

CASTLE DALY:

Story of an Irish Home Thirty Years Ago.

(Continued.)

Pelham followed Connor out of the room, and as seen by Ellen a few minutes later setting forth to work of his discontent by a solitary walk in the rain. As soon as he was fairly out of sight, Connor's figure dashed across the road in the direction of the Maynards' house, closely following in the wake of the postman. Ellen, left alone, returned to the dining-room, and her work was a delicate fronde of seaweed on wet paper to read to cousin Anne, as an addition to the Happy-go-Lucky Lodge collection of works of art. As her needle laboriously separated and arranged the minute pink and white fibres, her thoughts made rapid excursions from one subject to another. If only the boys would not quarrel; if only she could once more see cousin Anne, and help her to her heterogeneous possessions, if only she could learn the secret art by which Lesbia kept the boys so pleasantly engrossed that in her presence such joys as had occurred this morning seldom fell out. She laughed over the foolish squabbles with Connor, but they always left a little sting, a pin-prick wound, in her heart, that she could not get rid of for days after; and though no amount of coaxing would have won such an avowal from Connor, she knew quite well that it was the same with him. It was as necessary for him as for herself to bask in the good-will and approbation of those he lived among, and she knew by many little signs that nothing ever elated Connor more, or made him more contented with himself, than when some rare chance brought an unusual mark of confidence, or a word that could be twisted into approval from Pelham, his way. And Pelham, too, why did he wince so under Connor's little sarcasm and her own careless speeches, and brood over them so long, if he did not, at the bottom of his heart, care more for Connor's good opinion and hers than he ever chose to show? Surely she must be a very bad manager, a very inefficient sister, not to have brought about greater harmony between these two, and made them understand each other better before this. How the rain pattered down, and how still the house was within! Soon Ellen heard her father open the dining-room door, and make his way to the conservatory had left on the hall-table, and that himself in to read them; five minutes after, the door of the lower room opened hurriedly and her father's voice was heard calling her mother to come down stairs. It was not a usual thing for Mrs. Daly to leave her bed-room in the morning. How feeble her step on the stair was to her, how careful the lady who seemed to love! Ellen half rose to help her, and then sat down again. If her father had any unpleasant business to discuss with her mother, as was only too likely, it was better that they should talk it out first alone, and she must hold herself ready to comfort each separately afterwards. In dilemma her father was apt to turn to her instead of Pelham, and she was displeased her mother. There was something in the aspect of this day that reminded Ellen of another day at home, a day that had brought trouble and change. Was it the pattering of the rain? Strong, heavy rain, that would not have disgraced the West land, where everything seemed to be done more thoroughly and with more care than elsewhere. Her eyes and tried to conjure herself back in thought to Castle Daly, and to believe for a moment or two that when she looked up she should find herself surrounded by old familiar things. The touch of a wet cheek put close to hers roused her, and she opened her eyes quickly to the sight of Connor leaning over the back of her chair, with laughter in his eyes, and a bright raindrop falling from his drenched hair down upon her face. "What are you thinking of?" he began. "Have you not been cracking your sides with laughter over the fine disclosure we have had this morning?" "What do you mean?" "Don't you remember?" "Oh, nonsense. Why did you go out into the rain and get yourself so wet?" "What a question for a Connequara girl! To post my love-letter, of course." "Oh, Connor, have you really?" "And indeed I have. The joke is that I had to take one of Pelham's envelopes, with his initials on the flap. I dashed into his room, and found him at his desk, and that came to hand, directed it to Miss Lesbia, and rushed out after the postman to drop it into the Maynards' box with their other letters. I only noticed the big P. D. above the seal after it had slipped through my fingers. But it's an excellent joke."

"He does not intend to bully—it's his English way; and, Connor avouches, what I want from you, is just a promise to take no notice however snaky he is the rest of this day, but to help me to coax him round. If blarney is good for anything, it is to keep peace at home, among brothers and sisters, don't you think? There's papa's voice calling me. Connor, I'm sure that some important news has come in those letters you took in. I have had a strange unsettled feeling on me all day, as if something was coming. Suppose only it should be news that took us home."

she had seen her look at longingly so often, behind its glass-case on the pier. She would quite deserve that and other little marks of favor as well, perhaps, if events proved her not to have been guilty of willing old John Maynard's crocodile tears. "You are really a very good girl, Babetto, to remember the mending," she said cordially, "and as I think it likely I may have to look over some important business with Dr. Maynard when he comes in, I shall be much obliged to you if you will get it done."

the sea. If anyone else says anything, satisfy your conscience (you see I am giving you credit for being too scrupulous concerning other people's rights to be quarrelsome with your own) and I'll be glad to have you go with your mother and your brother to do what he pleased with his own money; he got very little pleasure out of it while he was alive, and he has chosen you to enjoy the benefit of his savings and his labors because you are the youngest pet child of our mother, who was a daughter to him once, and the most like her. If those two have met up with the young Bridget, and she has been so kind to me, I think that she will be glad of what he has done for you. I am writing to explain it to all the Maynards. By the way, one clause of the will enacts that you are to take the name of Maynard, and give it to your husband if—or shall I say when you marry—so you will keep our dear mother's name, Lesbia Maynard, to the end of the chapter."

way I had of keeping near her. If I thought she had such a poor heart as not to put up with a bit of a fight about a brother or a sister, that her lover planned to save her or a partner by Jove! Pelham would be welcome to have her, for she'd not be the girl for me."

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