

feet, and if he wants a hundred pounds for the cost of the joke, 'tis his widow the asking."

"And fair enough," murmured one or two, as Phelim made a step forward.

But Mrs. O'Farrell blocked his path. Her face blazed over the madonna blue of her dress, and she shook an angry fist. "You make another step towards that good man and true," she cried, "and you'll do it over my body, you—you Hussian!"

She had passed him the greatest insult known in the South of Ireland, resented by the Irish since Cromwell, from whose hated mercenaries the name was taken. Phelim's face crimsoned, and he clenched his fist. Then he drew himself up and wagged his head loftily.

"I'll have no quarrel wid a woman," he said, and he turned towards the cottage of Aislinn O'Rourke, followed by the neighbors.

"Go on wid him, time servers all," cried Mrs. O'Farrell, "and see what he'll stand you!"

"Anything my purse holds!" Phelim shouted back, and was cheered.

MRS. O'FARRELL went hastily to the Priest's House, and bent over Michael, whose beads hung in his listless hand.

"Did you hear, avick?" she asked tenderly.

"I heard," he murmured.

"And what's in your mind, Michael?" she asked, smoothing his hair. "What's in your mind at all?"

"I am thinking God is very good to me, so He is," he said. "He's given me back Aislinn's lover to her. I never prayed for that; but He's sent him back to her from the sea."

Mrs. O'Farrell could not forbear giving the curls she was smoothing a vicious clutch. "Tare and 'ouns!" she muttered. "And this is the man I've seen fight wid two men wan atther the other, and fair cry for the third!"

"They've gone up to Aislinn," murmured Michael. "He'll marry her, and she'll be kept in rich comfort, and I can lift my head again."

"Well, God knows I never expected to see the day when a man'd have too much religion," cried Mrs. O'Farrell explosively. "You omadhaun! Where is your manhood gone? And him stealing fifteen good years of your youth! Well, I'm thankful to say they won't find Aislinn. She's keeping my shop for me the day. I'll go and be telling her the grand life she's to have, since you're wishing it to her."

She walked off a few paces, and then turned suddenly. "Michael, dear," she said coaxingly, "you've niver done me the favor yet; but will you now, avic, in honor of this grand day? 'Tis on me own business."

"I will that."

"Then come up to me house a half-hour before midnight the night. I've me good reasons."

"I will, then."

"And come wid your face up to the stars, me b'y."

Mrs. O'Farrell turned and hurried over the sunken gravestones to the gate, and up the slope to her own little house, within which Aislinn was selling to a tourist at something below cost an old tea caddie. Mrs. O'Farrell immediately put the price so high that the tourist departed indignantly without buying anything. Then the old woman sat down and talked earnestly to the girl. For fifteen minutes she expounded and pleaded, without a word from Aislinn. But Mrs. O'Farrell noticed that her face was white.

"You're deafening me," said Aislinn at last, "and I see the crowd coming down from my cottage. I hope they've not battered my door in. Lave us set the stools out in front so we can be receiving the foine Scotchman."

Then Mrs. O'Farrell laughed joyously. "Well, I can see through a millstone!" she crowed. "Give your curls a pull with the comb, acushla, and slap at your cheeks till the color comes back."

WHEN Phelim Doyne and his companions walked up the gravel path leading to Mrs. O'Farrell's cottage, Aislinn sat in the doorway, the sun gleaming on her bright hair, a June rose swinging near her cheek, and the lids lowered over her blue eyes. But through the lashes she saw Phelim's face, complacent and solemn and sentimental. Mrs. O'Farrell was knitting, her shrewd eyes staring hard at the company.

"So then, Mither Doyne, and ye are calling on me?" she said. "Well, 'tis an honor. Back from your travels, I believe? This is me frind, Miss O'Rourke, in case you've forgot her."

"Don't I know her?" cried Phelim. "Not a day older does she look, and I miss nothing but the smile. Will you give me greeting, Aislinn O'Rourke?"

The neighbors rustled and nodded. Then Aislinn lifted her eyes and said gravely:

"I bid you welcome, Phelim. God save you!"

"Ah, and 'tis that welcome I've waited for," said Doyne.

Then he looked uneasily at the others. He had enjoyed their company so far; but now he was moved to speak alone of intimate things to Aislinn. But the neighbors seemed unwilling to take any hints. There they stood, moist eyed and open mouthed, ready, if necessary, to find the words for his proposal.

"Well, and now that you have your welcome, what next?" snapped Mrs. O'Farrell.

"The next is the favor of a few words with you in private," said Doyne to Aislinn, with much dignity.

Aislinn, her eyes again dropped over her lace-work, took two or three stitches before she replied. Then she said to him, with the ghost of her old smile, "Since you're atther wishing to see me in private, I bid you come to the fairy rath in Mrs. O'Farrell's field at twelve to-night. We'll be private enough there."

The neighbors moved disappointedly.

"'Tis said, if you've not forgotten our lore, Phelim Doyne, that every midnight of pattern day a banshee sits on the rath and waits for the venturesome. But you'll not believe that, you that were brave enough to go and win money from the Scotch."

"Them old stories!" said Phelim contemptuously. "'Tis a strange request," he said; "but there I will see you, Aislinn O'Rourke."

Aislinn went on with her lace-work. Mrs. O'Farrell bent over her knitting. Phelim shifted uneasily from one foot to another, and the neighbors shifted with him. Finally he said in his thin, cheery voice:

"Come on, then; we'll be after going to see can we find something to comfort us," and off he went in the direction of the village, the whole population soon at his heels.

SOMETHING before twelve that night, Michael O'Halloran got up from the little stool in the blacksmith shop where he had spent the day. He had done no work, since it was a holiday, nor had he said any prayers. What was there to pray for, since Phelim Doyne was still on earth and had come back to Aislinn? He had a strange sense of loss: what was he to do with his life now?

He rose and walked to the doorway, his head

bent. Then he remembered Mrs. O'Farrell's request to walk with his face up to the stars. As he raised his eyes, he straightened his shoulders and drew a long breath. It was a wonderful night, all softness and peace. It made him think of the nights when he used to go wooing Aislinn O'Rourke. The moon was shining in the Lower Lake, a jewel buried as deep in the waters as his love for Aislinn was in his soul. Under his breath he whispered a song Aislinn had loved. He hardly ever dared think of her; but now for a moment he let some of the old sweetness of his courtship ripple back into his heart. He had thought she loved him, and then Doyne had told him that Aislinn was secretly promised to him, and he had struck that blow of blind anger—and Aislinn had paid for fifteen years. He did not think of his own wasted youth. He only drew in long breaths of the soft night air and let himself love Aislinn again.

He walked on till he came close to the fairy rath, and then he paused. A figure in white stood near the rath; another, shrouded in a dark cloak, sat beside it, bowed and wailing; and down the road came a man, walking slowly. Louder and louder rose the wailing of the dark figure, and then the woman in white called, in a high trembling voice:

"Phelim—Phelim Doyne, Aislinn O'Rourke is waiting for you! I'm afraid—Phelim!"

With a muffled shriek and uplifted arms, the dark figure darted towards Phelim. He dropped the stick he carried, shouted hoarsely, and ran plump into the arms of Michael O'Halloran. The dark figure hurried up, divesting itself of the cloak, and Mrs. O'Farrell cried breathlessly:

"Michael, he was going to have Aislinn be herself here. Michael, for the love of the saints, be a man, and belt him wan! Aislinn never loved him; 'twas always you. She's waiting for you just back here by the rath. For the love of Heaven, bate the face off him, and go up to Aislinn, taking your manhood with you! Think of the fifteen years you've lost!"

The feel of a man's muscle against his own broke Michael's long habit of inaction. He crooked his left arm, and lifted the right, hardened with his smith's work, and he gave the struggling, howling Phelim Doyne fifteen methodical blows, while Mrs. O'Farrell danced about him in her madonna blue gown, her innocent face puckered with malicious glee.

It was a light enough return for what Michael had suffered. He cast Doyne aside and went up to the rath where Aislinn stood. Long and long he gazed at her, as if he would have atoned for fifteen years of hunger. And Aislinn's grave face broke into a rare and loving smile, not the teasing smile of the sunny girl of the old days, but the smile of a woman who had loved and trusted and waited alone.

"I could not have done different, core of my heart," he murmured.

"I know that, and I have loved you the more. God would have righted it some day."

"And He's left us a touch of the youth yet," said Michael.

And then they forgot the world, while Mrs. O'Farrell, her sense of justice appeased, assisted the groaning Phelim down the road to the inn.



He Ran Plump Into the Arms of Michael.

DIAMONDS OF VARIOUS COLORS

THE mention of the word "diamond" immediately brings to mind the picture of a translucent, white gem. Not all diamonds, however, are white. The most beautiful of all precious stones is said to be the red diamond. This surpasses the ruby in beauty, and is exceedingly rare. A few specimens are known to exist, one of which, weighing ten carats, now in possession of the Emperor of Russia, was bought by Emperor Paul for one hundred thousand dollars.

Dark blue diamonds, differing from sapphires only in quality and in the beautiful play of colors peculiar to the diamond, are handsome gems. Besides the Bismarck and Hope diamonds, there are only two known specimens in the world that can properly be called blue diamonds. Black and rose colored diamonds are also rare; while the green varieties are not so uncommon. The grass green is scarce, and when it does occur, it is more brilliant than the finest emerald.

There are several varieties of green tinted diamonds at the Museum of Natural History at Paris; but the best known specimen is at Dresden, which is considered one of the five paragons of its kind.

The most perfect collection of colored diamonds is in the Museum of Vienna. It is in the form of a bouquet, the different flowers being composed of diamonds of the same color as the blooms represented. These stones were collected by Vergil von Heimreicher, a Tyrolean, who had passed many years in Brazil among the diamond mines.

In early times the diamond was worn rough, or polished only on its upper surface. It was in this form that it was used to decorate temples, goblets, and crowns. Such stones are still esteemed far above others by the natives of India.

Among historic diamonds, one, the "Pigot," has gone out of existence. The story of its destruction is a tragic one. It was said to be worth two hundred thousand dollars. The diamond came into the possession of Ali Pasha, who always wore it in a green silk purse attached to his girdle. He was wearing it when he was wounded by Reshid Pasha. Knowing that his wound was mortal, he immediately retired to his divan, gave orders that his favorite wife should be poisoned, and then delivered the diamond to Captain D'Anglas, with the order that it should be crushed to powder in his presence. His command was obeyed, and the beautiful gem was utterly destroyed.