
The Mourner.
(A November Thought by T. A. Daly.)

Out o' bed of a mornin' was Mary McCroal
Before ever a sunbeam had cut its first caper,
An' had fetched from her door-step her bit of a roll
An' her wee jar o' milk an' her mornin' newspaper.
Then, the while she was wettin' her kittle o' tay,
She'd the paper forninst her ould specks as she read
What she held "the importantest news o' the day"--
An' that same was no more nor the list o' the dead.
She could aisily wait for the bit an' the sup,
But the hunger fur news she could never control,
Readin' wan colyume down an' the next colyume up,
Till: "Here's wan at St. Ann's," cried ould Mary McCroal,
"May the Lord rest his soul!"

She'd make way wid her tay in two minyutes or less,
An' she'd ready the table an' lay the cloth on it,
An' she'd deck hersel' out in her dacint black dress
An' her cashymere shawl an' her ould velvet bonnet.
Then 'twas off at a trot to the Church o' St. Ann --
To be there when the corpse an' the mourners came in.
Shure, what odds if she never had heard o' the man,
Nor had knowledge at all of a wan of his kin?
Faix, 'twas little, indeed, that the corpse needed care,
An' no bar to his soul on the way to its goal,
If no wan o' the mourners there bowin' in prayer
Prayed as strong or as long as ould Mary McCroal:
"May the Lord rest his soul!"

Ye might canvass the parish; not wan on the list--
Not a wan -- but would tell ye he couldn't remember
Anny funeral Mass that she ever had missed,
Under roses o' June or in snows o' December;
An' there's some that'd smile, recollectin' the sight
Of a red flannel potticoat, aye! an' a show
Of a dacint clane stockin', ould-fashioned an' white,
Whiskin' over the graves in the dust or the snow.
There was some might have said, wid a shake o' the head,
She was jisht an ould crow. But ye'd find, on the whole,
Not a wan o' thim all, when they buried their dead,
But was glad o' the prayers of ould Mary McCroal.
"May the Lord rest her soul!"

Aye! "the Lord rest her soul." Ah! the church was so bare
When she lay there th' day, fur the mourners were few.
But, shure, why should she care that the only wans there
Were the sexton, the priest, an' ould woman or twq?
An' what odds if the prayers at her passin' were brief
As the ride to the grave, when those prayers had been said?
An' what need was there here for the trappin's o' grief?
Fur, shure, death was a joy to this friend o' the dead.
Ah! 'tis well to believe that the prayers that she prayed
Fur the many before her who shared of her dole,
They have gathered together an' woven an' made
As a ladder o' light fur ould Mary McCroal.

May the Lord rest her soul!

PRAYERS: deceased relatives of Ernest Hechinger and George Kavanaugh; two others
deceased; James Gerend's mother and brother, undergoing operations; six special
intentions.