

Instantly interest lighted up her face, and after more elaborate directions—

"Would I be showin' ye the way, miss?"

I caught at the notion. But what was she supposed to be doing here?

"Lookin' for two asses, miss."

But ought not she to find them?

"Oh no, indeed." Apparently she was indifferent as to whether they were found or not. "But indeed it would be very tiresome when ye put two asses into one field, and they be strayin' into anither, miss."

I heartily agreed. What was her name?

"Ka-atie. Ka-atie Quirke."

Rather dull of me, but I have to ask her to spell it.

"K-a-t-i-e Q-u-i-r-k-e."

"Oh, Katie, of course!"

From that moment Ka-atie applied herself to taking my measure.

"Is yer father alive, miss?"

After a pause, "Is yer mither alive, miss? Who would be buried that ye know in the cimitery, miss?"

Satisfied on these subjects, she helped me gather some of the flowers in the lane that was so muddy and so lovely. It was blue with violets, soft with moss of indescribable green. The rain seemed in keeping with it, typical of the smiles and tears of the Irish nation. Ka-atie might have been haymaking for all the heed she took of the damp. She darted up banks to inspect a stray ass or so, and sat calmly by brooks to gather clusters of primroses. Together we collected a moist armful of beauty. Between whiles I was still the object of her interest.

"They're grand specs ye have on, miss. Would they be a deal of money? Would ye be able to fasten them on yer blouse as well as yer coat, miss?"

I now thought it my turn for polite enquiries.

"Was Katie's mother alive?"

"No, miss."

"What did she die of?"

"The influenzy, miss. That's a grand bag ye have. Would that be costin' a deal?"

On our arrival at the cemetery Katie, having possessed herself of the name, peered at the headstones in the soaking grass. "No, that's Patrick O'Reilly or Timothy Rourke."

Right on the brow of the hill was the grave we sought. Together we clipped and weeded and laid our treasure from the lanes among the moss of that peaceful resting place. She looked rather enviously at the glass cases and artificial wreaths on the other side. "It is a grand grave that," she said. Perhaps I fell a little in her estimation.

She fell in with delight with the suggestion that she should from time to time bring wild flowers to the mound we had beautified. "Sure it's next Sunday I'll be here and I'll see if the man has done what ye told him." This referred to my directions to the cemetery caretaker.

The walk home was all too short.

"Would the house that ye live in, in London, be as big as that one, miss?"

Nearing the village she forestalled my hospitable intentions. "Are ye hungry, miss?"

"Are you, Katie?"

"Yes, miss."

How she enjoyed her milk and biscuits, bless her. We exchanged visiting cards, so to speak, with merry promises to write to each other.

A curly-headed child a size smaller, "me cousin Biddy," joined us at the outskirts of the village. Together we went into the church, where the children crossed themselves devoutly and knelt to pray. Outside the door we parted, I on my solitary way, and they to the village fair.

My tardy conscience asked me, "How about the two asses?"

HENRIETTA HAWKINS.

WHERE?

A flock of winds came winging from the North, Strong birds with fighting pinions driving forth

With a resounding call:—

Where will they close their wings and cease their cries—

Between what warming seas and conquering skies—
And fold, and fall?

ALICE MEYNELL.

A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

Just being happy

Is a fine thing to do;

Looking on the bright side

Rather than the blue;

Sad or sunny musing

Is largely in the choosing,

And just being happy

Is brave work and true.

Be strong, we are not here to play, to dream, to drift;

We have hard work to do, and loads to lift;
Shun not the struggle, it is God's gift.

COMING EVENTS.

May 29th.—Rural Midwives Association. Tenth Annual Meeting. The Countess of Cawdor will preside. 3 Grosvenor Place, S.W. 3.30 p.m. Tea and coffee 4.30 p.m.

June 3rd.—Irish Nurses' Association: Reception of Guests to Nursing Conference, Dublin. Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland. 8.30 p.m.

June 4th.—Nursing Conference and Exhibition, Dublin, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland.

June 10th.—Annual Meeting, Colonial Nursing Association, Royal Colonial Institute, Northumberland Avenue, the Lord Ampthill, G.C.S.I., presiding. 3.30 p.m.

June 13th.—Duke and Duchess of Devonshire entertain Queen's Nurses at Devonshire House, London.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)