O, King of Glory, is it not a great change
Since I was a young man, long, long ago?
When the heat of the sun made my face glow
As I cut the grass, on a fine cloudless day;
Fair girls laughing
All through the field taking hay,
Merry in the fragrant morning,
And the sound of their voices like music in the air.
The bees were after the honey,
Taking it to their nests among the hay,
Flying against us nimbly and merrily,
And disappearing from sight with small keen buzz.
And the butterflies on the thistles,
And on the meadow daisies, and from flower to flower.
On light wing lying and rising up.
Moving through the air—they were fine.
The blackbird and the thrush were in the small nut wood.
Making sweet music like the songs of the birds,
And the sprightly lark with a song in her little mouth
Posing herself in the air aloft.
The beautiful thrush was on top of the branch,
His throat stretched out in melodious song.
And, O, God of Grace, it was fine to be
In benuestral Ireland at that time!

OUR WEEKLY STORY.

THE SISTERS.

By Stephen Dedalus.

Three nights in succession I had found myself in Great Britain-street at that hour, as if by Providence. Three nights also I had raised my eyes to that lighted square of window and speculated. I seemed to understand that it would occur at night. But in spite of the Providence, that had led my feet, and in spite of the reverent curiosity of my eyes, I had discovered nothing. Each night the square was lighted in the same way, faintly and evenly. It was not light of candles, so far as I could see. Therefore, it had not yet occurred.

On the fourth night at that hour I was in another part of the city. It may have been the same Providence that led me there—a whimsical kind of Providence to take me at a disadvantage. As I went home I wondered was that square of window lighted as before, or did it reveal the ceremonial candles in whose light the Christian must take his last sleep. I was not surprised, then, when at supper I found myself a prophet. Old Cotter and my uncle were talking at the fire, smoking. Old Cotter is the old distiller who owns the batch of prize setters. He used to be very interesting when I knew him first, talking about "faints" and "women." Now I find him tedious. While I was eating my airabout I heard him saying to my uncle

"Without a doubt. Upper storey—he tapped an unnecessary band at his forehead—gone."

"So they say. I never could see much of it. I thought he was sane enough."

"So he was, at times," said old Cotter.

I sniffed the "was" apprehensively, and gulped down some gin abroad.

"Is he better, Uncle John?"

"So I hear."

"O— he's dead?"

"Died a few hours ago."

"Who told you?"

Mr. Cotter here brought us the news. He was passing there.

"Yes, I just happened to be passing, and I noticed the window... you know."

"Do you think they will bring him to the church?" asked my aunt.

"Oh, no, ma'am. I wouldn't say so."

"Very unlikely," my uncle agreed.

So old Cotter had got the better of me for all my vigilance of three nights. It is often annoying the way people will borrow on what you have elaborately planned for. I was sure he would die at night.

The following morning after breakfast I went down to look at the little house in God's Britannie-street. It was an unassuming shop registered under the vague name of "Deeply." The drapery was principally children's boots and umbrellas, and on ordinary days there used to be a notice hanging in the window, which said "Umbrellas returned." There was no notice visible now, for the shop blinds were drawn down, and a grave bouquet was tied to the knocker with white ribbons. Three women in mourning, people and a telegram boy were reading the card pinned on the door. I also went over and read:—"July 21st, 189—The Rev. James Flynn (formerly of 2 St. Ita's Church), aged 65 years. R.I.P."

Only sixty-five! He looked much older than that. I often saw him sitting at the fire in the close dark room behind the shop, nearly mummified in his great coat. He seemed to have almost starved himself with heat, and the gesture of his large trembling hand to his nostrils had grown automatic. My aunt, who is what they call good-hearted, never went into the shop without bringing him some High Toast, and he used to take the packet of snuff from her hands, gravely inclining his head for sign of thanks. He used to sit in that stuffy room for the greater part of the day from early morning, while Nannie (who is almost stone deaf) read out the newspaper to him. His other sister, Eliza, used to mind the shop. These two old women used to look after him, feed him, and clothe him. The clothing was not difficult, for his ancient, priestly clothes were quite green with age, and his dogskin slippers were everlasting. When he was tired of hearing the news, he used to rattle his snuff-box on the arm of his chair to avoid showing that he did not hear. He then used to make believe to read his Prayer Book. Make believe, because, when Eliza brought him a cup of soup from the kitchen, she used to sit beside him and talk.

As I stood looking up at the crape and the card that bore his name I could not realise that he was dead. He seemed like one who had gone on living for ever if he only wanted to; his life was so methodical and uneventful I think he said more to me than to anyone else. He had an egotistic contempt for all women-folk, and suffered all their services to him in polite silence. Of course, neither of his sisters were very intelligent. Nannie, for instance, had been reading out the newspaper to him every day for years, and could read tolerably well, and yet she always spoke of it as the Freeman's Journal. Perhaps he found me more intelligent, and honoured me with words for that reason. Nothing, practically nothing, ever occurred to remind him of his own life (I mean friends or visitors), and still he could remember every detail of his in his own fashion. He had studied at the college in Rome, and he taught me of the speak Latin in the Italian way. He often put me through the responses of the Mass, he smiling often and pushing huge pinches of snuff up his nostril alternately. When he smiled he used to uncover his big, discoloured teeth, and let his tongue lie on his lower lip. At first this habit of his used to make me feel uneasy. Then I grew used to it.
That evening my aunt visited the house of mourning and took me with her. It was an oppressive evening of faded gold. Nannie received us in the hall, and as it was no use saying anything to her, my aunt shook hands with her for all. We followed the old woman upstairs and into the dead-room. The room, through the lace end of the blind, was suffused with dusky golden light, amid which the candles looked pale, thin flames. He had been confined. Nannie gave the lead, and we three knelt down at the foot of the bed. There was no sound in the room for some minutes except the sound of Nannie's murrating—for she prays noisily. The fancy came to me that the old priest was smiling as he lay there in his coffin.

But no. When we rose and went up to the head of the bed I saw that he was not smiling. There he lay solemn and copious in his brown habit, his large hands loosely retaining his rosary. His face was very grey and massive, with dinted nostrils and circled with scanty white hair. There was a heavy colour in the room—the flowers.

We sat downstairs in the little room behind the shop, my aunt and I and the two sisters. Nannie sat in a corner and said nothing, but her lips moved from speaker to speaker with a painfully intelligent motion. I said nothing either, being too young, but my heart spoke a good deal, for she is a bit of a gossip—harmless.

"Ah, well! he's gone!"

"To enjoy his eternal reward, Miss Flynn, I'm sure. He was a good and holy man."

"He was a good man, but, you see . . . he was a disappointed man. . . . You see, his life was, you might say, crossed."

"Ah, yes! I know what you mean."

"Not that he was any mad as you know yourself, but he was always a little queer. Even when we were all growing up together he was queer. One time he didn't speak hardly for a month. You know, he was that kind always."

"Perhaps he read too much, Miss Flynn?"

"O, he read a good deal, but not latterly. But it was his scrupulosity, I think, affected his mind. The duties of the priesthood were too much for him."

"Did he . . . peacefully?"

"O, quite peacefully, ma'am. You couldn't tell when the breath went out of him. He had a beautiful death, God be praised."

"And everything . . .?"

"Father O'Rourke was in with him yesterday and gave him the Last Sacrament."

"He knew then?"

"Yes; he was quite resigned."

Nannie gave a sleepy nod and looked ashamed.

"Poor Nannie," said her sister, "she's worn out. All the work we had, getting in a woman, and laying him out; and then the coffin and arranging about the funeral. God knows we did all we could, as poor as we are. We wouldn't see him want anything at the last."

"Indeed you were both very kind to him while he lived."

"Ah, poor James; he was no great trouble to us. You wouldn't hear him in the house no more than now. Still I know he's gone and all that . . . I won't be bringing him in his soup any more, nor Nannie reading him the paper, nor you, ma'am, bringing him his snuff. How he liked that snuff! Poor James!"

"O, yes, you'll miss him in a day or two more than you do now."

Silence invaded the room until memory reawakened it, Eliza speaking slowly—

"It was that chalice he broke. . . . Of course, it was all right. I mean it contained nothing. But still . . . They said it was the boy's fault. But poor James was so nervous, God be merciful to him."

"Yes, Miss Flynn, I heard that . . . about the chalice. He . . . his mind was a bit affected by that."

"He began to mope by himself, talking to no one, and wandering about. Often he couldn't be found. One night he was wanted, and they looked high up and low down and couldn't find him. Then the clerk suggested the chapel. So they opened the chapel (it was late at night), and brought in a light to look for him . . . And there, sure enough, he was, sitting in his confession-box in the dark, wide awake, and laughing like softly to himself. Then they knew something was wrong."

"God rest his soul!"

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