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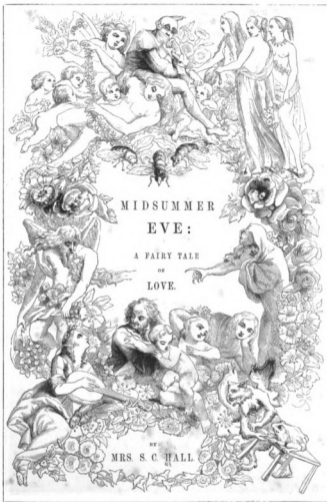
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## INTRODUCTION.



ow fertile of Thought are the Fairy Legends of Ireland; full of natural poetry, and seldom without a moral! That upon which this Tale is founded is, I believe, common to all parts of the Island; although I have, perhaps, committed a practical anachronism in bringing 'the Kelpies' of the North into the South.

It is believed that a child whose father has died before its birth is placed by Nature under the peculiar guardianship of the Fairies; and that, if born on Midsummer Eve, it becomes their rightful property.

This introduction will suffice to explain the machinery by which I have endeavoured to trace the progress of a young

INTRODUCTION.

girl's mind from infancy to womanhood; the Good and Evil Influences to which it is subjected; and the Trials inseparable from a contest with the World.

I express my earnest thanks for the powerful assistance my story has received from many distinguished Artists; to whose genius I am largely indebted for the effective manner in which it is placed before the Public.

Since its appearance in detached parts, in "THE ART-UNION JOURNAL"—I have carefully revised it; the addition of several new and more important engravings will, I trust, give to the Tale an increased interest and value, and justify its publication in a more complete form than it could receive in the pages of a Periodical Work.

A. M. H.

THE ROSERY,  
OLD BROMPTON.







D. MACLINE, R.A. . . .	Frontispiece to Part VI.
C. STANFIELD, R.A. . . .	Frontispiece to Part IX.
T. CRESWICK, A.R.A. . . .	Frontispiece to Part VIII.
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J. LECURIEUX . . . . The Title Page.  
The Engravings by W. T. GREEN, G. and E. DALZIEL, J. BASTIN, J. WILLIAMS,  
H. LINTON, G. MEASON, W. MEASON, A. J. MASON, &c. &c.  
The Initial Letters Designed by T. R. MACQUOID.  
The Cover Designed by J. MARCHANT.  
The Volume Bound by BONE AND SON.







PART THE FIRST.



T was as bleak and chill a Midsummer Eve as the oldest dweller in the Lake-country of KILLARNEY could call to mind. The wind, although it did not absolutely roar through the Gap of Dunloe, or round and about the Purple Mountain, and 'lofty Mangerton of the Hoary Head,' disturbed by its harsh murmurings and audible discontent the young trees and lowly shrubs that grow beneath the shadows of the evergreen woods. All know that unearthly spirits hold their revels on Midsummer Eve ; it is their fête-night : when they show the elements, of the past and future, that a power mightier than theirs can rule them. The wind knew this well ; yet, on this evening, was neither entirely submissive nor absolutely rebellious. At times, it started from its dull quiet and prowled abroad ; fretting everything it touched ; shaking the light branches of the silver birch and drooping willow, ruffling the narrow forms of the slim laburnum, wrestling roughly with the stout holly, and scattering the delicate arbutus, whose leaves, fruit, and flowers are as fair and bright amid December's snow, as in the sunshine of July. The wind was not only out

of season, but unnatural ; it brought the chill of winter into the very midst of summer. It was, in truth, a sharp-toothed and biting wind ; forcing its way into ill-built cottages—through broken windows and shrunken doors, where poverty sought warmth from peat-smoke rather than fire ; piercing through every hole in the torn blanket or tattered cloak ; whistling in bitter mockery of the poor man's moan ; stirring the flax upon the rock which the feeble fingers of age, or the firmer ones of youth, twisted into



threads ; causing the lamb to nestle closely into its mother's wool, and the foolish calf to low complainingly at its chilling howl, as it passed through the half-roofless out-house. Anon, it pelted the ivyed ruins of old Mucross, terrifying the very owls, who hooted it onwards, without stirring from their hermit-cells ; and scourged the angry bats who ventured forth on their wonted errands. The Beings who held sway over earth that night were so bent on mischief that they exerted their utmost skill to rouse the **STORM KING** from

uneasy repose, as he pillowed his head beside the Dæmon punch-bowl—set like the eye of a cyclops in the rough brow of Mangerton; but the old fellow who was still too wearied by the exertions of the long past winter to attend their summons, grumbled his displeasure in a tone which the echoes of Glena repeated in thunder. Compelled to be content with the efforts of his sharp and bitter satellite, they sought, so aided, to accomplish great things before the last hour of midnight—scudding with it bravely and boldly through the open country: at length it grew conscious of impotence, and retreated to narrow defiles and crowded inclosures—like those who, lacking power to disturb the world, delight in the minor evils of inflicting misery in their neighbourhoods and homes; but when, after ruffling the



waters of the Flesk, it sprang upon the bridge of many arches, it gave a wild howl of delight to see old DOCTOR MAGRATH bowed to the neck of his grey pony. "At him—at him—keep him back—keep him back," muttered a thousand voices to the wind; and surely there must have been some mysterious understanding between them, for right glad did it seem of encouragement to worry the old man, as he had never before been worried; his hat and wig flew over the bridge, and his poor bare head was buffeted as by a forest of shillelas; but while he moaned and murmured at the rough handling of the elements, two stout fellows followed to see that he neither tarried nor turned back; and who, having neither hat nor wig to

Lower Lake—except on their own 'Eve,' that they may have a chance of adopting some new-born child of earth into their community—a chance which seldom becomes a reality—although it is theirs by royal charter—the charter of the Prince O'Donoghue, lord of a thousand palaces that lie fathoms deep beneath the surface of Loch Lene. Kitty's grandmother had seen the Kelpie Queen in all her magnificence, arise on one of these festive occasions, from her water-palace, on the back of a huge frog, who seemed proud of his burden, and carried her with the air and bearing of a race-horse, while her dark air streamed on either side her fallow face, and her attendant court were endeavouring to press into their service everything they could take—from a tadpole to a water-rat ; she had often recounted this to Kitty, in her childhood ; and Kitty, even at that early period, affected to doubt a tale, which, despite her seeming, crept through her bones, and made her very heart freeze within her bosom. She would now have given all she possessed in the world, to have had any one with her beside her sick lady ; she started at every noise.

A certain wise man—known as Randy the Woodcutter—had been sent off for the Doctor ; and while she waited his return, she had, she thought, frequently heard him 'whisperin and cosherin at the door ;' and yet he came not. At length, however, his well-known step was distinctly audible.

"Is all right, Randy?" she asked, from within.

"All *will* be right when I knock," he answered, "and then open quickly."

"Is he on the road?" inquired the Nurse, heedless of the warning ; but before he could reply, a sharp blast rushed inward, and extinguished the flickering light of the lean candle she held with a trembling hand.

"A cross and a blessing about us, Kitty Kelly!" exclaimed Randy, falling on his knees. "God, he knows I couldn't help it. Why did you open the door before I knocked? I done all for the best, as the end will prove. Oh, murther! Why don't you shut the door, instead of standing there like a rock in the lake—there's something more than the wind pass'd in now!—bless yourself, woman, dear! Oh, then, sure it's impossible to tell what would be on the wings of the wind this Midsummer Eve!"

"Nothing worse than yourself," stammered the Nurse, bravely, though she perceived, at once, that THE HORSE SHOE was gone, and even fancied she saw 'something' flying off with it. Turning eagerly to Randy, who, pale and shivering, was gazing on the kitchen rafters—"Is the doctor coming!" she exclaimed.



"'Deed is he; and for fear he'd stop or turn back from his duty, on account of the hardness of the night, I set my two cousins to keep the road after him.

He'll be here soon. Oh, sure it was only my duty I did, madam."

"Is the man mad to madam me!" exclaimed Kitty. "Stand on yer legs, and shut the door, and put the chair against it, and don't keep staring and bowing to the rafters; dear me, but it is a blast; and I didn't think there was more than a whisper going."

"Kitty Kelly, you're not altogether of this country," exclaimed Randy, in a low tone: "you've only been two hundred years in it—for you came in with ould Oliver Crommell; so give way to your prayers—it's no wind that we're trembling in: of the three we're watching, one came in with me—the mistress will thank me for that; there was a second—and there will be a third. You may strive against them; I *dare* not!"

"I *DARE*!" replied Kitty, whose courage had in part returned—and then she started, for she fancied she heard shouts of ironical laughter; but, little daunted, she attempted to close the door violently. In this, however, she did not succeed; the wind pushed against her, and not only had the best of it, but flung her to the other end of the kitchen.

"Make the blessed sign," said Randy, yet without moving to her assistance.

"I can't," she replied; "my hand's weighed down by a ton weight." She had hardly uttered the words, when a gust of wind, freighted with most extraordinary noises—sighs, and snatches of music, atoms of laughter, and fragments of old songs, mingled with the sound of rushing waters—entered the cottage, and filled it as with an atmosphere.

"It will shut *asy* enough now," observed the Woodcutter, rising from



his knees, and wiping his brow. "Air, Earth, and Water! Oh, I'm not afraid to say my say about the good people, day or night; they never did me an ill-turn, and never will; quiet, and kindly, and good they are, and mane nothing but good to the dear lady;" and his huge head nodded, and his long limbs bent and twisted, in a peculiar sort of homage to something invisible to all eyes but his own. The Nurse thought it probable that Randy made the speech and performed his gesticulations, in the hope of propitiating the good offices of the company whom she now knew had come to the birth. It was currently believed that he could see and understand more than beseemed an honest man; and yet Randy *was* an honest man, and had the unbought happiness of being more loved than feared. Still, the all-powerful 'they,' whispered he, was a 'fairy man;' and, as such, he was consulted by many who



would scruple to confess they had any faith or trust in the existence of the 'good people.' This opinion had strengthened wonderfully during the last few months; indeed, ever since the young widow had given promise that the child of a dead father was to visit a care-full world, his hours had been spent, even more than usual, beside *THE FAIRIES' OAK*—a withered and time hollowed tree, which hung its decayed branches over the sedges that skirted the base of the far-famed 'Eagle's Nest' (the most wonderful of the lake's many wonders); and he had been more than ever attentive to keep free from pebbles and worm-heaps, 'the ring,' which tradition and his own

knowledge assigned as the favourite trysting-place of the 'good people.'

The door was now easily closed, and the candle relit at the kitchen fire; the Woodcutter threw upon it an additional heap of bog-fir: the old cat's hair stood out like porcupines' quills; every now and then she opened her mouth to hiss, but closed it again without a sound; she would lift a paw, and stretch it forth, bristling with claws—then draw it back again, each claw returning to its downy sheath.

"Sit down, Randy, and don't be showldering the chimney, as if there wasn't a chair in the place," said the Nurse, through her chattering teeth.

"I know better manners than to disturb any one from their sate," he answered, bowing round, respectfully.

The Nurse crossed herself with the thumb of her right hand, and retreated to the bed-room of her mistress. The fire burned brightly—yet the cat took no pleasure in its blaze, but kept moving, uneasily, from one

side to the other,—'wrinkling' up her coat, as if water had been thrown upon it—her tail twitching and bristling in restless discomfort.

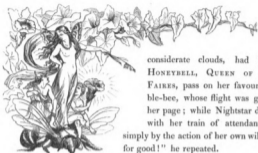
"It's hard on you, pusheen gra!" said Randy, addressing the cat; "but you can't help yourself. They'll neither hurt nor harm you, pusheen." "They've got possession now, and they'll keep it," he thought to himself.

"They will!" whispered a soft voice in his ear.

Randy caught hold of the fore-lock of his hair, pulled it, and jerked his head rapidly forward. "And for good," he said aloud, wishing to compliment NIGHTSTAR, THE QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES OF THE AIR, whose voice he knew, and whom he had often seen descend to earth with her train of attendants shining in the distance, like a silver halo in the moonlight.

And many a time, in the cool of a Midsummer night, when the grateful flowers drank in refreshing dews poured into their bosoms by





considerate clouds, had he seen HONEYBELL, QUEEN OF EARTH'S FAIRES, pass on her favourite humble-bee, whose flight was guided by her page; while Nightstar descended with her train of attendant sprites, simply by the action of her own will. "And for good!" he repeated.

"Don't speak," replied the fairy, in a dignified tone; "there is no necessity; we see your thoughts as they are formed, and notice them if we please."

"The dickens a doubt I doubt ye," thought the Woodcutter; for, despite his caution, thoughts would come.

"Now, don't swear, Randy; it's vulgar."

The Woodcutter could not prevent himself from thinking an earnest prayer, that power might not be given them to change the child, at its birth, for one of their own.

"And why not?" was the inquiry, in a low and gentle tone—the very shadow of a sound. "Why not? Are your world's children so free from care, and all the sorrows and troubles of life—that tug at your hearts, furrow your brows, weigh you down before your time—spectres leading you to graves—are they so very happy, that you do not wish them to be with us, who, you know, spend our lives in enjoyment?"

"From sunset to sunrise," thought Randy, "no mortal ever knew what you do be doing when the sun shines."

"Even so," replied Nightstar, whom, on turning round, he saw seated in the very centre of a cobweb, while



HER FACE was engaged in combat with the dispossessed spider, who, dangling by his thread, endeavoured to defend himself against the well-poised spear of the active elf. "From sunset to sunrise," she repeated, rocking herself backward and forward on her seat; "even so; and surely that is better than spending it as you and the rest of you spend it—in heavy sleep or midnight brawling."

"You never could lay that last to me, or to any of the Kerry boys," replied Randy, speaking out boldly; for he believed Ireland the finest country in the world, and Killarney the greenest spot in the Emerald Isle. He had no sooner spoken than he heard a loud clapping of hands, and



little cries of "Bravo!" and, fully aware of the compliment, he gave another pull at his head-tuft, and, to his great astonishment, found, on opening it, that he had caught a FAIRY IN HIS HAND.

"Why didn't you hold me when you had me," exclaimed the creature, springing on a moonbeam that had just entered the window; "and then I would have told you of hidden treasure, as well as the Leprehawn you are so fond of hunting."

"Sure, it's not misdoubting your honour's generosity I'd be," replied the Woodcutter. "You can give me the information, or the gould, which ever your honour plases, all the same;" and then there were shouts of merry laughter; and it seemed to the enlightened eyes of the bewildered man, that a multitude of the fairies of the three elements completely occupied the kitchen—twirling round the rafters, and filling every crevice and corner—some even clinging to the feathers of the cock's tail. The earthly good people were far more slow and heavy in their movements than those who appertained to the purer element; they ate and drank whatever they could find, and fought sham fights with each other—and real ones with the Kelpies or water fairies. The Woodcutter's unsealed eyes had no difficulty in distinguishing the three distinct races, who had attended their liege ladies to be present at the birth of the fatherless, on Midsummer Eve: he knew that the change of the earthly for the unearthly child, would belong of right to whichever of the three had first entered the house, and he congratulated himself on having so managed that

Nightstar and her court had been the earliest arrivals. Honeybell, Queen of the Earthly Spirits, would, he thought, yield honourably to the claims of her royal sister ; but he had no such faith in the Queen of the Kelpies. She was a yellow, damp, distorted, little creature, who diverted herself in a huge tub, by causing the elves who make up, what may be called 'the people' of the other tribes, to be ducked whenever they were caught by her frog-like subjects. Randy had *his* own purposes to work out, and he dreaded the Kelpies' influence : his mind filled with hope when he contemplated the gentle dignity and kindly expression of Nightstar, her attendants floating around her with ineffable grace—many of them perfectly transparent, their bosoms illumined from within, by a little spark of light like that which flashes from a diamond. He looked upon the Queen reclining on the cobweb with as much ease as an Eastern lady in a palanquin, and having attracted her attention by what he intended to be a gentle sigh, but which shook the web, so that her majesty caught hold of the banner of her standard-bearer for support, he composed his thoughts.

"You might have conveyed to us your desire to *think*, without blowing a hurricane," said Nightstar ; "but you mortals are so very boisterous. Yet I must forgive you, Randy ; you are an honest fellow, and I don't think I ever yet found a black ugly thought at nurse in your mind : evil gets there, to be sure, sometimes ; but it does not stay ; it meets with no entertainment ; you are an innocent soul, Randy, and we love you much ; otherwise, we should have granted you no such royal privileges as you possess. You have a great regard for this poor lady, I know : she will have a daughter, I can tell you that. And

now what is to be done with the little maid who is to be with us in a few minutes ?" "She'll come to the poor mother, please your gracious majesty, like a beautiful summer butterfly rising



from HER FATHER'S GRAVE," thought the Woodcutter.

The Queen nodded twice, and smiled. "If she is not very, very pretty, Randy, I think I shall give her up to my royal sister, Honeybell."

"You're a mother, yourself, I'll go bail, my lady," thought Randy, "though you are so very small and young."

"Oh, yes! I was a mother more than two hundred years ago," answered the Queen.

"What a little darling of a beauty she is," thought the Woodcutter, and the fairy smiled her pleasure at the compliment. "And looks as fresh as the first drop of May-dew," so ran his thoughts. The fairy smiled again and drew herself up with gentle pride. "She's every inch a queen," thought Randy, as her own particular court gathered about her. "If she was six feet high in her stocking vamps, she could not be more stately." Queen Nightstar had certainly much of mortal woman about her; she was lovely—witty—kind—and generous; but very, very small—even for a fairy; and yet the little creature prided herself upon her stateliness, upon her dignity, and queenly presence. She had never been so well pleased with Randy, though she had patronised him for years; she had hitherto thought him a good-natured creature; now, she fancied him endowed with exceeding penetration. "You're mighty fond of the young princes and princesses, I'll go bail," thought Randy.

"I am, of course," she replied.

"Might I make bold to ask how many your majesty has?"

"About three dozen," was the gracious reply.

"And you couldn't fix upon one you'd like to part with?"

"Part with!" she exclaimed—"I would yield my life rather than one of my children! Man—man—do you think I could have a choice!—My dear, dear children!—a mother's heart is large enough for all. I could love ten times as many, and yet one does not rob another of a hair's breadth of love."

"Why, then, if you are so fond of the whole three dozen, won't you allow that it's hard to take an only child from its mother—and she a widow?"

"You are very provoking, Randy," said her majesty, in answer to his thoughts—"and cunning in reasoning; but we merely exchange—we leave her one of ours."

"One of the ne'er-do-wells—that she'll see pine and die (to all appearance) before her eyes, at the end of three months: the grass isn't green yet over poor Mary Mackay, who fretted the life out of herself, after one of your changelings."

"Not one of mine—one of Honeybell's," replied Nightstar, thoughtfully.

"The baby will be all in the world left to comfort her; and sure there's plenty of children born in Killarney this holy night, by twos and threes—not wanted; where there's no house to hold, nor clothes to cover them: wouldn't one of them do for you?"

"I don't like low-born children," answered Nightstar, with a toss of her lovely little head.

"The highest born may have the lowest bed, when all is over; any way, your majesty could make them what you please; and it's yourself that knows that many a fine brave spirit rises from under the cabin roof; but no matter what they are; you could give them the gifts that would make them great people—and beautiful women, like yourself—my lady!"

"I'm sure I don't want to take the mortal's only little one, if she thinks so much about it: no doubt she will be very fond of it," sighed the Queen. "Honeybell is in such a sweet temper—so well-pleased with the cream and cakes, that she would, I daresay, instead of changing the child, help me to endow it. But there are the Kelpies; and you know their Queen is no friend of ours. Air has the first right of choice, Earth the second, and Water the third. She won't give it up, I am certain, even if Honeybell did."

A sudden thought crossed Randy's brain.

"I see, I see!—do it, do it," continued Nightstar, as rapidly as the thought was formed in Randy's mind; and, suddenly turning round, she addressed an observation to one of her courtiers, while the Woodcutter seized a little platter of blessed salt, and tossed it into the tub where the Kelpies were sporting. It was quickly and cleverly done; instantly the hands of Randy hung as awkwardly as usual by his sides; but great was the consternation that followed; such splashing of water and whistling of wind: the Kelpies rushed out of the house in the wake of their

insulted Queen, threatening revenge on the fairies of earth, by whom



they imagined the trick had been played them. Randy quickly shut-to the door, and could not help admiring the dignified self-possession of Nightstar, who called to Honeybell that the time was come. Immediately the court attendants prepared to follow their royal mistresses, but Nightstar expressed a wish that they should ENTER THE CHAMBER alone; and it was a beautiful sight to see them floating onward, Honeybell holding in her hand her sceptre of fairy fox-glove, and wearing a necklace of diamonds that circled her throat with a wreath of light; eclipsed, however, by the star

that glittered above the head of her sister queen. They moved on, hand-in-hand to the birth-chamber; while poor Randy, bewildered by the perfume of dews and flowers, and the gentle music, that whispered all around him, sunk upon his knees.

"Remember, gracious Queen," he thought; "remember, every crow thinks its own bird the whitest." In a little time, a low wail and bitter cry told him that a struggle had commenced between a living spirit and a bitter world.

His entreaty, addressed to the Fairies, did not, however, content the Woodcutter; the attitude he had assumed suggested another — a higher and holier petition; he prayed with all the fervency of his warm and honest heart, that the dear young lady might be saved in her hour of trial, and that her baby might be spared to her, to be the blessing and the hope of after years. Prayer gives strength to the feeble and invi-



gorates the strong. He arose much comforted, and looked round with a smile of satisfaction upon the tiny court, who, freed from the restraint



which the august presence of their Queens imposed, unbent their spirits, and played such-madcap pranks, that Randy could not but feel his freedom of sight a rare privilege; it amused him greatly to contrast the buoyant and thoughtless energy and activity of the younger members of the two regal courts, with the bearing, impressive even to solemnity, of the high official personages who, upon occasions such as this, were always in close attendance upon their sovereigns. Randy watched them with more than common interest, for he knew they would soon be summoned to council. This man, though cast in so rough a mould, was gentle and gracious in heart and mind. He had been known for years to the good people, and they delighted to do him kindnesses. They led him to where THE RED DEER SHED THEIR HORNS—and brought him the richest and earliest of the Wood Strawberries. When the sky looked blue above, and the summer breath

stirred the trees—so that all said, 'the fair weather is with us now;' they showed him where the little cloud was rising, herald of the Storm King; they taught him to dye wood, so that common fir could not be known from the arbutus or the charmed yew, so prized by strangers; they gave him knowledge of the virtues which dwell in herbs and flowers—of palmistry—of murrain stones and fairy strokes—and filled his mind with fables and old tales. Had he lived in earlier times, Randy

would have suffered wizard's martyrdom. As it was, he was as often called 'Randy, the Fairy Man,' as 'Randy, the Woodcutter,'—and he had certainly imbibed some of the spirit-feeling with the spirit-repute: he was keenly alive to the beauties of Nature; heard sweet music in the murmurs of brooks, and tuneful melodies from the leaves of trees. He could tell, it was said, what the south breeze whispered to the west, and gather the birds of the air around him—be they ever so wild. He wore a four-leaved shamrock in his bosom, and a wreath of mountain-ash circled his conical hat. The wildest deer on Glenna would neither harm him, nor fly from him. Whenever he passed through a village, or rested himself



beneath a tree, CHILDREN WOULD CROWD ABOUT HIM; and if he gave them but the blossom of a daisy, they would think themselves happy. His

only enemies were the eagles ; the echo of their screams, or the shadow of their wings, were the only natural sights or sounds that damped his spirits. His haunts were the ancient hollow oak and the green grass slopes whereon grew **THE FOXGLOVE**—flower chiefest in favour with the Beings of whom Randy did not scruple to own himself the faithful and fond ally.



He would have enjoyed the pranks and oddities of the fairy tribes much longer, but that his attention was aroused by a smart tap on the cheek from the wand of the chancellor. "I am commanded by his lordship," said a dapper little official, his secretary, in a dark cobweb robe, and a wig composed of the down of the wild rush, "to tell you to do something rational for his amusement ; we have taken much pains with your education, Randy," he added, "and would fain see its fruits."

"Would his honour like a story grave or gay—of his own, or of our people?" Having obtained leave to use his own discretion, Randy bethought him once or twice, and then, with a low bow to the great dignitary of fairy-land, he said :—"Flowers, my lord, are very beautiful to look at, and very sweet to smell ; but if you were much among the tip-tops of the family, you would be surprised at the odd ways some of them have, and the airs they give themselves. Well, those I am talking about had been used to a deal of tenderness, and were brought up under the warm shade of a fine glass-house ; and the beautiful lady that tended them said, one day, 'The roses in the flower-knot last twice as long, and are much sweeter.' Well! yer Honour never heard anything like the rustling of leaves the flowers got on with, when they understood what the lady said ; being brought up lonely and grand, and looking out on the

world through glass windows, they thought everything in a garden must be low and common. Yer Honour, they looked down on the flowers of the garden, just as much, or may be more, than the flowers of the garden look down on the flowers of the field—instead of *looking up* to the GREAT



CAUSE of all the sweetness and beauty they possess — who knows that if fine flowers are the most admired, the flowers of the field make glad the hearts of the greatest number of innocent children, who enjoy a heaven of happiness in gathering the cowslip, the wild violet, and the star-eyed daisy: to say

nothing, yer Honour, of the favour your people show—in preference to all the flowers that ever grew in a garden—for the banks of thyme, the blue-bells, the silver cuckoo blossom, and the purple foxglove.”

This procured Randy a round of applause.

“To go back, my lord, to the pampered flowers; some change of fortune coming on the lady, she was obliged to leave her palace of a house, and take shelter beneath the roof of a cottage—‘There’s some of my dear flowers,’ said the sweet lady, ‘able to bear removal as well as myself, and who knows but we may be all the stronger and better for it; I hope we are not too far gone in luxury to prevent our enjoying comfort.’ So she placed them in her cottage-garden; her favourite white rose folded the protecting moss closely over her bosom, lest she should catch cold, and—a—I forget the name of it—shut itself as safe up in its leaves as if it was going a journey of a thousand miles; and looked with a wave of contempt upon the manner in which the garden flowers strove, out of civility, to make room for it; while one or two grave blossoms—of the sage class—knew they should get stronger and better from being in the fresh pure air of heaven, and admitted that their new neighbour—the rose of the garden—was in every respect as much the lady as the rose of the glass-house; in the morning, the garden rose unfolded to welcome the sun, and to hear the early hymn of the birds, and to see how her buds were growing; and as the dew-drops, one by one, ascended to the clouds that

had left them during night, for her refreshment, she perfumed them for their journey, and graciously thanked them for their care : but the pampered flowers bent beneath the dew, and complained of the damp and chill ; and the delicate rose said that her dress was *tossicated*, and shook off the dew-drops so roughly in her pet, that the tender things broke into atoms, and the proud flower desired they should visit her no more, as she was too high-born to be treated like a common flower ; and needed no help from common things ; what was a refreshing blessing to others, her refined ignorance—”

“ She should have learned of us,” interrupted the chancellor : “ we know how to bring refreshment to, and take refreshment from, every flower that grows in garden or in field : they are our drinking cups, a thousand times richer than the things made of the world’s dross, which you earth-worms call ‘precious gems.’ Your rose should have learned of us.”



“ She learned of NATURE, my lord, at last,” continued Randy, “ for the next

night not a sparkle from any cloud visited her leaves, and she saw the fleecy moisture enveloping the other flowers, and felt that the Nature she had scorned,

was comforting her children, and whispering to them to be of good cheer, for that next year their blossoms should be fairer and wax stronger : and the gentle loving dews clustered upon the buds and leaflets ; and at last, as morning drew near, a sharp dry air made the most impertinent inquiries concerning her quarrel with the dew-drops, and whistled spitefully in her face, and ruffled her leaves, so that, the next day, the hot sunbeams entered into her heart ; and in the deepest humility she petitioned to be treated as a common flower, convinced that—”

The moral of Randy’s tale was scared from his lips by a message from Queen Nightstar to the chancellor, and by the noise made by

Honeybell's page in rousing his lordship from the heavy slumber into which he had fallen.

"Keep up, mistress," said the Nurse to the widowed mother: "The jewel it is!—so like it's father. A girl's born lucky that's like it's father! What do you say?—'it has no father?' It has two, lady dear: one in heaven, and one over—about—around us all!—the very King of Heaven is the Father of the earthly fatherless!—may He mark it to grace! Think of the comfort she'll be to you—to be your own; the weight of the world isn't half weight to the young mother who looks at her dawshy babby. 'You want to see it?' I'm sure you do; but wait till Nurse puts on its pretty cap, and makes it sit up like a lady. I tell you, dear, it's the very *moral* of its father."

"His child!—his child!—his own child! To smile like him—to speak like him! Are you sure, Nurse, nothing will happen it—nothing take it from me? I have a strange feeling, as if my child were in danger. But what danger?—there is nothing could have the heart to take my baby from its lone mother."



Randy felt the tears gathering in his eyes, but they were quickly changed to tears of joy—for he saw the WRITHING, MISSHAPEN SHADOW, that was to have been substituted for Geraldine's infant, forced by a number of the attendants to leave the cottage. He then thought

he would peep into the interior. There was no doubt about it; Queen Honeybell looked sulky; but the lamp in Nightstar's bosom shone more brightly than ever, and her words fell on his ear more full of music than the robin's winter song.

"Let us endow her for the world, and against the world; it is some time since we have permitted the child of our choice to remain exposed to the temptations and imperfections of mortality: let us guard her, and yet leave her with her mother." What music and tenderness were in Nightstar's words, as she continued—"I am looking at this moment into that young mother's heart: I see how new feelings stimulate

its pulsations : I see it expanding—welling forth its very essence into the new life which, though mysteriously parted from it, is dearer to it than ever ; there is a whole universe of love—pure, unselfish, spotless love—love without limit, boundless as ocean, and deeper than its deepest caves—in that sweet mother's heart, towards the little lump of half-animated clay that is *her* child. Oh, sister ! if it were given you to see the future that whirls through her brain ! The great Power of all has poured into her a new nature—a stronger motive and firmer principle of life : her very heart is enlarged.

" A child deprived of its father, and born on Midsummer Eve, is by right our own," said Honeybell, pouting ; but you have always some whimsy in your head about these creatures of earth. I do not envy you your power of seeing thoughts and hearts, believe me ! "

" Let it be ours," persisted Nightstar ; " let us pour into its heart and mind whatever of good we can ; but let us not take it from its mother." The Queen of Earth's fairies bent her head in no very cordial acquiescence ; and the aerial troop, seeing that their Queen had vanquished, were mightily pleased thereat, and played sundry fantastic tricks ; now opening the baby's sleepy eyes, to ascertain their colour, sleeking its small quantity of downy mole-like hair with their tiny hands, endeavouring to straighten its little wrinkled fingers, and sadly retarding the Nurse in its adornment, by untying the strings as fast as she tied them.

" Sister," persisted Nightstar, " help me to endow my favourite."

" We never agree on educational matters," answered Honeybell : " you are too ideal for me—better have her all to yourself."

" You do yourself injustice, sister. Let us wave our wands, and show the young mother, as in a dream, what may be the future qualities of her soul's idol : let us bestow on the fairest of earth's blossoms the most precious of all gifts that woman can receive or bestow : let us gift her with LOVE."

" Love ! rubbish ! " answered Honeybell, pettishly—" the source of woman's misery."

" And happiness ! "

" I would gift her with beauty, wealth, and spirit ; the world's treasures : that she may subdue the world."

"Let her mother determine," said Nightstar; "let her mother determine. Do you offer your gifts, and I will offer mine!"

The pallid mother trembled in every limb while the Queens performed their spells above her couch. At first, her vision was perplexed: she saw, floating around her, those animated atoms of the mysterious world that have so much power over our destinies—without recognising what or who they were. At length she singled out the two Queens—Nightstar, as a living thing of light—Honeybell, as only a creature, beautiful and minute. The Nurse saw that Geraldine's eyes were fixed, and that she seemed entranced; this, she fancied, was but a wile to get her to take her eyes off the child. Presently, her lady's lips moved, and she spoke softly and slowly, as if she were replying to certain questions, which the Nurse did not hear. "Whatever will give her most happiness, and make her most beloved—no woman was ever happy who was not BELOVED," she said. There was a pause after she had spoken these disjointed words; and the Nurse observed that her soft eyes wandered first to one side, then to another. She tried to call Randy, but her tongue refused its office;



she clutched the infant firmly in her arms, and kept her eye steadily upon it. Again words came faint and wearily from the mother's lips. "Thank you, thank you—if you cannot prevent the world from assailing her—it is well to teach her to endure—we must all do



that—the more love, the more endurance—riches, honours, and beauty, are fine things—but LOVE IS THE PERFUME OF LIFE!" There was another pause, and the young mother's eyes were illumined by an expression of tenderness, resignation, and joy, such as had never gladdened them since her widowhood. Her lips quivered, and after a time, large tears welled forth, but disappeared before they reached her cheek—removed by some invisible agency. "There is good to be gathered from both such sponsors," she said again; "but you think my thoughts—to be LOVING and BELOVED. So let it be!"

A soft mild light shone through the chamber—the atmosphere was filled with most sweet fragrance, and music soft and low. The Nurse urged by an irresistible influence, arose, and placed the infant on the mother's bosom. And as it drank its first draught of LOVE, it became imbued by that regenerating essence which cheers us from the cradle to the grave!







Drawn by W. E. Pout, A. R. A.

Engraved by G. Dohrn.

THE FAIRY RING.

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PART THE SECOND.



THE kitchen at 'Dovecote,' as Mrs. Raymond, in happier days, had named her cottage, was a long rambling room; dried hams and fish, intermingled with bunches of herbs, were suspended from the rafters; and in a division, 'hurdled' off for the purpose, the Nurse's favourite poultry, and, occasionally, a weakly lamb, or a brood of tender turkeys, while their red heads were

progressing, found a well-warmed shelter. It was sufficiently confused

and straggling to be styled 'picturesque,' and as uncomfortable as picturesque interiors generally are; there was a more than usual quantity of piggins and noggins, and



very fine old chairs—some gaunt and high-backed, others grotesque

and clumsy; it contained a dresser, garnished by more 'crockery' and pewter than 'Nurse Kitty' cared to keep in order; a settle, a losset, and wheels for spinning both flax and wool; and a deep chimney—a perfect cavern of blackness, even when the fire burned brightest—made mirthful in winter by the merriest of crickets. A door, it will be remembered, opened from the kitchen into the chamber where the sweet subject of Fairy contest and Fairy care had drawn her first breath of life. In a small parlour at the opposite end of the dwelling she received the name of 'Eva.' Before I tell how swiftly time flew—what it created and destroyed—what it mended and tattered—I must describe, briefly, the up-and-down, half-rustic, half-ornée, habitation, where her childhood was passing. DOVECOTE certainly did not turn



'its silver lining to the crowd;' the road view of the cottage was scarcely more than a mass of white wall and brown thatch; but those who were admitted within, and inhaled the perfume of its delicious garden, wondered what magic had been exercised to make so humble a place

a very paradise of beauty. There was a strange mingling of architectural incongruities about it. The window of the sitting-room might have been called an oriel; it was laced with stained glass, and overhung by woodbine and clematis, where the butterfly, and that gigantic beauty of Kerry—the great dragon fly—sported from sunrise to sunset. Next to this, a little square lattice peeped forth, plain and unadorned, save by the white curtain within; and beyond that was a porch—a perfect bower of climbing roses. At the other end, was the ordinary kitchen-window, beside which Randy was generally found seated—so much did he delight in watching the spray of the Torc waterfall, that gleamed above the trees. Opening, as this window did, upon the bend of the lawn, shaded by a sturdy rowan tree, and canopied by magnolia and variegated holly, it was in itself a study for a painter. A long grass bench, tufted with wild flowers, stretched nearly the length of the cottage, and then terminated abruptly at the porch, where the forest of roses rambled out and about, giving shelter to wrens, tits, and robins, half-way to the top of the pointed gable which rose above it. Such a magazine of animated nature as both porch and gable had become!—the dear old gable!—which people said had been a tower, a castle, or something of an abbey—once. It was

truly a most beautiful half-saved ruin! Its projecting stones covered with moss a foot deep—the green triumphant ivy trailing around what had been a buttress—the wall-flower and snap-dragon nodding to each other from their several nooks; the lichens and maiden hair, and golden-cupped flowers, with broad shining leaves, and the delightful tone of the sage-green moss, that clings closely to old stones, so lovingly anxious for their preservation, adding by contrast to the natural harmony of the whole—overgrowing the nest of the restless martin; while, a little higher up, the swallow—his toilsome journey over—

knew that his home was ready. In a small niche-like nook an aged owl had dwelt for more than half a century; for men as old remembered



him so long, looking out at twilight, with the same air and manner—if not wise, at least contemplative and sedate. But, after all, the glory of the old gable was the weathercock ; there were old, very old, people, in Cloghreen, who remembered when the weathercock was *not* there, but none who could tell when it was put up, or by whom ; in short, there was a mystery—a story about it that was growing into a legend to try faith 'hereafter.' Everybody said the weathercock was too large for the gable—too heavy for the old wall ; but the wall bore up bravely ; gloried in the distinction ; and did not at all mind the long massive bar of iron that was passed through it, but seemed rather proud than otherwise of the curiously-wrought cross that stood out so clearly against the sky. Surmounting the whole, beneath this symbol of Faith, were crossed arrows, depending from either end of which originally hung the iron letters that designate the four points of the compass ; one of these had been removed, and a hand—the forefinger only extended—occupied its place. The cross was regarded with much veneration by the peasantry, and they failed not to draw omens from the birds that rested thereon. When the winds were wild, and contended madly together, the weathercock groaned sadly, and the old gable, with generous sympathy, echoed its complaints ; but, generally, it performed its duty silently—perhaps we may add—sullenly.

The garden of Dovecote had a charm, which neither pen nor pencil can convey ; it was evident that the presiding mind was of no common order ; one that understood where every flower might be *not* only seen to the best advantage, but be so placed as to augment the beauty of its neighbours. Such fuschias ! such myrtles ! such verbenas ! as flourished there, were never seen elsewhere in the open air, even in Kerry ; it was a well-arranged community of flowers and shrubs, grouped in most charming harmony—of trees bending gracefully over the green turf, where the rich-toned crocus, and the delicate snow-drop, blossomed long before they peeped forth in less sheltered parterres ; everything, indeed, was trained, as though nothing had been in training ; so ordered, that disorder seemed impossible.

In this happy retirement, the young widow and her child were passing their lives : the first years of infancy had vanished, as Geraldine thought,

without any danger having threatened her little Eva; but Randy was by no means of her opinion: he knew full well that the Kelpie Queen—who considered herself cheated of her right—had been watching for means to taint the mind and harm the heart of the young girl; and during the week that preceded her birth-day, he took little food or repose, but wandered unceasingly about the cottage, seeking and working charms. Always on her birth-days, it had certainly been evident to her mother that her temper became fitful; there seemed a contest in her little bosom between the spirit of evil and the spirit of good. She was restless—her eyes wandered—and she had said, more than once, she heard music when her mother sung not, and a louder rush of water than the fall of the waters of the Torc. The mystery that hovered around her made her an object of the deepest and tenderest interest to all by whom she was beloved.

Abundantly was the promise of her birth fulfilled. Richly indeed was this lovely child endowed with the purest and holiest affections of our nature. Her little life had been spent in discharging the offices of kindly love to all living things that came within her sphere. Inanimate nature shared her tenderness; not a drooping flower that she would not seek to revive, nor a bruised bough that she would not bind. This, to her, was neither care nor labour; on the contrary, it was her joy—her very life. She acquired music without an effort: loving it so dearly, that the complications of the science made her pastime: and whenever she wearied of her other studies, her mother had but to say, "If you loved me, you would learn," to urge her to increased exertion. If ever child was ruled and guided by the Law of Love, it was Eva Raymond! Even when guilty of faults which, though common to most children were uncommon in her, a word or two of tender reproach, rather than reproof, would at once cast her weeping on her mother's bosom. The purest passion sent from Heaven upon this sin-stained world is the love a mother bears her child! Enduring, faithful, and intense,—a perpetual sacrifice of self at the shrine of Nature,—a deep mystery, which, when fathomed, causes the world to wonder at its depth and purity. And Geraldine watched over Eva with a mother's tenderness, and much of a father's wisdom. Her whole life was



a mingling of hope and fear—not for herself, but for her child. Eva's appearance in the village was a jubilee ; parents pointed her out to their children, and children looked upon her with delight ; while her mother's friends vied with each other in returning her considerate, and yet childish, love. One she would greet with garden—another with wild—flowers ; to a third she would present fruit gathered by her own hand : for, though her mother was not rich, save in the possession of such a child, she managed to have something always ready to lessen the wants of those who needed ;—and surely, like the widow's cruise, the generous hand is replenished by Him who loveth a cheerful giver. Eva was liberal in giving : she was more—she was generous to forbear. She could overcome any desire of her own, by the stronger desire of gratifying another ; and this in childhood is perhaps the greatest of all proofs of love ; for *then* the will is strong—the reason weak. As she advanced in years, her temper, at times, became more easily excited than was seemly, and she was strongly inclined to jealousy—not envious—there was no envy in her nature—but jealous if she were not loved. She would praise and caress a playfellow, and tell over to her mother all the child's good deeds, and do all she could to create in her an affection for the child ; and yet if her mother manifested much tenderness towards her companion, she would shed abundant tears—tears without words or murmurs. And this often troubled the gentle widow, made her thoughtful to call some other great feeling into action, and sometimes to doubt if her choice, at the child's birth, had been the safest and wisest ; for if love, the pure love of her innocent heart, brought its ecstasy of happiness, it also conveyed its poignancy of pain : and then she remembered that none born into life can be separated from its sorrows—that the best lesson we can learn is to endure them—that the sweetest softener of our own griefs, is the privilege of soothing the griefs of others.

Time was passing ; year added unto year its gatherings of knowledge and affection, and also its strength of will ;—another and another birthday went by, unmarked by any obvious danger. Child though she was—a very frolic, a toy, a delight, a sunbeam, a comforter—as far as love went, a friend—still she had hours of deep thoughtfulness,

mingled with tears—unaccountable tears—and fits, not of sullenness, but of silence. Her seventh birth-day had now arrived, and her mother considered it as the passing away of childhood, for, in most things, the child had wisdom beyond her years. Day broke with even more than the loveliness of that lovely season; Randy arose with the sun from the green bench whereon he had passed the night, and proceeded to sort the herbs he had collected in the moonlight.



They were the wild herbs that had grown upon THE BANKS OF THE RAPID LAUNE—where the grass is ever young and always green; for the fairies love the moist place, and keep its verdure fresh and sweet at all seasons: in winter the frost comes not here; in summer no arid heat parches up the blades that are full of generous life. The village children are happy when their plays are on this pleasant sward.

He was not long alone, for the Nurse soon joined him with a cordial greeting and a cheerful 'good morrow.' "Seven, Randy—seven to-day! and she looked wise enough last night for double that: if ever there was a born sunbeam it is that little darling."

"Ay," added Randy, "whose skin is as white as the blossom of the cuckoo sorrel; whose eyes are as blue as the flower of the flax; her lips red as the berry of the wood-strawberry that grows on steep Glena; her hair black as the raven's wing;—isn't that poetry, Kitty!"

"Poetry!" repeated the Nurse, contemptuously. "I'd thank you not to be drawin' comparisons of her beauty from such wild unnatural things as ravens' wings."

"True for ye," he answered; "and I wonder any mortal has the daring to lift up his voice when such as that is looking at him!" and Randy reverently uncovered his head to the sun, which had just risen from behind the mountains—a huge eye of glowing fire, whose rays penetrated the deepest and darkest forests of the beautiful glen.

"The birds don't mind it," said Kitty; "you hear them singing."

"Hymns!" replied the Woodcutter. "Hymns, and bits of praise and thankfulness: the flowers, poor things, open their leaves to the same tune; every blade of grass lifts itself up in gratitude at sunrise. Sure, I heard the unfledged birds learning their matins from their parents an hour ago in the old gable. Such a twittering!—and now, hark how they sing out!"

"I think," continued the Nurse, after a pause, more in compliment to Randy's feelings than to her own: "I think I never saw so round a ring as that down yonder on the grass; there's twice as much dew on it as on any other part of the lawn. What made it, Randy?"

"Agh!" was the only answer to this leading question.

"Well," she continued, "I never thought you a bit like yourself since the night she was born. Seven years this blessed Midsummer night—and what a night that was!"

"It's yourself and the ould pusheen cat that's alive still—'tis you both might say that, if you had any knowledge," replied the Woodcutter.

"I—and the cat! the ould grey pusheen that sleeps the four quarters round, barring Midsummer?"

"That's it!" explained Randy: "that cat will never sleep another Midsummer night after what she went through: she always looks ould at Midsummer. A dale that ould pusheen might tell the world of what she sees and thinks; but she's wise and—silent. There's more than one might learn a lesson from a silent cat."

"You know all about herbs and cats, Randy; but you never say how I look," said the nurse.

"Indeed, then," he replied, mingling his observations with comments

upon his herb-gatherings: "I think you always look the same: the elder's a fine thing, and so is the ash; and the hazel, and liverwort, and ragweed, so are they—fine things;—I don't see any change for the better on ye these twenty years. Camomile, it's bitter but true—the herb for you; and the sweet of the violet—the colour of her own eyes. There's an ould rhyme that was ould when my grandfather was young: something about

'The rose is red, the violet's blue,  
Carnation's sweet, and so are you.'

but there's no flower of the garden sweet enough or beautiful enough to go alone upon her birth-day. But what's here," he exclaimed, hastily; "I never could have gathered the wild rue, nor the wet dogweed, nor the water nettle! Was I mad, or are they put here for a warning?"

"He is mad, and he always was mad," said poor Kitty, "and knows more, I fear, than a Christian man should; and yet sees nothing hardly



worth seing around him! Lord help us! Why doesn't he catch the ould CLURICAUN, that does be mending his brogues, night and day, under the shadow of the cow-thistle? Why doesn't he lay hould of him and make him give up the purse o' goold he carries, ever and always, in his pocket. A fairy man! enagh! and can't catch the only fairy worth catching—the ould cobbler that would make the little mistress as rich as she is beautiful! a fairy man!" and the Nurse retired to her own territory to prepare the several 'treats'

her best skill could devise, in the forms of Sally-Lun and Slim-cake, for her darling. But Kitty was not allowed to remain long at her occupation. She had enough to do to answer the taps at the door, and receive the various little tokens by which high and low, rich and poor, sought to testify their affection for Eva Raymond. Long before she unclosed her eyes, her mother was praying by her bedside—praying earnestly to the Author of all good to protect her child through time and for eternity. THE MOTHER, so fair and young, seemed like a sister bending over a sister's couch; but no sister ever framed such prayers—no sister ever felt such love! It increased

the more for that she saw the child's face grow troubled, while slowly, from between her closed lids, large tears came forth, flooding her glowing cheeks, and her head moved so restlessly on her pillow, that Geraldine



awoke her, and while folding her to her bosom, murmured forth blessings and caressing words, such as have their source only in a mother's heart.

" I think I have dreamed such dreams before, mamma. I think I have, but I am not sure ; now that I see you and the sun, I am again quite happy ; but it was so damp and cold."

" What, my child ?"

" The water, mother ! but now it is all gone !" And then the Nurse came in, bearing a full basket of gifts ; presently the shadow of Randy was outside her window ; and in the happy elasticity of childhood forgetting all troubles, she bounded forth upon the lawn in the fresh air and bright sun of morning, as a young roe from a thicket on the wild-wood sward. " Hark, mamma ! how sweetly the birds sing ! and listen ! there is the

wood-quest. I do so love the coo of that dear bird: and here is Randy. Am I to wear that nosegay of curious herbs all day, Randy. Oh! I will; you gave me the same last year. I am quite, quite happy now—quite happy, and thankful, and will be so good. Look, look, how brightly plays the waterfall! Look! I never saw the spray so high above the trees." Her gaze was again turned towards the waterfall, and again she expressed a wish to watch the play of its gems in the sunlight, exclaiming, with more than her usual eagerness, "Oh, mamma! how I do long to bathe in it: to feel it fall among my hair, and grasp its jewels in my hands."

"Not fresh and fasting—go not near water at all, this day," replied the Woodcutter; "oh! darling, be led and said by me, the whole of this blessed day. Listen, avourneen:—A pair of thrushes, dear, built their nest in a beautiful bower, and an ould wood-quest had a grate love for them, and used to sit and watch, and think how happy they were, and pray that they might be always so: but the male bird said to his mate, 'it's a poor country, and I must go into another, and gather food against the young ones come out in the nest we have made, and cry for food; and we have none to give them.' And the poor mate said, 'Don't go, avourneen deefish, for when the time comes we shall not want food; there has been a hard winter, and the sunbeam always comes out when the cloud is gone; so you see, there will be plenty of red-worms in spring, and ripe berries in summer; and He who sends both will take good care that we want neither: go not from me, for life as it is, is all too short to enjoy your song:' but he would go; and the fowler spied the brave free bird as he winged his way, his heart full of the memory of his own nest: and his eyes full of the image of the patient loving mate, who would have stayed his going; and the cruel fowler aimed at his true heart, and his aim was steady, and the bird returned no more."

"Hush," whispered Eva; "hush, Randy! look at mamma?" and then in a loud voice she added, "I do not want to hear any more about the old thrush birds, Master Woodcutter; but I do want to hear about the young thrush-bird and the old quest; that's yourself and me, Master Randy. Ah! I've found you out, and I'll finish your fable:—the young thrush-bird was a wild, wilful, naughty, little bird, that would fly hither and thither, no matter how the old wood-quest croaked."

" Wood-quests don't croak, Miss Eva."

" Well, cooed! " she said, laughing ; " though the coo of an old wood-quest is almost a croak ; is it not ? "

" It's anything you like, avourneen deelish! and you may laugh as much as you like, if you mind me."

" Well, I will, indeed I will ; but, Randy, whisper," and she drew down his rugged head ; " make fables about anything but mamma and poor papa ; it kills me to see mamma's tears. What were you thinking of, you stupid Randy ? "

" Of you, darling—the powers forgive me! of nothing else do I ever think ! but I'll mind dear, and not fret the mistress again."

Eva held up her finger as she turned away, saying, with a playful pout : " Every other little girl has her own way on her birth-day ; while I dare not move but in your shadow, Randy. May I gather you some flowers, mamma, and some to give to those who so remembered me. I will sit by your side and bind them up, and after that we will go to the cottages, and then—but I will first gather the flowers." While her mother watched her movements, Randy stood by the mother's side.

" I learned a dale," he said, " last night ; some I may tell, some, indeed, I don't quite understand myself ; those *you know* watch and wait upon her, and pour right thoughts into her mind, and love her, and think her as worthy love, as she will be of honour ; their power will be with her for good, till she is herself a mother ; but danger is over her still, and she must beware water ; she must

beware water," he continued, trembling from head to foot, so intense was his earnestness ; " by night and by day—at Midsummer, more particularly—the whole of this blessed day and night, until to-morrow's sunrise, lady, she must beware water."

" Well, so she shall, Randy ; I promise you," replied Geraldine, " she can meet no harm among our own flowers ; and see," she added " she is moving her favourite plants within your fairy ring."

