The Little Bog Trotters

By

Clara Mulholland.


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THE LITTLE BOG-TROTTERS

Or, A FEW DAYS AT CONMORE

BY

CLARA MULHOLLAND

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

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THE LITTLE BOG-TROTTERS.

CHAPTER I.

AN INVITATION.

"TWELVE o'clock, I declare, and that small child has not returned!" said Mr. Merton to himself, as, awaking from his after-dinner nap, his eye sought the clock upon the mantelpiece. "What absurd hours these little ones keep now-a-days! Ah! there's my pet, I suppose!"

At that moment a loud knock and ring sound through the house, a slight rustling noise is heard in the hall, a quick, joyous step, a merry laugh, and Elsie Merton, aged ten, stands smiling and bowing before her father (*see Frontispiece*). She has been to a fancy ball, and makes a quaint, pretty picture in her old-fashioned dress and hat. Her round, merry face and bright blue eyes look soft and childlike under the dark vel-

vet hat and feathers; her little figure is curiously arrayed in a stiff brocade of many colors, her shoulders draped with a crimson silk pelerine, whilst her baby arms are covered with black silk mittens, and her fingers glitter with rings. In her hand she holds a large letter, which (forgetting the dignity befitting her gay attire) she soon begins to wave wildly and joyfully over her head.

"A letter, papa dear! a letter from Conmore. I am sure it is an invitation for us to go there for the summer," she shouted triumphantly. "Won't it be nice? won't it be nice? Oh! it will be fun, papa! Katty and I are just the same age, and they say she is so nice! Aren't you glad, papa? aren't you glad?"

"Very glad, my darling," answered Mr. Merton, taking the little girl upon his knee, and stroking her pretty golden hair. "It is just what I wanted for you, for then I shall know that my Elsie is well taken care of whilst I am away."

"You away, papa dear! What do you mean? I am sure auntie wants you to come too," she exclaimed. "Just wait till I read the letter, and you will soon see that she wants us both."

Tearing open the envelope, she read the first page of the letter, then threw her arms round her father's neck, and burst into tears.

"Oh, papa, papa, what does she mean? Are you really, really going to leave me? Please, please let me go where you go. I shall be so good! I shall——"

"Hush, hush, my pet!" said her father tenderly, "don't fret. I am only going to leave you for a time, and when I come home we shall be together again, and so happy—so happy! Meanwhile my darling must be a good, brave little girl, and not fret."

"I will try, papa dear," she answered through her tears. "But I thought you would come to Conmore with me, and now I don't want to go by myself, it will be so different. Let me stay here till you come back."

"You little goose," said Mr. Merton "what good would that do you? Why, you would mope yourself to death. Oh no, you must go to Ireland to your cousins, for there I know you must be happy."

"Yes, papa, but—but I shall be so lonely without you," she moaned, laying her little soft cheek against his, "and you will be

lonely without me. Who will make your tea, and cut your newspapers, and——"

"Well, now, Elsie, I am going to tell you a great secret," said Mr. Merton, smiling. "I shall not be lonely whilst I am away, for some one is coming to stay with me, or rather is going to travel with me—some one whom I love dearly, and who knows and loves my little Elsie, has promised to take care of me for her."

"Oh, papa, can it be Alice Kirby?"

"Yes, my darling, and you must love her very dearly, for she has promised to be my wife, and your mother."

"Oh, papa, I am so glad!" cried the little girl, clasping her hands. "I love dear Alice very much, and I have so often longed for a mamma."

"Poor darling, poor darling!" said her father softly. "God grant that she may prove a true mother to you, who have never known a mother's care. But go to bed now, my pet; it is late, and I do not want you to lose your roses; so say good night, and be off."

"Good night, dear, dear papa!" answered his little daughter with a long, loving kiss; and taking her aunt's kind letter, she tripped upstairs to her own room.

"Davis! Davis!" she cried to the gay-looking maid who came to help her to undress, "just guess what's going to happen!" I am going to have a mamma at last, and the sweetest, nicest, prettiest mamma that ever was!"

"Well, I'm sure I'm glad to hear it, miss, and we're all glad that master has chosen such a dear, pretty young lady as Miss Alice. But you'll be lonely, miss, when they're away."

"Oh no," said Elsie, "for I am going to Conmore to stay with my cousins."

"Law, miss, I hear that's a dreadful place—all mountains and bogs. What will become of us, with never a shop or a thing to look at?" exclaimed Davis in a tone of horror.

"That is all quite true, Davis," replied Elsie, laughing. "I'm afraid you will find it dull after London; indeed, I think you had better not come."

"Well, miss, I should be glad of a holiday, and I am so afraid of these damp country parts."

"Very well," said Elsie, "I shall speak to papa about it. But please to make me some nice, plain, strong dresses; these pretty silk and muslin things would be of no use at Conmore."

Davis replied, in a sad tone, that she would do as she was told, but that she thought it a dreadful thing for a young lady to go to such an outlandish place, when there were so many nice civilized places in England, where people dressed like Christians. Elsie laughed merrily at her maid's lamentations, and, jumping into her pretty white bed, was soon fast asleep.

The next few days passed away very quickly for little Elsie. Her papa took her about with him a great deal, and many and long were her visits to her future step-mother. Alice Kirby was a bright, kind-hearted girl, and Elsie, having known and loved her for many years as a friend, was only too glad to welcome her now as her mother. Never having known her own mamma, the child did not feel it strange that another should take her place.

At length the great day arrived, and Elsie, proud and happy, made one of the six bridesmaids at her father's wedding. When the moment of departure came, she clung to her papa, sobbing bitterly, but he consoled her by promises of letters and presents, and she smiled gaily through her tears at the bright picture he drew of their happy return. And so the little one dried her tears, and it

was a merry, laughing face that peeped out of the mail train at Davis next day, as Elsie and her uncle started on their long journey. Papa would soon be back, and the little girl was very anxious to make the acquaintance of her wild young cousins at Conmore.

CHAPTER II.

COUNTRY COUSINS.

THERE is great excitement in Conmore. Elsie is expected in the evening, and wonderful preparations are being made for her reception. Kathleen, the eldest girl, had worked very hard arranging the visitor's room, and, with the assistance of Moya, the nurse, had made it all nice and tidy. Indeed the whole day all the children had been running about the house, settling one thing and unsettling another, until their mother, losing all patience, sent them off for a walk.

The Sullivans were fine, warm-hearted children, wild as hares, but quick, lively and intelligent. They had always lived in the country, so that they were perfectly natural little people, quite unlike the small ladies and gentlemen that we meet with in town. Elsie was looked upon as a perfect wonder; she had been to so many strange places, and seen and heard so many won-

derful things. Some years before, she and her papa had spent a few weeks at Conmore, and her pretty dresses and beautiful

toys had quite dazzled her simple young cousins.

"I'm sure Elsie is a regular muff by this

time," said Frank, the second boy, as he knocked the stones about with his stick.

"I'm sure she's nothing of the kind, Frank," answered Kathleen, who was Elsie's own special friend, and just about the same age. "Elsie never was a muff, but of course you cannot expect her to be like you great rough boys!"

"Bah! rough boys, indeed! I suppose you are soft and gentle, Miss Pert? I wonder who mamma calls the mother of mischief, and—"

"Come now, Frank, that's not fair," interrupted Charlie, a fine stout fellow of twelve; "you know you could not have half the fun without Katty, so don't go casting up her sins to her. I say, Katty, what about the fireworks to-night?"

"Oh," said Katty, laughing, "I hid them in such a splendid place—just behind the door in the tool-house. I was afraid Bawn or Mabel would see me going in, but Moya let me out by the back gate, and stood telling me things to get in the garden, so they thought I was going a message, and I slipped in again by the front door before they had time to see me."

"Little monkeys!" exclaimed Charlie. "They are always poking their noses into

what doesn't concern them. Just look at them now how they are running! I suppose they are off to find out what's going on in the cooking line."

Bawn and Mabel were about eight and six and a-half, and were the greatest imps of

mischief for miles round. They were bosom friends, and always seemed to have some scheme or plan going on in their little heads. They roamed about through the gardens and neighbouring fields just as they chose. One day, indeed, when quite little, they wandered so far that poor Mrs. Sullivan was quite frightened, and sent men off in every direction to look for them. They were at length found, without any hats, their little feet bare, and their frocks soiled and dirty, eating scraps of bread and drinking some milk given them by a poor little country girl.

When the children arrived home from their walk, they found tea ready in the dining-room. It was six o'clock, and Elsie and Mr. Sullivan were expected at half-past, so they had not much time to spare.

"I wish to goodness they would come," said Frank, as he came down from brushing his hair and making himself generally tidy. "It's such a bore waiting tea. I'm as hungry as a hawk. I say, Katty, I wish that maid of Elsie's was coming. Wouldn't it be a rare lark playing all sorts of tricks on her?"

"No, no, Frank, that would not be right," said Katty, looking up from her book.

"Not right, my winkie! how prim we're getting! Now look here Katty, don't you

go chumming with Elsie, and getting a prim, stuck-up thing."

"Well, Frankie, I think it was very un-

kind of you the way you spoke to-day, and I know mamma wants me to copy Elsie, and be nice and well-behaved like her."

"Oh, bother good behaviour! What am I to do, I should like to know, if you get stiff and stuck-up? I shall have to chum with that monkey, Bawn."

"Frank! Frank!" cried a sharp, shrill voice, "come fast! come at once! Bawn is all burnt!" and poor Mabel, her eyes darting out of her head, her hair almost on end, dragged her brother into the garden.

Katty dropped her book, and ran after them to the tool-house door. Here a pitiful sight met their eyes. The unfortunate Bawn sat upon the floor, tears running down her cheeks. Her pretty blue dress was all dirty and tossed, and her poor fingers were burned and scorched. All round her on the floor were the squibs and rockets which had been intended for the evening's amusement.

"Well, you nasty—" began Frank and Katty in a breath. But the unhappy child began to weep so piteously that they had not the heart to say a word.

"Oh, Frank, what shall I do? Elsie will be here directly, and just look at my frock! Mamma will be so angry! And my fingers burn so! Oh dear! oh dear!"

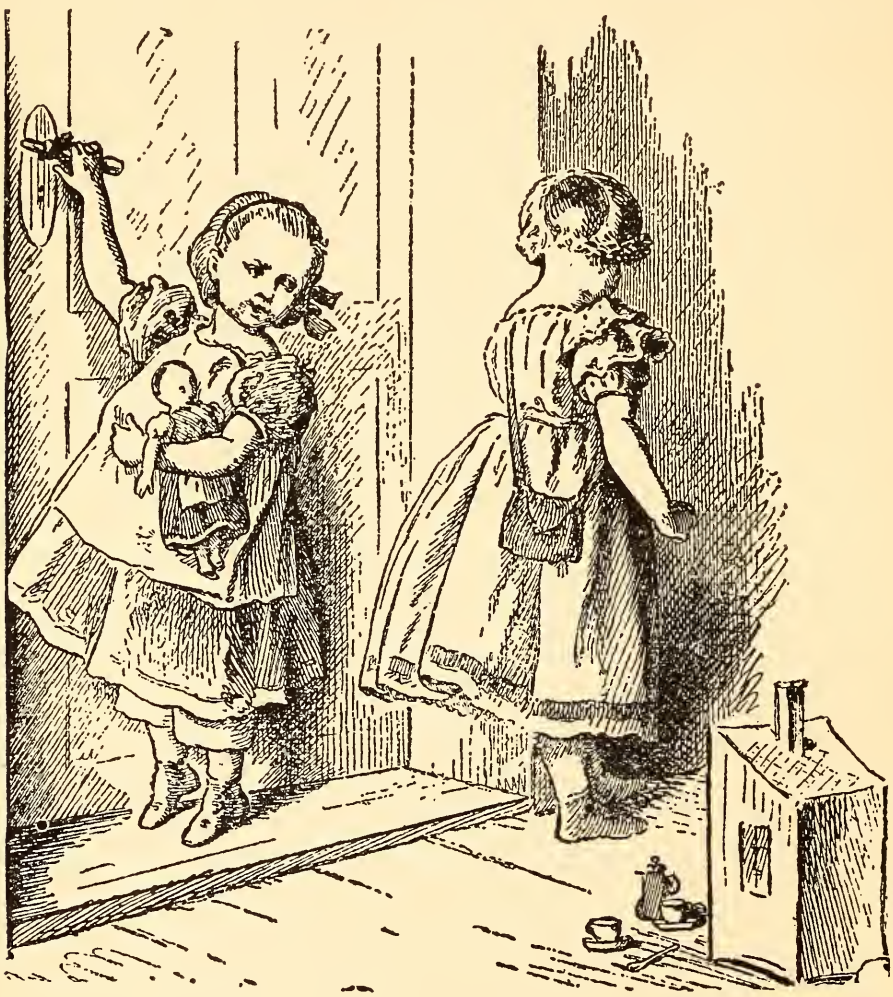
"Bawn, you are naughty!" exclaimed Katty, indignantly. "You had no right to come in here and touch poor Charlie's fireworks. You are a bad, wicked little girl, and deserve a good whipping!"

"Oh! no, no!" sobbed Bawn, "I did not mean to do any harm. Mabel and I were all ready dressed, and were playing outside there with our doll's house and things, and I peeped in, and asked her to come in, and —and she wouldn't, and went away, and I went in and got a match, and then, and— dear, oh dear, how sore my fingers are!"

"What on earth are you about in here?" said Charlie's good-humoured voice. "Why, Elsie and papa will be here directly. Come into the house at once. But, good gracious! Bawn in tears! What is the matter, little woman?"

The children all began to clamor together, and Charlie could scarcely understand a word they said. He heard something about fireworks being spoiled, destroyed, and a look of vexation and annoyance passed over his happy face; but seeing poor Bawn's expression of agony and the burns on her little fingers, he caught her up in his arms, and walked off with her into the house.

"Here, nurse," said he, depositing her on her bed in the nursery, "look after this poor child. She has burned her poor fingers, and I am sorry to say it is her own



fault. But don't cry any more, old girl; I forgive you. I must run off, for I hear the sound of wheels."

"Musha, musha, but you're the sorry

sight, Miss Bawn!" said Moya, holding up her hands. "What in all the world came upon ye, darlin', at all, at all?"

Bawn told her story as well as she could whilst Moya dressed her poor fingers, for she was sobbing bitterly both with pain and vexation.

"Troth an it was a shame to touch the poor boy's fireworks," muttered the nurse, "an he afther spindin' his day and his money over them to have a surprise for Miss Merton. But go to bed now, alanna, and slape paceful, fur shure he's afther forgivin' ye."

And so she undressed the poor little girl, who was obliged to go to bed, instead of going down to see her cousin and take tea in the dining-room. But her head ached badly, and her eyes were so swollen and red that it was quite impossible for her to appear.

When Charlie went downstairs, he found every one in the wildest state of delight. Elsie was in the midst of her cousins, and was being kissed and hugged in the most boisterous fashion.

"Well, we had a very pleasant journey, my dear," said Mr. Sullivan to his wife. "Elsie is rather tired, I think, and will be glad of a cup of tea. Bravo, Katty!—

learning to be useful, I see," he continued, smiling at his eldest girl, who was just then

leaving the room with a small tray in her hand.

"That is for poor Bawn," said Mrs.

Sullivan, as she closed the door upon her little daughter.

"For Bawn! Why, where is she?" said Mr. Sullivan. "Is she ill?"

The children looked nervously from one to the other in silence. Mary, or Bawn, as she was called, was a great favourite with their father, in spite of her wild ways, and he never liked to hear of her being punished. Mabel hung her head, and looked very guilty. She felt that she too was to blame in this matter, for she should have tried to keep her younger sister from going near the fireworks. So when she heard her father inquiring for Bawn, she knew that the whole story would be told, and that she should certainly get a good scolding. Very great was her delight, then, when she heard Charlie say—

"Oh, I made poor Bawn go to bed. She had a bad headache, and did not seem well. Moya is looking after her, and Katty has taken her some tea and cake."

"Poor darling!" said her father, "I must go and see her when we have had some refreshment. We are both tired and hungry. Eh, Elsie, old woman?"

"I am certainly hungry, uncle, but not very tired," answered Elsie; "the drive from

Clifden was so delightful, it quite refreshed me."

"So it was, little woman, so it was. I am

glad to see that the grandeur of London has not spoiled you for the country. You will see a great many things about here that will both shock and amuse you. That

sight we saw to-day rather startled you, I think."

"What was that, Elsie dear?" asked Katty, entering the room as her father spoke. "Was it anything very bad?"

"No, not very bad, but rather cruel, I think, As we drove along, we saw a poor woman dipping her little boy into a kind of well. He was awfully frightened, and screamed and kicked most fearfully, but she did not pay the least attention, and plunged him in again."

"Oh, that is nothing," said Katty, laughing; "why, we used all to be dipped in the sea when we were little, and it is a trifle bigger than a well."

After tea, Elsie was taken all over the house, into the farm-yard, and through the orchard. One had a "jolly" pet rabbit to show her, another a pretty little flower garden, and then she had to visit the unhappy culprit in the nursery, and console her as well as she could.

Katty and Elsie were perfectly enchanted at being together again, and appeared to be in great danger of offending Frank very deeply by their constant chumming; but he was very pleasant over it, and said he did not mind it in the least, so long as they

allowed him to go about with them, and sometimes join them in their walks.

"Don't be afraid, Frankie, old boy; I could not get on without you," said Katty, putting her arm round his neck and kiss-

ing him; "but we must try and not be such dreadful bog-trotters as we used to be."

"What on earth are bog-trotters?" asked Elsie in astonishment.

"Oh, people who trot over the bogs," laughed Katty. "Moya christened us that, one day Frank and I came home all covered with mud. We had been out for hours running through the fields and bogs."

"Well, I think it is a capital name," said Elsie; "but, good gracious, what is that?"

"A rocket! a rocket, I declare!" shouted Frank. "Bravo, Charlie! Hurrah! Come on, girls, round to the back garden."

It was now quite dark, and the young people found Charlie perched on the terrace, sending off some very good rockets and Roman candles. He had collected all he could find about the tool-house, and, in spite of Bawn's private performance, managed to make a very good display. With the assistance of Conn, the gardener, he worked away with great success, and the children shrieked with delight, and cheered and shouted as the many-colored balls of fire flew hither and thither above their heads. Elsie thought them very beautiful, and her delicate little face beamed with pleasure and excitement. But when at last

they saw in brilliant colors, "Welcome to Elsie," their joy knew no bounds, and they screamed and shouted so loudly that, putting his fingers in his ears, their father called for "mercy," and declared he must escape into the house.

"Oh, papa, papa, is it not exquisite? is it not perfect?" they exclaimed in a chorus.

"I really think Charlie is the cleverest boy I every knew," said Frank.

"Thank you, dear Charlie, very much," cried Elsie, putting her little arms round her big cousin's neck. "The fireworks were really lovely."

"I am glad you liked them, Elsie," he replied, "but Conn here deserves more praise than I do, for he taught me how to make them. He learnt at some place in Dublin."

"Arrah, troth an ye were an apt scholar, Misther Charles," said Conn, lifting his hat to the ladies. "But maybe ye would be wantin' me to help you with the little hut in the fields the morrow, sir?"

"Yes, Conn, I think so—that is, if my father allows us to make it."

"Ah! thin, troth he'll let ye do what ye like, sir, I'm thinkin'," answered Conn, with a smile.

"All right Conn. Good-night," said Charlie, as he followed his mother and sisters into the house.

It was very late, and quite time for little people to say good night and vanish to their beds. Elsie was tired from the excitement and her long journey, and was very glad to lay her little head upon the pillow.

"She is a dear, good girl, I think," said Mr. Sullivan to his wife when they were alone.

"Yes, indeed," she answered, "and I hope she will do my wild Katty good by her example."

CHAPTER III.

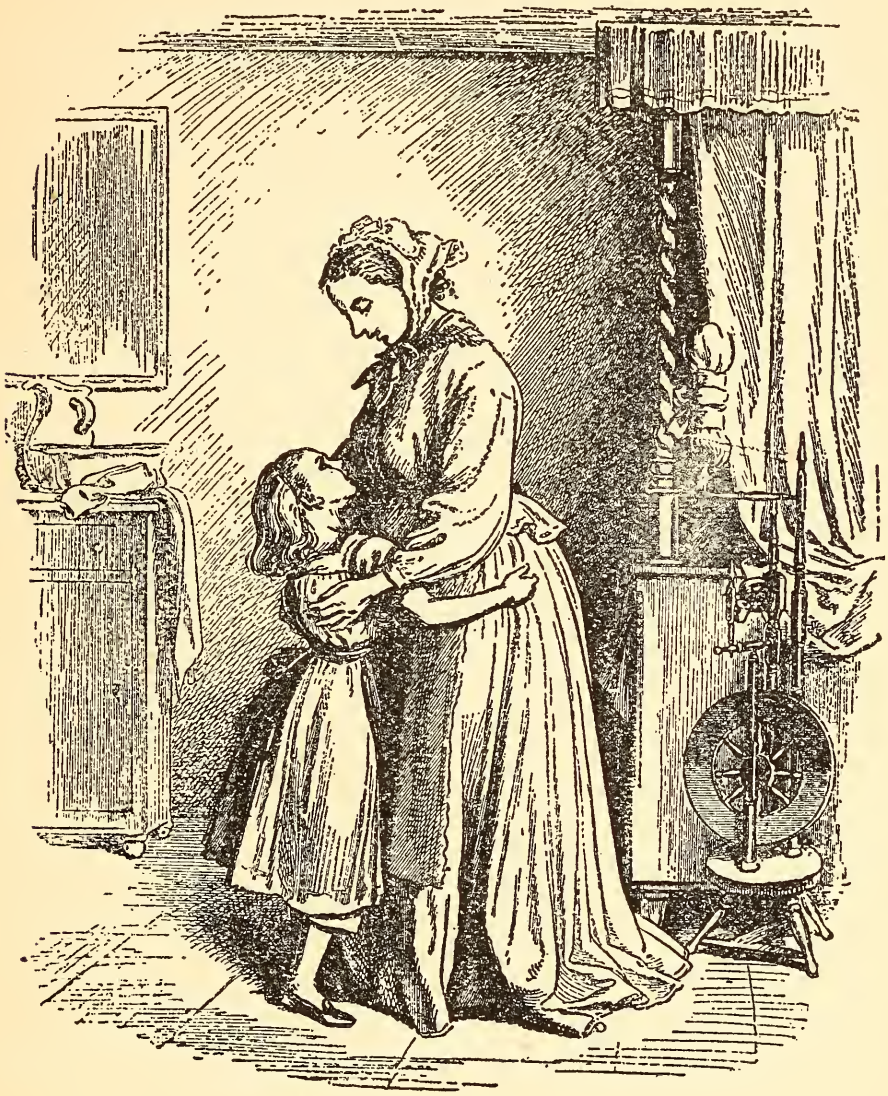
THE MUD HUT.

THE next morning, Elsie was up with the lark, but as Katty still slept soundly, the little girl dressed very quietly, lest she should disturb her cousin. The two children had talked for a long time before going to sleep the night before, for they were great friends; they always found wonderful things to say to each other when they should be asleep.

"I think I shall put Elsie in a room by herself," Mrs. Sullivan said, when it was decided that the little cousin was coming to them. But Kathleen, flinging her arms round her mother, implored her to allow them to sleep together; and so the girl won her point, for kind-hearted Mrs. Sullivan could not resist her earnest supplications.

Elsie stepped lightly to the window, and raising the blind, looked out for a few moments at the glorious hills and rich green fields, then drawing the table up close to

the window, she sat down to write to her father. Her letter was just written and



sealed, when a violent knock was heard at the door.

Elsie started, and Katty, jumping up in bed, began rubbing her eyes.

"Hullo, you lazy girls!" shouted Frank; "its half-past seven. What on earth are you about?"

"All right, Frank, all right," muttered Katty in a sleepy voice, "I'll be out directly."

Elsie laughed heartily at this speech, as her cousin was still comfortably tucked up in bed; but Katty was not long about dressing, and in less than half-an-hour they ran down to the dining-room together.

"Oh, I say, Elsie, we're going to have such fun!" said Frank as they came in. "Papa has given us leave to build a mud hut in the field behind the orchard, My winkie, what a lark!" and he danced about on one leg.

"A what?" asked Elsie in surprise. "A hut made of mud! Goodness! what—"

"Oh, my dear girl, I forgot! Of course a poor town lady like you could not understand the beauties of a mud hut, but I assure you it is exquisite; the walls are dripping like a piece of beef at the fire, the floor is—"

"Frank, Frank," exclaimed Charlie, laughing, "what a stupid, ridiculous boy you are! Don't believe a word he says, Elsie. I'll tell you what we are going to do."

"Now for some grand explanation of the building of a mud hut!" shouted Frank.

"Ah, stop, Frank, do?" said Katty, putting her hand over his mouth.

"Oh! let me go!" said Frank, wriggling away, and darting out of the room with a wild whoop.

"Now that that young urchin has hooked it," said Charlie, "we may talk in peace. Well, you see, Elsie, our house is to be built of large thick squares of turf, which Frank and I are going to pile one on the top of the other. Conn is to put up the rafters, and then we are to roof it with nice green sods of grass which had been cut for the new lawn at Criklewood, but were not used. It will be awfully jolly when it is done, I can tell you!"

Elsie did not quite understand all this talk about turf and sods, but she thought it would seem stupid to ask any more questions, so comforted herself with the reflection that she should understand all about it when she saw them at work.

As soon as breakfast was over, Charlie collected all the children together, and marched them off to the field behind the orchard. Here they found Conn, working away already at the little cottage.

"Now, Bawn, you and Mabel must pick out all the nice square sods, and carry them over one by one," said Charlie.

Away flew the two little girls to a far corner of the field, and Elsie saw their curly heads nodding wisely over some piles of green sods, somewhat larger and thicker than those she used to put into her lark's cage at home. But it hurt poor Bawn's burnt fingers, and before long the little ones had given up work, and were amusing themselves as they pleased, and Elsie laughed merrily as she saw them tying handkerchiefs over their heads, and making themselves look like little peasants trotting along through the fields. Trusty, Charlie's favorite dog, watched them with great attention, and followed them wherever they went.

The elder children were not so easily tired, however, and Katty and Frank worked away with right good will. They made themselves useful by handing up flat pieces of damp turf to Charlie and Conn, who placed them in rows, one on the top of the other, patting them tightly together with trowels. The little town girl felt rather disgusted at the wet, clammy-looking turf, but seeing how merry her cousins were over their work, she joined them, and very

soon began to think it the pleasantest thing she had ever done. They were very

happy, and worked away like a swarm of bees until dinner-time, when they were

obliged to leave their beloved hut and return to the house. They had certainly done a great deal in such a short time, and they all felt proud as they looked at the four dark brown walls, which were almost as tall as Charlie.

"We must make the door higher than you, old boy," said Frank; "it would never do to have you crawling in on all fours."

"Oh, that would be fun!" exclaimed Elsie, laughing.

"Hullo, you young woman from London! cried Frank, "have you no respect for my eldest brother? Him on all fours! That would be a come-down. I say young un, do you know, I think you'll soon be a good sort of girl."

"Delighted to hear it, Frank, I am sure," answered Elsie; "but what is going to happen to me?"

"Well, you'll soon be nice and wild—as wild as Katty there," said he, with a sly look at his sister.

"Now, Frank, that's too bad! It is a great shame!" began Katty.

"Oh, I am sure she'll never be that," said Mabel; "why, mamma says—"

"You shut up, Mabel!" said Frank; "it's none of your business. No one

asked your opinion. Hurrah!" he shouted suddenly, "there's Father John coming down the road!"

Away he rushed out of the gate, and down the road, with all the others at his heels.

Father John was the parish priest of the place, dearly beloved by all his parishioners, old and young, but the wildest little ones were his especial favorites, and many a culprit escaped punishment upon his imploring their pardon. Indeed, Frank re-

membered with gratitude how one day, when about five years old, he had been more than usually naughty and troublesome, and Moya was about to administer a good sound whipping with a birch rod, when Father John's kind face appeared at the nursery door, and he was rescued from the hands of the angry nurse. He had known them from their birth, and dearly loved them for their bright, happy faces and merry ways. He heard Frank's shout, and saw them all running after him, but he never once looked around, or pretended to see them. At last, when they were close upon him, he sank down upon a heap of stones at the roadside, and looking at the children, he said mournfully—

"Why on earth do you torment me, running after me in this way? I must complain to your mother."

But a merry twinkle in his blue eye, and a certain twitching of the corners of his mouth, showed that his vexation was only feigned, so the uproarious Frank simply laughed, and went on clamoring about the "jolly lark" they had been having all morning.

"Now see here, Frank Sullivan," said Father John seriously, "I saved you from a

whipping once, but I won't do so this time. You're one of the most cruel boys I ever met."

"How? What! I cruel, Father John?" exclaimed noisy Frank, quite taken aback for a moment; "what have I done that is cruel? I don't—"

"Why, you are always having 'larks.' I am sure there can't be one left in the heavens."

The children all laughed, for it was a regular joke with them all, this expression of Frank's; but he answered very quietly—"Oh, I go in for land-larks; I leave sky-larks for my betters!"

"All right, my boy. Keep up your heart," said Father John, laughing. "But who is the little stranger?"

"Oh, that is Cousin Elsie," answered Katty. "Elsie, come and speak to Father John."

The little girl came forward, and was patted kindly on the head by the good-hearted priest. He had known her mother well, he said, and had been very fond of her when she was a girl. Elsie flushed, and the tears came into her eyes at this mention of her own dear mamma, of whom she had known so little, but whose memory was so

sweet. The kind priest saw the pained expression on the little face, and, wishing to change the subject to something more lively, he said—

"But, by the way, Conn tells me you had some splendid fireworks last night. I suppose that was in honor of this little lady?"

At the mention of fireworks, poor Bawn grew scarlet, and carefully put her hands behind her back to hide her fingers, which were all tied up in pieces of white rag.

"Oh yes, Father," said Mabel, "it was awfully nice! Bawn and I"—Suddenly recollecting what she and her naughty sister had done, she hung her head, and flushed up to the roots of her hair. Father John looked from one to the other in astonishment, and Charlie, fearing he might think something was really wrong, told the whole story, sparing his little sisters as much as possible.

"Poor little mischief-loving girl!" said Father John, drawing Bawn down upon his knee; "so you were well punished for your naughtiness. Well, I hope it will be a lesson to you not to touch other people's things again. But come, come, cheer up!" he added, as he saw great tears hopping down the culprit's nose. We must do

something to amuse Miss Elsie whilst she is amongst us. What do you say to a picnic?"

"A picnic! a picnic!" screamed the children with one voice. "How awfully jolly! How delightful! Such lovely weather! Where shall we go?"

"Well, we shall see about that," answered Father John, getting up off his seat on the stones. "Let us now go in and ask mamma how we are to manage it."

Away flew the children like a flock of birds, their feet scarcely touching the ground, whilst Charlie and Elsie followed in a more dignified manner with Father John.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REBEL'S CAVE.

"MUMSIE dear! Mumsie dear!" shouted Frank, tumbling headlong into the drawing-room, where Mrs. Sullivan sat quietly at her sewing. "Here is Father John come to invite us to a picnic. How jolly! Oh my stars, he's sure to give us such delicious grub!"

"Frank, Frank!" exclaimed his mother, "do be quiet; do not talk so much slang. You are simply unbearable since you have made friends with those Newton boys."

"Oh, never mind, mammy dear; it expresses so awfully well what a fellow means. But here comes Father John."

"Good morning, Mrs. Sullivan," said Father John in his cheery voice. "We want you to help us to get up a picnic, just a pleasant little one amongst ourselves."

"You are very good to think of it, Father

John," said Mrs. Sullivan. "I am sure Elsie would enjoy it very much; it will be a novelty for her."

"Oh yes, auntie, indeed I should," answered the little girl, her eyes sparkling with delight. "I never was at a picnic in my life."

"Very well, then," said Father John, "I suppose we may arrange to go the day after to-morrow."

The children were in wild spirits. A picnic was always a great treat for them, but one given by Father John was sure to be extra good, as his old housekeeper made such splendid dainties, and never forgot the smallest thing when packing the hampers. They thought the time would never go fast enough. Katty declared she would go to bed at six o'clock, so that she might be able to get up very early the next day. But the boys scoffed and jeered at the idea of such a thing, and even Elsie said she thought she would be very foolish to do so.

"I wish you would sit down and hem a few dusters for me, Katty," said her mother, "that would help to pass the time for you." She turned round as she spoke, with the dusters in her hand, but Miss Kathleen had vanished. Hearing the word *hem*, she had

run off as fast as she could into the garden. Mrs. Sullivan laughed and shook her head, saying that she was a very wild, idle girl.

"I think I shall go and help Moya to unpack my things, auntie," said Elsie, laugh-

ing, "I want something to do, and I don't like hemming dusters either."

Moya was quite pleased to see the little girl, and they worked away quite pleasantly for several hours. At last everything was in its proper place, and Elsie, having washed her hands, went down to look for her cousins. The boys, she was told, had gone out an hour ago; Mabel and Bawn were playing with their dolls in the drawing-room, but Katty was not to be seen. Elsie ran upstairs and down, calling in her loudest voice, until she was quite tired, and was going back rather disconsolately to her room, when Bawn poked her little curly head out into the hall, shouting, "Look in the kitchen, Elsie, she is sure to be there."

So Elsie walked down the stairs, and knocked rather nervously at the kitchen door. As no one answered, she was about to turn away, when suddenly she heard Katty laughing merrily, and, opening the door, she saw her cousin sitting on a low stool, busily employed grinding coffee, whilst the cook was telling her an amusing tale.

At last the much-longed-for day arrived, and the two comfortable, well-cushioned outside cars stood at the hall door.

"Oh, please, Father John, let me go beside you," pleaded Mabel in supplicating tones.

"And me too!" said Bawn.

So Father John and the two small girls were carefully tucked up on one side by

papa, and then he and mamma went on the other. On the other car was a very lively party, consisting of Charlie, Frank, Katty, and Elsie.

They were in a most uproarious state, and Katty laughed wildly at every word her ridiculous young brother said. Charlie and Elsie were more sedate, but even they became rather boisterous from time to time. They had a most enchanting drive. The sun shone bright and clear, the trees were deliciously green and fresh, for it was early in June, and everything appeared truly beautiful to our happy young friends.

Passing through a wooded upland, they drove down into a beautiful little glen, nicely shaded and sheltered. A very steep mountain, thickly wooded, and covered with heather, rose at one side whilst the bright, clear waters of the Cloughmore Lake lay at their feet.

"My winkie! what a delicious climb we shall have, Katty," said Frank, "when I have refreshed my inner man!"

"Well, come along, and help to prepare something to refresh him with," called Charlie, who had already begun to make himself useful.

"Oh, certainly, sir," answered Frank joyfully; "anything to please you."

The hampers were taken down, wonderful baskets of wine, fruit and cake were produced out of the wells of the two cars, and the young people fell to right gladly to lay the table on the grass. What fun it was! How they laughed and made merry over their rural dinner-table! Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan and Father John wandered about the glen, talking and discussing the rich beauties of the exquisite scenery, and so the children were free to arrange things as they pleased.

"I tell you what," said Katty, "it's a great pity we have no hot potatoes; papa does love them, I can assure you."

"Boil some," suggested Elsie.

"Boil some, indeed, most noble damsel! In what, pray?" inquired Frank in a sarcastic tone.

"Well, Elsie is quite right," said Charlie; "run and gather me some dry, very dry sticks, and you'll see what a famous fire I shall make."

"Bravo, Charlie, you're a brick!" exclaimed Frank, "and Elsie is a genius, and I'm a—well, what am I? why, an ass!"

They all laughed heartily at this confession, and ran off to gather the sticks. They were not long making up a splendid

pile, to which Charlie applied a match, and very soon a great fire was blazing away in the sunshine. A pot full of potatoes had been discovered in one of the cars, for faithful Martha had forgotten nothing, and Frank was sent to explore the country, in the hopes of finding a well, as they wanted water to boil their potatoes in. He hunted about for some time without any success, when, hearing the sound of children's voices below him, he slipped down through the heather, and peeping between the bushes he saw the very thing he wanted, a deep well of clear, sparkling water. On either side of the pool was a little rough-looking country girl, with rosy cheeks and tangled hair. The smallest of the two, a tiny thing of six or seven, was holding forth in eloquent tones to her companion, who lay curled up on the grass, drinking water out of a pitcher.

"They're rale quality, I tell ye, Biddy, an' the're having the most beautifulest dinner iver ye saw; an as to the drink, it isn't wather they'll be afther drinkin', but wine an porther, an——"

"Now then, young uns, clear out!" shouted Frank, "I'm going to jump, so keep out of the way."

"That's won o' thim, Biddy, an bedad he's comin' for the wather for a' that," shouted

the little girl as she ran off. But Biddy, keeping her place upon the grass, watched

Frank narrowly as he filled his bottles from the well. Raising herself on her elbow, and looking up into his face with two big, solemn blue eyes, she said quietly—

"An shure it's niver true, yer honor, that the quality never drinks wather?"

Frank was immensely tickled at the idea, and tumbled head over heels three times upon the grass to relieve his feelings; then, making her a low bow, said—

"Our favorite beverage, my lady fair, is Adam's ale, a cheap, refreshing, and healthy one, when taken in moderation,"

Taking up his bottles, he sprang off, laughing merrily, whilst the girl lay back more astonished than ever.

"Where can you have been so long, Frank?" shouted the children, "you have been an age."

So he told them the story, and made them all laugh at his account of the poor little peasant's mystification.

"Well, the potatoes are all nicely peeled," said Katty, carrying over the pot, "so pour in your Adam's ale, Frank, and let us put them on the fire."

The little boy complied with her request, and in a few moments the potatoes were bubbling and boiling as merrily as if they

were hanging over a grand London-made range.

The dinner was a very pleasant one, and lasted a long time. The children were all so hungry, the eatables were so good, and the tongues wagged so merrily, that two or three hours passed over before they thought of making a move. At last Frank jumped up, and, saying that he thought his inner man was perfectly well satisfied, dragged Katty off for a scramble up the hill.

"Mind, you kids are not to follow us," he said to Mabel and Bawn, who looked very much as if they were preparing to run after them.

"No, no, children, don't go with Frank and Katty," said their mother, "you would be in great danger of breaking your necks."

The two little girls sat down again upon the grass, and began making up wonderful daisy chains and ivy wreaths to decorate their straw hats with. Slipping behind Father John as he sat talking to papa, they put a beautiful garland of daisies round his hat, and were in ecstasies of delight because he did not feel them putting it on.

"He'll never notice till he goes home," whispered Mabel, "and it will be such fun to see his face when he finds it out!"

"But he might be angry," answered Bawn.

"Angry, indeed! why, he's never angry," said Mabel, with a very knowing toss of her curly head. "Mamma says he's the best-tempered man in the world."

"Charlie! Elsie! papa!" shouted Frank from amongst the trees. "come here! come quick, all of you! I've found such a lovely little cave up here. Oh! do come up for pity's sake, Father John!"

The younger branches of the family went climbing and puffing up the hill, but the elders were not inclined to move, so called to Frank to tell them what it was like. Shouts of delight came ringing down through the heather, as one after the other reached the wonderful cave.

"What a delicious little house it would make!" exclaimed Elsie, sitting down to rest. "But see, there has been a fire. I wonder if any one ever lived in it. It is just like the kind of caves the hermits used to live in. How exquisitely the honey-suckle climbs up round the door!"

"Yes," said Charlie, "it is very pretty, but it would be dreadfully lonely to live up so high, all by yourself. I say, Frank, I vote you try it for a month, old boy!"

"Ta, ta, Charlie; I prefer tea and a hot cake at Conmore. But come on down, and coax the old fogies up to look at it."

Away they tumbled, pell-mell, down the hill, shrieking and laughing, catching at trees and grasping at heather, lest they should lose their feet, and roll headlong over the stones to the bottom.

"Oh, mamma," said Katty, in a breathless, squeaky voice, "it is most beautiful; you should really try and climb up to it!"

"No, thank you, dear," answered her mother, "I am too old for such work. But come along, boys; Father John is going to tell you a story about that cave."

"A story! a story! What fun!" shouted Frank, mopping his hot face with a very black-looking handkerchief.

"Did any one ever live there, Father John?" asked Elsie.

"Yes, indeed, Elsie; a poor, unhappy man lived there once for several months."

"Oh, do tell us about him, Father John!" cried all the children, settling themselves down comfortably on the grass beside the priest.

"A long time ago, dear children," said Father John, "just after the battle of Aughrim, in 1691, there was a great

number of small risings, before peace was completely restored to Ireland. The rebels were imprisoned or transported whenever they were caught, but in many cases they escaped over the mountains, and returned quietly to their homes and families. There was one man, however, whom the soldiers were ordered to take, living or dead. He fled to this mountain, and there in that lonely cave the poor fellow lived for many long, weary months. Galway had surrendered, the passes of the Shannon had been abandoned, but still the rebel remained hidden away in his quiet retreat, tended and watched over by a brave young girl, to whom he was very dear, Morning after morning she passed through the soldiers, who lay in wait for their victim, carrying food and clothing under her large cloth cloak. Suspicions were at length raised by her frequent appearance in the neighborhood, and they began to watch her, and soon took up their station along the road, just at the foot of the mountain. Maureen now found it very difficult to approach the cave, and at last was obliged to give up going altogether. Weary of watching and waiting for her coming, the wretched man wandered down the moun-

tain side. Very soon he saw the terrible position in which he was placed, the horrible trap into which he had fallen; but it was too late to retreat, for the soldiers had seen him, and were bearing down upon him from above. Escape by the road was equally impossible, for it was well guarded by heavily-armed men. For an instant he stood like an animal at bay, then swift as a deer sped down the steep hill, and, leaping into the lake, struck out boldly for the opposite shore. Guns were quickly levelled at the fugitive, and loud shouts echoed through the surrounding hills. But he heeded them not, and went swiftly on his way. He was a splendid swimmer, and the soldiers felt sure that they should again lose their prize, for, once across the lake, they knew that he was lost to them for ever. But shots carry far, and ere long the pure, clear waters were crimsoned with his blood. He reached the shore, my dear children, but only to fall dead upon the bank. Maureen, always on the watch, saw the struggle, and before the soldiers could cross the lake to claim the body of their victim, loving hands had carried it away, and kind-hearted friends had laid him to rest upon the hillside."

"Poor fellow!" said Mrs. Sullivan gently, "it was hard to die in such a manner."

"It was," answered Father John, "but I am sure he preferred a death like that to hanging, which would surely have been his fate."

The children were silent and subdued. It seemed so terrible to think of the little cave that they had admired so much having been such a miserable prison and hiding-place. It was quite a relief to them, therefore, when their father, jumping up from the grass, declared that he felt quite stiff, and that he thought it was time they were moving homewards.

"Hullo, Father John!" exclaimed Charlie, laughing, "are you going to a wake or a wedding, that you have decorated yourself in such a gay fashion?"

"You young witches!" exclaimed Father John, trying to look serious, as he beheld the beautiful wreath upon his chimney-pot. "I shall give it to you, if I catch you."

But Bawn and Mabel shook their curls and darted off, laughing merrily at the great success of their little plan. The rebel and his sad story were very soon forgotten in the fun of packing up the fragments, and getting comfortably settled on the cars again. The

drive through the cool evening air was al most as enchanting as the morning one, and so our young friends arrived home in excellent spirits, and did ample justice to the splendid tea and hot cake which awaited them at Conmore.

CHAPTER V.

FRANK MEETS WITH AN ACCIDENT.

FRANK SULLIVAN was a good, warm hearted boy, honest and truthful as the day, but rather conceited, I must confess. He thought his brother Charlie a wonderfully clever fellow, and was quite certain that there was not his equal in the whole length and breadth of the United Kingdom. But Charlie was cautious and careful, never indulging in the wild pranks and madcap adventures of Master Frank and his harum-scarum sister Katty; so the boy sometimes thought that his brother, though so clever in many ways, was, perhaps, somewhat of a coward. He was greatly mistaken, however, in his supposition; for Charlie, although he did not court danger, or rush foolishly into absurd scrapes, was one of the bravest boys that ever lived, and so he very soon proved to his incredulous young brother.

One day, soon after the picnic at Clough-

more, Frank felt very dull; Katty was busy ironing her doll's clothes, Elsie was writing

to her papa, and as Charlie had gone out with his father, the boy was reduced to

playing with Mabel and Bawn. They were strolling round the garden, wondering what they should do with themselves all evening, when suddenly they saw the gamekeeper's gun leaning against the wall.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Frank, "here's a find! How should you like to be shot, Mabel?" he enquired, laughing; and taking up the gun, he cocked it at the little girl, who ran screaming up the walk.

"Come back, you goose," called Bawn; "there is not the slightest fear, the gun is not loaded. And, besides," said she with a laugh, "Frank couldn't fire it if he tried a hundred times over."

"But it might go off," said Mabel; "please put it down, Frank."

Frank did so, but said with a contemptuous laugh, "Well, you girls are dreadful muffs. Why, you're as white as a sheet at the sight of an unloaded gun. What would you say to trudging along through fields and climbing ditches with a loaded one over your shoulder? My winkie, what a lark it is! And then to see the birds drop dead with one shot! And the hares and—"

"Well, you are conceited, Frank!" exclaimed Katty, who arrived with Elsie just in time to hear this magnificent tirade.

"I wonder when you shot a bird? Why, look here, Elsie, he knows as much about shooting as we do! If a hare stopped at about two feet from him, and said, 'Please shoot me,' he couldn't do it."

"Oh! such a story, Katty," shouted Frank indignantly, "you know I can shoot very well. Just ask Mick, the gamekeeper. And what's more, he'll tell you I can load the gun too."

"I don't want to ask any one," said Katty. "When you shoot birds, hares, and rabbits, come and show them to me. Then I'll believe you—not sooner. But come along, Elsie. Conn has given me some new roots for my garden. Come and help me to plant them."

The little girls ran off together to Katty's little garden, whilst Frank remained alone, in anything but a good temper.

"Well, you are a cool fish, Miss Katty," he remarked in a low voice, "making fun of me like that, and before Elsie too. Well wait; perhaps you may be obliged to say I can shoot very well, before you are much older."

He was deeply insulted, and felt highly indignant with his impertinent sister for the manner in which she had sneered at him.

He was determined that before long he would prove to Elsie, that what Katty had said was untrue. But how to manage it? His father objected strongly to his going out with the gamekeeper, he knew. Charlie had gone to Clifden, Father John was busy, and so he could think of no one who would, or could, take him out for a day's shooting. He might go by himself, of course, for he knew his way about the country as well as most people. But would it be right? Conscience told him not, for if his father objected to his going with Mick, how much more would he object to his going alone! He had almost made up his mind that he would give it up for to-day and not go, but conceit whispered that Elsie would think that he could not shoot, so conscience was silenced, and foolish Frank determined to prove himself an experienced sportsman. Shouldering the gun, he darted out of the garden gate, across the road, and away far over the fields.

It was a lovely day; the sky was blue and clear, the air fresh and fragrant. Little birds carolled merrily, and cocked their heads wisely on one side, as they heard the sound of approaching footsteps, then, seeing the boy close upon them, spread their wings and disappeared from his sight.

"A fellow must show a lot of girls that he's a man," he said to himself by way of an excuse for his disobedience; so he trudged boldly along, over wide fields, climbed over walls and jumped over ditches till he was fairly worn out, and yet he had not succeeded in catching a single thing—not even a sparrow. On he went, with loaded gun over his shoulder, eagerly watching for an opportunity to wing even the commonest bird as it flew past him. But it was no use; the little birds were wiser than he, for they knew where they were going, and what they were doing, whilst poor Frank did not. At last he came to a very high bank, and over this he must climb in order to get into the large green field that lay on the other side. It was steep and slippery, but Frank was a sure-footed climber, and soon reached the top. But then he found that he must jump some five or six feet into the field beneath. "Well, here goes," he said to himself, settling his bag securely upon his back, and grasping his gun tightly. "Here goes for a jump."

"Oh! I'm sinking!" he exclaimed in terror, "this is a bog! Help, help!"

And so it was; a bright green grass covered the soft treacherous bog, and the

poor boy had barely touched it with his feet, when he found himself sinking rapidly into the earth. His wild shrieks for help were unanswered, and an agony of fear came upon him. The cold perspiration stood in thick drops upon his brow, and his whole body trembled, as he felt that every moment he was sinking farther and farther into the bog. He looked wildly around, but no one was in sight. The sheep and the cows in the far-off pasture-lands browsed quietly in the sunshine, the little birds that he had sought to kill were singing as gaily as ever, the sky was not one atom less blue, and yet he was going slowly but surely to his death. The poor boy tried to say a few prayers; he implored God to forgive him for his wicked pride and conceit, which had been the cause of his accident, and wept bitterly as he thought of his mother's sorrow and grief when she should learn his death. But suddenly it seemed as if he had come to a standstill, as if he could go down no further; and so it was. He had sunk right down to his armpits, and here the cruel bog seemed to stop, and Frank was able to keep his arms upon the green sward. How long this might last he could not tell, and he prayed earnestly to God that he might be

rescued from this horrible death. He grew faint and cold as the evening came on, and he almost wished for death, to release him from the horror of the moment. Suddenly a thrill of joy passed through his frame, for he thought he heard the sound of voices coming towards him; but it died away, and his heart sank within him. It was getting so late no one would come out now, and how could he live till morning? He made one last effort, and, raising his voice, shrieked, "Help! help!"

There was a wild, piteous tone in his voice, as it rang out over the silent fields, and poor Frank shuddered at the sound. But this time it was answered from afar, and the voice was that of his brother Charlie. He heard the cry for help, and, running over the field towards the green bank, called out in cheery tones—

"Where are you, old boy?"

"Here—here, down below you," answered Frank in a miserable voice; "but take care, Charlie, for it's a soft bog, and if you come down you will be sure to sink."

"Good God!" exclaimed Charlie, "how can I possibly get you out? Oh, I see," he continued more cheerfully. "Be quiet there for a moment, and I shall come round to you."

He had seen some hard dry-looking parts of the bog upon which he could stand firmly, and, stretching forward, drag his brother out by the arm. But on coming down, he found that, although within a very short distance of Frank, yet he could not manage to reach him. One step farther, and he too should be drawn into the bog, and sink in the same way as his brother had done. What could he do? He knew not, and a terrible fear came over the brave boy lest the bog should open still farther, and that he should see his beloved brother disappear before his eyes. Suddenly, a look of joy illuminated his face, as he saw the gun, which Frank still held tightly clasped in both hands. That would save him, if he could only reach it.

"Look here, Frank," he said, "could you manage to push the gun toward me—near enough for me to catch hold of it? If you hold on by the other end, I shall then be able to pull you out by it."

"No, no, Charlie dear; it is loaded," sobbed Frank; "I cannot reach the trigger, and if it went off when we were pulling, you would be killed on the spot."

"But you are sinking fast, Frank; something must be done. I must run the risk,

Be firm and steady, and I think there will be no danger."

"Charlie dear, I'm afraid," cried the poor boy, the tears streaming down his pale cheeks. "Leave me to my fate. I brought it on myself. I would rather die a hundred times than see you injured."

"Well, I'll tell you what, Frank; let me take the gun from you first and fire it. If the trigger does not touch the ground, it is safe not to go off."

"I could never, never reach it again, Charlie dear, you are so far away, and I'm sinking so fast."

"Well then, I must risk pulling you out at once. Courage, old boy. Put your trust in God, and all will be well. My God, help me in this great danger," he said reverently. "Now, Frank, hold up the gun."

With great difficulty Frank raised the gun, and, holding it towards his brother, grasped it firmly at the butt end.

Bravely, but not without fear, Charlie caught the muzzle of the loaded gun with both hands, and with all the strength of his body, dragged his unlucky brother out of the bog. It was a fearful moment for them both, but God watched over them, and ere long they were standing safe and sound upon the green banks above.

"Let us thank God for having escaped such a fearful death, Frank dear," said Charlie, his young voice trembling with emotion. Baring their heads, the boys knelt down, and poured out their heartfelt thanks to God for His great mercy towards them, in this terrible moment of death and danger.

CHAPTER VI.

KATTY AND ELSIE RESOLVE TO MEND THEIR WAYS.

WHEN Charlie and Frank arrived home after their terrible adventure in the bog, they were greeted by shouts of delight, horror, and surprise. For several hours after Frank's conversation with Katty, no one remarked the boy's absence. Katty was very busy planting her new roots, and Elsie, Mabel, and Bawn had all three been pressed into her service, so that they had not time to think about Frank and his whereabouts. When Charlie returned from Clifden, however, he immediately shouted for Frank, to come and look at a new fishing-rod that he had been buying. But no Frank was to be found, so his brother ran round to where the little girls were hard at work, to make inquiries about him.

"I don't know where he is," answered Katty, laughing; "he won't speak to me for some time, I am sure, for I insulted him deeply this morning."

"Well, I saw him running out of the gate about three o'clock, with a gun over his shoulder," said Mabel.

"A gun?" cried Katty, in amazement.

"Yes, I suppose he was going to take it to the gamekeeper's lodge," answered Mabel.

"I must go and look after him," said Charlie, "he had no business to be going about with a gun."

Away he went at full speed down to the gamekeeper's lodge, which was about a mile and a half off, but nothing had been heard of Frank, nor had he been seen by anyone in the neighborhood.

"I'll tell you what, sir," said Mick; "as sure as I'm here, Master Frank has taken my gun, and gone out to shoot with one of Mr. Newton's sons. They were always good at leading him into mischief."

"No, no, Mick," replied Charlie, shaking his head. "The Newtons are away in Dublin. If Frank's gone, he is all alone. Come with me across the fields, and try if we cannot find him. You go that way, and I'll go this."

And so off they went in opposite directions, and my little readers have already heard how Charlie found his brother, and gallantly rescued him from a terrible death.

Poor Frank was a piteous sight as he appeared at the garden gate. The children were all looking anxiously up and down the road for the boys, and when they beheld their brother thick with mud and dirt, a pale, frightened look on his usually bright, merry face, a cry of horror burst from their lips.

"Frankie, darling! where have you been?" cried poor Katty, flinging her arms around his neck, without a thought for her pretty muslin frock. "Poor old fellow, you look like death."

"I was nearly dead, Katty, my own wee sister. I was nearly dying without even saying good-bye, but dear Charlie saved—"

Here poor Frank's words became inaudible, for he was sobbing bitterly.

"Hush! Frank, hush! be a man," said Charlie, in a voice thick and hoarse with emotion. "Come, Katty, let us get him quietly up to his room. I don't want mamma to see him in this state. She would be most dreadfully frightened."

So Frank was marched in by the back

door and up to his own room, where Charlie undressed him, and made him get into bed as quickly as possible. Katty ran off to Moya for a hot drink, and very soon the tired boy dropped off into a calm, peaceful sleep.

When the children assembled for tea, Mrs. Sullivan, quite struck by their silence, inquired if anything had happened to make them all so grave and serious.

"You seem very quiet, children," she said, "but I suppose it is because that madcap Frank is not here. Where is the boy, I wonder? Do you know anything of him, Katty?"

The little girl blushed and looked nervously at Charlie, who said quietly—

"Frank is not very well, mamma dear; he has gone to lie down."

"Not well?—poor boy! I must go and see what's the matter," said the anxious mother, getting up at once.

"No, no, mamma; don't, please," said Charlie, "he is asleep. But, mamma dear, I want to tell you about him. He has had an accident to-day."

"An accident! Charlie, is the poor boy injured?"

"No, no, mamma dear; but just listen, and I will tell you what has happened."

And so the story was told gently and quietly by the kind-hearted Charlie, who spoke highly of Frank's brave conduct, and very little of his own.

"Thank God for having spared my child to me," exclaimed the poor mother earnestly. "Let us hope that this may prove a good lesson to the giddy boy."

Frank was his mother's darling, in spite of his wild ways and madcap pranks, so when he awoke from his deep refreshing sleep a few hours later, it was only to be clasped in her loving arms, and covered with warm, tender kisses. The poor boy was very penitent, and begged his mother to forgive him for his wickedness.

"For I knew very well it was wrong, mother dear, and how dreadful it would have been to have died in such a state of sin! If Charlie had been ten minutes later, I should have been drowned in that awful bog."

This terrible accident made a great impression on the other children, and they were all very quiet and subdued, for several days after its occurrence. Katty, most of all, took it deeply to heart, for she could not help thinking that if Frank had been swallowed up in the bog, she would always have

blamed herself for his death. She it was who had taunted him with not being able to shoot, and had laughed and sneered at him because he said it was pleasant going along with a gun over his shoulder.

"Oh! Elsie, dear," she said, "what should I have done if my darling Frankie had died through my fault?"

"It would have been dreadful indeed, dearest," answered her little cousin. "But do you know, Katty, I think you are too fond of laughing at Frank and taunting him when he does not do a thing well."

"I only do it for fun. He doesn't mind."

"But he does mind," answered Elsie; "I often see him looking red and angry, especially when you do it before strangers."

"Poor old fellow," said Katty; "I would be very sorry to vex him, for I love him so much, Elsie—I think I love him more than any one else in the world."

"Well, then, why do you tease the poor boy so much?" enquired Elsie, in surprise. "I couldn't bear to tease papa, for I love him more than I could ever tell you."

"But you are quite different. You are good and quiet and thoughtful, whilst I am wild, impish, and giddy."

"Now, Katty, you are too hard on your-

self," answered Elsie; "but I think you should not laugh at Frank so much."

"Well, I will try and leave him in peace for the future, Elsie; but, do you know, I always feel awfully wild and impish during the holidays. The first week I am quiet enough, but when I have been a few weeks with nothing to do, I must be wild—I must play tricks, and tease every one I meet."

"You certainly are a dreadful child," answered Elsie, laughing; "I think Aunt Ellen was right when she called you the 'mother of mischief.' But seriously, Katty, I think we should try and do something useful during the holidays. A little sewing—"

"Don't mention it," exclaimed Katty; the idea of sitting down on a lovely summer's day to hem horrible dusters for wretched servants to dust with—"

"No, no," laughed Elsie, "I should not care to hem dusters myself. But I've got a plan in my head. What do you say to making a whole set of things for a poor little child?"

"That would be nice," said Katty; "but what child would you make them for?"

"It will be easy enough to find a child," answered Elsie, laughing. "But the other

day I was out walking with Charlie, and we went into a cottage to ask for some milk, and there we saw a dear little thing of about three. It was awfully pretty, but its big sister was crying because its frock was so torn, and—"

"I know who you mean. That's Biddy Doyle's little girl. But we couldn't make the things, Elsie," said Katty, shaking her head.

"Couldn't make them! And why not!" asked Elsie.

"Well, in the first place, I have no money"

"But I have," said Elsie.

"Second place, we couldn't cut the things out."

"But Moya could cut them out for us," rejoined Elsie.

"Third place, the boys, Bawn and Mabel would laugh at us, and tumble our things about."

"Ha, ha! Miss Katty, you don't like to be laughed at yourself, you see," said Elsie, laughing merrily. "But don't be uneasy; we won't tell the boys anything about what we are doing, and it will be a great surprise for Aunt Ellen when we have finished. Let us run and peep in at the cottage window.

If you saw the little duck with his fair curly hair, I am sure you would be wild to make him some clothes."

Off went the two little girls, along the

road and over the fields, till they came to a tiny cottage nestling down under a hill. Standing on tiptoes they peeped through the window, and Elsie whispered joyfully, "There he is. Isn't he a darling?"

"He's a duck," said Katty. "What a nice tidy little room. That's poor Peggy dressing him."

"What's the matter with her head?" asked Elsie.

"She had her head shaved, and so she must wear a cap. But come away, or they will see us. Let us go and consult Moya."

The good woman was highly amused at the idea, but promised faithfully to keep their wonderful secret, and to do all she could to help them. She was very much pleased to see wild Katty anxious to begin to sew of her own accord, and expressed a hope that she would one day get over her bog-trotting ways, and settle down into a nice, quiet, sensible young lady like Miss Elsie."

"For shure, Miss Katty darlin', it's hard enough to have them boys goin' bog-trottin' over the counthry and fallin' into ould bog-holes, widout havin' the young ladies followin' their example."

"But I never fell into a bog-hole, Moya," said Katty.

"Och, well, shure, an' ye wint very near to it if ye didn't, alanna. But go off now an' buy yer stuffs, an' ye'll see how fast Moya'll be afther cuttin' out the clothes."

Away ran Katty and Elsie with a hop, skip, and a jump, to put on their hats and jackets, before starting for the village to make their purchases. It was not far off, and they soon returned with all the necessary materials for a complete outfit. Elsie's purse was always well filled by her indulgent father, and she was not very extravagant, so that she was able to pay for all these things at once. Moya cut out a nice little chemise and white flannel petticoat, and, armed with thread, thimbles, needles, and scissors, the two girls trudged away across the fields to a nice shady tree, where they sat down, and began to sew away quite diligently. Katty was in good spirits; it was delicious to have a secret, and she had a nice soft piece of flannel to sew, so that her stitches were not too visible, and the seams looked quite nicely done.

"Sewing is not such a bad thing, after all," she remarked, popping a piece of butter-scotch into her mouth.

"No, indeed," said Elsie, "it is quite delicious sitting here under this tree, it is

so nice and shady. But who is that little girl standing there staring at us?"

"I don't know," answered Katty, still munching at her toffy; "ask her her name."

"What's your name, little girl?" shouted Elsie. "Come over here and have some toffy."

"My name is Mary Kelly, plaze, miss," replied the little girl, dropping a courtesy.

"Arrah, long life to ye miss," she said, her eyes sparkling as Elsie presented her with a lump of toffy.

"What are you doing here? I saw you sitting over there in the next field. What were you doing?" said Elsie.

"I was mindin' thim cows, miss."

"Why need you mind them?" asked Elsie. "They are not doing any harm."

"No, miss, not now; but shure they might run over into the corn-fields and spoil the crops."

"I see," said Elsie, "you are here to keep them from getting into mischief."

"Yes, miss, that's it," said Mary, and away she bounded over the field after a wanderer who appeared to stray too far from the rest.

"What a wild-looking little creature," remarked Elsie, as she watched the slight

figure darting amongst the cows in the adjoining field.

"Aren't you afraid of them?" asked Elsie, as Mary came skipping back to them.

"Arrah, they wouldn't touch me, miss; shure they're as quiet as lambs," she answered gaily.

Mary proved a very amusing companion, for she had many funny stories to tell, and so the children began to look forward to their work-time under the tree with the greatest possible pleasure. Mary believed in fairies, banshees, and ghosts, and had some fresh story to relate after every moonlight night. One day the two little girls were very much horrified to find that, although Mary was thirteen, she could neither read nor write, and they determined forthwith to undertake her education.

"That is the reason she believes in all those ridiculous stories of fairies and ghosts, I am quite sure," remarked wise little Elsie. "She is always dreaming about them as she sits minding her cows."

"Yes, I am sure that is just it," said Katty, "and it is very wrong to believe in such things."

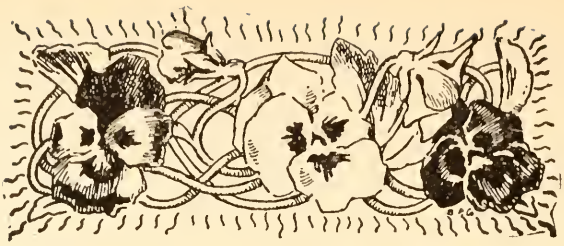
Mary was perfectly enchanted at the

thought of being taught to read, and tried her best to learn very quickly. The children lent her easy books, and she spent hours reading, as she sat in the field minding her cows. She was a quick, intelligent girl, and proved an apt scholar, so that in a very short time she was able to read, and even write upon a slate. Elsie and Katty were very happy. They felt that they were doing some good, and spending their days in a profitable manner. Katty was much quieter, and did not torment Frank quite as often as she used to do. Mrs. Sullivan remarked the change, and rejoiced greatly.

"If Katty goes on as she is now," she said to her husband, "she will soon be a really good, well-behaved girl."

"What has come over her, I wonder," said Mr. Sullivan. "Is her appetite good?"

"Oh, yes, I should think so," answered his wife, laughing; "I am not uneasy about her health, for she eats well and laughs as merrily as ever."



CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW BOAT.

WHILST Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan rejoiced at the marked improvement in their little daughter's conduct, Frank grumbled and set it all down to her chumming with Elsie.

"Girls are such muffs when they get together," he said in a complaining tone to Charlie; "just look at Katty, what she's come to. Why, before Elsie came she was far pluckier than Owen Newton, could beat him any day at a running jump, and now she's a regular muff. It's too bad!"

"Well, you are a ridiculous boy, Frank. Katty can't always go on like a wild boy," answered Charlie, laughing; "she's near thirteen now, and must begin to behave like a young lady."

"Bother young ladies!" exclaimed Frank. "I hate young ladies, with their mincing

ways and pasty faces. I won't have Katty a young lady."

"Come, come, Frank, you're a young simpleton," replied his brother. "Run off out of this and leave me in peace. I want to finish my book."

"Bother books, bother girls, bother everything," muttered Frank, as he slammed the door after him. "Every one's getting so mighty fine, I wonder what I'm to do. But I know," he added, brightening up a little, "there's my boat; I will be off and finish that, and we'll sail her to-day. Bawn, Mabel, where are you? I want you," he shouted. "Come along, and finish the Minerva."

The nursery door was quickly opened, and the two youngest girls came bounding down the stairs, to the imminent risk of life and limb.

"Steady there, young ones," he cried, "you'll break all your legs and arms if you go on like that; but come along, for I want to sail the Minerva to-day, and there's a great deal to do to her yet."

"How jolly!" said Bawn, skipping along like a frisky kitten. "Such work as we had to get out of Moya's clutches! There is somebody coming to see papa, and she

wanted us to be nice and neat, so she stuck us on chairs like pins in a pin-cushion; but the minute we heard your voice we darted out of the room and down stairs like wild-fire."

"You young imp," said Frank, "she should have tied you to your chairs, and then you could not have moved."

"Well, indeed, I'd like to see her tie me to a chair!" exclaimed Mabel indignantly.

"Or me!" echoed Bawn.

"Let us work away as fast as we can," said Frank; "I would like to finish the boat now, and then, perhaps, Elsie and Katty may condescend to come and see her sailing in Warner's Pond."

"Will you go so far?" asked Mabel; "that is a long walk; then we can't go until after dinner."

"Well, do you really imagine it will be done before that?" inquired Frank. "Let us see who'll be there first."

When they arrived at the tool-house, the two little girls were lost in amazement and delight, at the sight of the wonderful boat. It was a large deal chest painted white, with a bright scarlet band all round, whilst "Minerva" was printed in large black letters on one side. Two small planks were lying be-

side it on the ground, and these had to be fastened in for seats. Frank hammered away, Mabel holding the nails for him, whilst Bawn laughed and chattered, and hammered nails into every piece of wood she could find in the place. Just as the last finishing touch had been given to the "Minerva," and Frank was contemplating a mast and sails, the dinner-bell rang out across the garden, and the young people scampered off to wash their hands and brush their hair.

When dinner was over, they told Kitty and Elsie what they had been doing, and ask them to come with them to see it launched.

"It would be ridiculous to think of going to Warner's Pond," said Katty, "for it is a great deal too far off. You could never drag or carry the boat so far."

"Very well, old girl," answered Frank, "we'll not go there; we'll sail it in the brook at the end of the orchard, if you like."

At last, after much groaning over its fearful weight, the "Minerva" was carried through the orchard, and floated gaily down the brook. There was a pretty blue flag flapping merrily in her bow, and the chil-

dren were in perfect ecstasies at her beauty and lightness. Frank had a good strong rope fastened to the stern, and with this he pulled her rapidly through the water.

"Let me in, Frank, please do," pleaded Mabel; "I would love to have a sail."

"Of course you may," he answered quickly; "jump in and I will pull you along."

In jumped the little girl, and before she was well seated off ran Frank, tugging his best at the rope. But Mabel soon began to shriek wildly, for, lo and behold! the boat was fast filling with water, and the poor child was very wet and uncomfortable.

"Stop, stop, Frank," she shouted, "stop, I tell you! The water's all coming in. Let me out at once. Oh, dear, I'm all wet. What shall I do?"

The children all crowded round the unfortunate little girl as she stepped on to the grass, and the "Minerva" floated away, uncared for, down the stream.

Here was a nice state of affairs. What on earth would her mother say to her if she went home dripping wet? They would all be sure to get into a fine scrape, that was quite certain.

"If I could only get dry again," said she,

in a piteous tone of voice. "I wish I could slip into the kitchen for a while, I would soon be as dry as a chip at the fire."

"Hurrah!" shouted Frank, "I know what we'll do; we'll light a fire in our little mud-hut, and we'll dry Mabel there. Mamma will never know she has been wet, and we'll all escape a jolly scolding."

"Yes, yes, Frank," said Katty, "that's all very fine, but you know we are forbidden to light a fire without special permission."

"I know all that, old girl; but what's to prevent us getting that permission, I'd like to know?"

"Well, I don't know, except that I don't know who's going to ask for it. I'm not, for one."

"Bother you, Katty, you're turning out a regular muff," he replied pettishly. "But, Elsie, you'll do it, like a good little cousin; won't you now?" he said in a coaxing voice; "mamma would be sure to say yes to you."

Elsie hesitated for a few moments, but they all got round her, and begged her to be good-natured, and to take pity on poor miserable Mabel; so at last she gave in, and darted off at full speed towards the house. She did not at all relish the errand, but she

liked to do anything she could for her little cousins, who were all so kind to her. Mrs. Sullivan would not hear of such a thing at first; she did not like fires, she said, and would not allow it; but Elsie pleaded so well that she at last received the desired permission, and returned happy and excited to the orchard. But the children had not waited for her coming, and she met them carrying bundles of sticks and dried wood in their arms. They were so certain that she would succeed in her mission, that they were going to lay the fire in the mud-hut at once, without waiting for her return.

They were all in high delight at the capital way in which they had managed to escape a good scolding, and were soon sitting laughing and talking round a splendid turf fire. Mabel's frock, pinafore, and stockings were hung up to dry on a strong cord, that Frank had ingeniously fastened to sticks in the mud walls, and she felt very comfortable with a nice little cloak of Elsie's round her shoulders.

"Isn't it jolly, just?" asked Frank, popping a few nice new potatoes into the hot ashes to roast. "I can't imagine why people live in big houses; little mud-huts are twice as jolly."

"You silly boy," laughed Katty; "just fancy papa in his great big red chair, and his great long legs stretched along the whole house."

"Well, big men should be able to double themselves in two," answered Frank, "and they could all be folded away into nice, snug little corners, instead of sprawling all over the place, like great daddy-long-legs."

The children all laughed at this brilliant speech of Frank's, and toasted their toes at the fire as if it were December instead of August. But then the fire was in a mud hut of their own building, and so, although they were desperately hot, with great drops of perspiration pouring off them, they all declared it was "jolly," and appeared to enjoy themselves immensely. Suddenly, a great smoke seemed to rise up about them, the place became suffocating, and they saw, to their horror, that the walls of their precious house were all blazing away as merrily as their fire. Up they started, and flew out of the little door, just in time to save themselves from a severe burning. The wet turf of which it had been built, the wet sods with which it had been roofed, had dried up quickly in the summer sun, and in a very short time the whole gorgeous structure, at

which they had laboured so diligently, was reduced to a heap of smouldering ashes.

A dreadful fear came upon the children, for there stood Mabel, crying miserably over the loss of her frock, pinafore, and stockings; and, to make matters worse, Mr. Sullivan was seen coming quickly down the orchard. He had seen the high flames and thick smoke from the house, and had hurried out to see what was the matter.

His eyes fell immediately upon the unhappy Mabel, and, taking her up in his arms, he asked her what on earth had become of her clothes, and why her frock was off.

"There, there, papa," she sobbed out, pointing to the burning hut.

"What wicked, bad children you are!" exclaimed their father in an angry tone. "But you are the cause of this, I am sure, sir," he said to Frank. "You have been guilty of a great act of disobedience in lighting a fire out here. I am very angry with you indeed. Return to the house, and go to your own room for the rest of the evening."

"But, papa, indeed—" began Frank.

"Go, sir," said his father; "don't attempt to bandy words with me in that manner.

Go out of my sight. It was only to-day that I learned, quite by accident, of your wicked disobedience in going out with a gun, by yourself. Leave the orchard this moment."

Poor Frank coloured deeply, but answered nothing; his father would not listen to him now, so for the present he must submit patiently to his punishment. Struggling very hard to keep down the hot tears that would come in spite of himself, the poor boy returned to the house, and went quietly to his own room.

But Katty did not bear herself so meekly. She was furious with her father for treating poor Frank in such a manner. Elsie did all she could to soothe her, but it was all to no purpose.

"I hate injustice!" she answered indignantly. "Why should papa be so unjust? Why should he blame and punish Frank more than me or you?"

"Well, because—" began Elsie.

"Because what, I'd like to know?" interrupted the angry girl. "Because Frank's the best fellow that ever lived? because he's kind and good-natured with the little ones, and tries to amuse them? because—it's unjust not to listen to a person before you condemn them."

"Well, now, look here, Katty," said Elsie quietly, "when your papa hears how it is, and that we really had permission to light our fire, he will be sorry that he spoke so hotly to Frank, and in the meantime it won't do him any harm to go up to his room for a while."

"That's all very fine, but do you think I didn't see the tears come into the poor fellow's eyes when papa taunted him with his disobedience about the gun? It wasn't fair; it was cruel, hard-hearted, nasty—" Here Katty stopped to take breath, before continuing her angry tirade against her father; but before she had time to add another word, they saw Mabel rushing down the orchard towards them.

"Be quick in to tea, girls. Father John's there, and there's such a jolly cake, and Frank's making them all roar with the ridiculous nonsense he's talking."

"Frank!" exclaimed Katty and Elsie in a breath. "I thought papa had sent him to his room for the rest of the evening."

"Oh, yes; but when papa came home, and mamma told him that she gave us leave for the fire, papa kissed Frank, and they had a long chat together, and now Frank's in wild spirits. But I'm off to tea," and

away she ran, and soon vanished in by the hall door.

"Now, Katty dear, you see I was right," said Elsie, smiling.

"Yes, Elsie dear," answered Katty, "I'm sorry I was so angry, but I couldn't bear to see Frankie treated unjustly."

"There's no fear of any one treating Frank unkindly or unjustly, Katty, for he is

such a bright, merry little chap, that everybody loves him."

"That they do, Elsie dear," answered Katty, kissing her cousin affectionately. "But come along, dearie, or we shall be late for tea."

Every one seemed peaceful and happy now—Frank radiantly so, for his father had told him that after the holidays he intended sending him to college with his brother Charlie. This was glorious news, and Frank felt much older and many inches taller when he thought of it. Before going to bed, he and Mabel retired into the nursery, and, taking a slate and pencil, he made a long list of the things he should require at school, which he determined to get the very next day at Clifden.

This had been quite an eventful day, a day in which the children had been both very merry and very miserable. Long years after, they had many a laugh together over the wonderful launching of the "Minerva."

CHAPTER VIII.

A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

THE children were all deeply attached to Moya, who had lived with them for many long years, and was more like a second mother to them than a nurse. Great, then, was their sorrow and consternation, when one day their mother told them that the poor woman was seriously ill. They were all most anxious to help to nurse her, but their father only laughed at them, and said he thought the best thing they could do was to go off for a long walk across the fields.

"Well, then, let us go to the Nest?" said Katty.

"That is a capital idea," answered Frank. "I love that place, and I don't think Elsie has ever been there."

"No, I have not," replied his cousin. "What kind of a place is it?"

"Wait a bit and you'll see; it is far too beautiful for description. But you kids

are not to come," he said to Bawn and Mabel.

"Please let us go, Frankie!" they implored; "we'll sit outside, and won't be in your way at all."

"Very well; but mind you be quiet and don't keep bothering us. If you're very good, perhaps we may squeeze you in, as you're not very big."

"I tell you what," said Katty, "we'll be awfully thirsty by the time we get up there, so I vote we stop at the Nolans' cottage and get a bottle of milk to take up with us."

"Another splendid idea, Katty. Bravo, old lady, you're worth any money," said Frank; "Mrs. Nolan's the nicest woman in the country, and as for the children, they're rare little beggars!"

"Now, Frank, that's some of the Newtons' fine English," said Katty, laughing; "but come on, I'll be first to reach the cottage," and away she ran with all the children after her. At last, tired and breathless, she was obliged to stop within a few steps of the cottage, and Frank shot past her, and darted in at the door.

Mrs. Nolan was a fine buxom woman, and was busy making a pudding for the family when the Sullivans appeared at the door.

The "rare little beggars," as Frank called the children, were four in number, and had all clustered round their mother, to watch the stirring of the pudding. Such a dainty was rare, and great was their excitement and joy as they saw it growing under mother's fingers. They were all delighted to see "Master Frank," and told him to be sure and come back soon to taste the pudding.

"All right," said Frank, laughing, as he went out with his bottle of milk, "be sure and keep a big piece for me."

It was a glorious afternoon, and the sea looked exquisitely blue, as the children came scrambling down over the rocks. After much climbing and slipping, shouting and laughing, they at length reached a high moss-grown bank. Thick clusters of wild strawberries peeped out from the grass, and swinging their hats over their arms as baskets, the little ones picked the sweet fruit to eat with their milk, when they reached the Nest.

"Well, you have gone up high!" said Elsie, as they stopped, hot and panting, before a large hole in the cliff. "How on earth did you find out such a place as this?"

"We didn't find it out at all," answered

Katty, "Frank and I made it. But come in, Elsie—now isn't it lovely?"

"Well, it is delicious," certainly, she replied, "It is a capital idea. But I can't think how you managed it."

"You see we wanted a quiet nook to read and chat in," said Frank, "and so we clung to the bank and worked away for several days, holding on with one hand, and working with the other. We made that flat landing-place first, you see, and then we poked and dug until we got our cave this size."

"And this little table; how did you make that?" she inquired, laughing.

"That was very easy," answered Frank; "but you see our furniture is a little primitive, as we are obliged to sit on stones. But just look round, Elsie; isn't it lovely?"

Truly it was as Frank said, for, from their hole in the high bank, the children could see the whole of Balanakill Bay, lying bright and clear before them. Dark, dingy-looking fishing smacks became rich and golden in the glorious sunlight, and one or two little white-sailed boats, tinged with its coloring, were dainty enough to carry the most beautiful fairies upon their decks.

"Isn't it a pity that the sea should not always remain calm and clear like that?" said Elsie, with a sigh.

"Yes, indeed," answered Frank, "but still it is beautiful; it is glorious to see it dashing wildly against those great rocks."

"Oh, no, Frankie," said Mabel with a shudder, "it makes me feel frightened when I see it like that. It is just like a fierce angry man, Moya says, and she can't sleep at night when she hears it roaring."

"Poor Moya is not afraid of it for herself, but for her son, who is away at sea as a sailor," answered Frank, sadly.

"Does he never, never come home to see his mother?" asked Elsie.

"Well, he has been gone a great many years," said Frank; "Moya does not know where he is now. He was just fifteen when he went away first. He was sharp and clever, and papa wanted him to be a school-master, but he was too fond of the sea. But where is Bawn, I wonder?"

"Dear knows," answered Katty, laughing; "but don't be uneasy about her; she's all right, I'm sure. She'll turn up presently."

"Oh dear, I am very hungry!" exclaimed Frank. "Isn't it near tea-time, girls?

Mamma will think we are lost. Hullo! there's Bawn coming back again,"

"Where can she have been?" they said in a breath. "How excited she looks."

And excited she was, for, in spite of the cool evening air, her little cheeks were glowing like red-hot coals, her merry eyes were dancing joyfully, and her little feet scarce touched the ground as she skipped nimbly up the green bank.

"I've been to the quay," she shouted, breathless and panting. "He's come! he's come! Aren't you glad?"

"Who's come? Why should we be glad? I think you're mad!" were the answers borne down to the panting climber; but she only laughed merrily, and tossing back her chestnut curls, threw herself down comfortably upon the sward.

"Whoever wants to hear my news may come to me," she shouted back to her mystified companions; and being naturally curious, they soon came tumbling pell-mell down the bank to where she sat.

"Now for your budget, young 'un," said Frank.

"I've a great mind not to tell you a single word, for your impertinence, Master Frank," she said, tossing her curls.

"Please do, now, there's a good old girl," he said coaxingly; "if you tell me, I won't tease you again for a whole week."

"Ha, ha, Master Curiosity-box! you who are so fond of talking of the curiosity of women, take care, or you may become as bad as—"

"Please, Bawn, do stop your nonsense, and tell us who's come," exclaimed Katty, impatiently.

"You too, most respected eldest sister, are you also curious?" inquired the little imp, with a shake of her head. "Mabel, you and I should certainly be the eldest of our family, for I see we have the most sense. Well I'll tell you, if you're all very good. But guess first."

"No, no, monkey; tell us; we could never guess," laughed Elsie.

"Yes, you could. I'll give you a great chance. Well, some one who has been at sea for a great—"

"Why, Mick, of course," shouted Frank. "Hurrah! hurrah! how glorious! Why, Moya will be as well as I am to-morrow."

"God grant that she may, Master Frank," said a deep manly voice; and, turning round, they saw standing beside them a tall sunburnt sailor, who told them that he was

Mick Doolan, Moya's son, who had been so many years away at sea.

"How did you come here? Where on earth did you come from, Mick?" shouted the children in a breath.

"Well," answered Mick, laughing, "I came to the quay yonder in the good ship Sea Gull," and, landing, walked up the road as far as your father's farmyard, without seeing a soul I knew. The gate was shut, and I was just going to pass on, round to the hall-door, when I saw this young lady sitting on a stone nursing her doll, and the little dog Trusty by her side. She didn't know me, nor I her, for she wasn't born when I went away; but Trusty, old fellow, knew an old friend, and jumping up, licked me and whined with delight at seeing me; and then I looked in the little one's face and knew she was her father's daughter, and I told her who I was, and she put on her shoes and stockings and dragged me off here to surprise you all."

"Well, Mick," said Frank, warmly shaking his hand. "I'm right glad to see you, and I'm sure the sight of you, well and strong, will soon cure Moya."

"God grant that it may, sir," said the

sailor, lifting his hat reverently. "But let us hurry to the house, for I am longing to catch a sight of her dear old face."

"Let us go first, Mick, and ask mamma to break the news gently to her," said Katty; and, taking Elsie's hand, she ran quickly down the hill.

It was some little time before Mrs. Sullivan could understand what the breathless, excited girls were talking about; but when at last she learned what it really was, and saw Mick coming up the road with Frank, she was quite delighted, and only waited to say a few words to the traveller, before going to unfold the glad tidings to the poor sick mother,

The sight of her fine sunburnt son did more for Moya than all the doctor's medicines, and in a few days she was up and sitting in a big chair, in a nice shady little nook in the garden. Mick and the children were constantly about her, and she declared that she was never had been so happy in all her life.

"And now, mother darling," said her son one day, as he lay on the grass at her feet. "I don't intend to wander again, and I don't intend you to work any more, either."

"Och, alanna, machree!" she replied, "Sure ye must work at somethin,' an' what's a sailor fit for at all, at all?"

"Well, well, mother, I've got a plan in my head, but I won't tell you about it just yet," he answered, looking over with a knowing glance at Frank, who chuckled and winked, and at last tumbled head over heels two or three times on the grass, after which extraordinary performance he darted off across the garden as if he were shot.

Mick was an amusing fellow, and the children found him a very delightful companion. He had seen so many strange things, and visited so many foreign countries, that he could tell them stories about all manner of curious and exciting adventures that had happened to him and his brother sailors. The day after his arrival, he had gone down to the ship and carried all his boxes up to Conmore. He had brought some little presents for the children, but what amused them most was a large monkey that he presented to Katty. The little girl was half afraid of him at first, but when she saw how tame he was, she soon got over her fright, and even the small children began to pet and make much of him. Mick had trained him perfectly, and

he was as obedient as possible. It was most comical to see him trotting about the garden and house as quietly as a tame dog. He had one enemy, however, in the person of a large tabby cat, who resented his presence as an insult to herself. She had long been first favorite in the parlor, and received all the tid-bits from the breakfast-table; but now her nose was put out of joint by this miserable monkey, and Mistress Puss bristled with rage, and disappeared as quickly as she could when Joey was heard to approach.

One Sunday evening, every one had gone for a stroll through the fields except Elsie, who had stayed in the garden reading to Moya. She had just finished her book, and was running in to fetch another, when, on passing the kitchen door, she heard most extraordinary noises. Wondering what could be the matter, she opened the door, and there she beheld a very comical sight. Joey was sitting most complacently cracking a nut in the middle of the kitchen, whilst opposite to him was a queer white rolypoly-looking thing, with poor pussy's head sticking out at one end and her tail at the other. As Elsie came in, Joey looked up with a wicked twinkle in

his eye, as much as to say, "Here's a lark," but the unhappy cat tried to scramble off across the floor out of the presence of her enemy. Clank, clank she went over the tiles, and a large piece of china rolled on the floor. Out came her fore-paws, and on she went at a much brisker pace. Clank, clank, and, her hind-legs being free, she scampered out of the door and away into the garden. Moya saw the strange-looking creature run past her, and she called to Elsie to know what it could be.

"Oh dear!" exclaimed Elsie, laughing till the tears ran down her cheeks. "What a dreadful animal!"

"What was it, asthore?" asked Moya.

"The cat! the cat?" gasped Elsie; "she has gone through the milk jug, and can't get it off her body."

"How in the world did she do that?" asked Moya, doubtfully.

"Well, I really don't know," answered Elsie, as soon as she had recovered herself sufficiently to speak. "But I suppose Mistress Puss had her head in the jug stealing the milk, when she heard Joey come into the kitchen. She is so much afraid of him that I suppose she jumped off the table, jug and all. The china broke

on the tiles and out went her head, and there she was, an unhappy prisoner in a jug, until my coming in made her start again, and then she broke some more off it, and was able to run away. I wish the children had been here to enjoy it. It was such fun."

And very merrily they all laughed over poor pussy's adventure, as they watched her trotting about with a band of white china round her body. Bit by bit it broke off, and at last Frank chased her over a high wall, and as she alighted on a heap of stones on the other side the last morsel flew off, and she was free once more. Let us hope she learned a useful lesson, for she was never known to steal milk out of a jug again.

There was some mystery in the air, but what it was, no one but Mick, Frank, and Mr. Sullivan seemed to know. There were trips to Clifden and visits to Father John's, but what it all meant the children could not imagine. Frank was in a wild state of excitement, and seemed to think himself a most important person. Mick was for hours shut up in papa's study, and even Moya did not know what it was all about. Katty was burning with curiosity to know

what it could be, and she coaxed and petted Frank, till at last he told her, having first made her promise to keep it as a great secret.

"Yes, of course," she answered, "I won't breathe it to a creature. But what is it, Frank?"

"Well," said Frank, looking cautiously round, to see that no person was listening, "Mick is trying to obtain the post of schoolmaster."

"Is that all?" said Katty; I don't see why that should have been kept a secret."

"Well, but Katty," remonstrated her brother, "it will be a grand thing if he is chosen, because he's a sailor, and the other candidates have been grinding away all these years that he has been at sea. He was afraid to let Moya hear anything about it, for fear she should be disappointed. He is a splendid fellow, I can tell you—why, he speaks better than many a gentleman."

"Yes," laughed Katty, "That is the only thing that Moya found fault with in him. 'Sure an' he spakes for all the world like an Englishman, Miss Katty darlin',' she said to me, the day after he came home."

"So much the better for her that he does then," answered Frank, "why he went to

school in England on purpose. If he gets this place he will have a home for his mother for life."

"That's true," said Katty, "I would love to see dear old Moya mistress in the ducky little rose-covered cottage."

"So should I—But don't forget your promise. Not a word to Moya or the kids."

"Never fear, old boy," she said gaily. "I'll be as silent as the grave."

CHAPTER IX.

A GREAT TRIUMPH.

THE school at Conmore was not under the government, as most of our country schools in Ireland are, but was managed by a committee of gentlemen, amongst whom were Father John and Mr. Sullivan. When Mick first mentioned his anxiety to obtain the situation, which had just become vacant by the death of the old schoolmaster, who had been there when he was a boy and many years before, Mr. Sullivan did not know what to say, for he was completely taken by surprise, and greatly astonished at the idea of a sailor turning teacher.

"Well, Mick," he answered with a smile, "sailors are very fine fellows, no doubt, but they do not generally know much about the three R's, not to mention a great many other things that a schoolmaster should know and understand."

"That is quite true, sir," replied Mick respectfully, "but I think you will find that I know more than you suppose, if you only give me a trial."

"Oh, I am quite willing to do what I can for you," said Mr. Sullivan, "but you know you must go through a rather difficult examination before you can be elected, and it does not depend upon me in the least. But how did you come to learn so much? Had they a school on board your ship?"

"Yes, sir, and I got on famously; so much so, that I was put to teach the other boys at times, when the master was busy; and I spent some time in a good school near London."

"Near London?" said Mr. Sullivan, in astonishment. "Why, I thought you had been at sea all this time."

"Well, you see, sir, as I got on so well at reading and that, I liked it, and I used to think very often, of the happy days I spent in the old school-house at Conmore. One night I dreamt that I was master there, and that my mother, God bless her, was going about the place as happy as a queen. When I wakened and found that it was only a dream, I said to myself: 'I will be schoolmaster there yet.' Soon after, I left

the ship which was lying off Gravesend, and was to sail in a short time for South Africa. I went to London, where I earned a few shillings a week as messenger at a school for young gentlemen. The master was a kind-hearted man, and helped me all he could, and there I learned a great deal more than you would suppose. Any way, I will try what I can make of the examination papers."

"And I am sure you will succeed, my man," cried Mr. Sullivan, grasping him warmly by the hand. "Charlie, here is a brave fellow," he continued, turning to his son, who at this moment entered the room. "I only hope you will have as much strength of purpose when you are his age."

"Indeed, I hope so, father," said Charlie, when he heard the story. "And I hope Mick may get the place. Father John gave me this note for you, papa—I think it is about the examinations."

Mr. Sullivan took the note, and having read it, he told Mick that he was to go up to Clifden next day to be examined along with the other candidates.

The next few days were spent by the children in talking over Mick's life and ad-

ventures, and wondering if he would really succeed in the examinations.

"What a queer fellow he is," remarked Elsie, "not to have let his mother know where he was. There she has been fretting about him all these long years, and he never told her that he was in London."

"It is strange, certainly," said Katty; "but I suppose he did not think she was uneasy, for he is a good-hearted fellow, I am sure."

"I do hope he may get the place," said Frank, turning head over heels. "We'll have the greatest lark out, if he does. I tell you what, girls, if Mick succeeds, we'll give a school treat. What do you say to that, my friends?"

"It would be delightful," cried his sister and cousin. "We'll have a jolly tea and a dance. Did you ever see a jig, Elsie?" asked Katty.

"No, I have not," replied Elsie. "What is it like?"

"The best thing you ever saw, when it is danced in proper style upon a door."

"On a door! How on earth can that be done?"

"Well, you see, the door is taken off the hinges and laid on the floor, and then they

dance on it; the brogues make the most delicious noise upon it that you ever heard."

"A horrid clatter, I should say," said Elsie, laughing.

"You Londoners have no taste," said Frank. "Why, it is sweet music to my ears. But here is Charlie coming along at the rate of a hunt. What's the news, old boy?" he shouted at the top of his voice.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" answered Charlie, throwing his hat wildly in the air. "Victory, victory! Mick has won the day, and is now lord and master of the Conmore school-house."

"Bravo, bravo!" shouted Frank, rushing off at full speed into the house. In a few moments he appeared again, followed by Mabel and Bawn, dragging a great arm-chair after them. It was covered with pink calico, and festooned with paper roses of glaring colors.

"What on earth is that for, Frank?" inquired Charlie, laughing.

"That? why it is Mick's throne. Now, you girls place yourselves behind with flags in your hands, and I'll treat you to a little music."

Elsie and Katty seized the flags, and

waved them gaily over their heads, whilst Frank drew a penny whistle from his pocket, and began to play, "See the Conquering Hero Comes," in brilliant style.

"Now, you two youngsters, take that wreath of laurels," he said to Mabel and Bawn, "and stand behind me until Mick appears. When he sits down in the chair, you must come over, and bowing twice, place the crown upon his brow with great solemnity and respect."

Mabel and Bawn withdrew behind the chair, and Charlie went off into a convulsive fit of laughter at his brother's nonsense.

"If you must laugh, most noble brother," said Frank, in a dignified tone, "Please retire into the house."

"Here they are, Frank," whispered Mabel, "begin your music. There's Mick coming up the road."

Charlie disappeared in an agony of laughing, and Frank's beautiful music was heard squeaking and wheezing through the garden.

Mr. Sullivan and Mick were greatly amused at their magnificent reception, and the victorious schoolmaster sat down in the great calico-covered chair, and allowed the little girls to crown him with laurels.

Frank capered about him in the greatest state of delight, screaming out, "Bravo! bravo!" till he was quite hoarse and out of breath. Mrs. Sullivan and Charlie came out together to congratulate Mick on his success, and the poor fellow was quite overcome with emotion as the kind lady, congratulating him in a sweet voice, told him that she had imparted the good news to his mother, and that the poor woman was almost beside herself with joy. He thanked her for her goodness, and hurried away to look for his mother.

"That is really a clever fellow," said Mr. Sullivan to his wife. "Do you know, his papers were far better than those of the other candidates? He beat them all."

"I am delighted, both for his sake and his mother's, for now that we think of living in London, I was at a loss to know what to do with the poor woman, as she never would be happy in town."

"My dear, take care what you say about London, just yet," said her husband, "beware of little pitchers."

"Oh, they are not listening," she answered, smiling. "But what can they be talking about in such an excited manner? Frank, what is the matter?"

The children all came swarming round her, chattering and shouting till she had to implore them that she was not deaf, and understood English perfectly.

"Well, mamma, Frank says"—began Katty.

"You shut up," shouted Frank without ceremony. "Can't you let a fellow speak?"

"Hush, hush, Frank," said his mother, holding up a warning finger, "ladies first, remember."

"Bother ladies," muttered Frank; then seeing a look of vexation on his mother's face, he added quickly, "Forgive me, mamma dear, I didn't mean that—but Katty is such a torment, she wants to say everything."

"Now, Frank, are you not a foolish boy? Let Katty speak first, and then your turn will come. Now, Katty, what is it?"

"Please, mamma, it was Frank's idea—perhaps he had better tell you himself," replied Katty, hanging her head.

"Well, you are a ridiculous set of children," exclaimed their mother. "Now, Frankie dear, what is this famous idea of yours?"

Frank brightened up at this, and answered with a slight blush upon his honest face:

"Well, mamma, we were thinking that we children might give up our pocket-money and help to furnish the rooms at the school-house as a surprise for Mick and his mother. Elsie has a good deal of money—"

"A very good idea, indeed," said Mrs. Sullivan, laughing; "but how much do you think it would take to furnish two bed-rooms and a kitchen? Seven and six-pence?"

"Oh, more than that," answered the young people in a chorus.

"Quite right, a good deal more. Now let us see, how much have you got among you?"

"I have ten shillings," said Frank, look-ing proud of his enormous wealth.

"I have three and sixpence," said Katty rather shyly, and half afraid that her mother would ask her what she had done with the last half sovereign her father had given her as a birthday present.

"I have a pound, aunt," remarked Elsie quietly, "and papa would send me more if I asked him."

"No, no, dear child, that is quite enough for your share. Now, little ones, what can you contribute?" she said, turning to

Mabel and Bawn, who were whispering together in a very serious manner.

"I have only a halfpenny, mamma dear," said poor Bawn tearfully, "and Mabel says she has only a bright farthing, and she does not like to give it away."

"Well, we must try and do without it," answered Mrs. Sullivan gravely. "And now, dear children, amongst you, you have thirty-three shillings and sixpence halfpenny. That would not be enough, of course, but I am very pleased with you for all that, for it is generous of you to give up your pocket money in such an unselfish way. I will ask your papa, and I am sure he will give what is necessary to furnish the cottage nicely."

"Oh, thanks, thanks, dear mamma." said the children, jumping up, and kissing her uproariously.

Mabel alone held aloof; she felt selfish and uncomfortable, but could not make up her mind to parting with her beloved farthing, and she had nothing else.

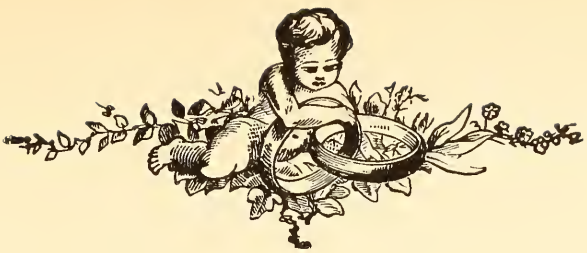
"I will give it," she said presently to herself. "I love Moya, and I will give it to her."

Darting after her mother, who was just going into the house, she pushed the bright

shining treasure into her hand, saying: "Take it, mamma dear; I want to help Moya."

"Thank you, darling, and God bless you," said her mother kissing her tenderly. "I thought my little Mabel was not a selfish child. You will be pleased that you have made this sacrifice when you see how comfortable Moya will be."

Quite delighted with herself, Mabel skipped gaily after the other children, who were going off to have a look at the schoolhouse, and lay their heads together as to what they thought it would take to make the rooms look snug and comfortable.



CHAPTER X.

THE SCHOOL TREAT.

MR. SULLIVAN was a generous, kind-hearted man, and gladly consented to supply the fund necessary for the furnishing of the rooms at the school-house. So a list was sent up to Clifden, and in a few days a heavily laden van was seen toiling slowly past Conmore. Frank was perched on the gate, swinging backwards and forwards in rather a disconsolate fashion. He had nothing to do. Charlie had gone off in his usual way with his father, and the girls were at their old work, "chumming up in their own room," he knew—for before coming out to the gate, he had peeped through the key-hole and saw Katty sitting as solemn as a judge, cutting out some soft looking stuff, whilst Moya stood watching and praising her. Elsie was not to be

seen, but he felt quite sure that she was there too, as Katty would not else have looked so happy. When he perceived the big cart coming along, and saw that it contained furniture, his face brightened, for he immediately came to the conclusion that these were the things they had ordered from town.

"Hullo, my man!" he shouted to the driver, "where are you off to with that load?"

"Up to the school-house," replied the man, touching his hat respectfully.

"Hurrah! that's jolly," cried Frank jumping off his perch; and running across the grass, he tumbled in at the drawing-room window, where his mother sat reading.

"My dear boy!" she exclaimed, as her work-basket went rolling on the floor, and the thread, needles and thimbles flew into various corners. "What on earth is the matter? Can you not come into the room like a gentleman?"

"I beg your pardon, Mums dearest," he answered meekly, stooping to pick up the scattered contents of the basket. "I was so excited that I did not see the thing. I want Katty and Elsie to come up to the

cottage with me. I have just seen the furniture go past."

"Have you really? Well, I'm very glad," she said. "But the girls need not go until to-morrow. They could not help to take the things out of the van, you know. To-morrow we shall go and put everything in its proper place, and make the rooms look neat and tidy."

"All right, mamma; then I'm off to help the unloading. If Charlie comes in, tell him to run after me and lend the help of his brawny arm."

"I don't think Charlie would fancy the occupation," she replied, laughing. "But I'll tell him."

The next day, the children were all in a perfect whirl of excitement and delight. The furniture had been put into the rooms, and they went off in a body to help in its arrangement. The little girls felt very important as they tucked up their skirts, and tied on long blue checked aprons that they had borrowed from the housemaids.

They swept and dusted, and carried chairs in and out of the different rooms; hung up pictures, and laid nice little mats upon the floor, which Conn had stained a rich brown color, for Mrs. Sullivan had

not thought it necessary to treat Moya to carpets. "I would love to live in a little place like this," said Katty. "This parlor is such a snug nest. Don't you wish you lived here, mamma?"

"No, indeed," answered Mrs. Sullivan, laughing. "I don't think I should have much peace with all you monkeys buzzing about me continually."

"Well, that would be a drawback, certainly," answered Katty; "but I think a little cottage like this far nicer than a stupid big house. Don't you, Elsie?"

"Well, I don't know," said Elsie; "but I think it depends greatly—"

"Bother!" shouted Frank, "it does very well for poor people, but do you think a gentleman would like to live in a poky hole like this? You're an awful goose, Katty."

"I'm not a goose," answered his sister, rather hotly, "and this is not a poky hole—"

"Come, children, don't begin to quarrel," said their mother; "everything is quite nice now, so I think we had better go home to tea."

The young people assented gladly, and off they set for Conmore, Frank and the two little ones running on before, whilst

Katty and Elsie walked quietly along beside Mrs. Sullivan.

"Mamma," said Katty, "I want to ask you something."

"Well, what is it, little woman?" inquired her mother.

"Well, mamma, Elsie and I were thinking that, now that Moya is going away, you would require some one to look after the little ones, and—"

"Quite right, my dear, so I do."

"Well, mamma, please to take Mary Kelly," said Katty, in a tone of entreaty.

"Mary Kelly!" said her mother in surprise. "Who is she, dear?"

"Don't you know them, mother dear? They are very poor, and Mary is such a dear little thing, and Elsie and I taught her to read and to sew."

"Well, upon my word, I am astonished," answered Mrs. Sullivan; "I had no idea one of my famous bog-trotters could be so useful. I am very much pleased indeed, Katty dear, and I shall see Mary and have a talk with her."

"Thanks, dear darling Mammy," said Katty, squeezing her mother's hand in delight.

"But I shan't have time to think of it

just yet," said Mrs. Sullivan, "for Father John wishes me to see about the cakes and other things for this wonderful tea-party in honor of the new schoolmaster."

"When is it to be, auntie dear?" inquired Elsie.

"We thought of having it next Monday," answered her aunt; "by that time Mick and Moya will be comfortably settled in their new quarters."

"Delicious!" exclaimed the two little girls, dancing about in delight.

"Yes, but we'll have to work very hard, in order to have everything ready," said Mrs. Sullivan. "Father John wants you to act the little play that you had last Christmas. He thinks it would amuse the children."

"'The Musical Lodger,'" said Katty. "I am sure the children would like it. It is great fun, Elsie."

"What is it all about?" asked Elsie.

"You will see. It would be a pity to spoil it by telling you. Poor Bawn had to do a cross old man lodger called Dibbles—Jeremiah Dibbles. She was dressed up in papa's dressing-gown, with an enormous hem turned up to make it short enough, and a nightcap. It was fun!"

The next few days the children were racing about like mad things. They had to rehearse the play, hammer up the stage, decorate the schoolroom, and write out the programmes, so that their time was pretty well occupied. They talked and laughed and raced and hammered, but nothing seemed to get on. Every one was excited and busy, but nothing was done till Mrs. Sullivan took the direction of things into her own hands. To Charlie she gave the task of writing out the programmes of the play in a nice round hand; Frank was sent off to hammer at the stage with the men, whilst the little girls stayed at home and helped their mother to make pretty wreaths of ivy and colored roses to decorate the room with. These they carried off when finished to Conn and Frank, who, climbing on ladders, twined them about the pillars and windows. Gay flags were hung about, with "Welcome!" "Long Live the New Master!" etc., upon them, and the stage with its crimson curtains and bright lights was quite a masterpiece. Charlie was something of an artist in a small way, and the drop-scene was the work of his hands. Prostrate on the floor, he managed to make a magnificent affair in colored chalks on coarse brown paper.

At length the evening arrived, and the little scholars, with shining faces and sparkling eyes, came pouring into the schoolroom, each one armed with a cup and spoon. The cups were soon filled with delicious tea, plenty of sugar and milk, huge slices of cake were handed about, and disappeared as though by enchantment. Moya, with snowy cap and neat stuff dress, was going about talking to the little ones, her face beaming with quiet happiness, whilst Mick was cracking jokes and making merry with some of the older children. The little Sullivans were very active and obliging, feeding the small scholars in a most wonderful manner with enormous pieces of cake, but when the tea was nearly over they vanished, and as soon as the clattering of cups and the munching of cakes had ceased, a signal was given, and the crimson curtain was drawn back, displaying the beautiful drop-scene to the delighted audience. Mabel and Elsie tripped about the room with dainty baskets upon their arms, from which they took gay-looking programmes to the play. The little children, who were only at the very beginning of the first book of lessons, were charmed with the bright pictures with which

Charlie had ornamented the cards, but those who could read were greatly excited as they saw what was going to be done for their amusement. The whole thing was very neatly printed in the young gentleman's best Roman characters, and was as follows:—

THEATRE ROYAL, CONMORE.

IN HONOR OF

MICK DOOLAN, THE NEW SCHOOLMASTER.

(Regular Scholars alone admitted.)

THE MUSICAL LODGER:

A Comedy by SNOOKS, Esq.

Mr. Gnaverly, ... Master FRANK SULLIVAN.
Mr. Rumpetrone, ... Master CHARLIE SULLIVAN.
Landlady, ... Miss KATTY SULLIVAN.
Mr. Jeremiah Dibbles, . . Miss B. SULLIVAN.

Tickets to be obtained by deserving children from Father John and Mr. Sullivan.

The little people acted with great spirit, and as the audience was neither severe nor critical, the whole affair was a decided success. Frank was a capital "Gnaverly," and tuned his violin, sang scraps of songs, and amused old Rumpetrone in a very amusing fashion; whilst Bawn's get-up and flat candlestick caused the most uproarious merriment amongst the spectators. Loud were the cheers and wild the shouting and

clapping as the curtain fell for the last time, and every one was very sorry that the performance was over. Very soon the stage, benches, and chairs were carried off, and Teddy the blind piper, with his friend and neighbor the violinist, struck up a merry tune, that set all the little feet going as fast as they could upon the earthen floor. Frank and Charlie went round the room making the shy children dance. Bobbing curtsies to a couple of rosy-cheeked, dark-eyed girls, each said in the approved fashion—

"I dance to you, miss."

The little maidens were rather frightened at the thought of dancing with the young gentlemen at first, but before long they quite forgot their shyness, and worked away like the rest of the company.

It was ten o'clock before Mrs. Sullivan could get the children to go home from this scene of wild merriment, and even then it was very hard to get them to come.

"Only one more jig, mamma dear," pleaded Katty; "Frank and I are getting on so well."

"Very well, you may have one more, but then you really must come," said her mother, "I am tired to death."

"I am going to make Teddy play 'St. Patrick's Day,'" said Mr. Sullivan, "and then the doors are to be thrown open, and every one must go home."

"That is a good idea," said his wife, laughing. "If we don't do something, I believe the imps will stay here till to-morrow morning."

So when Katty's jig was over, Teddy struck up "St. Patrick's Day," and the children were told to take up their cups and spoons, and toddle home as fast as they could.

"Wasn't it a rare lark, Elsie?" inquired Frank, as they were about to separate for the night. "Twice as jolly as any of your stuck-up London parties."

"It was fun, Frank, certainly," she replied; "but London parties are not—"

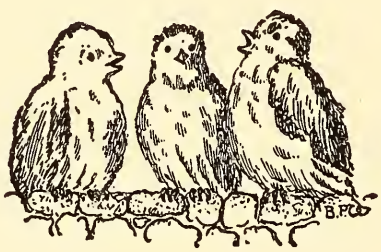
"Oh! of course not!" interrupted her cousin in his usual blunt fashion. "Just fancy a London girl footing it like those girls to night!"

"Well, of course ladies don't dance like country girls," answered Elsie, rather hotly, "but—"

"Never mind, old girl!" said her boisterous cousin, giving her a bear-like hug. "If all the London girls are like you, they

are a set of jolly bricks, and that's saying a good deal."

Elsie laughed merrily at this, and wishing her cousin good-night, ran up-stairs after Katty. They were all very tired, and were not at all sorry when they found themselves comfortably tucked up in their snug little beds for the night.



CHAPTER XI.

A SEVERE LESSON.

A FEW days after the splendid performance at the school-house, Elsie received a very interesting letter from her father, in which he told her wonderful tales of the beautiful places he and his wife had visited; they hoped, he said, to reach London by the end of September, and were most anxious that she should be there to meet them on their return. The little girl was in great joy at the thoughts of seeing her dear father again, but as it was only August, she had to restrain her impatience, and make herself happy at Conmore for some time longer. This was not a difficult task, however, as there was so much pleasure to be found in this beautiful place, so much happiness for her in the society of her cousins.

Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan had made up their minds to spend the winter in London, and

the children were in perfect raptures at the news. Katty was especially delighted at the idea, as she and Elsie would not be separated, and because she too was longing to see her cousin's new mamma. Many were the plans as to what they would do, and where they would go during the winter months, so that Frank found that they were becoming greater "chums" than ever, much to his disgust. The Newton boys, as they were called, had returned to their father's house, which was situated at about three miles from Conmore, and I am sorry to say that their society and example did not improve Master Frank. Harry and Wilfred Newton were wild, unruly boys, who knew no law but their own will, and often led Frank into very serious mischief. Mrs. Sullivan did not like them, but Frank had so few companions that she could not bear to forbid him to play with them.

One lovely morning, Frank and Bawn went away across the green fields to gather mushrooms. They were very busy and very merry, when suddenly they heard a loud whistle and a whoop, which Frank immediately recognized as the Newton call.

"Now, then, young bog-trotters," shouted Harry Newton, a long, lean boy of thirteen,

"What are you breaking your backs about?"

"Why, we're picking mushrooms," answered Bawn; "it's such fun."

"Fun, indeed!" sneered Harry, in a contemptuous tone; "very good fun for cowherds and peasants, but not very nice work for a lady."

"But I'm not a lady, you see," answered simple Bawn; "I'm only a little girl."

"No, I should think not, indeed," said Wilfred, a stumpy fellow with curly red hair; "I wonder who ever saw a lady with such dirty red hands."

"Just you mind what you're saying, Master Will," said Frank, getting very red and angry. "She'll be a lady before your sister, any way."

"Say that again, my boy, will you?" answered Wilfred, in a bullying tone, "and I will give you a taste of my fists."

"All right," replied Frank, taking off his jacket, "consider it said, and come on."

Bawn was dreadfully frightened, and began to cry when she saw the boys so red and angry-looking, and was running away home, when Harry Newton caught hold of her by her frock.

"Now, young un," he said, "you're off

to blab, I suppose. But don't be afraid, they won't hurt each other. I say, Frank, old boy, never mind wasting time fighting with that cub, but come along for a row with us."

"Don't you call names, Harry, or I'll make you—" began Wilfred.

"Oh! will you!" said his brother, clapping his hand over his mouth. "What a duffer you are to stand wasting time here. Don't you know that that old fool Longman may catch us any minute. Come on, can't you?"

"Oh, I forgot about the old boy. But as I don't want to spend my day over Latin verbs and English roots, I'm off," he shouted, and away he ran across the field.

"Look here, Frank," said Harry, "we've taken French leave and given ourselves a holiday. We both hate that old tutor the governor brought over from England, so we have given him the slip. Old Tidman has lent us his boat, and we're off for a spree. Come along, like a good fellow."

"But I must go home first and ask mamma's leave," said Frank. "Besides, what's to be done with Bawn? I must take her to Conmore."

"Bother mamma's leave!" exclaimed

Harry. "What a baby you are, to be sure. How much longer are we to remain in leading-strings, I wonder?"

"I'm not in leading-strings," said Frank, growing very red. "But—"

"Never mind buts," replied Harry. "Bring the kid with you, and come along; it's a glorious day. Be a man for once."

"Do go, Frank; I would love to go," pleaded Bawn, who knew at once that she was the kid alluded to.

"No, no, Bawn," said her brother. "I—"

"Why don't you speak plain English at once, and say you're afraid," sneered Harry.

"I'm not afraid one bit," said Frank, "and I don't suppose there can be much harm done by going," he remarked as a kind of salve for his conscience. In his heart he knew he was wrong to go, but when Harry taunted him with fear, his conceit and pride were touched, and he determined to show them he was not in the least afraid.

"Not a bit of harm, man," said Harry; "why, you have nothing to do even if you did stay at home, whilst we have a lot of stuff to learn with old Longman. But we know how to escape the old boy. Hurrah!

here goes for a good day's fun. Why, man, we couldn't get on without you ; you keep us alive with your fun."

Poor Frank felt quite flattered and pleased on hearing this. The Newtons were great fellows in his eyes, and he liked to feel that they could not get on without him. If he had stopped to think for a few moments, he might have remembered that it was to save themselves the trouble of rowing more than for anything else that they wanted him ; and he might not have cared so much about going to work hard for them, but Harry did not give him time to think, but hurried him off towards the sea. Poor Bawn's short legs could not keep up with those great school-boys, and in a few moments she was left behind. She felt very angry at this treatment, and called loudly after the boys ; but they did not even turn their heads, and the poor little girl began to cry as she saw them jump over a high wall and disappear from her sight.

"Unkind, ill-natured fellows," she said, stamping her foot and clenching her little fists. "If I was big, I'd—I'd—"

"You'd what, little woman?" said a cheery voice behind her. "What's the

matter with Molly Bawn, and why is she straying about up here, by herself?"

"Oh, Father John! Father John! those nasty boys have gone in a boat and—and —left me behind them," she answered, sobbing.

"And a very good job that they did, little one," he answered; "why, those madcaps might have tumbled you into the sea, and I wonder who could have picked you out again."

"Frank can swim splendidly," said Bawn, drying her eyes.

"I'm glad to hear it," said Father John; "but come along home with me. I am sorry Frank has gone to boat with those wild Eton boys. God send him safe back again," he murmured, looking anxiously up at the sky. "I thought there was something wrong when Frank did not come to meet me when he saw me coming over the hill."

"Frank was cross," answered Bawn, "for he did not want to go without mamma's leave, until Harry said he was afraid, and then—"

"And then the poor foolish boy's pride was touched, and he went," said the priest with a sigh. "Well, well, boys will be

boys, I suppose; but I'm sorry Frank has been led into disobedience."

So Bawn took Father John's hand, and went down the hill to Conmore, very sad and sorrowful because she had lost her sail on the bright blue sea.

The three boys had meanwhile reached the little nook where the boat was lying, and jumping nimbly into her, they pushed away from the shore. It was a glorious day, and the sky above them was bright and clear, whilst the sea shone like a looking-glass in which were reflected the beautiful hills which surrounded the little bay. Frank had soothed his conscience, and rattled away in the wildest possible manner. His companions laughed loudly at his nonsense, as they lay comfortably back upon the cushions smoking short clay pipes—for these boys of thirteen and twelve actually smoked, although they had promised their mother not to do so until they were twenty-one. But promises went for very little with these young gentlemen, and they always smoked when they got the chance. Frank had never been forbidden, but it made him so ill the only time they had managed to make him do it, that they did not care to try it to-day, as they wanted

him to row. So Frank was left in peace on this subject, and pulled away like a man at the two oars. When they had been out for about an hour they began to feel very hungry, and Harry produced a basket of good things, to which they did ample justice.

"Now I feel myself again," said Frank, as he took up the oars, "but, I say, wouldn't it be jolly to jump in and have a swim? The water looks perfectly delicious."

"Rather not, thanks," said Wilfred; "why, we'd go down like stones."

"Pooh! nonsense!" said Frank. "Can't you swim?"

"Not he," answered Harry; "but I can."

"Oh yes! what a crammer!" sneered Wilfred; "I'd like to see you swim in there."

"Well, it is pretty deep," said Frank, "but that is all the better if a chap can swim."

"If—" began Wilfred.

"Now you shut up, or I'll pitch you in to the fishes," shouted his brother.

"Now keep quiet, you two, or you'll upset the boat with your fighting," said Frank. "But I say, Will, could you keep the boat steady while we jump in and have a short swim?"

"Of course I could," said Wilfred; "do you think no one can manage a boat but you? I've often held her steady for my father. So away you go. I want to see my brave Harry in the water."

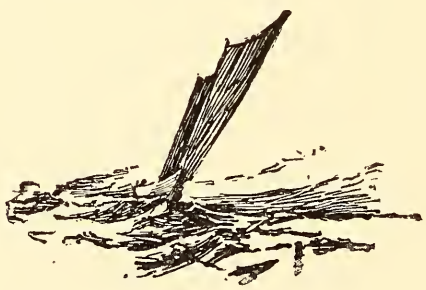
In a very few minutes the two boys were ready, and with a "one, two, three, and away," plunged into the deep blue waters. Frank struck out boldly, swimming in a swift, decided manner, that would have done credit to the great Captain Webb. Harry, on the contrary, floundered and kicked and blustered, swallowing mouthfuls of salt water as he tried to follow his companion; seeing that that was impossible, and that he was in danger of sinking rather deeper than he bargained for, he turned and scrambled into the boat again. Wilfred was in the greatest possible glee at his brother's defeat, and laughed most immoderately as he helped him over the side. Harry was sulky, so said nothing, but, sitting down quietly, began to put on his clothes again. When Frank had been swimming for some time, he turned round and began to swim back towards the boat. But what was his horror when he saw a terrible blackness spreading over the sky, a loud peal of thunder echoed through the

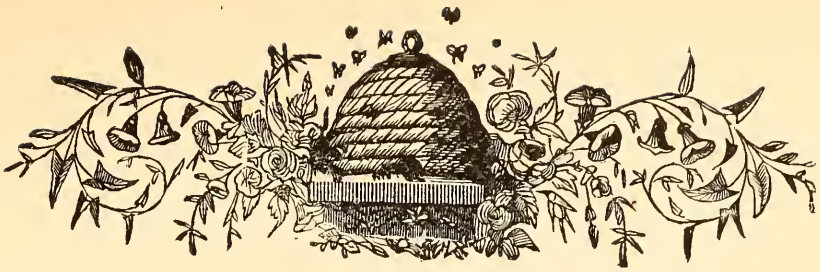
hills, and a terrific squall of wind came rushing madly over the waters, sweeping the little boat on before it as lightly as though it were a withered leaf upon the roadside. The boys in the boat uttered a piercing scream, for they were quite unable to help themselves as they were whirled along before the storm. They could row a little, it was true, but that little was useless now, for in the terror of the moment Wilfred had let one of the oars drop, and it was carried quickly from their sight. But poor Frank was in a dreadful position, pitched and tossed by the merciless waves. Turning on his back, he floated along upon the angry waters, the thick rain falling in torrents upon his upturned face, as still and motionless he was swept away towards the open sea. One long wild cry for help rang out over the waves, but no answer came, save the ringing echo from the mountains. One short feverish prayer for mercy rose to the poor boy's trembling lips, and then he resigned himself calmly to his fate. Suddenly his arm struck violently against some hard object, and, grasping it tightly with both hands, to his great joy he found it was an oar.

"Thank God," he murmured, "this may

help me to bear up a while longer, and perhaps some ship may pick me up."

Making one more effort, he raised himself upon the oar, and calling out wildly, "Help, help!" sank back exhausted upon the waves.





CHAPTER XII.

A VOICE FROM THE DEEP.

ABOUT seven miles from Conmore, along by the sea-shore, nestling down amongst the rocks overhanging the sea, stood a small cottage belonging to Tim Kelly, a fine hardy old fisherman, and father to Mary Kelly, the little Sullivans' friend and *protégée*. He was very poor; and although he and his only son Pat were both hard-working and industrious, it was sometimes rather difficult to make both ends meet. Pat, foolish boy, had married when scarcely nineteen, and so before long there came a great many little rosy mouths to fill, and little fat bodies to keep covered; so poor Mary was obliged to earn her living for herself, by herding cows through the neighbors' fields. When, therefore, Mrs. Sullivan, granting her little daughter's request, received Mary as a servant into her house, old Tim's joy knew

no bounds, and he blessed her day by day and hour by hour for her goodness to his darling child.

At the very time that Frank and the Newtons were left in such a terrible manner to the mercy of the cruel waves, Tim, Pat, and Margaret, his wife, were busy upon the strip of beach that lay beneath the rocks upon which their little cottage was perched. They were working away, filling great heavy creels with the thick brown sea-weed that had been washed up by the high tide. These creelfuls were carried up and deposited behind the cottage to serve as manure for their garden and potato field. Suddenly their work was interrupted by the storm, and the pelting heavy rain drove them up the rocks, and into their house for shelter.

"God save us, what a storm!" said Margaret, as she shook the rain-drops from her skirt. "But what can that fearful cry mean, father dear? Listen; don't you hear a cry from the sea out yonder?"

"Chut, chut, alanna," said the old man; "ye're full o' strange fancies wid the starm, I'm thinkin.' But, Lord have marcy on us, an' shure I do hear somethin'."

"Oh yis, father dear! "It's a human

voice," cried Margaret, her face turning pale with horror. "It comes from the sea, Pat, asthore. Some one is in danger; let's get out the boat."

"Meg, alanna, what good could we be doin' on that sea?" said Pat, pointing to the angry waves which beat fierce and white against the rocks.

"Ye could, ye could, Pat," said the brave woman, "for I hear the voice call again for help, an' I must be doin' somethin'. If ye won't go, say so, and father and I will go alone."

"Not while I'm alive to prevent ye, Meg," answered Pat. "But stay wi' the childher, an' father an' me 'ill go see what we can do."

The two men left the cottage, and, hurrying to the beach, pushed the little boat upon the waves, and springing into her, were soon whirled from the shore. To and fro upon the angry waters went the little bark, and Margaret, as she saw it pitched and tossed upon the cruel waves, felt a terrible fear come into her brave, strong heart. One moment they were tossed high upon the waves, the next engulfed, as it were, by the raging surf and foam, they disappeared completely

from her sight. Falling upon her knees, the little ones clustering in terror about her, she implored God to have mercy on them, and guide them safely back to shore.

It was hard work rowing upon the wild tempestuous sea, but Pat and his father were old hands, and pulled away with all their strength. Suddenly they heard Frank's terrible cry of "Help! help!" borne along upon the storm, and striking out in the direction from whence his voice came, they saw him float towards them.

"My God! it's a young boy," shouted Pat, and, stretching out his oar, he managed to bring him so close to the boat that he was enabled to catch the oar that Frank held with a deathlike grasp, and thus, not without great risk of his own life, succeeded in lifting him into the boat. For one single instant Frank looked up; then, with a sharp, gasping sigh, fell senseless to the bottom of the boat.

"Poor lad, he was nearly gone!" exclaimed old Tim with tears in his eyes. "But God send that we may reach the shore!" he murmured, as a heavy wave dashed over them. At last, however, after much battling and long hard fighting against the elements, they succeeded in

reaching the shore. With deathlike face and quivering lip, the brave Margaret stood waiting for their return. A cry of horror and dismay broke from her as they lifted their lifeless burden from the boat.

"Pat, that's Masther Frank Sullivan! But is he livin' or dead?" she cried.

"Masther Frank Sullivan, did ye say, alanna?" inquired old Tim; "thin thanks be to the Lord that I've saved him, if so be as he's still livin'. Quick, alanna machree, and let's get him into the house, till we bring the life into him agin."

For many long weary hours Frank lay still and motionless in the cottage by the sea, and his kind preservers were filled with terror lest they should be obliged to return a lifeless corpse to his mother's arms. But at length, to their great joy, he breathed slightly, and, opening his eyes, said with a sigh—

"Mamma, mamma! Katty, is mamma angry? Tell me, like a good girl, what she said. But, good gracious, where am I?" he cried, starting up suddenly.

"Here, in our cottage, Masther Frank," said Margaret, coming forward.

"And who may you be?" asked the boy, rather pettishly; "I don't want strangers."

Then Margaret told him gently of all that had happened, and how her father and husband had saved him at the risk of their own lives.

He was too weak to do more than look his thanks, but tears of gratitude rolled down his cheeks. At length he said, "Poor mamma, how she must have suffered! Could not some one go to Conmore and tell them that I am quite safe?"

"Pat is gone, Masther Frank," answered old Tim with trembling voice; "shure he only waited to hear ye spake, an' he set out at once."

"God bless you, Tim, and reward you," said Frank, "for your kindness to me."

"Come now, don't talk no nonsense, Masther Frank, but jist go to sleep," answered Margaret; "ye look pale and washy enough."

The fire was poked into a nice, cheerful blaze, and Frank was left to himself. Deeply he pondered over his wonderful escape from death, as he watched the firelight dance upon the wall; but soon his eyes grew heavy, and he fell into a deep, refreshing sleep.

It was a wild, stormy evening when Pat set out to carry his glad tidings to Con-

more; the wind blew a tremendous gale from the north, and a terrific storm of rain almost blinded those who were compelled to brave its fury. Horror and dismay had taken possession of the happy home at Conmore, and every fresh moan of the wind through the trees cut like a knife into the poor mother's heart as she sat listening anxiously for her husband's return. Nothing had been heard of the three boys since morning, and the fierce storm coming down struck with terror and agony the loving hearts that watched and waited for them. Mr. Sullivan and Charlie had been down at the quay all the afternoon, hoping to see the boys come in there. The poor father knew not what to do, and dared not return home without one word of comfort for his poor wife. Boats had come come in to the quay—fishing smacks, yachts, and schooners—but no one had seen the three unhappy boys, and the father's heart was wrung with grief and misery. The rain came down in torrents, and Charlie tried to prevail upon his father to return home and rest, if not his mind, at least his poor weary body.

"Charlie, my son, how can I look your mother in the face? She will see at a glance that I fear we shall never see our boy again."

"Have courage, father dear," answered Charlie in as hopeful a voice as he could possibly manage; "I somehow think that Frank will turn up again soon. He's such a lucky chap. Just remember the day in the bog."

"Yes, yes, but you were near to help him my boy," answered his father with quivering lip. "But to-day, alone in that storm with two young fools—"

"God is with him to-day as then, my friend," said Father John coming up from behind. "Put your trust in Him, and all will be well, believe me."

"I have tried, I have tried, Father John," answered the unhappy man; "but when I look upon that sea, and think of my poor boy—"

"God help you, poor fellow," murmured Father John, in broken accents.

The wind whistled and shrieked, and the rain fell heavily, pouring down each side of the road in deep muddy streams. But the wretched father walked along, perfectly unconscious of the drenching rain, wrapped in his own melancholy thoughts; he heeded it not, and his two companions, respecting his silence, followed quietly behind, without uttering a word. As they came within

sight of Conmore, a cry broke from Charlie's lips, and he sprang quickly forward. A little white figure came flying out on to the road, stopped, hesitated, and then, turning, ran quickly to meet them. The nimble feet, flying curls, and short skirts, soon told Charlie that this was his madcap sister Bawn, running wildly through the heavy rain, without shawl or hat; and seizing her by the frock, he stopped her as she ran past them.

"Let me go; let go, man," she screamed. "I want my papa and brother and—"

"Hush, you little silly! I'm Charlie, and there's papa. What on earth is—"

"Charlie, dear! Oh, papa!" she exclaimed, twisting herself out of her brother's hands, and rushing on to her father. "Papa, dear Frankie's found again. Old Tim found him. Aren't you glad?"

"What, Frank? Are you sure, Bawn darling?" asked her father, trembling as he spoke, and clasping his little daughter in his arms.

"Yes, quite sure, papa; come in and Pat Kelly will tell you all about it," answered Bawn triumphantly. "The moment I heard it, I rushed out to find you, papa dear, for I knew you were miserable down there at the quay by yourself."

"God bless you, my darling, my sweet angel," said her father, and tears of joy and gratitude dropped upon her curly head as she nestled in his arms.

CHAPTER XII.

A JOYFUL MEETING.

WHEN Frank awoke from his deep sleep he was greatly surprised to find that it was broad daylight. He heard the lowing of the cows in the field near the cottage, and the merry chatter of Pat's little ones as they gave the chickens their breakfast. "After a storm comes a calm," and so it was this morning, when the boy lifted the curtain that hung before the window, and peeped out. Not a breath of wind stirred the clear blue waters; the sky was serene and beautiful, the air sweet and balmy. A shudder passed over Frank as he gazed on the tranquil, peaceful sea, and thought how different he had seen it only a few hours since.

"It was but the just punishment of my disobedience and conceit," he murmured; "but thank God I did not die in such a terrible manner, unprepared as I was."

"Help me down, Maggie, quick, quick;

he's lookin' at me," said a sweet little voice outside the window; and Frank saw that a tiny child of three was perched upon the bench along by the cottage window.

"Arrah, shure, he won't eat ye, Bid," answered her sister, a wise young person of five.

"But come on, for there's a whole lot of ladies an' people comin' up the road."

Maggie helped her down, and away they ran, just in time to escape all the young Sullivans, who came running in at the gate a few moments later. Before Frank knew where he was, his little room was besieged by a perfect mob of delighted children.

"Hullo, old fellow!" said good-hearted Charlie, grasping Frank by the hand. "Here we are in a body to carry you home again. I hope you are all square after your dipping?"

"All right, Charlie dear, but longing to give dear old mammy a good hug."

"My own darling boy," said his mother, coming in with his father. "My poor lost treasure," she murmured, putting her arms round him and kissing him passionately, whilst the tears, but tears of joy now, rolled down her cheeks.

"Dear old Frankie," shouted Bawn, "I was wishing all day it was me was drowned instead of you. I'm such a wee thing, it would not have mattered so much."

"You old darling," answered Frank, hugging her. "I wonder what papa would do without you."

"Indeed I don't know," said Mr. Sulli-

van; "she's the best little woman I know; eh, Bawnie?"

"I'm your own wee Bawn, papa dear," said the little one, climbing on his knee, and patting his face with her little fat hands.

"That you are, my darling," he answered, stroking her curls; "did you hear how she ran out in the rain to look for me, Frank, when she heard that you were found?"

So the story was told, and Bawn was petted and kissed and made much of, till Margaret appeared at the door to offer them some refreshments if they would condescend to eat in her humble cottage. They were only too glad to hear the invitation, and tumbled pell-mell into the kitchen, where it was laid out.

"This is jolly, certainly!" exclaimed Frank, as he saw the steaming hot cake that Margaret had prepared for them.

"I'm glad ye like it, sir, for shure it's little we could find likely to plaze yez."

"Like it, indeed," answered Katty; "why, it's glorious, and these eggs are famous; aren't they, Elsie?"

"Oh yes," replied Elsie; "and it is so nice to think dear Frank is all right again. What is your name, deary?" she said, stoop-

ing down to a chubby-faced, three-year old girl with big blue eyes, who was standing staring in amazement at all the ladies and gentlemen.

"Take care; she'll bite, Bid," said Frank, laughing; but the little one only hung her head and smiled.

"That's Pat's little girl," said Frank to his cousin; "I surprised her trying to peep in by my window this morning."

"The little duck!" exclaimed Katty; "and oh! Elsie dear, she'll just fit our clothes."

"What!" inquired Charlie; "are you gone quite out of your mind, sister mine?"

"Now, Charlie, do mind your own business," answered Katty, rather pettishly. "Don't you think she would do, Elsie?"

"She would indeed," replied Elsie; "she's just the size we wanted."

"I wish we had them here to try on. Mamma dear, may we take this little child home with us?" she asked her mother, in an excited manner.

"What on earth do you want to take the child home for, Katty?" inquired her mother, who had not heard a word of the preceding conversation, and was therefore greatly surprised at her little daughter's request.

"Well, you know, mamma—that is, you see—" she began.

"Bravo, Katty; very well explained," shouted Frank, laughing; "but I know all about this affair, so allow me to tell mother what you mean."

Katty was delighted, for she felt rather ashamed to tell her mother of her own good deeds, and so was glad to have it done by another.

"Well, you see," began Frank, "the fact is, Katty feels ashamed to boast about herself, and therefore she could not tell you what she means."

"Come to the point, old chap, can't you?" said Charlie.

"Very well, most noble brother, I will. Know, then, ladies and gentlemen, that Miss Katty Sullivan, popularly known as the Bog-Trotter, has, with the aid of her most amiable, sweet, and obliging cousin, Miss Elsie Merton, made a complete set of clothes for an infant of four years old, for which she is seeking a suitable candidate."

"Bravo, Katty," said Mr. Sullivan.

"I always knew you were a brick, Katty," said Charlie.

"I am very much pleased indeed, Katty dear," said Mrs. Sullivan, kissing her little

daughter. "But where did you get the materials?"

"Well, you see, mamma, Elsie had a good deal of money," said Katty, blushing and smiling at so much praise. "We made some clothes first for Biddy Doyle's little girl, and then we had some stuff left, and we're just finishing another set; and so, when I saw this little blue-eyed duck, I thought they would just fit her."

"Well, upon my word," said Mrs. Sullivan, "you are a very good child, and I must say that Elsie has been a very improving companion for you; yes, yes, Elsie dear, it is quite true. Katty is a much better child in every way since you came, and I am very glad that you are going to be with her all winter."

"Elsie is a brick!" exclaimed Frank, "although she is not a bog-trotter."

"Elsie is a very good little girl," answered his mother; "but I beg that you will not talk about bog-trotters any more, Frank. You know I never liked to hear the girls called by that absurd name."

"All right, mamsie dear, I won't," he answered, laughing, "but I'm sorry Katty is getting so well behaved; it was twice as much fun when she was a—"

But his mother held up a warning finger, and Frank left the obnoxious word unsaid, and went out laughing to join his father and Charlie.

Two cars were waiting for them on the road, and, taking leave of Margaret and her little ones, the whole party returned to Conmore.

The fat child of four years old was to come up on Sunday evening to have the clothes tried on, and Katty and Elsie were quite satisfied with the arrangement.

When they arrived at home, they found Father John and Mr. Newton waiting to see Mr. Sullivan. Frank blushed and hung his head when he saw the latter, for then, and then only, did he remember that he had not inquired about the unfortunate boys whom he had last seen in such a precarious situation.

"I have come to apologize for my bad sons, Mr. Sullivan," said Mr. Newton; "I was deeply pained when I learned how wickedly they had behaved; but I have given them a severe punishment, and I don't think they will disobey me again."

"I am sorry Frank was disobedient," said Mr. Sullivan in a low tone; "and I am convinced that what he suffered during that

dreadful time, when he was in instantaneous danger of death, will be sufficient to make him truly obedient for the future."

"Yes, papa, yes," sobbed Frank, clasping his father's hand. "I have made a solemn promise never to disobey you again."

"Enough, my boy," answered Mr. Sullivan. "I trust you have learned a lesson that you will never forget."

Mr. Newton had, meanwhile, been telling Mrs. Sullivan the history of his sons' escape and return home after their dangerous expedition.

"In the morning," said he, "Mr. Longman, their tutor, could not, or said he could not, find them for their lessons, and so went off for the day to Clifden. I had not the slightest idea of their absence until this morning, when Father John came to inquire for them."

"What! you did not know of their danger?"

"Not a word, my dear lady, nor any one else in the house, except a worthless housemaid, who took and dried their clothes without saying a word about the business."

"But how did they escape in that storm?" inquired Mrs. Sullivan.

"Well, that's just what I'm coming to," he answered. "When Father John came to inquire about the young rascals, I was quite surprised, and sent for them at once to question them upon the subject. They attempted to deny the whole affair, but I told them that was no use, as I knew all about it, and then they confessed all, and implored me not to punish them. It appears that they lost an oar, and so—"

"Yes, it was that oar that helped to save my poor Frank," said Mrs. Sullivan.

"Well I'm glad of it," returned Mr. Newton, "for I think he's a good boy, though he is a bit wild. When they lost the oar, they could not row, and so were completely at the mercy of the waves. For some time they were tossed up and down, clinging as best they could to the boat, but in a few moments it was turned bottom upwards, and they thought they were lost. They were near the beach, however, and one great breaker dashed them high upon the stones. The boat was smashed, and they were much cut and scratched. They managed, however, to scramble to their feet and crawl home, for they were faint and frightened, and could scarcely walk. They crept in by the back gate, and upstairs to their own room."

"Poor boys, they must have suffered," said Mrs. Sullivan compassionately.

"Yes; but I fear they would start again fresh to-morrow if they got the chance," he answered bluntly; "but they are not likely, though, for I pack them off to Eton the day after to-morrow."

"But the holidays are not over yet," said Mrs. Sullivan, in surprise.

"No, nor for three weeks more, madam; but I'm determined not to see them again for some time."

"I think you are a trifle hard on them," said Mr. Sullivan. "After all, they are only boys. Forgive them, and I am sure you will find a little softness better than your stern punishment."

"Softness! No, no; I'm sick of the word," replied Mr. Newton impatiently. "Why, their mother has petted and indulged those boys till they are—But I will say no more. I am glad your boy is safe; he is honest and truthful, and I like his face. Good-bye."

"Poor fellow!" said Mr. Sullivan, when he was gone; "he is passionately fond of those boys, but I am afraid he and his wife take a bad way with them."

"Very bad indeed," said Father John,

"for they never agree about them, and so the boys don't pay any attention to what they are told by their parents, but do pretty much as they like."

"They will ruin them between them," said Mr. Sullivan. "Charlie," he called; but all the children, Charlie included, had scampered off when they found that the conversation was getting serious, and were now to be seen upon the lawn, laughing merrily at Joey the monkey's performance upon a tin whistle.

CHAPTER XIV.

FAREWELL, CONMORE.

"ARE there any youngsters here, I wonder, who could eat candied peel and preserved fruit?" inquired Father John, walking into the dining-room, where the children were all gathered together. "Some impudent fellow has sent me a couple of boxes from Dublin, and I don't know what to do with them."

"We'll soon show you how to get rid of them, Father John," answered the children in a chorus; "tell us where they are, and we'll soon put an end to them for you."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Father John, as he pulled two boxes of sweet things out of his pocket. "But I thought you were all in deep grief for poor Joey, and here I find you as merry as grigs, and ready to eat good things at a moment's warning."

"Well, we've mourned for him for three whole days," said Katty, popping a preserved apricot into her mouth; "we might

injure our health if we grieved too long for him."

"Did you hear who killed him, father?" inquired Charlie.

"Yes, the poor fellow!" answered the priest. "Mick told me how those young scamps the Newtons beat him to death. It was a good thing he caught that chap Harry."

"Yes indeed," said Frank; "I don't think he'll forget his beating in a hurry."

"Indeed I hope not," said Charlie; "he is the greatest coward that ever breathed. I only wish Mick had given him more when he was at it."

"Ah! well, Charlie dear," said Elsie in a compassionate tone, "I think he got quite enough; the poor boy had to travel all the way to Galway with those sore bones of his."

"And serve him right too," said Frank and Charlie in a breath, "the cruel, mean coward, to sneak in upon a poor animal when he was asleep—"

"Come, come, boys," interrupted Father John, "they are gone, so don't waste your time abusing them. Come off for a ramble with me. I want to have you with me as much as possible now. Dear knows when

we may meet again, once you leave Conmore."

And next morning the whole house is in a perfect uproar. In a few days the Sullivans are to leave Conmore and start for London, which from the far west appears a paradise of enchantment, a mysterious country, like those the children have read of in their fairy-tale books. They are all in a perfect whirl of excitement, longing for the time to pass over, for the day of departure to arrive. Katty and Elsie are helping Mary Kelly to pack up their books and toys, whilst Bawn and Mabel are running wildly from one room to another. They have tied up most wonderful little parcels, which they have marked "private" in great round letters, and are most particular that they should be carefully packed.

"Really, Bawn, I will not pack any more of your rubbish," said Katty impatiently, as the little girl brought her the fourth small bundle, which proved to be an empty tin, smelling strongly of mustard, and filled now with odds and ends of pictures and old stamps.

"Ah! please, Katty, just this one," pleaded Bawn; "I won't bother you any more."

"Well, just see that you don't now," answered her sister, stooping down to put the precious parcel into the trunk. A sudden crash made her jump up in terror, and looking around, she saw the big, empty chest of drawers lying flat on the floor. She heard a scream of fright and horror from her little sister, but the child was nowhere to be seen.

"Katty, Katty, I'm here. Oh, do help me!" cried Bawn in a piteous voice, which sounded thick and muffled. Katty looked helplessly round. Where could the child be?

"Bawn!" she shrieked; "Bawn, where on earth are you?"

"Here, in the drawer—here—oh dear! I'm smothering," panted Bawn.

Away ran Katty down the stairs, screaming at the top of her voice—

"Bawn's smothering — mamma — papa. Be quick, be quick! She's dying. Oh, do come!"

Terrified by Katty's shrieks and entreaties, Mrs. Sullivan and her husband, followed by Conn the gardener, Frank, and Elsie, came flying up the stairs.

"What has happened, Katty?" inquired her mother, pale and trembling.

"I don't know," answered Katty; "but the great chest of drawers has fallen on her, and crushed—"

"Here she is, the monkey," shouted Frank, dragging Bawn out by the pinafore. "She was only getting the impudence squashed out of her."

"Hold your tongue, Frank," said his mother, severely; "this is no time to talk nonsense."

"Well, she was in a comical position," said Mr. Sullivan; "and if Katty had not been in the room, she might have been smothered. I hope it will be a lesson to her not to shut herself up in a drawer again."

Frank laughed most immoderately at this, and was ordered downstairs for his pains. Bawn hung her head and said—

"I did not know the drawers would fall, papa. I only got into the top one, which was pulled out. I thought it would be a nice little house."

"You children are really dreadful," said poor Mrs. Sullivan with a sigh; "I really don't know what I am to do with you; there is always one or other of you in mischief. Good gracious, child, if your father and Conn had not been here to lift that

great chest of drawers, you would certainly have died there."

"I know, mamma dear. I will never do it again," sobbed Bawn, clinging to her mother's knee.

"I hope not, my dear," answered Mrs. Sullivan; "but now, children, you must all go out of doors, and leave the packing to me and the servants; you only hinder us and keep us back when you are here."

Loud and bitter were the lamentations when this order was made generally known; but Mrs. Sullivan was firm, and out they were all bundled into the garden.

"There now," said Katty, in an angry voice, "that's the way I'm treated when I try to be useful. I made a resolution to do as much as ever I could to help mamma, and now I'm sent off like a baby and told I'm in the way. It's not fair, it's—"

"Well, now, Katty dear, don't get angry about it" said Elsie, in a soothing tone.

"I am not angry," answered Katty, kicking the stones about with her feet; "but it's enough to provoke a saint. Just because that monkey Bawn goes into a drawer, we are all to be turned away like babies. I'll never try to be useful again. I'll—"

"Hullo, Katty! what are you in such a temper about, I'd like to know," shouted Frank, coming along with a bundle of croquet hoops and mallets under his arm.

"Oh, don't bother," answered Katty, impatiently; "I'm not in a temper, but just you leave me alone."

"Come now, old girl, don't be cross with a poor chap the last day we have to spend at Conmore together," he said good-naturedly. This softened his sister, and she answered quite meekly, but with tears in her voice—

"Indeed I'm not cross, Frank; just ask Elsie if I am; but I was trying to be of some use to mamma, and then she told me I was only in the way, and turned me out into the garden. And I just love packing."

"All right, old girl, don't fret about it; poor mamsie was bothered and frightened, and wanted to get rid of us all. But cheer up, Katty, and come and we'll go off and see if there's any sign of Charlie; he went to Clifden to see if Joey was stuffed yet."

This brotherly sympathy comforted poor Katty's wounded feelings, and she brightened up very quickly under the influence of Frank's merry, genial nature, and Elsie's gentle, caressing little ways.

"Between ourselves, Katty dear, I think it's just as well you were sent out; it would be a horrid shame to spend our last days stooping over nasty stupid trunks," said Frank, as they walked along.

"Yes, it is much nicer out here certainly," answered Katty, "but last night Elsie and I were talking about all we were going to do, and how good and useful we were going to be all winter, and I wanted to begin to-day, and—"

"Oh! time enough to begin when you're well settled in London," interrupted Frank, laughing. "Don't you think so, Elsie?"

"Oh no, Frank; you know there's no time like the present," answered Elsie, looking very wise.

"You are too wise to live, Elsie, that's my opinion," said Frank. "But, I say, what sort of an old blue-bottle are you two going to have for a governess in London?"

"She's not a blue-bottle," answered Elsie indignantly; "Miss Pim is the dearest old thing possible."

"Miss Prim! ha, ha!" laughed Frank; "what a capital name! Just fancy being ordered about by a Miss Prim—"

"But it's Pim," said Elsie, "not Prim."

"My winkie! I think I hear old Prim—

Pim. Eyes right! As you was! Turn out your toes, Miss Kathleen."

"What rubbish you do talk, Frank," exclaimed Elsie; "do you think any respectable governess would talk like that?"

"Never mind him, Elsie dear," said Katty, laughing heartily, "the boy's quite cracked, I am sure."

"Oh, no, I am not in the least cracked, sister mine," Frank replied, "but I think Miss Prim would probably find me rather hard to manage. My winkie! wouldn't I love to get hiding her spectacles or her mittens!"

"But she dosn't wear spectacles, or mittens either," answered Elsie.

"Good gracious me, what does the woman call herself Prim—Pim for? Tell her, with my comps., that she should wear them. But hurrah! there's Charlie," and before Elsie had time to reply to his last impertinent remark about her governess, of whom she was very fond, Frank had disappeared round a sudden turning in the road.

"How did Frank know that Charlie was coming?" Elsie inquired; "I don't see him anywhere. Do you Katty?"

"Oh! I believe he could see him miles off," answered Katty, laughing. "But listen,

don't you hear the click-clack of the pony's feet on the road? That's Charlie."

"Oh, yes," said Elsie, and at this moment the two boys came in sight, Charlie riding his sturdy mountain pony, whilst Frank ran panting beside him.

"Well, was he done?" inquired the little girls together.

"Oh yes," answered Charlie, pointing to a box which he had strapped on in front of his saddle. "Here he is in this box."

"Poor old Joey!" said Katty sadly, "he'll never make us laugh with his tricks again."

"No, indeed," answered Charlie, drawing up his pony beside his sister. "Do you know, Katty, I can't bear to look at the poor little fellow, he seems so stiff and lifeless now."

"I'm sure I'll hate to look at him too," answered Katty; "I wish we had buried him."

"Well, then, I suppose you won't care to take him to London," said Frank. "Bawn and Mabel will be very cross if you don't."

"I don't care a bit whether they are or not," answered Katty; "it's my affair, not theirs. Joey was my monkey."

"Of course he was," replied Frank, "but all the same—"

"Oh! I'll tell you, Katty," said Charlie; "it would be a capital thing to make him a present to Moya. She will like to have him, I am sure, and will take very good care of him, and—"

"Oh yes, yes, that is a capital idea, Charlie dear," answered Katty; "we'll take him there at once."

When they arrived at the gate outside the schoolhouse, they were surprised to find

Bawn sitting just inside it, with Margaret's little child, Biddy. They were having a game of some kind, which must have been very amusing, judging from Biddy's merry laugh and Bawn's happy face. Katty flew at the small girl, and, catching her up in her arms, covered her with kisses.

"Och! Miss Katty, darlin', ye'll be afther spoilin' that child," said Moya, coming down the path to meet them.

"Indeed I can't, Moya, for we're off to-morrow. And we've just brought you a present."

The monkey was here produced, and Moya thanked them for their thought and kindness in giving it to her.

"He's not so funny as he used to be, Moya," said Bawn, "but then he won't eat anything, or steal any eggs, or—"

"But, shure, he'll put me in mind of me darlin's when they're far away in the grand city beyant," answered Moya, with tears in her eyes, for she was very sad at the thought of losing all the little ones whom she had loved and tended from their cradles. So the present was made and accepted, and Joey was installed on a small round table in the corner, with his little red cap on his head, and his tin whistle in his hand. Poor

Moya wept bitterly as she bade her darlings good-bye, and Mick told her he would feel jealous if she cried so much about them.

"Musha, musha, Mick, weren't they lovin' an' consolin' me when you were far on the say?" answered the poor woman, with her apron to her eyes, and her arm thrown lovingly round Bawn and Mabel. These young damsels were not at all inclined to weep, however, and felt very uncomfortable in her close embrace. At last they managed to wriggle away, and, slipping out of the schoolhouse, ran home as fast as they could. The elder children felt sorry for their kind-hearted nurse, and stayed so long talking to her and consoling her, that it was near tea-time when they reached home. The hall was full of great large trunks, strapped and labelled for the journey, and Frank danced with joy when he saw his own beautiful new portmanteau quite ready for the road.

"Well it is jolly, going off to see the world," he exclaimed; "those trunks look perfectly delicious."

"Take care, my boy," said Charlie; "perhaps you'll be wishing yourself back in Conmore before half the term is over. I did, I know, when I went first."

"Not a bit of it," answered Frank; "I'm not such a fool. You were a smaller chap when you went. But I say, Charlie, when we get to London, let us take a hansom all to ourselves, and leave the kids with the mater."

"All right, old fellow, we'll see if we can manage it."

This going to college was a wonderful event in Frank's life. Until now he had never left Conmore, and knew very little of the world that lay beyond this lovely country place. He had glorious dreams of the life he should lead in the beautiful college near the Thames, and often talked and wondered over it to Katty and Elsie; but they were full of their own affairs, of their winter in London, their lessons and studies, so poor Frank found them bad listeners, and wandered off to indulge in his day-dreams alone.

One morning Katty and Frank sat together over their breakfast, talking and wondering about their new life, and all that was going to happen during the coming winter.

"What will become of me when you are gone, Frankie dear?" said Katty, affectionately; "I shall never have as much fun without you."

"Oh! you'll get on very well, old girl,"

replied Frank. "You see, it would never do for you to go on leading the wild harum-

scarum life he led here. You must become a lady—you must—"

"Please, Miss Katty, Margaret is here with little Biddy," said a neat servant, coming into the room.

"Oh! is she, Mary? that is nice," said Katty, jumping off her chair. "Where is mamma?"

"Your mamma and Miss Elsie are talking to her in the library, miss," said Mary Kelly, for this neat little servant was no other than our old friend Mary, who, under the teaching of a good mistress, was becoming a thoroughly useful little maid.

Away ran Katty to the library, whilst Frank wandered off by himself. Leaving Mrs. Sullivan to talk to Margaret, she and Elsie carried little Biddy off to their own room, and, taking off her old worn-out clothes, they decked her out in the nice warm things they had made themselves. Then from a drawer Katty produced a beautiful doll, and poor little Biddy's eyes danced with joy as she caught the darling in her arms, and hugged and kissed it most rapturously.

"Doesn't she look lovely, mamma dear?" inquired Katty when they returned to the library, "I think she looks a perfect duck."

"God bless you, Miss Katty, and you too, Miss Merton," said Margaret, "and God reward your kind father for all he has done for Pat and my poor father. Say good-bye to the ladies, Biddy, and come home."

The two girls kissed Biddy most affectionately, and, filling her pinafore with cakes and apples for her little brothers at home, sent her away radiant with joy and happiness.

At last the long expected morning on which they were to leave their dear old home arrived, and after a night spent in a state of feverish excitement, the children arose with great joy as they heard the clock on the stairs strike five.

A hurried breakfast, a last visit to the farmyard and favorite nooks about the grounds, a whispered, good-bye to a pet lamb or a much-loved kitten, and they are all ready to start, eager to see the unknown world that lies before them. Father John is there to say good-bye, his merry genial face a little clouded, for he is sorry to see his dear young friends go off in this way. But gaiety is contagious, and the sight of their animated, delighted faces soon restores him to his usual good-humor, as he tucks them up comfortably in the cars.

"Good-bye, dear Father John," they shout.

"Good-bye, dear children," he replies.

Crack goes the whip, off start the horses, and with one wild shout of rapture the young Sullivans turn their backs on their old home, Conmore. It is a glorious morning, and as they pass along the road overhanging the bay, the sea is glowing in the rich golden light of the sun as he rises in the far east. At a sudden bend of the road they catch the last glimple of the old garden where they had so often played, of the green fields where they had loved to ramble, and of the ivy-covered house in which they had all been born. Without one thought or regret for the happy life that was gone for ever, or fear for the life that is to come, the children raise their voices and exclaim in joyful chorus, "Farewell, Conmore!"

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