

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE STORY OF MARY DUNNE."*

Once more in narrative form we have set before us the unspeakable horrors of White Slavery. The thanks of the public are due to Mrs. Francis Blundell for having with such conspicuous ability, such delicate restraint, and such tender sympathy set before us that which, because unseen by us, we are all too prone to forget. Alas! too many of us imagine that legislation has, with one fell swoop, rendered impossible that such a disgrace to our manhood and womanhood can any longer exist, and so we complacently fold our hands and do—nothing! The pathetic history of Mary Dunne once more arrests us, and we ask ourselves:—Are there indeed and in truth still such foul deeds done, still such foul creatures rubbing shoulders with us, on God's earth? Read, and though it break your heart, read on to the end, but let it not be in vain.

Mary—lovely, childlike, devout; Irish, with all its winsome characteristics—lived high on the side of a purple mountain. "To one who viewed it from a near standpoint the whitewashed wall of the poor cabin might not have seemed so very white, but in Mat Kinsella's eyes it gleamed with pearl-like radiance, for was it not the dwelling-place of Mary, the beloved of his soul?"

The first glimpse we have of Mary we take in company with Mat, who has tramped from the village to see her. There were two girls dancing on the grass as he approached, one a curly-headed child of six, the other ten years or so her senior.

A tall, graceful creature, with a crown of golden hair catching the afternoon sun. To say Mary was sunburnt or tanned would be to give a false idea of that sun-kissed face of hers; it contrasted harmoniously with the dark brows and lashes that shadowed her blue eyes.

The two were dancing a jig.

"There, now, Eily, ye do be mixin' it up wi' the double! Och! I'm tired, anyway."

"Ah! don't stop," pleaded the child. "Let me thry wance more. I'll not forget this time."

"Right foot first then," cried the other. Now her clear voice took up the tune—"Diddle *ei*, diddle *ei*, diddle *ei*."

Sweet Mary, dancing in sunlight; how have we the courage to tell what followed?

The detailed incidents of cabin life alone make the book priceless.

Mat is not for Mary. "Himself," her father, decreed otherwise.

"Ye may whistle for her sure. What are ye, to be thinkin' of her at all? A sarvant boy with not a penny of your own, and the very coat on yer back paid for by his riverence."

Mat, "a decent boy, God help him," according to Mary's mother, emigrates with the determination to make a home for his darling.

"His riverence," the simple, pious, humorous

old man, so delightfully human in his sympathy with the young lovers, so diplomatic in his treatment of "Himself," is the innocent cause of sweet Mary's tragedy. She wishes to go to Liverpool, where wages are higher and not dependent on potato crops, where she will be able to send help to the little cabin on the mountain side, and lay by something to hasten re-union with her "boy." His riverence persuades "Himself," and Mary goes.

Mary goes. Good-bye, sweet mountain flower!

"Two letters for ye this mornin', Father."

"Two—that's a wonderful thing, Mrs. Malone! I hope one may be from Mary Dunne. I didn't think she'd be the girl to leave her old pastor so long without a line." After the reading of the letter he toils up the mountain side to visit Mary's mother. "Mary has had a bad accident. She is in a Liverpool hospital. Oh! woman dear, I hardly know how to tell you, but she threw herself under that motor-car."

Like a true father of the flock, he at once crosses to Liverpool, and finds there a bruised and broken mountain flower. The horror of his innocent child's fate, her simple trust in him, her broken story, we have endeavoured to convey in abbreviated form.

"Where did she take you, child?" asked Father Delaney.

"It was a quiet little cottage in the country, your riverence. I made sure I was goin' to be happy."

He stood up and stood looking at the girl, who lay very still with her face averted.

"God bless you, child," he said. "Don't fret, don't try to think. Just remember you're like a little straw lying on the tide of God's mercy, the infinite ocean of God's mercy."

He knelt stiffly down by the bed; somehow the petition which came to his lips was that which he was used to offer for suffering souls, the Psalm beginning "Out of the Depths."

The nurse followed him to the door.

"She's past all human comfort," he said, "but I put my trust in God."

We have not space to record Mary's subsequent history. Her tender reception by her mother, the ignorance of events in which "Himself" was kept, Mat's return and agony, the words which he spoke to "his riverence" in his anguish, "Would you ask me to take a corpse to my heart?" which explained the man's feeling and his outlook, should and ought, as a duty, be read, and re-read, by all thoughtful and earnest women. The cries of Mary Dunne and her martyred sisterhood still enter into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. Let it not be to our shame that we stop our own against them.

H. H.

A WORD FOR THE WEEK.

She who lays her gifts upon the altar of specific beneficence goes away justified; but she who casts her personal mite into the treasury of the common good is of a finer devotion, and greater soul.

* By Mrs. Francis Blundell. John Murray.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)