THE PROFESSOR IN ERIN

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GLOSSARY.

ARD-RIGH. – High-King. The title of the over-king of Ireland.
ATTACOTTI. – An under-race in ancient Ireland who overthrew the aristocracy for a time, and made one of their number king, but were finally defeated.
AIRE-DESA. – The lowest order of nobles in Ancient Ireland.
ABHAINN MHOR. – A great river.
A GRADH. – O love.
AIRMEDA. – A woman physician in Irish mythology, daughter of the leech-god Dianket.
AODH (*pron.* Ee) O'NEILL. – Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, the chief figure in the Nine Years' War in Ireland in the sixteenth century. He died in Rome, 1616, and was accorded a public funeral by the Pope, and was buried in the Franciscan church of San Pietro di Montorio.
AODH RUADH O'DOMNAILL. – Red Hugh O'Donnell, the young prince of Tirconnell (Donegal), who joined Hugh O'Neill in the Nine Years' War. He died in Spain, 1602, and was buried by the king's order with royal honours in the Cathedral of St. Francis in Valladolid.

BREHON. – Judge, who heard the pleadings in the law courts (Dals) of ancient Ireland.
BRIGH BRUIGID. – A woman judge in ancient Ireland.
BADBH. – Pronounced Bove. One of the war-goddesses in Irish mythology. She sometimes took the shape of a bird, sometimes that of a hideous hag.
BRUIGHEAN. – The public free hostels in Ireland maintained by the public. There were two classes, one class being for kings and nobles.
BRUIGID. – Keeper of a public hostel.
BEANTIGHEARNA. – Pronounced ban-tee-hearna. A noble lady, wife of a Tighearna or lord.
BAILE-ÁTHA-CLIATH. – The town of the Ford of the Hurdles. The Irish name of Dublin, pronounced Bla-Cleea.

CUCHULLAIN. – A famous figure in Heroic Ireland.
CONALL CEARNACH. – Conall the Victorious, another famous figure in Heroic Ireland.

CATH. – A battalion, consisting of three thousand men. Pronounced Cah.
CEANN. – Head. Used in the story for a sergeant.
CEAN-FEADNA. – Pronounced cann-fana, a captain of one hundred men.
CATH-MHILIDH. – Pronounced Cah-vella. Commander of a battalion.
CONNACHT. – The correct spelling of the province of Connacht. Pronounced Connut.
CARBAD. – A chariot used in ancient Ireland.
CARR. – A rough cart in ancient Ireland, generally drawn by oxen.

DUNGEANAIN. – Now Dungannon. The ruins of Hugh O'Neill's castle are near the town.
DUINE-UASAL. – Gentleman. Literally, noble man, or noble one.
DRUIMCLI. – Head Professor in the ancient Bardic Schools of Ireland.
DUN BULL OF CUAILGNE. – One of the Two Bulls in the ancient Irish tale, Tain Bo Cuailgne (the cattle raid of Cuailgne), in which Cuchullain and the Red Branch heroes, and Queen Meve of Connacht, figure.
DAGHA. – One of the greatest of the gods in Irish mythology.
DUN-EASA. – A famous cataract.

EMER. – The lovely young wife of Cuchulainn, who had the six gifts; the gift of voice, of sweet speech, of needlework, of wisdom, of chastity, of beauty.
EOGHAN RUADH O'NEILL. – Red Owen O'Neill, a brilliant general who held Arras for the Spaniards against the French, in 1640. Returning to Ireland, he raised an army and defeated the Puritan Commander, General Monroe, at the battle of Benburb, 1646. He was nephew of Hugh O'Neill.

FAT-NECK, SON OF SHORT-HEAD. – A giant who put Cuchulainn to severe tests.
FER-LEIGHNI. – Man-of-learning. A title in the ancient schools of Ireland.

GEIS. – Taboos. The High-Kings had several.

LAIGIN. – Leinster.
LIA FAIL. – The stone at Tara upon which the High-Kings were inaugurated. According to tradition this stone shouted when a king of the true Gaelic race stood on it, but was silent after the birth of our Lord. Petrie believes the pillar-stone now at Tara to be it.

MUMHA. – Munster
MAELMUIRE. – A man's Christian name (the servant of Mary, i.e. the Virgin) now anglicised Miles.
MACHAE. – One of the three war goddesses in Irish mythology. A malignant being, who feeds on the heads of the slain in battle. Hence she is said to be 'mast-feeding' after a battle.
MIDIR. – The fairy king of Bri-leith, now Slieve Golry in County Longford. One of the gods in Irish mythology.
MIDHE. – Meath. It was one of the five sub-kingdoms of ancient Ireland.

NAOMH PADRAIG. – Saint Patrick.

OLLAMH. – Pronounced Ollave. Professor, or doctor of learning; the highest degree.

RIGH-DAMNA. – Heir Apparent of the High-King of Ireland. Literally 'King-material.'

SRAID CRAOBH RUADH. – Pronounced Srawid creeve-rue. Red Branch Street.
STARUIDHE. – Historian. One of the seven 'Orders of Wisdom' in the schools of ancient Ireland.
SAI. – Pronounced see. Professor 'with noble wealth of knowledge,' in the schools of ancient Ireland.

TANIST. – Elected successor to a king, chief, or professional man.
TREN-FHER. – Literally Strong-man. A champion who answered challenges in the household of the king.
TIR-CONNEL. – County of Connel, now Donegal. The O'Donnells ruled there from the fifth century to the beginning of the seventeenth century.

TIR-EOGHAIN. – Country of Owen, now known as Tyrone, ruled by the O'Neills for centuries.
TLACHTGA. – The ancient palace of the kings of Meath.
TIR-NA-N-OG. – The Land of Youth. Elysium of the ancient Pagan Irish.
TUATHA DE DANAAN. – The people of Danaan. The gods of Ireland.

ULADH. – Ulster.

INTRODUCTION.

This is a fantasy, a dream-story. You are asked to accept the supposition that the history of Ireland for the last three hundred years was very different from what in reality it has been. You are asked to suppose that Ireland during those centuries developed normally, keeping her own language and laws, and following her own racial traditions. That such a development might have occurred is within the facts of history. For a time, towards the close of the sixteenth century, it lay within the region of possibility. For nine years Hugh O'Neill, descendant of the High-Kings of Ireland and Prince of Tyrone, aided by Red Hugh O'Donnell (the young Prince of Tirconnel) waged a successful war with the forces of Elizabeth. They were finally defeated at the Battle of Kinsale, 1602, and the work of planting Ireland with an alien population was carried on during the rest of the century. The most important of these plantations were those of the Scotch and English adventurers in Ulster in the reign of James I; the Cromwellian Settlement; and the Williamite which took place after the second siege of Limerick in 1691. The Battle of Kinsale was fatal to Irish independence, and its effect on the country was far-reaching and tragic. "There was not lost in one battle fought in later times in Ireland," writes Lughaid O'Clery, the hereditary historian of the O'Donnells in the seventeenth century, "so much as was lost then."

And his lament we may read, coming quaint and poignant, human and deep, across the centuries, as he counts the toll of the losses, and measures the wound of his country. Here it is in its English translation: -

"There was lost there first, that one island which was the richest and most productive, the heat and cold of which were more temperate than in the greater part of Europe, in which there was much honey and corn and fish, many rivers, cataracts and water-falls, in which were calm productive harbours. There were lost, too, those who escaped from it (namely those who fled from Ireland after it) of the free, generous, noble-born descendants of the sons of Milesius, and of the prosperous, impetuous chiefs, of lords of territories and clans, and of the chieftains of districts and cantreds; for there were never in Erin at any time together men who were better or more famous than the chiefs who were then, and who died afterwards in other countries one after the other, after their being

robbed of their father-land and their noble possessions, which they lost to their enemies on that battle-field. There were lost, besides, nobility and honour, generosity and great deeds, hospitality and goodness, courtesy and noble birth, polish and bravery, strength and courage, valour and constancy, the authority and the sovereignty of the Irish of Erin to the end of time."

The story – the dream-conception of a normally developed Ireland – brings from the real Ireland a German Professor, a famous Celtic scholar, by somewhat stage machinery, into a kingdom where he finds everything different from that Ireland in which he had arrived a few days before. All is interesting and strange to him. Within the fantasy, life appears to move naturally, yet, belonging as he does to two worlds, he falls into a dangerous situation from which he is only delivered by a return to his normal world.

This story was written some years before the War.

CHAPTER I.

It was late in the afternoon when Professor Schliemann, of Berlin, reached a hotel in Dungannon, a small town in the north of Ireland, having arrived in the country the day before to visit the scenes of the Nine Years' War in the sixteenth century. As the first authority on Old and Middle Irish and the Celtic languages, he was surprised to find that his name was unknown to Mr. Murphy, his landlord. His work on the Milan Glosses and the elucidation of obscure terms in the various manuscripts he had examined, had placed him in the fore-rank of Celtic scholars. For some time he had been engaged on a history of Ireland from the death of the last High-King, Roderick O'Conor in the eleventh century, to the flight of the Earls in the seventeenth. His object was to prove that Irish Gaelic history ended at that period; a view he held in opposition to that of his friend the French Celtologist, de Narbonne, who denied that Ireland had become politically, linguistically and socially an English province from that date.

When he had dined, he went to see the ruins of Hugh O'Neill's castle. They stood on an eminence, surrounded by trees, and a wind like a dirge moaned through the branches, while some drops of rain fell. Desolation, ruin, death, the tragic passing of a race, the wind *caoined* to his ears. Here, indeed, he felt the truth of his contention; and taking his notebook from his pocket, he began to write, moving slowly forward. Unnoted, a heap of stones and rubble lay in his path. Stumbling, he fell, and as he descended into darkness, his head struck some hard substance and he knew no more.

A tall thin man with a refined and bearded face was bending over him when he opened his eyes. "I am afraid you are hurt," he remarked.

The Professor sat up and looked around. Electric lights revealed a large room, with a vaulted, groined roof, and walls lined with iron doors. One stood open. On a shelf he saw parchments, papers, and large leather bound volumes.

The stranger spoke again. "If you will tell me where you live," he said, "I will drive you there."

Schliemann rose slowly to his feet. He felt confused and giddy. A few broken words in German fell from his lips.

"Come with me, sir," said the gentleman, and took his arm. "The fresh air will revive you."

He led him from the room, and up a flight of steps. The stairs brought them to a large hall, whence they passed into a courtyard. A full moon shone upon the walls of a great building that formed three sides of the square. Lights gleamed from its windows.

Crossing the courtyard, they reached a gate, guarded by a sentry. A wide street led past handsome buildings. Between rows of trees ran a central walk; and the white electric lights shone upon a statue of a man on a great marble pedestal with bas reliefs of martial figures. The man wore a crown; his hand was on a drawn sword.

A large car stood under one of the lights. Guided towards it by the stranger, Schliemann got in, and lay back on the cushion. He began quickly to revive, and his thoughts grew clearer. As the car passed rapidly through the streets, he saw he was in some unknown city. "Where am I?" he asked.

"In the royal city of Dungeanainn," his companion answered. "I am taking you to my house. I shall be happy for you to rest there and we can summon a doctor."

"It is very kind of you, sir. I left Berlin three days ago to make an exhaustive study of the scenes of Hugh O'Neill's wars in the reign of the English queen, Elizabeth. And that I may not trouble you unnecessarily, I now recall where I was staying. It was at Murphy's hotel in the Main Street."

The gentleman listened courteously; he made no answer. When the car stopped before a large house, he helped the Professor to alight. They crossed a handsome hall, and went into a room whose walls were hidden by shelves laden with books.

Excusing himself for a moment, the gentleman left the room. Schliemann sank on a chair, and glanced around. His mind grew clearer. Not long ago, he remembered, he had been in O'Neill's ruined castle; and the last room he had seen was the shabby and not overclean one in Murphy's hotel. He was now in a house that evidently belonged to a man of wealth and culture. There had been a sequence of events. He would follow them. First, he was in the ruin entering a statement in his notebook. Then he had stumbled; fallen over stones, and

descending into a vault or dungeon, had lost consciousness. So far was clear. Discovered there, he had been brought to the chamber (probably by the gentleman in whose house he now found himself) of some municipal archive, some underground library, and still half stunned, had been further helped by this person.

His glance fell on a book that lay on a table near his chair. He took it up and opened it. It was an epic poem, written, he was interested to find, in Irish. The preface informed him that it was the work of a writer in the seventeenth century, and, considered one of the masterpieces of the world, had been translated into every European language. He looked at a second book, a series of lectures on radium in Irish. A glance at a third revealed a novel in the same language, also said to be a masterpiece.

Interested in these discoveries, and feeling better, he rose and examined the nearest book shelf. The majority of the works were in Irish, dealing with every branch of knowledge. There were books in German, but none of his own; and copies of all the extant classics of the ancient world, together with works in Arabic, Hindostani, and the modern European languages.

A large volume presently caught his eye; he drew it from its place. "Ireland from the Reign of Aodh I to the Accession of Niall II," it was entitled. Some humorous production, he thought, as he opened a page. But the work was closely printed, and had notes and a long list of authorities.

He went back to his chair, and read its table of contents. That of Chapter I ran thus: -

"Condition of Ireland politically and socially in the sixteenth century. – Aodh O'Neill. – Aodh Ruadh O'Donnail – Coalesion of North and South. – The Arrival of the Spaniards. – Elizabeth of England, her policy as carried out by her Viceroys and agents. – The Battle of Kinsale: total defeat of the English. – Aodh O'Neill's march on Dublin. – Capture of Dublin. – Aodh O'Donnail defeats the enemy in Connacht."

The tables of the next Chapters showed the restoration of the Irish monarchy, the gradual settlement of the nation, the rebuilding of Tara, the Laws revised, the development of trade; the revival of Art and Literature, and the increasing prosperity of the kingdom. The

Professor laid down the book and looked around again. A glass case, set in an oak frame, attracted his attention. It stood on ornately carved legs; from each hung a fine steel chain. A cluster of electric lights hung above it.

He got up and looked into the case. The glass was set in lead; beneath, on white silk, lay two open vellums. The size of the page and the penmanship differed in each. Both manuscripts had the appearance of immense age. He regarded them with increasing interest. It was in the examination of such ancient books that his most important work lay. He took out a magnifying glass, and bent over the case.

The door opened, and his host appeared. He paused on the threshold, and fixed a keen glance upon the Professor. What he saw was a little man with a large head covered with thick white hair still showing here and there traces of its original flaxen colour. The thin firm lips were pursed below the broad and somewhat turned up nose. The face was clean-shaven.

From behind a purple curtain came the voices of a man and woman. The Professor raised his head. He closed his glass as he saw his host.

"You are better, I am glad to see," the latter said.

"Yes; but these books, these vellums – they interest me exceedingly. If they are not forgeries, you have here two pre-Patrician vellums long lost to the Celtic world." The Professor swung his glass.

"They are not forgeries, and it is as you say," was the reply.

The Professor bent again over the case. No one could tell better than he if they were forgeries. But the examination of the script would be the work of months.

"I am the possessor of the one extant copy of the *Codex Dromsneachta*," the gentleman continued. "And, also, of the second known copy of the *Psalter of Tara*. The other copy is in the royal library at Tara. Many scholars visit me to see them."

The Professor sought for his card-case. "I must have left it in Murphy's hotel," he muttered. Then in a louder tone: "My name is Schliemann, I am Professor Schliemann of Berlin."

His host bowed. He did not appear to be impressed by the name, or to be aware that he was in the presence of the greatest European

scholar of Old and Middle Irish. "My name is Duald MacFirbis," he replied.

"A descendant of the great genealogist?"

"There have been several of my ancestors of that name. We have been hereditary historians of Connacht for sixteen hundred years."

"I am glad to meet you," the Professor said warmly. "You can help me, I am assured, in the research I am about to undertake."

"It will give me much pleasure to serve you," was the courteous answer. "And from finding you in the archives of the palace, you have, I conclude, permission to pursue your researches there."

"Ah, that is the mystery! I cannot explain my presence in that chamber from which you rescued me. Only this afternoon – unless I have lost count of time – I was in a small town called Dungannon. I was examining the ruins of O'Neill's castle, when I met with an accident. I tripped over some stones, and fell into a vault, and knew no more till you kindly came to my aid."

There was a pause; MacFirbis's eyes studied his face. "I should advise you to rest," he said. His tone sounded to Schliemann unnecessarily solicitous.

"Later, later," he answered, impatiently. "There is much to interest me in this room. Those priceless manuscripts, your clever extravaganza," he pointed to the history, "a reversal of the actual facts."

"It is my work. It is not exhaustive, but as far as it goes it is exact."

"An exercise of the brain, of the imaginative faculty, I presume, to show how the history of Ireland might have been written."

"It is the history of Ireland, and I have been careful in my authorities."

The Professor stared in his turn. "Crazed," he thought, "or carrying on a stupid joke." He planted a hand on each hip as he gazed into the other's face.

He was about to speak when the purple curtain was drawn aside. Through an open door he caught sight of a table set out for dinner. Across the threshold came a girl in a gauzy evening dress, carrying a

white cat in her arms. "I hope Midir is not here," she said, addressing MacFirbis as she stroked the cat.

"He is in his kennel, Sorcha. Has Geoffrey gone?"

The girl's colour deepened a little. "He has not gone," she replied.

A chair was pushed back in the next room, and a man's step crossed the floor. "No, Historian, I am here," a voice said.

A young man appeared in the doorway. Straight-limbed, tall and handsome, he wore a dress, or uniform, that fixed the Professor's attention upon him. The tunic was white, collarless, and embroidered in gold in interlaced Celtic ornamentation across the breast. A wheel-brooch of gold clasped a short white cloak with a deep fold of scarlet, that hung from the right shoulder over the back. His kilt was of white; the leggings, strapped by dark bands, were tipped with gold. He wore an emblazoned sabre-tash. The sword was in a chased scabbard.

His eyes passed over the Professor, blank of interest. They turned to MacFirbis. "I have an hour before I go on duty," he said. He glanced towards a clock and corrected himself, "two hours," he added.

"You will, then, dine with us," said MacFirbis. He looked at the Professor. "This is Ceannfeadna Geoffrey Keating," he said, "a young officer in the King's Foot Guards."

"You bear a distinguished name, young sir," the Professor answered. "But may I ask what the prefix Ceannfeadna means?"

"You are then not acquainted with our military titles," said MacFirbis, "in spite of your excellent Irish, which interests me, as it is a mixture of the medieval with idioms and sounds more confined to our peasants. Ceannfeadna means captain."

"You are in a Scotch regiment, I conclude, I have seen your Highlanders."

"I am in an Irish regiment, sir," said the young man, "in the King's Foot Guards. This is our palace dress. We have more serviceable clothes for active service."

"In King Edward's?"

"In King Niall's."

The Professor was silent. A suspicion grew within him; he was in a private asylum for lunatics. He half turned to the door leading into the hall, then paused. He could not leave the manuscripts

unexamined. Brief as his gaze at them had been, they appeared to be of great antiquity.

MacFirbis asked if he felt well enough to join them at dinner. The invitation was courteously pressed again, as he replied that his dizziness had passed. It was repeated by the girl with a grace and charm of manner, as she looked at him with blue sane eyes, that reassured him that she, at least, was in possession of her senses.

He found the wines excellent, the dishes choice. Two men-servants were in attendance; these he eyed several times, wondering if they were the keepers.

The white cat sat on the girl's chair, looking with its secret green-blue eyes across her shoulder. Every now and then she talked to it. Captain Keating said little; he seemed preoccupied. MacFirbis and the Professor carried on a conversation, learned and heavy. Presently a servant announced the arrival of the doctor for whom MacFirbis had sent. He rose at once, and invited Schliemann to follow him.

CHAPTER II.

They returned to the library. A full-bodied man stood on the hearth-rug. He had a strong jaw, and eyes that seemed to swoop on the faces they saw and hold them by some invisible hook. MacFirbis introduced him as the Physician O'Liaig, and left the room.

"I am sorry to hear you have met with an accident," the doctor said. "The Historian's phone led me to think it was serious."

The Professor looked at him cheerfully. "I am delighted to see you," he answered. "I suppose you are the visiting doctor here. Yes, I met with an accident. I was in the ruins of O'Neill's castle, and while making an entry in my notebook, I tripped over a heap of rubble and fell into a dungeon. There is a soreness on the right side of my head, but otherwise I feel quite well."

The doctor left the hearth-rug; he stepped up to the Professor, and looked at his head. "There is a swelling and an abrasion," he remarked. Opening a bag he took out a bandage, lint, and a bottle, bound up the wound and advised the Professor to go to bed. "The swelling will soon be reduced," he added, "and a night's rest will make you all right."

The Professor pushed out his lips. "No, no," he exclaimed. "I am an elderly man, and do not mind appearing before the charming Sorcha with a bandaged head. You are a doctor? May I speak to you in confidence?"

"Most certainly."

"Then kindly inform me am I in a lunatic asylum? And further, I should like to know the name of this city in which I now find myself." The doctor busied himself for a moment with his bag. "I can assure you," he said pleasantly, "that you are not in a lunatic asylum. You are in the house of a high official, the Hereditary Historian of Connacht. As to the name of this town, it is the royal city of Dungeanain."

"But this is extraordinary. Before my fall I was in Ireland, in a small country English-speaking town called Dungannon, and my last recollection before my fall was that I stood in a ruined castle that had been the home of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, in the latter part of the sixteenth century."

"The impression can be explained," the doctor answered, "what you want now is rest. Your brain has had a shock. Take the medicine I shall send you, and in a few days you will be yourself again."

They shook hands, and the Professor watched him leave the room. Then he sat down, laid a hand on each knee, and stared before him. A question faced him, that required, he felt, an instant answer. If he were not in the society of lunatics, where was he then? Some link had snapped in his memory. Tales of men who had lost their memories and were found wandering in districts where no one knew them rose unpleasantly before him. Weeks, months, might have elapsed since he stood in the ruined castle. That he was in Ireland appeared probable; it was even certain. But where in that country did the higher classes speak Irish? And what men had written the mass of literature in that language that stared at him from the shelves?

His eyes travelled to the case. Wherever chance had thrown him, he had made a most important discovery. He must test the age of the vellums, and put the script to a searching criticism. The *Psalter of Tara* was a third century work, and the *Codex Dromsneachta* might even be older. The writing, the language appeared more archaic, more obscure than the oldest of the Glosses. Should the vellums prove genuine, or, as more likely, ancient copies, he must secure them.

But his thoughts troubled him again. The lost memory, the leap in the dark from the ruined deserted castle to the vaulted chamber with its iron doors. There was a mystery; he must find the clue.

As he sat thus absorbed, staring with knitted brows into space, he was aroused by voices in the dining-room. He looked round; the door was ajar. The tones rose; the words reached his ears.

"I regret that you do not see the impropriety of your request," he heard MacFirbis say. "It is impossible for me to give my consent. I have permitted you to come to this house, not extending to the son my quarrel with the father."

"But I beg you to reflect, Historian, that I love your daughter, and that she has this evening promised to be my wife." The second speaker was Geoffrey Keating. The Professor rose and went to the end of the library. Standing before a large enamelled clock, he examined the work. But the voices reached him there.

"This but shows that I should never have permitted the intimacy," MacFirbis replied. "Your visits here must end, and before long my daughter's good sense and her affection for her father, will show her than an alliance between a Keating and a MacFirbis is impossible."

"My father's quarrel is not mine."

"It must be. The Ollamh Keating makes an absurd and unwarrantable claim to the *Psalter of Tara* and the *Codex Dromsneachta*. He even dares to charge me with keeping stolen property."

"I have heard, Historian, at least he and my grandfather held that they had good grounds for claiming the books. But this is nothing to me."

MacFirbis's voice thundered through the room. "What! You believe the charge, young man!" There was a silence. Then MacFirbis again. His tone was frigid, "I must ask you to leave the house," he said. "I decline to speak with you further, I forbid you to address my daughter from this hour. No! it is not necessary for you to attempt an explanation. You need not apologise. Your father's quarrel is yours!"

There was the sound of a door being opened; someone went out; it was closed again. Shortly afterwards he heard MacFirbis's voice behind him.

"I trust your head will soon be healed," he said calmly, as if he had not just come from a stormy interview with his daughter's lover. "Perhaps you would like to go to your room?"

The suggestion was waived aside. The Professor pointed to the case. "Are they genuine?" he asked, "those two vellums."

"I can assure you they are," MacFirbis answered. "They are very ancient, and have been in the possession of my family for a great period of time. Yet for one hundred and sixty years they passed out of our hands."

"Then are you sure that these are the original manuscripts?"

"Quite sure, for they passed into the hands of men who belonged to the Hereditary Order of Historians. Besides which, no copy or forgery could have deceived us."

The Professor walked up to the case. "This is very interesting," he observed. "I regard their discovery as of great importance, and they

will throw much light on the study of Old Irish. It may, indeed, be possible that they are pre-Patrician copies of the works, of which we know there were later redactions made by monkish scribes, but which have been lost."

"Some late copies, or rather fragments, remain. But the value of the two vellums I possess is immense. They are actually the work of Pagan scribes; and the Hereditary Order of Historians has pronounced the *Codex Dromsneachta* as the original work, while my copy of the *Psalter of Tara* dates from the lifetime of King Cormac MacArt, and is a century older than the one preserved in the royal library of Tara."

"Tara!" the Professor exclaimed, "Tara is a collection of mounds."

"True, it was for centuries, but it has been a royal palace for three hundred years. But I am sure you are still feeling the shock incident on your fall. Your room is prepared, and as I have forgotten the name of your hotel, I have told my body-servant to provide your wants from my wardrobe."

"I thank you, I shall be glad to accept your hospitality for the night. The hotel is in the Main street, Murphy is the name of the proprietor."

"A foreign one, English, I imagine. I will look in the Directory. There will be a procession through the city to-morrow. The King leaves Tara by an early train to make a state entry into the city. He will proceed to the Cathedral to offer thanks to God for the recovery of the Righ-damna."

"The Righ-damna?"

"The Heir Apparent, Prince Conn O'Neill."

"I will go. – I will go to bed."

"It is the safest course after your injury. Pray follow me."

The two men left the room. They went upstairs to a large and handsomely furnished apartment. A bottle with medicine stood on a table; MacFirbis advised a dose. O'Liaig was one of the cleverest doctors in the city, he said, especially in cases of mental shock, such, for instance, as would result from a fall. He lingered a minute longer to wish his guest a restful night, and to hope his head would be better on the morrow.

When alone, Schliemann's mind wrestled again with the mystery of his surroundings. Was he in a lunatic asylum? It seemed the rational explanation of the circumstances in which he found himself. Yet it did not satisfy him. That hiatus in his memory – hours, weeks, perhaps months to be accounted for.

Another and weird answer suggested itself. His name was to be found on the list of Associates of the Psychical Research Society. Had he been thrown into a hypnotic condition by the fall? And was it his other self, his astral body, that now moved through these strange scenes? As one who had glanced at Psychology, the question interested him. Supposing the hypothesis to be true, it was possible that he might be able to see books that were no longer in existence.

Then he drew back sharply from this train of thought. He struck his legs and arms and chest, and smiled. No, he was solid, flesh and blood and bones; not a shadowy form of unknown and unweighable quantities. Instantly, the desire to look at the vellums seized him again; he started from his chair. There was a light in the passage when he looked out. It was empty, and the doors along it were closed. Softly he went forth; softly past the doors, along the corridor, down the wide stair, across the hall. He turned the handle of the library door.

Something rose from the moonbeam on the floor; a great dog. It fixed green-fire eyes on the Professor. He drew back, closed the door and returned to his room. There were iron shutters on the case, secured by the chains.

CHAPTER III.

When he awoke next morning, it took him a few moments to recall what had happened. Then he rose, removed the bandage, and dressed. The windows of the room looked on a large garden, with green lawns, rose-walks, and beds of brilliant flowers. The dome of some great building showed in the distance against a summer sky. There was the hum of a stirring humanity; the gathering of a concourse. From the many roofs and spires, he saw that he was in a large city.

He turned from the window on hearing a knock at the door. MacFirbis came in. Had the Herr Professor passed a good night, he asked in German; was he well? And the Professor, declining to speak his own language, answered in Irish that he had slept soundly and felt in good health.

"You have hidden from me, Sai (Professor) Schlieman,," MacFirbis said in a gratified tone, "that I have for my guest the famous Archaeologist whose discoveries in Crete, and on the site of Sagalassus, and in Asia Minor, have excited the interest of the world. I am delighted that a fortunate chance should have brought you to my house."

The Professor hastened to deny the deeds accredited to him and proclaim his own identity.

"It is my work on the Milan Glosses and ancient Celtic scripts," he said with emphasis, "that have given me what claim I have to renown."

But MacFirbis brushed the explanation aside. "You have the modesty of the truly great," he replied, "and would place the pastime of your moments of relaxation before your great and lasting deeds."

Schliemann looked offended. "My notes on the Milan Glosses have attracted some attention," he remarked shortly.

"It is, I am confident, my loss that I have not seen them. By the Milan, you probably refer to the Glosses on the manuscripts brought back from that city in the reign of Niall II."

"Those I mean are still in Milan."

"I have not heard of them. But your honoured name is indeed familiar to me, and your books on archaeology are now in my library.

It was my friend, Ollamh MacAodha, who was here this morning, who told me what a distinguished guest my roof sheltered. He has gone to get you a place on the balcony of the House of the Aire-desa of the city. The Aire-desa, as perhaps you know, has the same functions and duties as your Burgomaster, or the Lord Mayor of an English city. MacAodha will take you there, for I am unable to accompany you, as I should have wished, for, as Hereditary Historian of Connacht, I have to take my place in the procession with my four brethren of the First Order."

Sorcha did not appear at breakfast, and MacFirbis was summoned away when they rose from the table. The Professor went to the library, having first asked a servant if the dog was there. It was in its kennel, the man had replied.

He found Sorcha standing near the case, from which the shutters had been removed. Her back was towards the Professor; she drew a glove slowly on her hand. A chain of gold leaves, exquisitely enamelled, with a jewelled medallion, hung round her neck. Her head was crossed by a thin gold band; her hair hung to her waist. She was robed in silk that shimmered with tints of sea-green, pale blue and pink. She turned as he approached, and greeted him with a few words of welcome and an enquiry for his health.

"Can you open those locks?" he asked, pointing to the case, when he had replied.

She looked at it with a sudden blue flash of anger from her eyes. "No! My father keeps the keys."

"They are very valuable, very valuable and interesting."

"They are hateful! I wish they had been lost centuries ago!"

"Lost! Ach little Vandal, or Dane! It was the Danes who used to fling your manuscripts into the lakes. Why do you speak so fiercely?"

There were tears in her eyes; and he understood. In spite of his pugnacity and severely practical mind, there was a sentimental vein in his nature.

"Yes, yes, I see," he said, "the young soldier has angered your worthy father. But he may forgive him. It appears that his father thinks that yours has no right to these remarkable works."

She smiled, a little dainty but cold smile. He had in fact, put a big blundering foot down on the flower of her love. Not yet might he, a stranger, speak of it to her, or offer tactless sympathy. With the roses in her cheeks deepened, she turned her face aside. A footman entered, and said her carriage had come.

The man placed a silk cloak over her shoulders, and she bowed to the Professor and left the room. He trod swiftly to the case as the door closed behind her. For some minutes his eyes moved over the two pages; then he felt for his notebook. The cover was crushed; the leaves soiled; but his last entry was still legible. "In the ruins of O'Neill's castle," he had written, "I have evidence of the death not alone of a dynasty, but of a nation."

"I must have fallen at that moment," he said aloud. He raised his head and stared sharply about him. The door opened as he stared, and MacFirbis entered, accompanied by a short alert looking man with humorous mouth and eyes. The man wore a dark green silk cloak, with a branch of bells embroidered in gold on the back. He was introduced as the Ollamh MacAodha.

"A hundred thousand welcomes to Ireland, Sai Schliemann," he said warmly. "Your researches have been followed with deep interest in this country."

"You have read my works?" Schliemann asked.

"Certainly. Your discoveries have thrown light on the early races of Crete and Asia Minor, and on some disputed points in Hellenic colonisation."

"But I must inform you that I take no credit for these things. It is my Notes on the Milan Glosses and my Celtic studies."

"Yes, true. I had heard you were giving your attention to excavations that would throw much light on the Galatians in their first colonies in Asia Minor. I am glad to tell you that I have got you a seat on the balcony of the House of the Aire-desa. And I shall be delighted to take you there in my car."

MacFirbis left the room; the Professor pointed to the case. "You see those vellums – are they genuine survivals from Pagan Ireland?" he asked. "If I could examine them – a long and exhaustive

examination – I should be able to decide whether they were the age claimed for them."

"Oh, they are genuine. That is an undisputed fact. Their history can be traced through centuries. It is a pity that they should have made a breach between two learned families."

"Between my host Duald MacFirbis and the Ollamh Keating?"

"Yes, the story is public property, and you may have heard it."

"I only left Berlin last week, and am ignorant of the dispute."

"Then I will tell you, but I advise you not to refer to it when speaking to the Historian, or the Ollamh Keating when you meet him. In the middle of the seventeenth century there was a learned priest named Geoffrey Keating, he travelled through Ireland to study the ancient books in the care of the hereditary keepers, and visited MacFirbis's ancestor, the Hereditary Historian of Connacht, who gave him free access to his books. They formed a close friendship, and some years later in the turbulence of the civil war raised by O'Conor, Prince of Connacht, at the edict that freed the non-free clans, MacFirbis retired to Munster and sought refuge in Keating's house. He died there, and the two vellums remained in the hands of the learned doctor, who, we may believe, meant to restore them to their owners, the MacFirbis family. It was not till his father was dead that the son of Duald MacFirbis discovered that the vellums were missing. He at once claimed them. Keating's nephew, who had been admitted to the Order of Hereditary Historians, refused to restore them, declaring they had been given to his uncle. Appeals and threats proved useless, and even a private war; and it was not till one hundred and sixty years later that chance placed the books again in the hands of a MacFirbis. This was a mortal offence to the Keatings, who brought the matter before the Law Courts, and failing there, petitioned the king. But they were unsuccessful, and the books remain the property of the Hereditary Historians of Connacht."

The two men presently left the house, and got into MacAodha's car. The streets were crowded, and their progress was slow. From roofs and windows flags and banners waved, and garlands of flowers festooned the bright coloured cloths that draped the balconies. A great

throng of people moved behind the lines of troops that guarded the route.

They got out of the car, and going up a wide semi-circle of steps, passed through marble columns to the Hall of the Aire-desa. A broad stair led them to a long gallery that ran the whole front of the building. Numbers of men in what appeared to be a national costume, and richly dressed women, stood about. Standing apart, his eyes on the stair, was a tall elderly gentleman of dignified appearance. His portly figure was hidden by a cloak similar to that worn by MacAodha, with the difference, that the gold branch and bells were repeated on the wide flowing sleeves. As soon as he saw MacAodha, he came forward with welcoming eyes.

"I have been watching for you," he said. Then he turned to the Professor. "The famous Sai Schliemann?" he asked.

"Schliemann is my name," the Professor answered.

The gentleman took his hand and shook it warmly. "A thousand welcomes before you!" he said.

"It is the Ollamh Keating who greets you, Sai Schliemann," MacAodha explained, "with whose Analytical Treatise on the Philosophies of the Nineteenth Century, you are, of course, well acquainted. I hear it is a textbook in your Universities."

"A profound subject," the Professor answered, "but my work has chiefly lain in the study of Comparative Philology, and—"

"In your marvellous excavations," interrupted Keating. "We owe much to your spade."

The Professor's lips tightened. It was dawning on his intelligence that what he had accomplished was unknown to these people, who credited him with another man's work. The question whether to acquiesce in the mistake suddenly became an important and even ominous one.

"I have met your son," he said abruptly. "A fine young soldier with an historic name."

Keating looked pleased. "I value your praise," he replied, "Geoffrey has not mentioned that he had had the honour of meeting you, at which I am surprised."

"His mind, my friend, was full of another matter. I met him—" A warning glance from MacAodha stopped the sentence. The Professor coughed.

MacAodha put his arm through the Professor's as they went towards the balcony. "My dear friend," he whispered, "be careful not to mention MacFirbis. It is a deadly feud."

They took their places in the first row. The Professor leant his arms on the railing and looked down. The royal procession was already approaching. First came the trumpeters, men in rich liveries, riding black horses, who pealed loud notes on the great trumpets they carried. A column of cavalry followed, the men wearing yellow coats faced and braided with black; yellow and black plumes waved in their helmets. A detachment of foot marched behind, in moss green uniforms faced with tan, part, MacAodha said, of the regiment of Tir Eoghain. Then came a row of carriages, bearing men in handsome robes, the chief officials of the city, escorted by a body of mounted police in russet uniforms with buff belts. A troop of lancers in white uniforms with crimson facings followed; and immediately in their rear appeared a line of carriages, with men in brilliant-hued and magnificent dresses.

"These are the hereditary officers of the King's household," Keating remarked, "and are all of noble birth. That lord yonder is the Taisech Scuir, Master of the Horse. The lord in the carriage just passing is the Marshal of the Forces. He sits by the Door-keeper of Tara. That nobleman in dark blue and gold is the Keeper of the King's Treasures and Chess. By his side is the Keeper of the King's Hounds. Following is the Rechtaire, Superintendent of the Banquets. Every one of these lords represents some post in the royal household, inherited through generations from chief to chief. Some posts like that of Keeper of the Chess are very interesting survivals from an immense past. Most of the offices are honorary ones, conferring a special rank upon the person to whom they are attached. I would draw your attention to this horseman who brings up the rear of the officials. He is the Tren-fher, or Cath-milidh, the Strong Man of Battle, a figure attached to the retinue of the Kings of Ireland for so immense a period that not even our most learned heralds can tell at what date the post

of Tren-fher was created. He wears, as you see, an apron of white leather over his velvet coat, with the Royal Arms embroidered on the breast."

"Here come the King's Guards," exclaimed MacAodha, as the crowd began to cheer. "They are the tallest men in Europe. You remember, Sai Schliemann, that passage in Pausanias in which he speaks of the great height of the Celtic warriors who stormed Delphi three centuries before our era. But here are the King and Righ-damna."

As he spoke every one on the balcony rose, and the Professor stood up. The crowd in the street shouted, "Health to thee, O Niall! Health and the blessing of God to thee, O King! A hundred thousand welcomes, Righ-damna!" The applause and volume of welcome drowned the music of the bands. Schliemann leant forward. The world he was in appeared real, solid, the scene no dream. The royal carriage passed slowly, drawn by eight black horses, with trappings of scarlet and gold, led by footmen in white and gold liveries.

The King sat erect, saluting frequently. He was a middle-aged man with a look of youth in his eyes. His face was shaven except for a long grey moustache, and he wore the uniform of a cavalry regiment. He seemed to the Professor more a man of action than a profound thinker; a prince not afraid of a hearty laugh, a Chief with his clan, more than a monarch separated by his lofty position from the crowd. "Yet he is a diplomat, too," he thought, "by his broad brows." Then he looked at the heir apparent, the Righ-damna. The young man had a haughtier air, a colder glance, and a rarer smile.

"Here is the Princess Findebair, the King's only daughter," said MacAodha, pointing to a carriage that came behind the Royal Guard. "The lady by her side is her aunt, the Princess of Midhe. Findebair of Ireland is the most beautiful Princess in Europe."

She was a fair girl with dancing blue eyes, who smiled joyously on the crowd. Her aunt also smiled and bowed. The cheering as they passed was very loud.

"And who are these?" asked Schliemann as five carriages, each drawn by six white horses, approached.

"They are the Five Princes of Ireland," Keating replied. "That red-haired man so magnificently robed is Cathar O'Domnaill, Prince

of Tirconnell. Hear how the crowd cheer him. They remember Aodh Ruadh, his great ancestor, as well as his own merits. In the second carriage is the Prince of Midhe, whose wife is the King's sister. That young man in the third carriage is Turlough O'Brien, Prince of Thomond, whom rumour says is in love with Princess Findebair. That soldierly figure in the fourth is MacMurrough, Prince of Laighen; that grey-haired man in the fifth is O'Conor, Prince of Connacht. And now, Sai Schliemann, follow the chiefs of the Sean-Ghalls, from which race I am myself sprung. There, in that carriage, is the Earl of Kildare, with his Countess, a lady of great beauty. That dark, heavy-faced man, is the Earl of Clanrickard, and behind him comes the Earl of Desmond, with his wife and daughter. The Countess was Keeper of the Queen's Treasures to her late Majesty Queen Maire, who was, as you may remember, Princess Maire of Orleans, and her daughter is Lady-in-Waiting to the Princess. His Majesty has always made a point of honouring his Sean-Ghall subjects. Lord Talbot of Malahide sits in the fourth carriage, a nobleman who has a high post in the Government. The Earl of Ormond, also an important member of the Government, is in the fifth, and in these carriages are Preston, Viscount Gormanstown, Nugent, Baron of Delvin, and Fleming, Baron of Slane."

"All these nobles, I perceive, keep their Norman titles," said Schliemann.

"Yes, by command of Aodh II, in the seventeenth century, for there were a few of the Sean-Ghalls who wished to assume the ancient titles of the land. But King Aodh said that his Norman subjects were not less Irishmen and loyal subjects by keeping the titles their swords had won. And it is true that we Sean-Ghalls are proud of our descent, and do not forget it though loyal Irishmen."

"Here is my friend, MacFirbis," remarked the Professor, as a fresh line of carriages came into view. In each sat a man wearing a cloak, embroidered in gold, each cloak being of a different colour.

"They are the Five Hereditary Historians of the First Order," answered MacAodha, "and each province, as you see, has its own colour. The figure in the primrose-hued cloak is the Hereditary Historian of Munster; he in the crimson is that of Laighean; the black

cloak so magnificently blazoned and embroidered covers the shoulders of the Hereditary Historian of Uladh, and the green—" MacAodha paused, then deftly continued: "Here are their daughters. On high occasions one daughter, of each of the five, receives a command to be in the train of the Queen or the Princesses of the Royal House, and they have to wear their hair flowing and a necklace of a special design as their badge."

"I recognise the fair daughter of MacFirbis among these maidens," said Schliemann. "She is beautiful, and, in so far as I am able to judge, in no way resembles the modern female who seeks to be on a level with men. I am not surprised that young Keating has fallen in love with her."

He was recalled the next moment to the indiscretion of his remark by a nudge from MacAodha. But the mischief was done, and glancing at Keating, he saw the look of amazement on the latter's face change to one of blazing anger. For a moment he seemed about to speak, then remained silent till the last of the procession had passed.

CHAPTER IV.

"If you will join me at lunch in my house," he then said to the Professor, "I shall be delighted to have some conversation with you, and show you my collection of enamels."

"You can accept the invitation," whispered MacAodha in Schliemann's ear, "for the Historian of Connacht will be in his place in the Cathedral, and later will have to attend the King in the Palace."

Schliemann's hesitation was momentary. The spirit of the investigator was aroused in him. The more persons he met, the more sights he saw, the greater the probability of his being able to solve the mystery of his surroundings. He walked with Keating from the house of the Aire-desa to a street near one of the city parks and in the neighbourhood of the Palace.

The Ollamh's house showed evidence of wealth, and taste in its owner. The paintings in the wide vestibule and in the drawingroom struck the Professor as works of great beauty; and he noted rare vases and splendid treasures of art on the handsome cabinets and tables. Keating introduced him to his wife, a fragile-looking woman reclining on a couch. She had delicate features and a gentle, languid air, and excused herself in German from joining them at lunch.

During the meal the two men conversed upon the politics of Europe, and the Professor was interested to find that the monarchs and presidents that had been governing their countries before he entered Hugh O'Neill's castle were the heads of the powers whom the Ollamh knew. Some confusion of the various political situations arose when Keating referred to an Irish ambassador and to a treaty between the King of Ireland and the French Republic. From politics they passed to a discussion of the source whence Dante drew his "Divina Commedia"; and both agreed that he had been influenced by the "Navigato Brendani" and the life of Saint Fursa. It was not till the servants had left the room that Keating touched on the subject of his son.

"As we are now alone, Sai Schliemann," he said, "I would ask you a question about my son, Geoffrey. From what you said when we were in the house of the Aire-desa, it appears that you know more of his life

than he has allowed his father to know. Was it – or did I misunderstand you, as I imagine I must have done – was it at the house of the Hereditary Historian of Connacht that you met him? It seems incredible, and no doubt I am mistaken."

"I fear," replied the Professor, "that I shall arouse your anger and bring your displeasure on the young man's head, when I reply that it was. Is he your only son?"

"My only son," an iron gleam came into the Ollamh's eyes. "And it was there you met him?"

"He is in love with Sorcha MacFirbis and she with him."

The Ollamh rose from his chair. He looked at Schliemann with the gaze of a man face to face with some frightful fact; a gaze, dark, stern, astonished, expressive of a mind struggling with a passion incoherent and dumb for the minute; then he turned and paced the room.

Presently he paused. "This news that you tell me is the worst in the world that I could hear," he said; "worse than the death of my wife or the loss of my fortune. What grounds have you for saying that my son loves the child of a man whom I regard as my enemy?"

"I heard Captain Keating tell MacFirbis that he loved his daughter last night," replied the Professor, "and that the young lady loved him."

"And—" Keating's voice suddenly took a note of menace that made the Professor move in his chair, "and what did the Hereditary Historian of Connacht say?"

"He appeared extremely angry. He refused to listen to him, and ordered him to leave the house."

"In ainm De!"[1] – the words had a steely ring, and for a few moments the Ollamh seemed about to give vent to his fury. Then he swung round and paced the room again.

"It might have been wiser," Schliemann thought as he watched him, "had I remained with MacFirbis than entered the den of this infuriated parent. Here we have, it appears, in the twentieth century the feud of the Capulet and the Montague re-enacted."

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[1] In the name of God!

The silence lasted a couple of minutes, then the Ollamh came back to the table. There was a white hue about his mouth, and his eyes were like flint. But he had succeeded in controlling the violence of his rage, and his voice was calm.

"I must ask you to pardon me," he said, "and I am deeply grateful that you have told me of this thing. It is a severe and unexpected blow. I gave the name of Geoffrey to this boy, my only son, calling him after the great Ollamh Geoffrey Keating, the first of my family admitted to the Hereditary Order of Historians. I gave him that name, praying he might have the wisdom and spirit of that learned man. I consecrated him to the purpose to which my father had before consecrated me. When a military ardour seized him and he preferred joining the army, I was filled with regret, and remonstrated, for I had hoped he would have followed the profession hereditary in our family from the reign of Niall I, but when my words could not move him, I yielded, and sent him to the Military College, where he passed, I will say, his examinations with credit" – the Ollamh paused – "and now, my woe! my bitter grief! the boy has done far worse than forget the traditions of his family, and is a disgrace to me, to his mother, and to the name of Keating!"

"I sympathise with you," said Schliemann," especially in your son having taken the profession of arms instead of adhering to what I consider a most interesting survival, the Hereditary Profession of Historian. But, as the two young people love each other, is there no way by which peace could be made between you and MacFirbis?"

"There is one way," said Keating, sternly, "the restoration of the stolen vellums, the *Dromsneachta* and the *Psalter of Tara.*"

"I hear that you claim them," exclaimed the Professor, "and that they were in the possession of your family for nearly two centuries."

"They were the property of my grandfather, and had come into his hands through five generations. They had been given in the seventeenth century, in the reign of Niall I to the Ollamh Geoffrey Keating by Duald MacFirbis, Hereditary Historian of Connacht, in gratitude for kindness shown to him when he sought refuge in his friend's house during the wars in the West. The books, though claimed by every successive Hereditary Historian of Connacht,

remained in our family till 1820. They were then stolen by the grandfather of the present historian."

"That is a serious charge," said the Professor, "and one I should think the Law – you have laws, I conclude – would put right."

"It has failed to do so," said Keating, grimly. "For greater safety, as he thought, my grandfather placed the books in the library of the National Museum in Baile Átha Cliath before he went abroad. It was a fatal mistake. They were seen by MacFirbis as he was showing Sir Walter Scott (at that time on a visit to this kingdom) over the galleries. The next day MacFirbis visited the library, bringing certain documents with him, and claimed the books. The Chief Librarian consulted the Keeper of the Museum, who again consulted the Four Hereditary Historians, Laighin, Mumha, Midhe, and Uladh, and in the end the books were handed over to MacFirbis. Unfortunately, my grandfather, though cited to return, failed to do so by the given date, the mandate reaching him too late. He brought the outrage before the Courts of Law, and when they failed to do justice, he petitioned the King. But even this supreme appeal was useless, and the robber kept his stolen goods."

"You have, indeed, a grievance," remarked the Professor.

"A grievance which I live to right!" was the determined answer, "which I am bound to remedy. It may not surprise you to hear, Sai Schliemann, that so seriously did my grandfather take the matter that he made a solemn vow that he would devote his life to the recovery of the books. He further made a will in which he commanded that each eldest son of our family should take a similar vow when twenty-one, and that if he refused, he was to be disinherited. My father took the vow, and so did I. My son is twenty-three. Two years ago on his coming of age he vowed with all the solemn and impressive form with which the vow is enshrined, to restore the books to his family, and should he fail, to administer the same oath to his eldest son. And now, he not only entered the robber's house, but forgetful of his sacred pledge, of his duty to his father, has sought to ally himself with this Delilah, the robber's daughter."

"Love is a madness which we old forget," said Schliemann. "I feel, indeed, that it is a matter on which I can offer you no advice. But I

think you will never recover the books by violence. They are guarded. Four locks and chains, an iron shutter, and a savage dog secure them from the attack of any thief."

"You have seen them!" exclaimed the Ollamh.

"Through a glass case. I am about to ask their owner to let me examine them. The words are so obscure, the penmanship so archaic, that I feel here is work worthy of my best powers."

The door was thrown open as he spoke, and Geoffrey Keating swung into the room. Unbuckling his sword, he greeted the Professor, and then sat down at the table. His father rose and went to a window, where he stood with his back to his son.

"We have been standing for hours," Geoffrey remarked, helping himself to a dish. "The General was under the impression – how he got it heaven knows! – that the King would leave Tara at midnight."

"Tara!" said Schliemann, his interest quickened. "I am making a monograph on the causes that led to the desertion of Tara. Pray tell me, young man, does the King – the person I saw to-day – does he still observe the ancient geis[2] which forbade the High King to be in bed in Tara after sunrise?"

"Not to the letter. When Tara was rebuilt and occupied by Aodh II, the question of the geis was discussed, and the King being an energetic man, history says, observed it. Niall I did the same, and so did King Seaghan. But Niall II liked his bed of a cold morning, and using his kingly authority, appointed a King's Deputy, who, when the Court was at Tara, had to be out of bed and salute the sun when it rose. It is now done by the officer of the night guard, who, with a trumpeter, stands at the East Gate, and as the sun rises above the horizon, the latter sounds the Sun Call."

"This is very interesting," said Schliemann, taking out his notebook. "A survival out of the dark of time. Are all the other royal geasa observed? Can the High King go on board a ship on the Monday after May Day, or go round North Leinster left-handwise, or traverse Moy-Callain after sunset?"

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[2] Taboo.

"They are all modified. But you must ask my father. He can tell you about these things better than I can."

The Professor rose and approached the stiff and silent figure by the window. "I must record what has survived of these taboos or geasa," he said, "and all information on the subject will be of value to me in my monograph on European taboos."

The Ollamh turned. "You will understand," he answered, in a low, frozen tome, "that I place my books at your command, only too honoured that you should study them. But, illustrious Schliemann, I cannot converse any longer with you in the presence of my son. I ask you to follow me to my library."

He strode from the room with so ominous a face that his son's hand paused as he was about to raise a glass of wine to his lips.

"Is my father not well?" he asked, turning his eyes on the Professor.

"He has had a shock," said the Professor.

The officer rose. "A shock?"

"My young friend, sit still. Do not meet an evil half way. At present your father and I have business together. Later on you will have your interview with him."

"But the nature of the shock?" said Geoffrey Keating.

"You will learn before night, or, perhaps, not till to-morrow." The Professor went towards the door through which the Ollamh had passed.

But he had the tact not to prolong his visit, for though the Ollamh was most courteous, taking from his shelves, and laying before him, the books that dealt with the ancient geasa of Ireland, he saw in the hard and absent expression of his face that his thoughts were concentrated on the news that he had heard.

He returned in Keating's motor car to the Historian's house. MacFirbis was still at the Palace, and the Professor judged his absence a good opportunity to examine the vellums and copy the exposed pages. But as he put his hand on the handle of the door of the library, a fierce baying answered the touch. At the same moment he heard a footstep behind him; turning, he saw the butler.

"Your pardon, and it is my sorrow that you should be delayed, noble one," the main said. "But the door is locked, and the Staruidhe (Historian) keeps the key."

Schliemann turned away. Through an open door, on one side of the hall, he caught a view of the garden. The broad flight of steps leading down to the sward was flooded with sunshine, and there was the perfume of roses. He put on his hat and went out.

As he paced the paths between the trellis-work covered with red and white and pink and yellow roses, the sounds of the city came to his ears – a passing band, bugle and trumpet notes, the roar of traffic. Once he paused and looked at the house. It was a big, handsome building, with flowers and interlaced work carved in stone above the windows. At one of the lower windows he saw two uplifted paws and the great head and white powerful chest of a hound. A deep, vindictive bark came through the glass.

Presently the butler came out, and the baying ceased. The man gave Schliemann a letter, and standing a few paces off, appeared to wait for an answer.

The Professor read the letter slowly, studying penmanship and spelling. "Tell Captain Keating I await him here," he said, when he had finished the inspection.

Then he bent over a rose. He delighted in flowers, and had a garden of his own in Berlin, with roses which he boasted were the most beautiful in Germany. The flower he smelt was coral-pink, very large and fragrant.

When he raised his head, he saw Geoffrey Keating coming towards him down the path. The officer's eyes had the steely gleam that his father's had worn. He stopped short before the Professor.

"My letter," he said, "has told you that I wish to know why you have thrust yourself into my private affairs."

The Professor raised his hand deprecatingly. "I am aware of your trouble, and understand your present anger," he replied. "It was by a sentence – accidental and unpremeditated, I assure you – which I uttered, that let your father know of your attachment to Sorcha Nic Firbis. And seeing my mistake, I hoped to soften the Ollamh's heart

by acquainting him with such details as had come under my observation."

Keating's eyes flamed. "You meddlesome fool! Do you wish to dig in hearts as you do in ruins!" he exclaimed. "You have done irreparable harm! My soul and conscience! if you were not an old man I would challenge you!"

Schliemann looked suddenly interested. "A challenge! Then, unlike the sister island, you have not abolished the duel? It is the Fircomlainn, the Truth of Combat, no doubt. And do you still observe the five days' interval between the date of challenge and the fight?"

"I would not give you five minutes' grace—" the young man suddenly paused. "Pardon me," he said, changing his tone, "you had some trouble with your head, and God forbid I should touch a madman."

He turned away, and swung down the path. At the same moment, Sorcha appeared on the steps. She gave a little cry, and ran to meet him, and he hastened towards her.

The Professor bent again over the rose, but the lovers' voices reached his ears.

"If my father should come!" the girl gasped.

"I had to come, Star of Knowledge, Pulse of my Heart," Keating answered. "That old madman, Sai Schliemann, told my father that I had asked the Historian to consent to our marriage."

"Oh! But it cannot be worse than that my father should know."

"My grief! it is. Sorcha, pearl of pearls, I made a vow."

"Vows can be broken!"

"Not with honour. If I keep this vow, it severs us for ever! It is about the manuscripts! And I made the vow before I knew you. No! do not draw away. You shall stay in my arms."

"You must keep the vow."

"Yes! But you, too, heart's treasure, I shall keep. Listen! I swore this oath lightly two years ago. I swore to be the enemy of every MacFirbis till I recovered the two cursed books, the *Psalter of Tara* and the *Dromsneachta.* I swore that was the object of my life. – Lean your head against my heart. – Listen to my new vow. I swear here that

I keep you in life, that our graves shall be together, our place in heaven side by side!"

A minute later there was the sound of retreating steps, and the baying of the dog broke out again, deep-throated, vicious. The Professor looked over the rose-tree; Sorcha stood alone, her face buried in her hands. The scene had touched his kindly heart; he approached her gently.

"Do not weep, my child," he said. "I see a way to make peace. You are your father's only child, and, united to Captain Keating, the books will again be in the charge of a member of that house."

Sorcha raised her head. "You are mistaken," she replied. "I cannot be Hereditary Historian of Connacht. It is my cousin, Maelmuire MacFirbis, who will succeed my father." She turned away.

"But why?" asked Schliemann, following her, interested in her answer. "Have you changed the ways of your forefathers? I read of females in high authority in your Tales, of the female physician Airmeda, of Brigh Brugaid, the female brehon, of Maive, Queen of Connacht."

CHAPTER V.

When MacFirbis returned an hour later he found the Professor in the garden taking notes on the rose-trees. After some conversation on the plants, they went into the house and entered the library. The dog looked at Schliemann with hostile eyes, and only ceased growling at the second command from his master.

The butler brought in tea and coffee, and while the Professor drank a cup of the latter, MacFirbis said he had an important letter to write, and asked to be excused for a few minutes. As he sat down before a table and began to write, Schliemann's eyes rested on the case containing the vellums; and no sound broke the silence in the room for a time but the scratching of the pen.

The door presently opened and a young man came in. He appeared about twenty-eight, and had flaxen hair, and a moustache so fair as to be almost white. His light-blue eyes had a cold gleam.

"Am I late?" he asked, crossing to the Historian's side. "I was out when you telephoned."

"No, just in time," MacFirbis answered. "I have not finished my letter. Let me present you to the illustrious Sai Schliemann, discoverer of the Palace of Knossos. This is my kinsman and Tanist, Sai Schliemann, Maelmuire MacFirbis."

Both men bowed; the young man then poured himself out a cup of tea, and turning towards an easy chair, sat down. The Professor put his empty cup aside, and sitting well forward in his chair, brought the tips of the fingers of both hands together.

"The survival of your title and position is extremely interesting," he said.

"I think we are the only nation in Europe that has hereditary historians," the Tanist replied, the drops of tea on his pale moustache.

"To-day I learnt something of your orders of nobility," continued the Professor. "And as the Gael is instinctively an aristocrat, I would like to know what is the condition politically and socially of the mass of the people, and what rights they have. To begin with, have you Anarchists?"

The Tanist played with his tea-spoon, and smiled as he glanced at his cup. "The word is unknown in Ireland," he answered. "Our people were guarded in the seventeenth century from the tyranny and aggression of the nobles. To-day the laws protect them from the greed of individual who would combine, as in America, to make great fortunes at the expense of the public. We have no poor-houses."

"And among your four million, what is the average of crime?"

"Crime among our thirty millions is less than in any northern country. If you attend the reception at the Palace to-night you will meet probably one of our most eminent Brehons, who will give you full information on the subject."

MacFirbis rose from his chair; he held a sealed letter in his hand. It was in an official looking envelope, with a coat of arms emblazoned on it.

"Excuse my interrupting your enquiries," he said courteously to Schliemann, "but this is on important business."

The Professor stood up. "No," said MacFirbis. "Pray remain. It may be well to have a witness, and I shall be honoured if you resume your seat."

Schliemann obeyed, and as he sat down, caught the cold gleam of the Tanist's eyes.

"I have received a letter from Ollamh Keating," said MacFirbis with some solemnity of tone and manner. "This is my reply, and I telephoned for you, Maelmuire, that you as my Tanist should give it into the Ollamh's hand."

"Now?" said the young man.

"Now. But wait." Maelmuire had risen somewhat slowly. "I have to speak on a second and even more personal matter."

"A private one?" The Professor thought the Tanist gave him a glance from his lowered eyes as he spoke.

"Yes. Sai Schliemann, pray remain. I am honoured that you should be present at this conference with my Tanist. You met Ceannfeadhna Keating here last night. Did you observe anything in his manner towards my daughter?"

The Professor turned his gaze on the Tanist. The young man was looking down, but there was an air of attention in his attitude as if he listened intently for the answer.

"I observed that your daughter and Captain Keating are in love with each other."

Maelmuire suddenly raised his eyes.

"A passing fancy on the part of both," said MacFirbis. "My daughter is very young, and in a few months she will have forgotten him. Last night, Maelmuire, Geoffrey Keating asked me for Sorcha's hand. I have forbidden him my house. But the Ollamh has heard of the proposal, and he has written me a letter which removes finally any hope I had entertained that our families would yet be reconciled. The matter has now become serious."

"I should say, Historian," said the Tanist smiling, "that the affair has come to a happy ending."

"It is serious," repeated MacFirbis. "It appears that the Keatings for three generations have bound themselves by an oath of a fearful and solemn nature to steal – for I have no other name to call the act they contemplate – the *Psalter of Tara* and the *Dromsneachta.* The Ollamh informs me of this himself."

"You will warn the police, of course,"—the Tanist's voice was quiet and slightly contemptuous.

MacFirbis looked at him with an air of grave rebuke. "I fear you have something of the modern unchivalric spirit, Maelmuire," he replied. "I belong to an older school, and the feud between the Clan Keating and the Hereditary Historian of Connacht is not one to be rudely discussed by every small lawyer in Erinn. The Ollamh Keating has honourably told me of his intention. And with the help of God and Saint Ciaran, I shall be able to protect my books."

Maelmuire stood silent for a minute. "I see," he said presently, addressing MacFirbis, "that the American's offer of one hundred thousand gold screpall for the *Psalter of Tara* and the *Dromsneachta* has got into *An Rioghahas.*"

"I saw the paragraph," said MacFirbis, "and was astonished that the editor had inserted it."

"You did not answer the man, I think you said."

"No. The offer was an impertinence on the part of the American, and not one that I could notice. These millionaire Americans" - MacFirbis looked at the Professor - "hold nothing sacred. They believe that gold can buy honour and the soul of man."

"Indeed," said Schliemann, "I agree with you. One of them - an oil king I think he was - offered me a large sum to forge a manuscript for him."

The Tanist turned away, pausing for a moment to pat the dog's head. Then he glanced at Schliemann. "I shall have the pleasure, I hope, of meeting you again," he remarked. "Perhaps you will be at the Palace tonight?"

"Sai Schliemann," MacFirbis answered before the Professor could reply, "will be my guest, I trust, as long as he stays in Ireland, and will accompany me, I hope, to the Palace this evening. I mentioned your name, Sai Schliemann, to the Ard Righ, and he commanded me to bring you to the reception."

The Professor bowed in acquiescence. A moment later the door closed upon the figure of the Tanist.

"I am sorry to say I have failed to find your luggage or the hotel you mentioned," said MacFirbis. "From its name it is evidently kept by a foreigner. I shall communicate with the police, as I fear you fell into the hands of some dishonest persons. In the meantime you will perhaps do me the honour to wear the Court suit I have provided."

Schliemann thanked him. "As we seem to have an hour to spare," he said, rising from his chair, "I shall be glad to have a closer look at the guarded vellums. I must make friends with your dog."

He approached the case, but paused before the angry attitude of the animal.

"Be silent, Midir!" MacFirbis called out, and rose and joined the Professor. "You shall look at the books, and welcome," he said. "I submit them with confidence to your inspection."

He touched a spring, and raising the case, took out with reverent hands the *Psalter of Tara*, and gave it to Schliemann. As the latter touched the vellum, he was seized - as if some fiend had taken possession of his mind - with the fierce cupidity of the bibliomanic.

The book and its companion, a voice within him said, must be secured. It was not a theft but a duty to take them!

"There is a page in Ogham at the end," said MacFirbis, "in Irish that required to be glossed in the fifth century. It is a summary of one of the Tales, and is highly valuable as a light upon the attributes of the gods. My friend Mac Aodha has annotated Ua Cuinn's 'The Gods of the Celts,' which has hitherto been the standard work on Irish Mythology, throwing much light on the gods from the study of this Ogham."

Schliemann was suddenly conscious of a faint smell that emanated from the vellum. It was that of some wild flower whose name had escaped his memory. The smell, though sweet, gave him a curious sensation; it seemed to visualise before his eyes, and as a mist obscure the letters.

He was sitting in a chair when the sensation passed, and the book was no longer in his hands. MacFirbis was holding a glass of water to his lips.

"My grief! my friend," he said anxiously, "I am afraid you have not yet recovered from that blow on your head."

"It is impossible that I fainted!" exclaimed the Professor, staring about him.

"You became suddenly giddy and staggered. The vellum fell from your hand – it is safe and restored to its case. I led you to this chair. And, now, shall I send for the doctor?"

"No! Most certainly not!" said Schliemann, decisively. He stood up. "I am perfectly well."

He walked with a firm step towards the case. The dog's hair bristled; it growled. Silenced by its master's voice, it lay down, keeping its eyes on the Professor as he looked at the open pages through the glass, while MacFirbis, reading the ancient lines aloud, explained the meaning of the obsolete words.

When the Professor went to dress for the reception at the Palace, he found the Historian's valet waiting in his room. He was about to dismiss the man, when his glance fell on the costume he was to wear. It was a dark red brocaded satin tunic threaded with gold, with lace on collar and cuffs, a cloak of white satin with a border embroidered

in gold and red; white satin breeches, silk stockings, and shoes with gold buckles. He stared at the garments for a minute, his hands clasped behind his back, his feet well apart.

"It is well de Narbonne does not see me," he thought, as he finally decided to put them on, "or my friends in Berlin."

CHAPTER VI.

As the Professor drove with MacFirbis and Sorcha to the Palace, he leant back for a time in the corner of the carriage to avoid the eyes of the public, but finding presently that he attracted no attention, his curiosity made him alter his position, and gaze with interest through the windows. When they reached the Palace gates, MacFirbis pointed to the crowned figure on the pedestal. 'That is the statue of the founder of the present dynasty,' he said; 'Aodh I of the restored line.'

On alighting, they entered the Palace, and passing handsomely-robed officials and tall soldiers in the vestibule, they crossed the Black Marble Hall to the Green Marble Hall, and to the Hall of Porphyry, whence they ascended a white marble stair to the Cedar Gallery. Down this gallery they followed a brilliantly-dressed crowd of men and women to the Bog Oak Gallery, where the fine carvings on the black walls, done by famous artists, were pointed out by MacFirbis to Schliemann. In the centre of each panelling the carving was interlaced with silver, which relieved the sombreness of the walls, and glittered in the light of the electroliers. From this gallery they reached the ante-chamber of the Throne Room, a vast and magnificent apartment, famous and unique among palaces, the Historian said, for the enamels on its walls.

The Professor's eyes moved with interest among the courtiers. The tall fair men and women in their splendid and bright-hued robes recalled to his mind the words of Giraldus Cambrensis, that '*in Ireland man maintains all his majesty. The Irish have countenances of exquisite colour, and bodies of great beauty, symmetry, and strength*,' and he muttered the sentence to himself in the original Latin.

The entrance of the King was announced by musicians playing the National air. He was accompanied by the Righ-damna, Princess Findebair, the Princess of Midhe, and the Five Princes of Erin. The hereditary officials of the Court followed, and took their places about the royal group. Seneschals called the names of the guests, and each in turn advanced and bowed to the King, his son and daughter and sister, and to the Five Princes.

Schliemann approached the King in the wake of MacFirbis, and was graciously welcomed when presented by the Historian. Making his series of bows awkwardly, he then passed on. As soon as the presentations were over, the King left the dais, and with the members of the royal family and the five princes, moved about amongst the guests.

Schliemann found himself presently in a group of men who belonged to the learned bodies of the country. They were well versed in the politics of Europe as he understood those politics. Amongst them, he discovered, were men who had made some discovery in science, or had written books that had appeared to move the thought of Europe. Yet the discoveries and the books he had not heard of. Those made in science were of great value, he recognised, though the processes, were not explained. He began to question the scientists, and found that they were under the impression that he was speaking of facts, which as a learned and highly-educated man, were, of course, well known to him. They used terms and spoke of forces the meaning of which were obscure to Schliemann. Changing the language in which the conversation had been carried on from Irish to Latin, he found himself able to grasp the subjects; and soon brilliant flashes of thought, set alight by the men's words, crossed his own mind. He was introduced to others, whose names he was supposed to know as a matter of course, painters, sculptors, musicians, and authors, whose conversation delighted him by its brilliancy and wit.

From this fascinating company he was withdrawn to be presented to the Princess of Midhe, who was deeply interested, he was told, in Archaic Greece. She had written a book pointing out the connection between the early gods of Greece and those of Ireland; and greeting him warmly in German, carried on the conversation in that language. Her subject, to his annoyance, was his supposed discoveries on Greek sites in Asia Minor, and his answers were brief and guarded. He had had a moment's hope that as she had 'dabbled' in literature – for in this contemptuous light he regarded her work – she would confine her conversation to books, when he might attract her attention to his Old and Middle Irish studies, and thus establish his own identity.

But the Princess persisted in keeping to the subject of his work with the spade. She was a handsome woman with a regal air, charming manners, and a slightly commanding tone. He felt powerless before her, unless he bluntly refused to answer.

As he could not be silent, he described some ancient ornaments taken from a tomb which he had seen in a museum in Athens; leaving her, though not intentionally, under the impression that he had opened the tomb. He then passed to the subject of myths, firmly keeping the conversation upon the gods and cults of Greece and Ireland, and delighting the Princess by his vast knowledge. When the interview came to an end, she promised him a copy of her work, and invited him to her palace, Tlachtga, in Midhe.

As she moved on, Schliemann turned round, and found Maelmuire MacFirbis standing at his elbow.

'You have made a friend of our clever Princess, Sai Schliemann,' he remarked. 'She generally likes to be listened to, but on this occasion your fame made her your listener.'

'She appears to be a remarkable student for a woman and a Princess,' the Professor replied bluntly.

'You are no courtier, then, nor have a high opinion of the intellectual powers of women. By the way, I was much interested in your description of those ornaments which I saw myself when I was in Athens last spring, and which were discovered fifty years ago.'

There was nothing in the perfect politeness of the Tanist's tone to remind Schliemann that he had allowed the Princess to think he had found them on the site of an ancient city. Yet he had an impression that Maelmuire knew it, and that he appeared an impostor.

'I am far more interested in ancient literature than in the work of the archaeologist,' he replied, 'and I have made a special study of Old and Middle Irish. The *Psalter of Tara* and the *Dromsneachta*; for instance, have more interest for me than the finest ornament the spade may throw up.'

The Tanist slightly bent his head and stroked his white moustache. 'Many share your opinion,' he said. 'But there are other valuable manuscripts in the kingdom. You should visit the Royal Library at Tara. Do you spend some time in Ireland?'

'About a week.' Schliemann stopped abruptly, as if a hand had been laid on his lips. His position rushed before him, made vital by the question: What door would open and let him out? His own will?

He turned away. Moving through the courtiers, he saw Sorcha standing alone by one of the doors, and the retiring figure of Geoffrey Keating crossing the threshold. The Professor went nearer. Suddenly she glanced in his direction, and smiling rather shyly, came towards him.

'Let me point out some of the pictures to you, Sai Schliemann,' she said sweetly, a bright colour on her cheeks.

'Very good,' he answered, and offered his arm. Her offer was kind, he thought, considering he was middle-aged and no doubt an uninteresting person to a girl. He gave her a fatherly glance. She looked radiant and beautiful, her patrician head poised high, and her eyes blue wells of light.

'That picture,' she said, pointing to a great canvas on the wall, 'is the Combat of Cuchullin and Ferdiad at the Ford. It was painted two hundred years ago, and is an Ua Donnchadha. He had a secret for fixing his colours. Sir Joshua Reynolds tried to discover the secret a hundred years later, but failed.' Her clear voice suddenly sank.

'Sai, you are interested in the *Psalter of Tara* and the *Dromsneachta*?'

The Professor stopped. 'Extremely so,' he replied.

'Do not stand still, and pray speak lower. Is not that my cousin Maelmuire over there?'

She raised her voice again. 'This picture is a portrait of Aodh II, a Vandyke. But come into the tapestry room, for you must see the famous piece made one hundred and fifty years ago in the hand-looms of Corcaigh. It is the story of Deirdre, and on the other side of the room is the Siege of Troy and the story of Helen, worked in the same looms. Both are priceless.'

She lowered her tone. 'My father is going to do you a favour which he only does to persons of fame and in whom he has confidence. He will allow you to take the books from their case and examine them. It is possible that he will let you take them to your room, where you would be free from interruption. Perhaps you will ask him.'

'A close and uninterrupted study of the vellums would be what I desire,' replied Schliemann. 'And if you think he will allow me to take them to my room, I shall ask his permission to-morrow.'

'I am sure he has every confidence in you,' the girl answered, her eyes suddenly deep and thoughtful, and she led the way to the tapestry room. There, introducing him to a gentleman, a famous painter, she smiled and left him.

It was two hours past midnight when Schliemann and the Historian left the Palace. The Tanist accompanied them, sitting by Sorcha's side in the carriage. The girl was in high spirits. Along the way the numerous electric lights made the streets very bright. Complaints of the brilliancy, MacFirbis said, had been made by many of the citizens, who declared that it deprived them of that repose which darkness confers. Their complaint had been laid before the Airedesa and the members of the City Council, but it was doubtful whether the lights would be lessened.

'The city is remarkably free from burglaries,' he added. 'We have no slums, and should your visit be prolonged, as I hope it will, I shall show you the homes of our lower classes, and explain to you the working of what I may call our Poor Law system.'

As they entered the square where the Historian lived, a motor car with drawn blinds rushed by, turning into the street they had left.

'That is the Ollamh Keating's car,' the Professor remarked. 'At least it resembles the one in which I drove to-day.'

The Tanist looked through the glass at the back of the carriage. 'What colour was she?', he asked.

'The car that went past was white,' said Sorcha quickly, 'and the Ollamh Keating drives a yellow Mac Gearr.'

'A pale primrose,' said Schliemann.

'This car, I think, was white,' said MacFirbis, 'and it had a dark line.'

'So had the car I rode in to-day,' returned Schliemann.

The carriage stopped as he spoke. The butler stood on the steps, his shadow making a black splash to the right, and the white light of a globe showed his agitated face. He ran down and opened the door

before the footman could alight. But he did not speak till his master was in the hall and Sorcha ascending the stair.

'There was a noise in the library, Historian,' he said. 'But as the door was locked I could not go in.'

'In the library, Cormac!' MacFirbis sought under his robe for the key.

The Tanist stood arrested by the hall door. He had been about to leave, and now flung a glance at the man's face. The Professor stood still and attentive.

'Midir gave tongue,' went on the butler. 'It was my grief, Historian, I could not get in. There was a noise as if a heavy weight fell. I ran to the door and called through the keyhole that I had a revolver in my hand, and I pretended I was coming in. Then I heard footsteps going to the window, and I ran round to the garden. But when I had unlocked the doors there was no one there. I was looking for a policeman as the carriage drove up.'

MacFirbis went with swift strides to the library door. He unlocked it and turned on the electric light. Two globes were already alight. Schliemann and the Tanist followed; a glance showed them the case overthrown and the body of the dog beneath. The window looking into the garden was open. An outcry of wrath and dismay broke from MacFirbis, and he rushed to the help of the dog. The two men behind hastened to his side, and the heavy case was raised. With trembling hands he drew the dog's body forth.

'Ah! Midir! best of friends,' he lamented, 'is it death you have found at the post of duty.'

'See if the books are taken,' the Tanist exclaimed, his tone swift and stern.

'Yes, yes, find out if they are safe,' urged the Professor.

Leaving the dog MacFirbis unlocked the chains and raised the iron shutter. There were tears in his eyes.

'They are there,' he said.

The Tanist and Schliemann bent forward and looked in. Their eyes met as they raised their heads.

‘A thousand thanks with God!’ exclaimed MacFirbis; then his tone changed. ‘This is Ollamh Keating’s deed!’, he said in a voice that thrilled with passion. ‘It is his attempt!’

CHAPTER VII.

The Tanist went to the window; he examined the sill, and looked out. Then he left the room, having asked the butler for a lamp. MacFirbis returned to the dog, and knelt on one knee by its side.

'He is not dead,' he murmured; 'I will send for a dog leech.'

A light suddenly shone in the garden. Schliemann crossed to the window, and bending over the sill, saw the Tanist beneath, examining the ground.

'Are there footmarks?' he asked.

The Tanist made no answer. He put the lamp on the ground, and measured something below.

'Ah, you have found traces of the thief!' exclaimed Schliemann. Presently the young man rose, and came into the house.

'I have sent for the dog leech, but not for the police,' the Historian replied.

'And after that for the police.'

'No. This is not a matter for policemen to examine,' the Historian's eyes flashed. 'Ollamh Keating honourably warned me of his intention, and this is his first attack.'

'The books will be stolen,' said the Tanist, in a tone that showed he had lost patience.

'I trust that when you receive them from my dying hand,' the Historian replied, 'that you will guard them as securely as I have done.'

'This is medieval, quixotic!', exclaimed the Tanist.

'To a modern spirit, but not to those who keep the honourable traditions of the past,' rebuked MacFirbis.

There was a brief pause; then the Tanist changed his tone.

'The thief had a duplicate key of the garden gate,' he said, in a cool, composed voice. 'He escaped by the window, but he did not get in by it. He must have been secreted in the house, and entered by the dining room.'

'It is impossible,' said MacFirbis. 'Who would have hidden him? Not Cormac. He has been in my service forty years.'

'Cormac is incorruptible. But we must learn what persons called at the house that day.'

The Professor thought of Geoffrey Keating; he kept silent. He was silent, also, when Cormac gave the names of those persons who had called at the house and omitted that of the officer. 'Ha!' thought Schliemann, 'the old steward has his own reasons for not mentioning young Keating.'

He heard the Tanist ask to be given charge of the books for that night, a request MacFirbis refused. Maelmuire then lit a cigar.

'As I cannot help,' he remarked, 'I will bid you and Sai Schliemann good night, or, as here comes the dawn, good morning.'

He turned away, and a minute later the hall door closed behind him.

In his room, the Professor thought over the occurrence as he prepared for bed. He believed Geoffrey had tried to get the books. Sorcha, perhaps, had helped him. Both looked to time to lessen the Historian's anger. As he said the word time, he felt again that sudden check, that keen sense of uncertainty as to his own identity and surroundings. Were they made of his own will? Had he not but to leave Ireland to be in his known world again? But the vellums – they must be copied or taken. No wrong, no theft, would be committed under the circumstances, if he brought them to Germany.

The next morning he asked MacFirbis's permission to remove them from the case; and made the request with an easy conscience. Yet it felt a twinge when he met the friendly and unsuspecting eyes of his host.

'I shall grant your request with pleasure in a day or two,' the Historian replied. 'I am leaving Dungeanain this afternoon for my country seat in Connacht, and it will give me sincere pleasure if you will be my guest there. You would have ample leisure to study the books, which, this morning, I am unfortunately unable to allow you to see.'

The Professor accepted the invitation. Where the vellums went he must go. A minute later Sorcha came into the room. Her father did not speak of the attempted theft, and, from her manner, Schliemann thought she must be ignorant of it. She looked as fresh as a newly opened rose, and was dressed as if to go out. Just as breakfast was over, the Tanist arrived, but he, too, made no allusion to the books.

The Professor had thought that morning of his money. He now asked the Historian if the English coins and notes he carried were the currency of Ireland. When MacFirbis told him that it would be necessary to effect a change, the Tanist politely offered to take him where he could do so.

'No, no!', exclaimed Sorcha, with a charming air of having her own way. 'You, Maelmuire, will change Sai Schliemann's money. The Sai is coming out with me this morning. Will you not, Sai? I wish to show you the Cathedral, as we are leaving for Muigheo to-day.'

The Professor consented, and the Tanist smiled. 'So even our German guest must obey you, Sorcha Bán,' he said. 'But you tell me news. Are you leaving Dungeanain, Historian?'

'This afternoon,' replied MacFirbis.

The Tanist made no comment; he turned to Schliemann. The latter had emptied his purse on the table. There were five sovereigns, some silver, and three banknotes. One, for ten pounds, the Professor resorted to his pocket. He passed the rest to Maelmuire, who having counted the money, formally took charge of it. Soon afterwards he left, having promised to meet the party at the station. He had not been long gone when Sorcha declared her intention of going out; and inviting the Professor to accompany her, the two set forth for the Cathedral.
It was about ten minutes' walk from the Square. Begun in the reign of Aodh I, it had taken two centuries to complete it. Native artists, and the most skilled workmen the kingdom had produced for eight generations had slowly reared the building. When finished in 1805, it was considered the most perfect structure reared in Europe since the age of the great medieval church builders. Sorcha lingered but a short time in the nave, and led the Professor to Naomh Padraic Chapel, where she pointed out the tomb of Aodh I. It was of porphyry and hammered bronze, the canopy, wrought of the latter, was richly enamelled, and looked as if jewelled. Figures in white marble, finely sculptured, representing Saint Patrick, Saint Columcille, Saint Brigid, and Saint Ciaran, guarded the tomb. The statue of the king was crowned and kneeling, the arms outstretched in the attitude of prayer known to the Irish as *cros-figill.*

About four or five people were in the chapel, sightseers, who moved about, looking at the carvings, stained windows, and frescoes. One of them was a tall, thin man, with a shaven face, whose dark eyes were brilliant and questioning. He wore a fawn-coloured overcoat of a fashionable cut, and tan gloves on his hands. He touched everything he examined.

As the Professor gazed at the tomb, Geoffrey Keating entered the chapel. He greeted Schliemann as if he had forgotten the angry interview of the previous evening. But the Professor looked at him with disapproval. The attempted theft, he felt, was almost a personal matter. The moral law held for Keating, who was in his own world and natural environment. It was a sin for him to break it. Bluntness of speech was Schliemann's habit, and had made him some enemies. His kindly disposition was often hidden by a dogged determination to have his own way.

'Young man,' he said, sternly, 'I will say at once that I think you did a foolish and guilty thing.'

Keating looked at him calmly. 'It is his head, *a leanbh*,' he whispered to Sorcha.

'No!', said Schliemann, angrily. 'Flippancy will not avail with me. I am speaking of your attempted theft of the vellums.'

Keating smiled, 'What theft?', he asked.

Sorcha touched the Professor's arm. 'Are not the books in your room?', she said, eagerly.

'They are not. That young man's attempt to steal them has prevented my seeing them to-day.'

'Steady, my good Sai,' said Keating, 'if it is not your head that makes you that charge, I must ask for an explanation.'

'Geoffrey, *a ghradh*, wait.' Sorcha raised her face to the Professor. 'You will be our friend, will you not?', she said. 'We are in great trouble.'

'I am acting the unpleasant part this moment of a candid friend. In what other way can I help you?'

'Help us to get the vellums.'

'Ach! No, no," the Professor grew stern again. 'You wish me to be your accomplice in the theft. Consider for a minute what you two

young people propose. You wish to commit an ethical wrong, a moral breach, a sin against religion, a breach of filial duty, and you ask me to share your guilt and connive at the theft of your good father's property. I tell you I will not.'

'We do not wish to steal the books,' her face was winning, her eyes honest and sweet. 'I would not do such a sin, nor would Geoffrey. But he has a vow to keep. And it is not right to break a vow made in the name of the Trinity and the saints of Erin. We only ask you to give the books to Geoffrey. He will take them to his father, and – then later I shall return them to my father.'

'But my dear young lady, how do I know that this young man – supposing I gave him the books – would allow you to return them to the Historian. For a lover will make vows which the husband breaks. Also, he may not be able, even if he were willing, to return them to my kind host, your father, for certainly his own father, if he once gets them, will not give them up. He will, no doubt, put them under double locks, and place some wild beast on guard.'

'You forget, Sai Schliemann,' said Keating, 'that even if my father were to guard them, as you say, that the books must pass into my hands at the Ollamh's death.'

'But what guarantee do you give that you will return them?'

'My word, to which you are now witness.'

'I do not doubt your integrity, my dear young man, or that you would not return them. But I think of the future.'

'I will give you a document stating that I will return them, and another to Sorcha. I promise you here, on my honour, that I will return the two vellums to the Hereditary Historian of Connacht.'

'Who may be Maelmuire MacFirbis at the time the opportunity to restore them occurs.'

Keating was silent for a moment. 'Yes, I will give them to Maelmuire MacFirbis,' he said.

'Now,' said Schliemann, 'explain what happened last night.'

'There I am in the dark,' replied Keating. 'What happened?'

'You know. For you broke into the library when we were in the Palace, overthrew the case, and nearly killed Midir, a dog with an interesting mythological name.'

'You are entirely mistaken,' exclaimed Keating. 'I was at the Palace till two o'clock, and then went to Lord Fingall's house. The Righ-damna was there.'

'That is why my father made up his mind so quickly to leave Dungeanain,' said Sorcha. 'Who could the thief have been?'

'The evidence points to Captain Keating or his father,' the Professor replied, emphatically. 'If it was not the officer, it must have been the Ollamh. You remember we saw a motor car, whose blinds were drawn, leaving the Square.'

'Yes. But I did not think it was his.' The girl fell silent, and presently turned away from the tomb. Keating followed her, and the Professor saw them go to the great carved door of the chapel, and pass out. He remained where he was.

He had arrived at a conclusion as to the thief. The elder Keating had made an attempt to secure the vellums. He would certainly make another, and perhaps succeed. The books would then be removed from his (Schliemann's) reach; and the importance of securing them as soon as possible became urgent.

As his eyes kindled with the thought, the stranger in the fawn-coloured coat, who had been moving slowly round the tomb, stopped by his side.

'That is an uncomfortable way to offer prayer,' he remarked, speaking slowly, as if selecting each word.

Schliemann turned a glance upon the speaker. The stranger's gaze was on the statue of the King. 'He looks like Moses on the mountain,' the man went on. 'He would appear easier if the sculptor had put a pedestal under each elbow.'

'Ach,' said Schliemann, 'that attitude in marble is an interesting sight. To pray with outspread arms was much practised by the ancient Irish. It is the *cros-figill*, literally the Vigil of the Cross. The King, crowned, robed with the signs of his earthly state, thinks but of his simple humanity as he kneels.'

'He had grit and brains, and made his kingdom,' observed the stranger. 'But, noble sir, may I remark that your Irish is a little difficult to understand. My own is not the best, perhaps, though I studied it for some years.'

'You are not, then, an Irishman?' There was a sudden eagerness in the Professor's tone.

'No. I come from America, and we have but few Irish in the States. If you can speak English, I would be pleased to converse with you in that language, which is my native tongue.'

'I know English,' replied Schliemann, 'but speak it less fluently than I do Irish. I have devoted thirty years to the study of that language, chiefly Old and Middle Irish.'

'Then, sir,' said the stranger, speaking in English, 'I'd drop into modern talk when conversing with any individual whose education has suffered neglect on the Old and the Middle.'

'You may know my name,' said Schliemann, 'I am the well-known Celticist, Professor Schliemann, of Berlin.'

'Pleased to make your acquaintance,' said the stranger, and held out his hand. 'I guess it is more than likely that you know mine. I am Mr. Amos Moss, of Chicago, billionaire.'

'I have not heard it,' said the Professor, with his usual directness of speech.

'Too busy with the Old and Middle. Well, I take stock in the antique. I have, sir, a palace out there in Chicago full of ancient ware that I or my agents have got. Price never holds me back. I've bought up the insides of three Italian palaces. Now I am on the library. I mean that, sir, to be second best to the Vatican. So far my collection of ancient books and manuscripts promises to be the biggest in the States. I have got up the German, Italian, Anglo-Saxon, French, Arabic, and Celtic Rooms, each apartment decorated according to the country's style of art. I am on the Celtic quest now. There are hundreds of ancient manuscripts in this kingdom, I am told; but the book dealers say they seldom come on the market. Do you happen to know a short, stout man of lively countenance of the name of MacAodha, who belongs to the trade of historian in this country?'

'I have met him,' the Professor replied.

'That party, sir, I got an introduction to, and learning my tastes he offered to show me at a friend's house two antiques in the way of manuscripts. I saw them, and they are old enough to have moss on their covers. One was written by a pagan king of Ireland at a time

when, outside the Roman Empire, the rest of Europe dressed in paint or a wolf-skin. That pagan king was civilised, and could write and jot down his thoughts on vellum, and there's that book to-day. Now, sir, I want to buy that book and another lichen-covered one that's with it, and I am ready to pay a handsome sum to their owner.'

'I know and have seen both books,' said the Professor in Irish. 'They belong to the Hereditary Historian of Connacht. And not all the money you own could buy them. He guards them as if they were the most precious heirlooms.'

'So report says,' replied the American, in the same language, once more slowly choosing his words. 'It is true I offered him one hundred thousand gold screpall – fifty thousand eagles – and he took no notice of my offer. I wrote again; then I called. I called every day for a week, but he was never at home. And then it was that MacAodha came to my hotel one day, and told me not to write or call any more, as the Historian was angry. Now, noble sir (duine uasal), I have never failed to get what I want. That has been my secret of success, and I shall take those two books with me when I leave Ireland.'

'You make your determination known to a stranger,' said Schliemann. 'Is that wise?'

'I see no unwisdom in my words. As to listeners, there are but yourself and the king to hear. I speak freely to you, for we are both men of other countries, and there is a long closed ear on the dead.'

'I would ask you a question,' there was a note of marked interest in the Professor's tone. 'Does this kingdom strike you as – as unusual, as abnormal?'

'It is foreign, and, of course, appears strange in some ways to you and me. There is a good deal too much of the communal system here, and they do not allow men with wits to make fortunes in the way we do in the States.'

'It seems to me as if-,' the Professor hesitated, 'that I have been wafted into an unknown land by enchantment. This Ireland I find myself in is unlike the Ireland I was taught about when I was at school. That it was a British Isle, under the English Crown, governed from Westminster, thoroughly Anglicised; the inhabitants having forgotten their language; was nearly depopulated; the remnant of the

race sending representatives to the English Parliament, where they clamoured for Home Rule. Were you not also taught these things?'

'I guess not,' said the American, in English, 'or my father would have seen about that teacher being shunted into a lunatic asylum.'

He threw a shrewd glance at the Professor. 'I must be off now,' he added, 'to see a book dealer. Very pleased to have made your acquaintance, sir. If you feel any more of that enchantment I'd see a doctor.'

He raised his hat and turned away. Schliemann's eyes followed him till the great door closed upon his figure. The stranger seemed to be in his natural environment; he appeared, indeed, to suspect the Professor's sanity. After a few moments' thought, Schliemann left the chapel, and going down a side aisle, went out of the Cathedral by the south entrance.

A motor car had drawn up by the steps. It was primrose, with a brown line, its blinds were drawn. One was raised as Schliemann looked at it, and he saw Ollamh Keating seated within. He appeared to expect some one; then, after a swift glance about him, he gave an order to the chauffeur and drove away in the direction of his home.

'It was he who broke into the Historian's house, the Professor said to himself.

As he walked down the street, the car whirled past. The blinds were again drawn. The Ollamh had apparently changed his mind, and was not going home just then.

CHAPTER VIII.

At three o'clock that afternoon the Professor left Dungeanain for the west with MacFirbis and Sorcha. He had taken his ticket with coins such as he had not seen before. A gold screpall he found was equivalent to an English guinea, and there were four values to the copper crosoc, according to size. The largest value to the silver coinage corresponded to seven shillings, and the lowest, equal to the third copper crosoc, was about twopence half-penny English. He determined to keep one of each coin, and present them to the Berlin Museum. The Tanist waved them good-bye from the platform as the train moved off.

Beyond the city the train ran through richly-cultivated land, wooded and dotted with trim cottages standing in gardens. As he was carried on, Schliemann saw evidences of an industrious and prosperous people, living in comfort on the soil. Many fields were covered with glass-houses, or treated to intensive culture. These were the market gardens of the north, where vast quantities of vegetables, fruits and flowers were grown for exportation and home use. The manufacturing centres, of which there were numbers throughout the land, MacFirbis told him, were worked by electricity, the great waterways and lakes of the kingdom being utilised. The Professor asked if the people who had brought the land to such rich cultivation were not the descendants of the Scotch settlers planted in the north by James I of England, and was surprised to hear that there were no Scotch settlers in Ulster, the population being of unmixed Gaelic descent.

'But the Orangemen,' said Schliemann, 'what have you done with them?'

'We import them,' MacFirbis replied, whom the noise of the train had prevented from hearing the exact question. 'The climate of Erin is unfit for their growth. The Prince of Thomond has an Orangerie of some size.'

The Professor fell silent; he presently glanced at one of the newspapers the Historian had given him. He searched its columns for news of his country. The Kaiser had made a speech on the German navy. He spoke with disfavour of the alliance between three Catholic

countries, Italy, Spain and Eire. In another paragraph he saw it stated that the German ambassador in Baile Átha Cliath would probably explain away the speech on the morrow.

'A German ambassador in Dublin,' thought Schliemann. 'I must see him.'

Then his eye fell on the heading, 'Visit of the Queen of Spain to Erin.' 'A friendship,' ran the paragraph, 'has long existed between her Majesty and Princess Findebair, and the Queen will spend a fortnight at the Courts of Tara and Dungeanain.' Then his glance passed to:

'The Ard-Fheis opens at Tara on the 18th of October. The Earl of Ormond will bring forward the question of Free Trade with England and Scotland. Great opposition is expected. The Aire, Flann Ua Loingsig, will bring the state of the inland fisheries before the Second House of the Forradh; and considerable opposition is expected to the motion of Brugaid Art MacDubhghail that Crown rents should be paid for such bog lands as are held by the individual in distinction to those bog lands held by the nation. The increasing value of the peat industry has brought the question to a head. The labourers will be represented by their delegate, Aithech (or Plebeian), Cathal Ua Cuinn, a workman himself, whose book, 'Labour in Europe,' has attracted attention, not only in this kingdom, but also on the Continent and in England.'

After a swift run, the train crossed the border and entered Connacht. The Professor noticed, as they went along, that the land here was also highly cultivated, and that the sides of the hills and mountains were clothed with forests. He was surprised at this.

'I am astonished at the size and extent of your woods,' he remarked, 'especially here in Connacht, which province I had heard was bare and treeless, except for those trees that grew in the demesnes of your landlords.'

'Your informant could never have been in Ireland,' MacFirbis replied. 'Our forests are a great source of wealth to the country, and especially those in Connacht.'

'Do they belong to the Crown?'

'They belong to the nation. Every householder paying taxes, outside the cities, has a right in them. The laws define these rights, which are regulated by the rank and amount of taxes paid by the householder, and there are severe penalties for any infringement of them. Everyone pays a tithe, according to the right he possesses to the

Government, so that these forest tithes form an important item in the Civil List. There is also a duty on the export, which is regulated by co-operation.'

'And the game? What are your game laws?'

'As the nation preserves the forests, so it strictly preserves the game. Every wood has its foresters and keepers; and every householder outside the cities has the right to shoot and trap for a certain number of days spread over the game season, regulated according to his right in the forest. There are two royal woods given by the nation to the High King, all rights in which are his alone. Each of the Five Princes has also his own wood, for which he pays a tax to the Government.'

'Is yours a constitutional one or an autocracy?'

'We have a Government framed as far as modern life will allow on the ancient clan or communal system, and every public service, like our railways, transit by water, lighting, distribution of fuel, and even our Civil Service, has to be based upon his fundamental law. We have no monopolies, yet there is sufficient freedom in the working of the system to enable an individual to enrich himself, but the law falls on him heavily if in doing so he ruins his neighbours. Our coal mines and all mines, except gold and silver, belong to the nation. The gold and silver belong to the king, and through him to the Government. There is a fresh election to the Ard-Fheis every five years. Each Tricha Ced or Tuath sends three delegates to the Second House of the Forradh. As you are probably aware – knowing so much of our language – a Tricha-Ced is a division of the land of about 188 square miles. There are 184 in the kingdom. The nobles sit in the First House of the Forradh, and are also elected. The only persons who have a right to sit in this House are the King, the Righ-damna, the Five Princes, the Five Historians of the First Order, and the Four Archbishops. The Bishops have to be elected.'

'The King is then a monarch with limited powers,' said the Professor, making an entry in his notebook.

'With defined rights and limitations,' MacFirbis replied. 'He is the father of the nation, the High Chief of his people. He is subject to the laws. Yet his ancient, noble and lofty state is well maintained. We

Gaels are instinctively aristocrats. We keep with something deeper than mere pride our unbroken genealogies. No other country in Europe can show such length of recorded pedigrees. But ours is no slavish cringing to wealth and rank. We except our nobles to be men of high principle, useful in the service of the kingdom, courteous and generous. We except the same qualities in the people. We dwell much upon race. We teach the nation pride of race.'

About an hour later the party alighted at a station near a range of hills; and a short drive brought them to the gates of Tir-da-Glas, the country seat of the Historians of Connacht. They were high, of a fine design in hammered iron, and had been made, MacFirbis said, in the early part of the eighteenth century. The avenue ran through a double row of beech and oak, making a gradual ascent; and the park, the Professor saw, was of considerable size, containing huge and ancient trees. The gleam of a river caught his eye, and a ruined castle on a mound by the right bank. Rows of yew trees, old and towering, bordered a path that led from the house to the river. They now stood out black as ink against the flame of the western sky.

Presently the house and its wide terraces came fully into view. Built of limestone, the former somewhat resembled in style an Italian country palace of the seventeenth century. Birds, flowers, interlacings and scrolls were carved in stone above the windows, and these designs appeared again in the cornices, pediments and pilasters; all being the work, the Professor later learnt, of a sculptor who had lived in the neighbourhood.

The interior of the house – as much of it as he saw that evening – which included the great hall and the dining and drawing rooms – appeared at first sight to have an absence of luxury. But a closer examination showed him that the colours, the decorations, and the furniture had been chosen with regard to the best in art, and that the seeming simplicity was the perfection of taste. The library – which he did not see till the next day – was in a higher storey, and ran the whole length of one wing of the house, lighted by a cupola and six windows looking west.

The sun had set when he went on the terrace after dinner with MacFirbis and Sorcha. The afterglow made the sky a glory of rose and

violet, green and primrose, giving the silvery clouds in the east a pink gleam as they hung in the transfused light. The two men lit their pipes; and their conversation having no interest for Sorcha, she left them, and flitted down among the flower-beds, her white cat in her arms.

The Professor learnt much in his talk with MacFirbis of the condition of the land, of drainage, of husbandry, of the output of the Connacht coal mines, of the important tobacco industry, of the occupation of the people around, and of the position, influence and power of the clergy. For two generations the latter had confined themselves to the spiritual welfare of the people, and while firmly upholding the doctrines of the Faith, instructing their flocks in their duty to God and to their neighbours, left them free to act for themselves in all lay matters, believing that the high teaching of the Church must build up the characters of those under their charge and make them good Christians and honourable citizens. A hundred years before, there had been a tendency among them to claim control over their flocks in matters not pertaining to the Faith. But from this assumption of power they were saved by a great Archbishop and a wise and far-seeing band of men within the priestly order. And, now, while in France and Italy and Spain, Atheism had increased, and the priests had lost so much of their influence with the peoples of those countries, they had acquired in Ireland a firm and lasting hold upon the affections of their flocks and were regarded with the greatest veneration and honour.

Presently Sorcha came back to the two elderly men. In her white dress, a scarlet butterfly bow aflame in her hair, she looked in the evening light an aerial creature. Tales of the forests and mountains of his fatherland, of the Lady Venus, of beautiful women not of mortal birth, fitted through the Professor's thoughts as he looked at her, mingling incongruously with the sober subjects upon which he and MacFirbis had been speaking. Legends, nursery stories, which lay with other half-forgotten things in unvisited corners of his mind, came with an uprush of memory, and interested him by their unbidden appearance – keen philosopher as he was. It was temperament he knew, his German temperament, where sentiment and romance could

keep company with an analytical and searching spirit. The white cat looked even a creature of enchantment, with its pale blue, secret eyes, a faded reflection of the brilliant blue of those of its mistress, star-like, mysterious, deep, in her alluring face. It stretched forth its claws, as if resenting the touch of a mortal, when he put out his hand to stroke it.

The girl had come to invite them to visit the ruin by the river. 'It will interest you, Sai,' she said, as she lightly struck the aggressive paw. 'It is six hundred years old, and was built by a Sean-Ghall, a Norman who, partly by his sword and partly by the will of the King of Connacht, obtained land here. The people say there is buried treasure in it. Would you like to dig there as you did in Greece and Asia?'

The Professor smiled. 'What would your father say,' he replied, 'if I undermined and brought down the walls?'

MacFirbis laughed. 'I have no fear of that with the spade of a famous explorer,' he remarked. 'And Sorcha's suggestion is a good one. You might find objects worthy of your examination, for the dungeons have been long covered in and are said to contain treasure.'

The girl moved on, beckoning to her father and Schliemann to follow. They crossed the terrace, and entered the path between the black walls of the yews. The light pierced the interstices between the dark red trunks; and the trees were motionless in the windless air, save where the finches darted in and out of the branches, seeking their shelter for the night. The path ran in a straight line to the river, covered with the yellow sand taken from the shores of the great lough at the base of the Ne-fin range. Shadows of the dense trees crossed it, looking like dark pools on the sand. The girl seemed to float before the Professor's eyes, over the golden sand, across the shadow-water, a white, gauze-clad figure with the splash of scarlet in her hair. A sense of unreality crept over him again, filling him with vague, uneasy questionings, sending a thrill through strings of his being that had lain long rusty and unsounded.

'I will get the vellums,' he thought. 'I will see that German ambassador, then I will let myself out of this strange kingdom.'

The impression passed as they emerged from the yews, and he became again eager to investigate, to listen. The path ended before a

marble pavement, a semi-circle surrounded by a low balustrade, with four steps leading to the river, and three wide, shallow ones to the grass on the right. Walking to the mound, they entered the ruin, where he looked at the Norman masonry. The wall on the southern side had fallen in, and thus opened a wide view of the river reaches and the offsets of the mountains. MacFirbis pointed out the road by which they had driven from the station winding through the plain, and told Schliemann it led to two great lakes, and thence onward till it reached the city by the ocean, whose docks were filled with the ships of the world.

The idea of his guest excavating the mound took hold of him as they moved about the ruin. He tapped the grass-covered heaps of fallen masonry with his stick, offering conjectures as to the position of the dungeons.

'I will send some men to dig here under your guidance, to-morrow,' he said. 'There may be Norman armour and other objects of interest hidden here, though, in spite of popular rumour of treasure, nothing, I fear, to compare with that of your Asiatic explorations.'

Then, as the lilac light deepened into purple, and a mist from the river floated in white wreaths to the foot of the mound, he looked at his daughter's gauze-clad shoulders, and led the way back to the house.

The next morning as the Professor looked from his bedroom window, he saw a group of labourers carrying pickaxe and spade standing on the terrace. The sight annoyed him; he frowned.

'My host intends that I shall be ridiculous, foolish,' he muttered. 'And in all probability we shall be buried under the walls of the castle.'

Recovering his temper, he went downstairs and dismissed the men. At breakfast he told MacFirbis that he must make a closer examination of the ruins before any excavations could begin.

After breakfast he visited the library – a long gallery, with many thousands of books, and saw numbers of valuable manuscripts which he viewed with the delighted eye of a scholar face to face with works in a language the study of which had been his speciality for years. But he did not see the *Dromsneachta* or the *Psalter of Tara*. With his customary directness of speech, he asked MacFirbis to let him

examine the books that morning; and received the answer, given with great courtesy and in a tone of regret, that, for that day, they were not within the reach of any student.

'But, to-morrow,' said MacFirbis, 'with the help of God, you shall have the books. And I speak the truth when I say that it is with sincere pleasure and complete confidence that I shall place them in your hands. If you have any letters for the early post,' he added, 'put them in the box at the end of the gallery. The mail goes out at twelve.'

This remark gave the Professor an idea. He would write to his sister, a widow, who kept his house for him in Berlin, and to his friend the Celtologist, de Narbonne. If they replied, if the postal system in the kingdom of Ireland, as he now found that system, could forward letters to persons who lived in a world which had no conception of such an Ireland, the situation would be still more remarkable and inexplicable.

To his sister he wrote that he was in good health, but could not yet fix the date of his return. She was to see that this roses were daily watered, the dead flowers cut off, and a basketful of his red and white Queen Luise sent to their sick neighbour.

His letter to de Narbonne was longer, but also guarded. He told him that he had found two pre-Patrician vellums, which he had every reason to believe were genuine works of the third century. He hoped to secure them; but as there was some difficulty in the matter, he did not expect to return to Germany for at least a month. On each envelope he put an English two-pence halfpenny stamp, and then dropped the letters into the box.

He went out after lunch with MacFirbis, who showed him his farm. The barns and granaries were half a mile from the house, under the charge of a steward. Away in the fields the ripe wheat and oats were being reaped by motor-machines. There were two mills on the estate, one worked by electricity and one by the water of the river.

'Ireland imports little corn,' said MacFirbis, 'the country under our advanced system of agriculture – even with our increasing population – being able to supply nearly all our grain. What you see being reaped will be ground in my mills. Each miller is a character in his way. The one whose mill is worked by electricity looks upon the

other as a backward fellow, not at all with the times; while the river man declares that the river was made by God, and greater and more sacred than the electric power which man makes from the water, and which owes its speed and strength to the river. It is no use to tell him that electricity is the great force lying everywhere in nature. Many of the farmers,' continued MacFirbis, 'have their own mills. The people feed on oatmeal and whole flour, home-cured bacon, fresh pork, potatoes, garden vegetables, of which great quantities are grown, honey and milk, and on special days mutton and beef. Every peasant has his orchard, in which he grows apples, gooseberries, currants, raspberries and strawberries; also walnuts and hazelnuts. Tea is used sparingly. The Health Lecturer of each Tricha-Ced has shown the danger to health when over-drawn or drunk too freely.'

'Are these lectures paid by the Government?', asked the Professor.

'The Government pays the members of the National Health Committee, who are all men specially trained for their position. They are chiefly doctors or men who have devoted years to investigating the causes of disease. Their body is re-elected every five years. Each Tricha-Ced supports its own Health Lecturer, who must have passed a rigid examination, and have received a certificate of qualification from the National Health Committee. With our fine lakes and rivers, we have made the water supply a simple matter. Every baile of forty houses must, by law, have its public baths. We follow somewhat the Roman system, and carry much of the water through aqueducts. The people are taught the value to health of cleanliness, and even to the poorest cottage is attached a bath-house.'

On returning to the house, MacFirbis called a gardener, and bade him take a measuring line and a spade to the ruins.

'You are anxious, I am sure, to survey the ground,' he said to the Professor. 'I must ask you excuse me for the present, as I have some business to attend to. But I hope to join you later.'

He crossed the terrace and entered the house, leaving the Professor looking at the gardener with an air of a man who finds himself in a ridiculous position, and resents it.

CHAPTER IX.

The gardener touched his glibbe and shouldered his spade. He was short and dark, with a long upper lip, a wide mouth, flat nose and heavy jaw. On cheeks and chin were sparse black hairs. The Professor's stare slowly changed, and his eyes grew mild and contemplative.

'A survival,' he thought, 'one of the under-races. This man's ancestors were in Ireland before the Gael.'

He had written a monograph on the Cave-man of Europe, and had theorised on the sounds of his language. He had maintained that in his descendants, to be found all over the Continent – these sounds survived. The man before him clearly belonged to this primitive race; and he questioned him with an attentive hear.

'Cahil MacBuan,' he repeated, gratified to find that he slurred his vowels and telescoped some of his words. 'You follow a good profession. And in my opinion you are a descendant of the Atticotti, of whom probably you have never heard.'

'Noble stranger, I have been at school,' replied the gardener. 'And they put a king on the throne of Erin. But it is not of those old times I trouble my head. I am busy daily with the flowers and fruits of the earth, and study the ways of worms and birds.'

'And among your flowers I see rare and beautiful roses. I shall look at these glorious blooms.'

The Professor paused by a row of standards bearing crimson and yellow and white blossoms, but the gardener, walking on, turned into the yew path. Schliemann presently followed. As the afternoon was fine, he decided that he would sit on the sunny side of the castle and enter some notes in his book.

He dismissed the man at the end of the walk – taking, after a moment's hesitation, the spade and line – and made his way to the ruin. The river gleamed on his right, deep at this part, and flowing silently between its banks. Higher up, to the left of the castle, there was a ford, and the water sang in the shallows. He went with a slow step over the flower-starred grass to the shadow of the crumbling keep, and ascended the mound. The interior of the castle was flooded

with a sunshine that brightened to gold and emerald the mosses on the stones.

Crossing to the side where the wall had fallen, he stood by the edge, and, with his hands clasped behind his back, surveyed the scene. A sturdy figure he looked. His soft felt hat shaded his eyes from the sun's rays; his thick white hair streaked with flaxen, gave him in the luminous air the appearance of some seer of older days. His dogged air, his resolute chin, were tempered by the genial gleam from his eyes.

His gaze crossed the river, and wandered through the park till it rested on the road leading to the great ocean-city. Now and again a cart, or carriage, passed, going up or coming down the hill. If ascending, they emerged into view from a wood on the plain; if coming from the west, they broke into sight on the crest of the hill. As he looked, a motor car appeared on the summit, and came rushing down the slope. Its colour was pale yellow or cream – he was not sure which – with a dark line. With raised eyebrows, he followed its course till it vanished in the wood.

'The Ollamh Keating! He ejaculated. 'I ought to warn my host.'

But he did not move for some minutes; then, as he spurned the spade at his foot, and was about to turn away, his glance was arrested by a figure on the other side of the river. It approached the bank, and entering the water, waded through the shallows. It was Geoffrey Keating.

'So, so, I was right,' Schliemann thought. 'It was the Keatings' car.'

He planted his feet firmly on the ground; his air became more stubborn and aggressive. He watched the young man run up the mound and leap over the masonry, with disapproving eyes.

Keating greeted him; he leant his shoulders against the mossy wall, and glanced at his wet boots.

'This sunshine is delightful,' he remarked.

'I thought we had left you in Dungeanain,' the Professor said shortly.

'You did; but I am here. Sai Schliemann, Sorcha thinks you are willing to help us. Is she right?'

'You have the merit of directness, Captain Keating. I will be as brief. No. I have no power to help you.'

'Pardon me, you have. The books are to be placed in your hands.'

'I have told you that I will not put them in your hands without a guarantee that they are to be returned to the Hereditary Historian of Connacht.'

'I am prepared to give it. Here is a copy of the document in which I promise to return the books. Another copy I shall give Sorcha, and the original, when you have seen it, shall be placed in a cover, and sealed, and left in charge of the Keeper of the Archives of the Ollamhs, in Baile Átha Cliath.'

The Professor took the offered paper, and slowly read it through. Then he folded it up and put it in his pocket.

'I believe you to be a young man of honour,' he said, briefly.

'You then consent?', said Keating.

'On conditions. The Historian gives me the books to-morrow, and it will take me a considerable time – a month at the least – to read the scripts.'

'By the saints of Erin! Too long,' exclaimed Keating. 'Sorcha is to be my wife before then.'

'Indeed, indeed!', said the Professor, testily. 'What, then, is your plan, sir lover?'

'That you give the books to Sorcha to-morrow. And let her know that I shall wait for her here.'

'Perhaps you are not aware, Captain Keating, that I am expected to dig in this ruin; to look for Norman gold, and bring down the walls.'

'That, of course, is your work, and it is digging that has made you famous. But will you be kind enough to defer it till the day after to-morrow?'

'And should I do so, and you meet Sorcha here, she bringing the books—'

'We shall cross the river, step into a motor, and drive to a friend's house fifty miles from Tir-da-Glas. I shall leave her there, motor to Dungeanain, show my father the books, and redeem my oath.'

'Proceed,' said Schliemann, in a caustic tone. 'I perceive that my intended study of the books has passed out of your sight.'

'Not at all, noble one. Having shown my father the books, I inform him that it is through your help I have been able to restore them to his care. But, that having seen them, I must return them to you for a few days, a condition of that help. My father, a man of the highest honour, will respect my promise. At the end of a month, you will put the books into his hands.'

The Professor's pugnacious air lessened. 'Go on,' he said.

'I return to the neighbourhood with them, and give them to you in this castle. As you will be engaged in your excavations, there will be no difficulty in our meeting. Then I rejoin Sorcha and make her my wife.'

Schliemann stood silent. His kindly and somewhat sentimental heart made him favour the plan. Of course, his important, his supreme work was to secure the vellums; but he could do that and yet agree to the part Keating had assigned him. Then, the moment the books were in his hands again, he would go to Dublin, see the German ambassador, and return to Berlin, stopping in Paris on the way thither to show his prize to de Narbonne. When every page had been photographed, he would send the vellums to Keating, writing at the same time to MacFirbis to assure them of their safety and ultimate restoration to the Hereditary Keepers.

'I accede to your request,' he said, presently. 'But the books must be in my hands again in four days.'

'In three, and a hundred thousand thanks. I am under an eternal obligation to you; and tell Sorcha I shall be here at eight to-morrow evening.'

'I have a conscience, young man,' said the Professor, 'and it asks me am I right in helping you to elope with my host's daughter? It will be a severe blow to him.'

'Only for a time,' replied Keating. 'He adores Sorcha, and not long ago showed me every token of friendship and kindness. It will be a brief storm.'

'I trust so. Certainly I think Sorcha will be happier with you than she would be as the wife of Maelmuire MacFirbis, for whom, I imagine, her father designs her.'

'Ah,' Keating drew a deep breath.

'Your eyes blaze. The Tanist would, I expect, like to put the pretty pink rose in his garden. Well – I will give your message.'

'May you be seven times better than now! I shall wait by the keep.'

'An exposed position. Look! I see your motor car going up the hill.'

Keating straightened himself alertly, and glanced in the direction. 'That fool of a chauffeur has mistaken my order!', he exclaimed. 'I left him three miles beyond the station.'

'But you came from the direction of the seaport city,' replied the Professor. 'Perhaps, young man, I had better tell you that I expect the Historian to join me here.'

'Then I will be off. My message to Sorcha, noble one! and the blessing of God with you.'

'May God prosper your way,' the Professor returned, giving the usual farewell; but he said the words gruffly.

He watched the young man wade through the ford, and cross the park to the boundary wall of the road. Then, lighting his pipe, he sat down on a stone, with his back to the river. Before long, he heard the splash of oars on the water, and glanced over his shoulder. A boat with two men in it had drawn close to the bank. One got out, and he recognised Mr. Amos Moss. He came with an elastic step towards the castle, and ascending the mound, clambered over the broken wall. As he saw the Professor he raised his hat.

'Busy with the Old and Middle, Professor?', he remarked in English. 'I did not expect to see you here. It was only yesterday we were pricing up King Aodh. Well, I'm pleased to meet a man of your knowledge again.' He held out his hand.

The Professor took it stiffly. 'So you have come west?', he said.

'I have, sir. Are you digging here?'

Schliemann shook his head.

'I saw your spade. I have been told you are the great archaeologist. If you have any antiques you wish to sell, you'll not get, I guess, a higher price than I can give.'

'My work is not here,' said the Professor, shortly.

Moss looked round the ruin and then in the direction of the house.

'Are you touring, Professor, or visiting?', he enquired.

'I am the guest of the Historian of Connacht,' the Professor replied in Irish.

'If you are returning to the house I will accompany you,' Moss replied in the same language. 'I hear the library is a fine one, and as it is Celtic, I may get some ideas for mine in Chicago.'

'But I understand that the Historian and you, Mr. Moss, are not acquainted, and moreover that you have pestered him with letters about his two famous books.'

'I guess you are right. He has had several letters from me which he has not answered, and the opportunity now offering, I shall call in person.'

'Then you must understand, Mr. Moss, it is not I who shall bring you to the house.'

The American smiled slowly. 'I will not force myself on your company,' he answered. 'I will call later.' He raised his serge cap, and turned away.

Schliemann strolled back to the house. At the end of the yew walk he met the gardener. The man was clipping a branch, and he stopped and spoke to him. Presently a procession came on the terrace; two men carrying a litter on which lay the dog, Midir, with a bandaged paw, and behind them the Historian and the butler, Cormac. The party crossed the terrace, and turned off in the direction of one of the gardens.

'If the brute is dead,' said the gardener, who had paused to watch the sight, 'I trust they will put the carcase under a rose tree.' He began to clip again.

'A utilitarian spirit in this Atticotti,' thought Schliemann, and seeing Sorcha appear on the terrace, he went to meet her.

The girl seemed to know he bore a message for here. Turning pink and white in turns, she listened to him. When she learnt that he would give her the books on the morrow, and that she was to meet Geoffrey Keating in the castle, she assumed so winning and charming

an air that the stings of his conscience were forgotten for the moment. Then she kissed his hands and ran into the house.

An hour later as he looked from a window in the drawing-room, he saw MacFirbis coming along one of the paths that led from the high-walled garden, in company with a man whom the Professor's prolonged gaze discovered was Moss. As they drew nearer, he saw that they appeared to be engaged in friendly conversation. They passed on to the terrace, and presently went out of sight.

He did not meet MacFirbis till dinner. In the course of the meal, MacFirbis mentioned an interview he had had with a gentleman who had come to view the ruins.

'I met him,' he said, 'as Cormac and I were taking poor Midir to the house of the animal doctor, whom I keep on the estate. He addressed me courteously, struck with the size and beauty of Midir, and asked to be allowed to examine him, as he had wide experience in the treatment of animals. He appeared most skilful, and accompanied me to the house. Later, I tried to persuade him to join us at dinner, but he had to return to the town.'

'I think I saw you walking with him,' said Schliemann. 'Did he tell you his name?'

'Yes. MacMossa, a curious name. But how did you get on at the castle? I hope MacBuan was of some help.'

The Professor slowly peeled a peach. 'I have not yet completed my plan,' he said. 'In four days' time I may be ready.'

A bright colour rushed to Sorcha's face. She had been sitting silent, absorbed, the Professor guessed, in the thought of her flight till he spoke. She looked at him, then at her father, but did not speak.

When they entered the drawing room a little later, MacFirbis asked her to play one of the nocturnes of Ua Siodha. 'You know them, of course,' he said to Schliemann. 'Play, Sorcha, Tir-na-nOg.'

She obeyed, but when she had finished the famous nocturne, she rose, and saying that the music had fled from her fingers, took the white cat, and went out on the terrace.

Not long after, Cormac brought a telegram to the Historian. When he had read it, he said with a smile: 'We shall have a visitor to-morrow. Maelmuire will be here by noon.'

CHAPTER X.

The Professor was looking at an illuminated page of a manuscript in the library the next morning, when he was joined by MacFirbis. The Historian carried a sealed parcel in his hands.

'I have redeemed my promise,' he said, smiling; 'and here are the two vellums. This key will open the box in which they are contained. And now,' he added, 'I can leave you without any fear that I shall be neglecting my duties as a host, for I have to visit a friend in the next tuath, and shall not be able to return before seven o'clock. But my Tanist will be here, and will be ready to give you what help you may desire in deciphering the pages.'

He put the parcel on a table, bade the Professor farewell and left the library.

With slow and careful hands, Schliemann broke the seals, and drew from its wrappings a box made of yew with bands of silver. The faint scruples, which conscience had ventured to raise, vanished as he unlocked the box and raised the lid. It was lined with yellow silk, and the two vellums lay within. Putting a hand in a pocket of his coat, he felt round it, searching for his magnifying glass; it was not there. Then, remembering that he had seen one on a table near a recess between the book-cases, he carried the box down the library, smelling, as he went, the same delicate perfume of flowers that he had noticed when he had held the *Psalter of Tara* three days before. As he reached the recess he stood still, and the box dropped from his hands. He did not move, but, hidden from the rest of the room, remained rigid and silent like a man in a catalepsy. Yet his mind was clear and alert, and knew the body was held by unseen bands of iron, and the tongue frozen.

'Good God!', he thought, 'what has happened to me!'

After a while he heard the door at the end of the library open and some one come in. He tried to move, to call out, but there was neither sound nor motion. 'It is thus they bury the alive as dead,' his mind spoke to itself, and sent the thought to the tongue, but it lay speechless between locked jaws.

He heard the door open again, and Cormac's voice.

'The gentleman whom you expect, Tanist, has arrived,' he said.

'Bring him up here,' answered that of Maelmuire. 'When did the Historian say he would return?'

'At seven, Tanist.'

'Where is Sai Schliemann?'

'He is at the castle, noble one, which he is about to excavate.'

The sound of a door closing followed the words; there was silence in the place. A few minutes passed, then the door opened, and a man's step came into the room.

'Good morning,' said Maelmuire's voice. 'You are the detective MacSuibhne whom the head of the Department promised to send.'

The reply was given in a low tone, and the Professor did not catch it. Two chairs were then moved as if the Tanist and his visitor sat down.

'You have been given an outline of the case,' went on the Tanist. 'An attempt was made three nights ago to steal two famous manuscripts from the house of the Historian of Connacht in Dungeanain. The historian entertains certain chivalrous old-fashioned ideas, and will not call in the aid of the police. I am his Tanist, and it is my duty to see the manuscripts are safe-guarded. I am, therefore, employing a detective to discover the thief. You are, I hear, one of the smartest men in the force.'

'I am considered so,' a second voice replied; and the Professor, with an apprehension that his frozen body would not let him express, recognised the voice as that of Moss.

'Have you a suspicion of the thief?', it continued.

'I want your opinion,' the Tanist answered; and Schliemann listened, wondering if thus the dead felt as their spirits moved about among the living, desirous to communicate, yet unable to do so, as Maelmuire told of Ollamh Keating's threatening letter and of the vow taken by father and son. 'On the surface it looks,' concluded the Tanist, 'as if they – either the Ollamh or Captain Keating – broke into the room. But I have other suspicions.'

'And these, Tanist?'

'The Historian has lately made the acquaintance of an elderly gentleman, a foreigner, who says he is the well-known archaeologist,

Schliemann. He met him under peculiar circumstances. On Monday the Historian had occasion to visit the palace archives, to which, as you are aware, only the Ollamhs of Ireland have free access. On the floor, stunned and bruised, lay this gentleman, who appeared to have fallen from the gallery, to which there is access from the Chamber of the Archives by short stairs. He has not yet explained how he came there, and I have found he had no ticket of admission from any Ollamh in Ireland.'

'This certainly looks suspicious,' said the voice of Moss.

'He has shown a marked interest in the two manuscripts, which at times he seems anxious to hide. The Historian is so convinced that he is the well-known archaeologist that he is about to allow him to look at them.'

'This is interesting, Tanist.'

'He is a foreigner, for he speaks Irish with an accent, and often uses quaint and obsolete words. It is possible that he may be an agent for some gang of art and manuscript thieves. A millionaire, named Moss, an American, offered to buy the vellums. The Historian, considering the offer an impertinent one, took no notice of Moss. I have heard that this Mr. Moss is very anxious to get them. The thieves, of course, know that; and my idea is that they mean to take the books to New York, should they succeed in stealing them, and sell them to Mr. Moss, who probably will have no scruples about buying them.'

'Mr. Moss left Baile Átha Cliath yesterday for New York.'

'Where the thieves will follow him if my theory is right. I found a footprint under the window through which the person who had broken into the house had escaped, and I got Cormac to measure Sai Schliemann's boot. He was at the palace, it is true, but I considered it wise to neglect nothing that might yet be evidence. The feet were not the same size, but I found this magnifying glass, which belongs to him, for there is his name on the case.'

'In my opinion, you may dismiss Moss from having anything to do with this affair,' said the voice of Moss. 'He is a man of honour, and has left Ireland. But—,' the voice grew emphatic, 'I strongly suspect this man Schliemann of having designs on the books. He is an agent,

I believe, of the Keatings. He met Captain Keating in Dungeanain Cathedral; and yesterday they had an interview again in the old castle out there by the river. He must have let Keating into the house, and hid him in the library, or given him keys which opened the doors. By the way, Tanist, perhaps you notice that I speak Irish with an accent, for though a man of Erin, I was brought up abroad.'

'I had noticed it,' the voice of the Tanist answered. 'Then you have been in this neighbourhood since yesterday?'

'That is true, noble one. I came at once to investigate and to watch Schliemann, whom I suspected at once on hearing the story. As I understood that the Historian had refused to call in the police, I did not reveal my identity when I met him with a sick dog yesterday.'

'Quite right. Now, what do you propose to do?'

There was a pause; the Professor heard the scraping of a chair on the floor. Then someone, Moss, he thought, coughed; presently the man spoke.

'The important point, Tanist,' he said, 'is the safety of the two books. And as this fellow, Schliemann, is in the house, and the books will be placed in his hands by the Historian, I advise you to secure them now in the absence of both; and, I further suggest, that you give them to me, and I will return at once to Baile Átha Cliath, and place them in the hands of the Chief Keeper of the National Archives.'

'But that would take you away from this neighbourhood for some hours,' replied the Tanist, 'and would be loss of time. We must employ some other agent, for I, myself, cannot transfer the books without the leave of their Hereditary keeper.'

'I thought of that, Tanist. But I had a wire this morning from the Central Depot in cipher. There is some important information connected with the case, which makes it necessary that I should return to Baile Átha Cliath for a few hours. I am confident, from what you have told me, and from the wire itself, that it has to do with Schliemann and the Keatings. I would ask you while I am away to closely watch Schliemann, and, if possible, convey your suspicion to the Historian.'

'I mean to do so,' said the Tanist. 'But it will not do to rouse Schliemann's suspicions. I believe him to be ignorant of the ancient

forms of our language and incapable of reading the books. If your idea is right, and he is an agent for the Keatings, we might take advantage of his ignorance. There are numbers of manuscripts in this room of no great value or date, which would deceive an untrained eye. Two of them, placed in a case, can be left in his room; and we may be confident that he will take them for the books.'

A chair was pushed back; Schliemann heard him cross the room. The sound of a case being raised followed; then Moss spoke.

'In my opinion, Tanist,' he said, 'he knows what he is about. The Keatings would not employ an ignorant man, and the old fellow has a learned look. I warn you that the books are not safe, and strongly advise, as a precaution, that I take them to Baile Átha Cliath.'

'I would follow your advice, MacSuibhne,' the Tanist replied. 'But I, as Tanist of the Hereditary Historian of Connacht, cannot take the books without his leave. Not even to save them can I give them to anyone. Now—', the lid of the case was closed, 'here are two manuscripts of much the size and shape of the *Psalter of Tara* and the *Dromsneachta*, which I think will deceive Schliemann. I will take them to his room. Can you stay to lunch, or do you wish to catch the 12.45. It is now 12.20.'

'I cannot stay, thank you, Tanist,' the voice of Moss answered. 'I have a wire to send. I will write it here. Pray do not wait, for Schliemann may return before you put the books in his room. I will write to you from Baile Átha Cliath.'

'Very well. And you will be here by eleven to-morrow.'

A few seconds later the door opened and closed, and the Professor knew that he was alone with Moss. The American, if he chose, could kill him, take the books, rifle the library, and he, Schliemann, powerless and frozen, could not prevent him. He heard Moss begin to move about. His figure suddenly came into view of his fixed and staring eyes; he was examining the book-shelves. Turning from them soon, he peered into the glass-cases that ran down the centre of the room. The yew-box had fallen near one, a yard from the recess; the lid lay open; the books had fallen out.

'He will see me now and then,' thought the Professor, 'and the wretch may charge me with the theft.'

But the American's glance was arrested by the books; with a quick indrawn breath, he stooped and raised them from the floor. He rustled the pages, seized the box, laid the vellums swiftly in it, and putting it under his coat, hurried up the room, passing soon out of the Professor's sight. The latter heard him stride to the door, go out, and lock it behind him.

Then, as Schliemann stood staring across the library, listening in his prison of inert flesh, sensation returned, and he felt as if the iron bands that bound him were being loosened. He could move his eyes, and open and shut his fingers. The stiffness of death passed, and the blood seemed to grow warm again in his veins. Each second motion came flowing back in throbs and leaps of nerves and pulses, till finally he was able to stagger forth and stare about him.

In a few minutes he was himself again. He went swiftly to the door, beat upon it, and called aloud. No one answered. Then he hastened to a window and threw it open. The whole row on that side looked towards the west, commanding a view of the park, ornamental lawns, a walled garden, and the forest-clad mountains; he saw no sign of life beyond a herd of deer crossing a distant part of the park. He shouted, but the silence was unbroken. Both house and grounds appeared deserted.

At last, finding that he could not attract attention, he sat down on the nearest chair, and reviewed the situation. Moss had the vellums, and would start at once for America. Irish law might not be able to reach him there. But even if they were brought back, should he, Schliemann, ever see them again? He must return soon to Berlin, and once out of Ireland – this Ireland of King Niall and the Five Princes and the Ollamhs – who could tell whether he would be able to enter it again.

But about him now were other manuscripts and printed editions of the ancient literature of the kingdom. His practical mind bade him make the most of the opportunity. Starting from his chair, he searched the book-shelves, selected a volume, and taking a seat at a table, began to study the archaic work.

CHAPTER XI.

The hours passed unnoticed. He had discovered a world of Celtic literature unknown to the scholars of Europe; and a civilisation was suddenly revealed, the existence of which he had only guessed.

But he was aroused at last by a knocking at the door and the voice of the Historian. 'Sai Schliemann, are you within?', he called.

The Professor rose and went to the door. 'I am locked in,' he answered; 'a prisoner, and my calls have failed to attract the attention of the household.'

'There is no key on this side. Who locked you in?'

'The thief who has taken it away.'

He heard fresh steps approach the door, and the voice of the Tanist. 'Force the lock!', he said.

'Here is Cormac with keys,' answered MacFirbis, as other steps drew near. 'One of them may fit.'

Several keys were tried, and the lock yielding at last, those without came in.

'What has happened?', asked MacFirbis. 'How long have you been a prisoner, my friend?'

'Since half-past twelve to-day to be accurate,' replied Schliemann. 'I have important and disastrous news to give you, Historian. Your books – your invaluable books – are stolen.'

'Stolen! What books?'

'The *Psalter of Tara* and the *Dromsneachta*.'

A white look crept over the Historian's face, and he stood as if stunned. A smile crossed the Tanist's lips, which he instantly repressed. Signing to Cormac to follow, he went to the door; said something to him there in a low tone, and returned to the others.

'This is, indeed, a tremendous loss,' he remarked calmly to the Professor. 'I conclude you were beguiled here and locked in, Sai Schliemann?'

'It is the Ollamh Keating!', cried MacFirbis, his voice a war-note. 'It is he alone who could have done such a thing; penetrated to my library, beguiled the Sai, and secured the books! But he shall not keep them long. No! By Saint Ciaran!'

'He has been outwitted, you will find, Historian, or at least his agent, for I do not think he came here himself.'

'God grant it, Maelmuire. But have you information? Do you know the agent?'

'He does indeed,' said the Professor, 'not the agent, but the thief. Historian, the man who has stolen your precious books is Amos Moss, the American. He came here to-day under the guise of a detective, seized the books, and made off.'

'Great God! That vandal!', exclaimed MacFirbis. 'That low commercial mind to have the vellums. Bad as a theft by the Keatings would be, this is worse. But, Sai Schliemann, I left the books in your charge. How did this man overcome you?'

The question was unheard by the Tanist; he had gone to the door, where Cormac had reappeared. They spoke together for a minute. The Professor shook his head.

'By an extraordinary occurrence,' he answered, 'which I will describe later. For we waste time standing here. The thief has had nearly six hours' start, and is probably at Queenstown or Liverpool by now. Those ports should be watched, and telegrams sent to the police.'

'Queenstown! Where is Queenstown? I do not know of such a place,' said the Historian. 'And as to Liverpool? Why should he go thither when not thirty miles from here is Cathair-na-Mart, whence MacEogain's and Ua Caonain's and Ua Dubda's lines of steamers sail every day. Maelmuire,' he turned to the Tanist, who had joined them, 'I command you help me to recover these books, as my Tanist and successor, as I would command,' he added, impressively, 'my son, if God had blessed me with one.'

The young man bent and kissed his hand. 'I will be not only your Tanist, but a son to you to-day,' he said. Then he went to a table and wrote on a telegraph form.

'You will be too late if you do not pursue the thief at once,' asserted the Professor, in his most positive tone. 'You were taken in, Tanist. The man you thought a detective was Moss. He came here yesterday, and has been trying to get access to the books ever since.'

'You saw him, then,' the young man's tone was smooth and polite. 'There is, I believe, a view of the avenue from the castle where you were engaged in your interesting excavations.'

'It was in this room, this library, I saw him,' Schliemann returned, sharply. 'I tell you you have been deceived.'

'Maelmuire,' the Historian exclaimed, 'we must track this fellow, this Moss. Gracious God! that he should have the books! I see you are sending a telegram. We must wire to every port. This is a case in which I permit your calling in the aid of the police, for it is now no longer a contest between two Ollamhs of rank, where etiquette and honour are regarded, but a common theft by a man whose views of life are bounded by the dollar. Sai Schliemann, forgive my forgetfulness of your wants. As soon as these telegrams are sent, we shall prepare for dinner.'

'I will write them all,' said the Tanist, quietly, 'if you, honoured kinsman, will leave me for a minute. I am on the track of Moss.'

'Then, Sai, we shall retire. And when you have dined, you will give me the details of this disastrous affair. Maelmuire, I shall ask you then to relate what you have learnt.'

On going to his room, the Professor looked about for the two manuscripts that the Tanist had put there. They were not to be seen. '*Herr Je*! He feared my scholarship after all,' he said to himself, and gave a smile, half pleased, half caustic.

At dinner, he heard him ask for Sorcha, and the question recalled the elopement and his promise to the lovers to his mind. In the events of the day, he had forgotten it and them. Then as he heard the Historian answer that Cormac had told him that she had gone out for the evening, and that she was probably spending it with his neighbour, Ua Conagher, whose daughter was Sorcha's friend, the Professor suddenly felt ashamed, and regretted the par the had taken. He had harmed this honourable old man, and must presently witness his grief. He raised his eyes and stared at the big bay window that looked on the terrace. A few last rays of sunlight lingered on a bed of scarlet flowers, turning them to the colour of fire. The long, black shadows of the yew trees stretched across the sunlit corner, and as he gazed with perturbed eyes, he saw those of two men suddenly thrown between

two of the trees. Then the light died off the grass, and where the shadows had lain was the pale green sward alone.

Though no reference was made to the books till the fruit and wine were placed on the table, it was evident that MacFirbis dwelt upon their loss by his grave, absorbed air, which every now and then he tried to shake off, as if he were anxious that the Professor should not think him lacking in courteous attention, or that he blamed him for their disappearance. But the latter, rendered uncomfortable by an uneasy conscience, did not notice this consideration and delicacy of feeling; and it was Maelmuire who was the first to return to the subject.

'I think you said you saw Moss enter the library, Sai Schliemann,' he remarked, as if the thought had just occurred to him. 'At what hour was that?'

'Between twelve and one,' answered the Professor. 'Soon after twelve, I should think.'

'You had been there some time when I brought you the books,' said the Historian.

The Tanist's hand was on a crystal jug of wine; he did not move the vessel; a faint colour came to his face as he looked from one speaker to the other. 'What books were those?', he asked, in a slow, distinct voice.

'The *Psalter of Tara* and the *Dromsneachta*,' MacFirbis replied. The Professor gave the Tanist a caustic glance. He felt pleased at the young man's discomfiture.

'I placed them with every confidence in Sai Schliemann's hands,' MacFirbis continued. 'And I do not blame him now, but rather commiserate with him upon the treatment he received from this audacious thief. Will you kindly tell us, Sai Schliemann, all that occurred?'

The Tanist rose from the table. What agitation he had felt was no longer apparent; his manner was cold and composed. 'If the Sai will defer the story for a minute,' he said politely. 'I shall be glad to hear it when I return. Historian, pray excuse me for a few moments.'

He went out through the open window, and Schliemann saw him go in the direction of the yew-walk. In a short time he re-appeared

with two men dressed in russet-cloth, collarless tunics, dark knee breeches, soft yellow leather gaiters, and russet-red caps on their heads with a crown, a number, and the letter N embroidered in white in front.

'The police!', exclaimed MacFirbis, as his eyes fell on these figures, through the window. 'They have brought news of the thief. Excuse me, Sai Schliemann, I must hear their report.'

Hastily he pushed back his chair, and went on the terrace. The Tanist was speaking as he drew near.

'The detective and I were alone in the library,' the young man said, 'from 12 till 12.20. He must have gone out immediately on receiving the books and given them to his accomplice. I think then he went to his room, found the bogus books, and passed them on, too, to the man; for Cormac found that they were gone when I sent him to the room. After that he must have returned to the library, and locked himself in.'

'Health to you, men,' said the Historian as he reached the group.

'Health to you, Historian of Connacht,' both policemen replied, saluting.

'Have you secured the thief? And, above all, have the books been recovered?'

'We think we know the thief, Historian. The Tanist has got important evidence.'

'But it is Amos Moss, the American, and he is now, I fear, on the ocean. Have you sent a cablegram to the New York police, and wireless to the outgoing ships?'

As MacFirbis spoke, the Professor came on the terrace. He walked towards the group with his hands clasped behind his back, his head erect, and the afterglow of the sky on his face and thick white hair. MacFirbis went to meet him.

'The police are here,' he said, 'and we are anxious to hear all you can tell us of the thief.'

The Professor faced the men. The Tanist, he knew, had conveyed his suspicions to them; he assumed his combative air, which was tempered, however, by a gleam of humour in his eyes.

'Briefly, men, my information is this,' he said in a clear, assertive voice. 'The Historian brought me the books, and I was conveying them to a table I was seized with a sudden extraordinary rigidity which prevented my speaking or moving. The books fell from my hands, and I stood in a recess hidden from the view of anyone who entered the library, retaining the powers of hearing and sight, but as deprived of that of motion as if I were a statue of stone. I heard the Tanist come in, then Cormac, and after that Amos Moss, who deceived the Tanist, got the books, and made off. When I recovered, I called from the window, but no one answered.'

The Cean, or sergeant, fixed a steady eye on the Professor during the speech. 'The Tanist says he was in the library, sir, at the hour you mention,' he remarked, 'but you were not there. He further states that he moved about the room. Can you explain this?'

'Certainly, policeman. I was there, hidden from his view in the recess between two bookcases. If you come to the library I will show you how I stood. And moreover' – the Professor turned sharply to Maelmuire, 'I overheard every word you said, and your suspicions. You warned Amos Moss, whom you took for a detective, of an elderly gentleman, a foreigner, who is on a visit to this country.'

The Cean glanced at the Tanist, whose masked eyes had met the Professor's. They suddenly changed. 'You had the sense, however, not to give him the books,' continued the Professor, 'though he pressed you hard, and I believe, young man, you would have given them but for some rule of your tanistry. Come! I will show you all where I stood.'

He swung round, and walked with an energetic step towards the house. The others followed. Mounting the stair, he led the way to the library, and placing himself in the recess, bade the Tanist and the policeman stand in that part of the room where the former had interviewed Moss. When they had done so and acknowledged that he was hidden from their sight, he stepped out from the spot, and addressing MacFirbis, reminded him that he had been witness of the faintness that had overtaken him (Schliemann) in Dungeanain when he was about to examine the books. These attacks filled him, he said, with some alarm, and were due, he feared, to his fall. While the

policemen exchanged glances, the Historian in a courteous and sympathetic tone agreed with this opinion, and advised him to consult some doctors whose names he mentioned as if they were well-known to the Professor.

The policemen, having made a brief examination of the library, spoke apart with the Tanist. They then returned to the terrace. The other men soon joined them there, and found they had been questioning Cormac.

'The Tanist, Cean,' said Cormac, 'had sent me to the castle to ask the Sai if he wished to have lunch brought to him there. He was not in the castle, and it may have been then he called. The rest of the servants were at the east end of the house, and would not be able to hear him. It was their dinner hour. The Tanist went out after he had given me the order, and did not return till over an hour ago. He came back with the Historian. The young lady was in her own sitting room all day till evening, and could not hear him either.'

'It was like the house of the dead,' put in the Professor. 'But who is this boy? He seems to bring news.'

All eyes turned in the direction to which he pointed. A boy wearing an apple-green tunic and cap whirled up the terrace on a green bicycle. Springing to the ground, he bared his head and gave a green envelope to the Tanist.

'A telegram,' said the Historian. 'There may be news of Moss.'

Maelmuire's face darkened as he read it. 'This news is serious, Historian,' he said looking up. 'We have made a mistake, Cean,' he added, addressing the sergeant. 'MacSuibne wires that he was not here to-day, and that I had wired to him to wait in Baile-Átha-Cliath. I fear, Sai, what you said is true, and that I was deceived by the American. I offer my sincere apologies.

'Remember in future, sir, not to judge too hastily, or reach conclusions based on false premises,' the Professor answered with dignity. 'Yet I am to blame.' He turned to MacFirbis. 'This man, Moss, came to me yesterday when I was engaged in – looking at the ruins, and asked me to procure him an entrance to the house. I refused. But I ought to have warned you, for, later, I think, you met him, when he doctored your dog. He called himself MacMossa.'

'*In ainm De!* Was that he?' The Historian's eye grew bright with anger. 'And he gave Midir medicine! – Cahil MacBuan!', he called as the gardener suddenly appeared from the yew-walk. 'Go at once to the house of the leech and bring me a report of Midir.'

The Tanist looked at the sergeant. 'What is to be done?', he said, as the gardener crossed the terrace. 'It is Moss.'

'It may be Moss, noble one,' the man answered. 'We shall wire to all the ports and to America. And I am cycling now to Cathair-na-Mart[3] to despatch wireless messages to every steamer that left there to-day.'

He saluted, and turned briskly away, followed by his comrade. The Tanist went into the house to write a telegram. A movement at his feet made Schliemann look down, and he saw the cat. With alert head, and lengthened body, it went by as he bent to stroke it. The Tanist presently returned, gave his telegram to the messenger, and sat down on one of the chairs Cormac had brought out on the terrace. Filling himself a glass of wine from a long-necked crystal-and-silver jug, he leant back, joining now and then in the fitful conversation of the two elderly men. The latter drank their coffee, and lighted their pipes, but it was evident that MacFirbis found solace in his, for every now and then he took it from his lips and looked anxiously in the direction whence he expected the gardener to appear. Presently the cat approached the group, pausing once or twice to leap with supple grace at a white moth, then meowing afresh it came up to the Tanist's chair, and rubbed against his leg.

'Orchil misses Sorcha,' he remarked; and lowered a hand to stroke its head.

[3] The Irish name of Westport, in Co. Mayo.

CHAPTER XII.

'Midir is dead,' MacFirbis said a little later, as the gardener came on the terrace with a slow step. He rose and went to meet him.

'The dog is dead,' repeated the Tanist, as the Historian, having spoken to the man, went into the house. He left his chair, and walked up to the gardener, followed by the Professor.

'I would like to have his body to put under the black rose tree,' the gardener said. 'Noble one, will you ask the Historian if I may have the carcase of the dog?'

'Your utilitarian spirit is to be admired, Attacotti,' said Schliemann, 'but the Historian will place a pillar of marble not a rose-tree over Midir. He is dead, then?'

'The dog is dead, as I thought,' said the Tanist. 'Moss must have poisoned him. It is much to be regretted, Sai Schliemann, that you did not warn the Historian.'

'I reproach myself deeply,' the Professor answered. 'But what is this, man?', he added, as the gardener offered him a letter.

'I found it pinned to the moss on the broken wall of the castle facing the river, noble one,' was the reply. 'And it is your name that is on it.'

Schliemann took the letter, and opened it slowly. 'Our thanks for ever and a thousand blessings on you,' he read. 'O, dear Sai, I have forgotten Orchil. Please bring him to the castle to-morrow and give him to Geoffrey. And please take care of him till then.' He frowned. 'So they have gone,' he thought.

The Tanist lit a cigarette, he did not look at him. With a slightly embarrassed air the Professor refolded the note, and stood still, holding it in his hand. After a few moments, he put it in his pocket. 'An anonymous communication,' he remarked aloud.

Maelmuire turned upon him a courteous glance. It said that the Professor's letters were his own concern, and that he had no wish to pry into his affairs. Then, as if the matter left his mind at once, he pointed to the chairs, and suggested that they should return to them for the present, as the Historian, he was sure, would prefer to be alone for a time. When they were seated, he referred in a courteous and

regretful tone to his egregious mistake in suspecting the Professor of dishonest intentions, apologising gracefully, and concluded by saying that the responsibility of guarding the books, and the attempt to steal them in Dungeanain, had, he feared, developed a suspiciousness which he must check as a dangerous quality.

'I have had a lesson,' he added, 'and I can only thank you sincerely for the frank way in which you have pardoned my mistake.'

Night had closed around them, and they sat under a sky ablaze with stars, when hurrying footsteps came on the terrace. As both turned their heads, they saw Cormac.

'*Oc! Oc!* Tanist!', he cried, running up to them. 'The Historian! – my master, my king!'

Maelmuire sprang to his feet. 'What has happened?', he asked in a sharp, quick tone. 'Where is he?'

'*Ochone!* in his own library off the first hall. He has had bad news! My grief! such news!'

The Tanist turned on his heel, and strode towards the house. The Professor moved uneasily in his chair. 'What is this news, Cormac?', he asked.

'The *leanbh*, the child – my young lady – has gone off to marry Geoffrey Keating – my malediction on him. Yet why should I curse him?', the old man's tone suddenly changed, 'since they took the heart from each other.'

Schliemann put down his pipe. 'This is disturbing news for your master,' he remarked, 'and coming just when he has lost his books, and heard of the death of his favourite dog, makes a combination of misfortunes hard for him to bear.'

'She gave me a letter,' went on the old man, 'as she was going out. 'Give that to my father, to-morrow,' she said, 'and tell him I won't be back to-night. But don't give him the letter till to-morrow.' But I gave it to him just now when I saw he was in sorrow over Midir, thinking it would take his thoughts off the dog. And, by St. Jarlath! it has. May I never be better for this!'

The Professor remained on the terrace. Time passed, and he heard a clock strike twelve; then a step drew near, and, looking round,

he saw the dignified figure of the Historian. He could see his face in the bright night; it was sad but composed.

'Forgive me, my friend,' he said, 'for having forgotten my guest in the weight of personal calamities. I have been much bowed down. But it may have been I have deserved the loss of my books, my faithful dog, and—', his voice suddenly shook, 'my beloved daughter for my sins, and I will make a pilgrimage to Cruach Padraic.'

The Professor nearly groaned aloud; he was conscience-stricken, abased. But for his promise to Geoffrey Keating he would have there and then confessed his share in the elopement. As it was, he remained silent, not attempting to offer any consolation. With a humbled look, he followed the Historian to the house, parting with him in the hall. On the stair he met the Tanist, who apologised for his abrupt departure. 'But you have heard?', he added.

Schliemann bent his head; then, looking up, met, in the light cast from an electrolier, the young man's pale blue eyes. 'He has the cat's eyes,' he thought; his contrition lessened.

The next morning he found the parish priest had come to breakfast. He was a son of the Earl of Desmond, and had been with the Historian from an early hour. He had a thin, aristocratic face, and a manner so gentle as to give him an air of humility. His smile showed, however, a keen sense of humour, and there was something magnetic in his glance. It was evident that his presence helped to console MacFirbis. Surprised at learning his birth, the Professor commented upon it with his usual directness of speech.

'I did not know that the Irish aristocracy entered the Roman Catholic Church,' he remarked. 'I had heard that all your priests were the sons of farmers or shopkeepers.'

'You have been misinformed,' the priest replied. 'The Catholic Church is indeed wide and all embracing, and, as among the Italian clergy, men of every rank in life can be found in our priesthood, and it has been so since the coming of our Apostle, St. Patrick. And we have not only had the sons of our nobles, both Gaelic and Norman, in the Order, but princes of the Royal Hy Niall, and of the Houses of the Five, as well as the sons of farmers.'

The later, the priest and MacFirbis left the table together; the Professor, seeing the Tanist engaged in reading his letter, rose and went on the terrace. He found a telegraph boy waiting there, and saw a second messenger cycling up to the house. Turning into the yew-walk he met the gardener.

'Well, have you got Midir?', he asked, as the man greeted him.

'My grief! no,' was the reply. 'He would have been good under the black rose tree. It takes blood to nourish that rose. Are you going to the old castle, noble one?'

'Yes, but not yet to labour there.' An ironical smile crossed Schliemann's lips. 'I go there to reflect upon my great work. I can even spare a moment now to see your black rose tree.'

The man suddenly assumed a surly air; with a curt salute, he passed on as if he had not heard the remark. 'The Attacotti blood is strong in that fellow,' thought Schliemann, and made his way leisurely to the ruin, led thither by a fear that Sorcha had left another note.

A search along the fallen wall, however, showed him this was not the case. He crossed to the keep, and as he gazed upward at its grey and broken front and winding stair, he heard the Tanist's voice. Taking a step to the right, he saw him coming from the yew-walk accompanied by a tall gentlemanly-looking young man.

'MacBuan told me you were here, Sai Schliemann,' he said, as he climbed the mound. 'This is the detective, MacSuibne, and he wishes to have a personal description of Moss.'

The Professor straightened himself, pressed his heels into the ground, and fixed his combative eyes upon the pleasant, refined face that looked up at him from the foot of the mound. Then he threw a glance of ironic humour at the Tanist.

'Are you sure that this drawing room young man is the detective?', he asked.

Maelmuire laughed. 'Yes. There is no mistake this time. It is MacSuibne, the most famous detective in the force.'

'I am MacSuibne, Sai Schliemann,' the young man said. 'And the Tanist has told me of his mistake. Kindly give me a description of Moss.'

'That you may compare it with that given by the Tanist, and see where I trip. Well, that's part of your work.' The Professor folded his arms, and tersely described the American's appearance.

'It is the man who deceived me,' said Maelmuire.

'And Sai Schliemann's description agrees also with that of the billionaire that I received this morning,' the detective remarked. 'It was necessary, Sai Schliemann,' he added, 'to be very sure of the man. For Amos Moss has not only more millions than any other man in the United States, but he controls several Trusts, has acquired great political power, and will try to be made President at the next election. You met him for the first time, I suppose, in this ruin the day before the theft.'

'Not at all,' replied the Professor. 'I first met him in the Cathedral in Dungeanain;' and he went on to relate that part of his conversation with Moss that had reference to the books.

'All this is interesting,' said the detective in his gentle voice. 'And quite true. He has this palace with the nation-galleries, and has given enormous sums for his treasures. He employs agents all over the world.'

'The strange fact is that he was in none of the vessels that left for the American ports yesterday,' observed the Tanist. 'Nor was he to be found at any of the hotels he was known to have stayed in, either in this kingdom or in the kingdom of England and Scotland.'

'Can you tell me, Sai Schliemann, what became of the two modern manuscripts that the Tanist tells me he left in your room with the object of deceiving you?', the detective asked after a brief pause.

'And the question,' put in the Tanist, looking at Schliemann, 'covers me with confusion as it recalls my idiotic mistake.'

'No, detective, I cannot. I never saw them. I was locked up in the library. But I can explain how my magnifying glass came under the window, to set all your suspicions at rest. I must have dropped it there when looking at a rose tree. And the footprint that the Tanist measured was, no doubt, that of Moss, who later poisoned the dog, having nearly killed him that night.'

'I had come to that conclusion myself,' the detective replied, and turned to the Tanist. 'I think Moss has not left Ireland and is in Baile-Átha-Cliath,' he remarked. 'I shall return by the next train.'

'There won't be one for nearly an hour,' said the Tanist. 'And I must leave you now, MacSuibne, as I have an engagement. Sai Schliemann, perhaps, will be kind enough to show you these ruins while you wait. MacSuibne is an interesting man to talk to, Sai.'

'No doubt,' said the Professor, and closed his lips firmly.

'I am not an archaeologist,' said the young man, smiling. 'But I cannot,' he added gravely, 'but regard it as a high honour if the famous Sai Schliemann should rebuild this ancient castle again for me by his words.'

'Nonsense! young man. I am no orator, though a writer and scholar. My castle would never rise above its foundations. We will smoke a pipe here in the sunshine, and I shall be interested in hearing of your police methods. The country police are, I understand, a military force, armed like soldiers, many thousands strong, and attend the evictions—', the Professor paused, 'or have you evictions?'

He sat down as he spoke on a piece of fallen masonry, and the detective flung himself on the grass. The Tanist's figure could be seen retreating towards the yew-walk.

'The business of the police,' said the detective in his boy-like voice, 'is to see that the laws are obeyed and to prevent crime. The Irish country police are six thousand men, and the police of the cities twelve thousand.'

'Are murders prevalent, and is insanity on the increase?' The Professor took out his notebook.

The young man's eyes wandered to it as he gently replied: 'We have less homicidal cases than any other country in Europe, and far less than our neighbour, England, in spite of our large population. As to insanity, the health of the nation is so guarded that, though not high, it is each year on the decrease.'

'And what is your most prevalent or national crime?' The Professor's pencil was poised for a moment.

'A tendency to factions, promoted by the national temperament. It is restrained by a strong executive force, but it is nevertheless

productive of crime.' The young man rose suddenly to his feet. 'Sai Schliemann, I see a stair. I am going up it. The view must be splendid from that broken window.'

He glanced upward as he spoke; then leaping over some stones and rubble, put his foot on the weather-and-time-worn stair, and quickly disappeared. In a short time he re-appeared at the window. 'There is a magnificent view,' he exclaimed.

'I will look at the stair,' thought the Professor. 'If the steps are still able to bear the weight of a man, they shall be my excuse, with this view, of my not bringing pickaxe and spade near the keep. *Herr Je!* I hate to be a fool!'

Carefully crossing the rubble and stones, he entered the keep, and bending, peered up the winding stair. All was gloom. At the same moment he heard MacSuibne's descending steps, and drawing back went into the sunlight. The young man stood by his side.

'Were you coming up?', he said in his gentle voice. 'It is not a difficult climb. The steps are good, but by the window there is a gap of six feet from one step to the next.' He glanced at his watch. 'I am afraid I must be off if I am to catch the Baile-Átha-Cliath express. I think we shall find Moss, Sai Schliemann; and I know you will give us any help in your power.'

'You may be certain of that,' said the Professor. 'I am as anxious as the Historian, or the Tanist, that those invaluable vellums should be found.'

'A thousand thanks. Health be with you, and a blessing,' the young man replied. He raised his hat, smiled pleasantly, and ran down the slope. When, a little later, he reached the balustraded semi-circle on the river bank, he paused a minute to watch Cahil MacBuan, who was sweeping the marble floor, then entering the yew walk, he disappeared from the Professor's view.

'A German detective would laugh at that boy,' thought Schliemann, and went back to the stair to examine a fern growing in the wall that had caught his eye. Taking out his pocketknife to remove it, the knife slipped from his hand and disappeared through a crevice in the mound by the stair. The Professor bent and put his hand into it. Then he drew himself up. 'The dungeon,' he muttered. 'If I am

questioned again about my excavations, I can show them my discovery.' He gave a grim smile.

CHAPTER XIII.

When he returned to the house, Cormac gave him a letter from the Historian. He was obliged to go away for a few days, he wrote, but he hoped his much-valued friend would make Tir-da-glas his home as long as he stayed in Ireland. He had ordered the head steward to provide him with as many labourers as he required when he began his excavations, and he trusted that the work would lead to many interesting discoveries. When Schliemann met the Tanist at lunch he found he was also charged with kind messages for him from MacFirbis.

A number of telegraph boys whirled up to the house during the day; and the Tanist appeared to spend his time in receiving and sending telegrams. At dinner he told the Professor that Moss had not yet been found.

'We are watching the ships at every port,' he added, 'but MacSuibne is right, he has not gone to the States. We think he is on the Continent. Thence probably he will go eastward to Japan, perhaps, and cross to San Francisco. We are keeping the theft very quiet, and so far it has not got into the papers. But I fear it will be in to-morrow.'

The following morning the Professor found a pile of letters before his plate. He was conscious of a thrill as his eyes fell on the envelopes. Could his sister have forwarded them? He took up one, then another and another, seeking the familiar German stamp. But each envelope bore one with a border of minute interlaced work of varied colours surrounding a white centre, on which was painted in life colours the king's head, the head of Niall III of Ireland.

'Tanist,' he said later, when he had gone through this correspondence and had made sure that there was no letter from Geoffrey Keating to Sorcha, 'Tanist, will you be kind enough to help me through this tangle of missives, and explain who these persons are who have honoured me with invitations.'

'With pleasure,' Maelmuire replied. He gathered up his own letters, and leaving his chair, laid the bundle on a table by the bay window. Then he came back, and stood by the Professor's side. The latter silently handed him letter after letter.

'Ireland has discovered what a distinguished visitor she has,' the Tanist said as he looked at the letters. 'Most of your correspondents are probably known to you by name – some certainly must be well known. These letters are from a number of celebrated men, and from the secretaries of our most important literary and social dails. The latter inform you that you have been made an honorary member of their various societies. And here,' he added, after he had glanced at the last letter the Professor gave him, 'here is one from the secretary of our literary princess, the Princess of Midhe. It is a royal command. The Princess invites you to Tlachtga for three days.'

'Tlachtga,' said the Professor. 'The name is of most ancient origin. It was that of a pagan palace where the Druids celebrated Samhain and kindled the sacred fire. The site is, I am told, known, but the name has vulgarly anglicised to the Hill of Ward.'

The Tanist turned a brief glance on the Professor; then he laid the letter on the table. 'Tlachtga,' he remarked, 'was built early in the seventeenth century close to the ancient site, by Melachlin, Prince of Midhe. And you have been misinformed as to its present name, which is the same as its ancient one. I see the Princess wishes you to be at Tlachtga to-morrow. One of the motors will take you thither, should you prefer that to the train.'

'Undoubtedly the car would be a pleasant way of seeing this strange and interesting country,' replied Schliemann; then he paused and began to search in one of his pockets.

'I shall give orders to the chauffeur to be ready at any hour you please. But I advise you to go early that you may not be rushed at the end. You will, of course, return here to complete your excavations, for which, by the Historian's order, a body of men are held in readiness. We are all interested in what you may discover.

But Schliemann did not answer; he was searching for something in another pocket. The Tanist crossed the room, and, taking up his letters, opened the door, and went out.

Presently the Professor drew his hand from his pocket, and stared at the floor with knitted brows. Then he rose, turned sharply, and went up to his bedroom. He shook out the garments the Historian had lent him, turned over papers and books, opened drawers and

cupboards, till, suddenly struck by a thought, he hurried from the room, and leaving the house, went in the direction of the castle. There he moved slowly about, with his eyes fixed on the ground searching the ruins for some object. When near the keep he stopped, and, uttering a sharp exclamation, looked up at its walls. The next second he strode towards the stair, and gazed sorrowfully at the crevice.

'*Mein Gott*!', he groaned, 'I must have dropped it in there. And all my notes – my invaluable observations – my too brief redaction of the *Psalter of Tara* – all gone, gone.' Then suddenly straightening himself, a look of decision settled round his mouth. 'I will, indeed, now excavate,' he said aloud, 'even if I bring down this tower.'

He knelt and peered into the hole, but, rising almost immediately, he sank on a heap of rubble, where he remained motionless for a few minutes as if buried in thought. Then, with a quick movement of head and body, he rose briskly, and crossed the grass to the fallen side of the castle. Lighting his pipe, he sat on the wall, where the sunlight and the pleasant murmur of the river warmed his body and sang in his ears. In a short time he had recovered his cheerful attitude of mind.

He heard his name called; throwing a glance across his shoulder, he saw Geoffrey Keating below the wall. He took his pipe from his lips, and rose.

'So you are here, Captain Keating,' he said with some emphasis.

'Yes, as I promised,' replied Keating. 'I have brought back the books. And – have you got Orchil?'

Schliemann did not reply for a moment. He looked down at the officer's face, and then at the parcel upheld in his hand. 'What books are those?', he presently asked.

'The *Psalter* and the *Dromsneachta*. Take them, please, and give me Orchil, for I must be off.'

'Did your father see them?'

'No. I brought him the parcel, told him the conditions, but he refused to look at the books. I am clear, however, of my oath. If Orchil is there, just chuck him down.'

'Captain Keating, I must ask you why the Ollamh refused to look at the books.'

'Because – but I prefer not to explain. If the cat's not there, I must go to the house and get it.'

The Professor looked down with a grim air at the face beneath him. 'I have been your accomplice in this matter,' he said, 'and I ask, I even demand, an explanation.'

'Well, my father has very strong ideas of what he considers chivalrous or honourable conduct. That is all.'

'But he was about to steal the books himself.'

'Steal! There was no theft in the matter, Sai Schliemann. He meant to recover his own, and he sent a letter to warn the Historian. You have been kind enough to help Sorcha and me. We are grateful, deeply grateful, but – the Ollamh refused to look at the books, as he said they had been taken treacherously.

The Professor was silent; something – anger, he knew, shook him for a moment. His honour had been assailed. He looked doggedly above the handsome head by the wall; but the feeling soon passed. 'The Ollamh is right,' he thought, 'and I should have scorned this act – anywhere else.'

A sound at his feet brought his eyes again on the young man; he was climbing the wall. 'I must get Sorcha's cat,' he said emphatically.

'Well, you cannot go to the house,' said Schliemann, 'unless you wish to meet the Tanist, and if you do, I promise you I will not be your second. Wait here, and I will fetch this beast.'

He took the books from Keating's hand, and left the ruin. There was no one in the yew-walk or on the terrace; he paused, untied the string, and laying the parcel on a seat, took up and examined each manuscript in turn, with compressed lips and half contemptuous, half interested eyes. It was an insult to his scholarship to suppose that he should mistake them for the two pre-patrician works. As he refolded them in their paper wrapper, the cat came through an open window, and, choosing a sunny spot a few feet from the seat, sat down and began to wash itself. The Professor at once put the parcel on the bench, took a few cautious steps forward, pounced upon the cat, and carried it to the ruin.

'Did you look at the books?', he asked as he gave Keating the animal.

'No. Sorcha took the books from your room, where you had kindly placed them for her,' Keating answered. 'And I did not remove the cover. Now, I must be off,' he added, 'and a thousand thanks.'

He jumped over the wall, the white cat writhing and struggling under his arm. On the ground he paused for a moment, looked up, raised his cap with a smile, then hastened towards the river.

'If he meets the Tanist,' thought the Professor, 'there will be a duel. And meanwhile that young man thinks the books were genuine and that he has redeemed his oath.'

But the Tanist did not appear till lunch. The Professor mentioned with some decision that he had formed his plan for the excavations, and that he would prepare to carry it out on his return from Tlachtga. The Tanist listened with polite attention, and expressed a hope that he would find some interesting object.

When he went to the terrace again the Professor remembered the parcel. It had been removed, and the afternoon papers lay on the seat. 'The Tanist has taken it in,' he said to himself, 'and won't say anything to me of his discovery, as he is ashamed of his part in the business where I have been concerned.'

He picked up one of the papers, but had scarcely glanced at it when he was joined by the Tanist. Seating himself on the bench, he remarked that he was glad to find that the theft of the books had not yet got into the papers.

'We want it kept quiet,' he added.

'I quite understand,' replied the Professor. 'But you have society papers, I suppose, and the kites who edit them will, no doubt, give details of Sorcha's elopement.'

Maelmuire did not reply for a moment. He smiled coldly.

'Our society papers do not resemble those of England or America,' he said. 'An editor who gave the personal details that the editors in those countries do would be not alone liable to action by law, but the circulation of his paper would soon cease. It is considered the height of ill-breeding to comment on the private life of individuals, or to publish their misfortunes.

'Then your society papers must lack spice for the general public. But I am pleased to hear of a country where some decent reticence is

still observed. How about your divorce cases? Do your papers give many columns to them?'

'Not an inch. They are given a line in the law notices. I do not say that there are not editors who might like to give more, but the opinion of the kingdom is against making them public, and also it is forbidden by law. There are, however, but few to report.'

The Professor's hand wandered to his pocket; then he frowned. 'I must get a new notebook,' he thought. But no other book, he sadly reflected, though crammed with notes, could be the same as the one that had been his link with the life he had left on entering King Niall's kingdom.

The next day he set out for Tlachtga in one of MacFirbis's motor-cars. The chauffeur, a merry-faced young man with a deferential manner, now and again slackened speed on the way to point out some place of interest. They passed Norman castles, now turned into handsome modern dwellings; large country houses, and comfortable-looking cottages. In nearly every townland, the chauffeur said, there was a house of amusement, where the peasants acted plays, and had their literary and music festivals.

On reaching the city of Athluain, the Professor stopped to buy some clothes, and was interested to find that a modified form of the sumptuary law was observed in Ireland.

'Our people wear good, serviceable clothes of bright colours,' the salesman told him. 'We make cheap and pretty garments for the young women of the lower classes, as well as more durable ones, but public opinion is against dressing above your rank. As you are aware, noble one, we make our own fashions, and rarely take a lead from Paris, keeping in a great measure to our national dress. Many of the higher class wear it when abroad. So that the Irish are easily known on the Continent.'

As the car crossed the magnificent bridge that spanned the Shannon, the Professor saw that the marble figure of a bull stood at each end. Both were of great size. One was carved in white marble; that to the east in brown. By the side of the white bull stood the figure of a woman with flowing hair and haughty head; by the brown, a young warrior armed with shield and spear.

'The dun Bull of Cuailgne and the White-horn,' said the Professor. 'But if this great city is Athlone, its chief modern interest is its siege. St. Ruth must have had his camp over there. Can you tell me, chauffeur, the site of Ginkell's army?'

'Of whom, noble one?', asked the man.

'Ginkell, the Dutchman, King William's general. He took Athlone, you know.'

'I never heard of such a siege, noble one. This Ginkell did not come here.'

CHAPTER XIV.

The Professor reached Tlachtga about four in the afternoon, entering the park through the western gates. Groups of people walked about or rested under the trees, the greater part of the park being open to the public. The palace, built on a height, was visible along the whole length of the drive. It was a fine specimen of the Perpendicular, pinnacle, and richly decorated, bearing the mellowed air of three centuries. Entering by the north doorway, which led to the Visitors' Hall, he was received by one of the officers of the household, who having welcomed him in the name of the Prince of Midhe, conducted him to a stair, where a second official led him to a gallery, whence he was passed into the hands of a steward of the palace, who showed him his bedroom.

He had not been alone ten minutes when a gentleman of the household entered. 'The Princess was in her grotto, Tir-na-n-Og,' he said, and invited Sai Schliemann to her presence.

'Tir-na-n-Og,' the Professor exclaimed. 'I trust, sir, I shall not have to dive into a lake, or enter a magic door in the nearest mound, which, opened, will never let me out again.'

The gentleman laughed. 'Oh, no,' he replied, 'the entrance is an easy one, and there is no magic in this Tir-na-n-Og.'

He led him to a gallery, and down a shallow flight of stairs to a vestibule, where, opening a door, they entered a garden, the upper end of which was crossed by a row of double, semi-circular arches, through which could be seen a second garden with terraces, streams, fountains, and statuary. Before a flower-clothed hill, rose a marble building which Schliemann found, on entering, was the ante-chamber of a hall tunnelled in the side of the hill. Its walls gleamed in the light of the electroliers, with circles and devices of pearls and amethysts taken from the rivers and rocks of the kingdom. Chairs and stools stood about, covered with gold and scarlet cloth; and on tables of different coloured marbles, lay books, pictures and writing material. The Princess was listening to a choir of harpists, six young girls clothed in green robes, whose music, blending with the echoes, produced the acoustic effect of a second and distant choir.

She greeted the Professor with warmth, and, leading him through the hall, pointed out the gems that studded the walls, and the beauty of the mosaics. She had had the hall made, she said, in the very hill where the goddess Brigit, the pagan patroness of learning, was said to have held her court. She also showed him a gold torque, hair-band and bronze cauldron that had been found in an ancient chamber in the hill, and asked him to give a lecture upon them as soon as he had had some refreshment.

'The Prince and the guests at the palace are anxious to hear you,' she said with a gracious yet commanding air, 'and we shall be deeply interested in hearing you explain the points of resemblance in the archaic ornaments of Greece and Ireland.'

Schliemann's brows knitted. 'If your Royal Highness will allow me to defer this lecture till to-morrow, to prepare – to study, these interesting ornaments and this vessel,' he replied, 'it is possible I might have something to say. But—'

She interrupted him imperially, smiling. 'But I prefer the spontaneous speech of a great man. Here is an attendant, Sidhe' – she signed to a lilac-clad girl bearing a gold tray with wine and coffee to approach – 'who will offer you some of the ale and food of Tir-na-n-Og.'

The Professor helped himself in silence, and the Princess changed the conversation. She told him that she was interested in the love affair of a young couple with whom he was acquainted. 'I mean,' she added, 'young Geoffrey Keating and Sorcha Ni Firbis.'

'They have eloped, your Royal Highness,' he replied, 'and the good Historian is in much trouble. By now they are married.'

'Sorcha is here,' the Princess answered.' 'I bade the Countess Clanrickard, to whose house she went, bring her to Tlachtga. The Countess was in the car when Sorcha left Tir-da-glas. The marriage will take place privately to-morrow. Sorcha tells me you have been her friend. I am very anxious to make peace between the Historian of Connacht and the Ollamh Keating, who are both gifted and learned men. Their dispute over the possession of the vellums, the *Psalter of Tara* and the *Dromsneachta*, is a ridiculous anachronism in the twentieth century. It will be a happy achievement to reconcile these

two good and noble old men. And I take it as an omen of success that their children love each other.'

As she spoke, the choir played a few bars of music, and a party of men entered the marble ante-chamber. They carried fishing-rods, which they gave into the hands of attendants, and then – a tall, grey-haired man leading the way – they came into the grotto. Schliemann noticed the latter's alert eye and humorous smile, and judged he was in the presence of the Prince of Midhe. Having kissed the princess's hand and bowed to the ladies, the Prince declared himself and his retinue thirsty, and demanded a draught of the ale of Tir-na-n-Og. A crystal vase was filled with wine, and speedily emptied by the Prince, after which Schliemann was presented to him, and received some courteous words of welcome. Later on, the Professor learnt that he was interested in aviation, and had started a factory for aeroplanes on his property; and, also, that he brought his people into partnership in his various industrial enterprises in the province. Now, however, with his beaker re-filled, he seated himself on one of the scarlet seats, and appeared to resign himself to whatever might be the will of his wife; to the infliction of a lecture, in short, Schliemann guessed, on Greek and Irish art.

Among those who accompanied him, the Professor noticed a big, broad-shouldered man with a heavy white moustache, a broad furrowed brow, and cold penetrating eyes. As he took his stand, at the Princess's direction, before a table on which had been placed the torque, band and cauldron, he heard her address this stranger in German. Schliemann's interest was at once aroused.

'A fellow-countryman,' he thought. 'I must have a word with him.' He listened to the Princess.

'Count an Arnheim,' she said, 'if taking the chair were allowed in Tir-na-n-Og I should ask you to do it. You tell me you have not met your distinguished compatriot. I am delighted that he should lecture in the presence of the ambassador of his country.'

The Professor's eyes kindled. He was face to face at last with the ambassador from the Court of Berlin to that of Niall III. The door whence he could depart from the kingdom seemed to open at once. Slightly agitated by the thought, he stood still, gazing at the Count.

Then suddenly recalling the fact that he was expected to lecture on a subject upon which he was not qualified to deal, he lowered his gaze. No position could be more unpleasant to him. Master in his own work, a man of profound learning, trained in a school of exact and deep thought, the popular and shallow lecture was abhorrent to his soul. With tightly closed lips and brooding eyes, he stared at the cauldron, indifferent to the silence that had fallen upon the Princess and her companions.

Then, all in a moment, his fixed stare changed, and a look of keen interest lightened his face. Taking his magnifying glass swiftly from his pocket, he turned the cauldron on its side, and going on one knee, peered under the rim. Presently getting to his feet, he folded his arms across his breast and looked at his audience with the composed and assured air that he wore when addressing his class in the University of Berlin. He had found, he said, two minute inscriptions on the ancient vessel, one in Ogham and one in letters which he had deciphered as 'Gobniu[4] made this for the Daghda.'

This reading he would submit to other Celtic scholars, and while he was anxious to have the opinion of such men as Pederson and Kuno Meyer and Strachan and Zimmer, and, above all, de Narbonne, he believed the reading would be found correct. It was a very interesting discovery, considering where the vessel had been found, and the antiquity of the rites connected with the hill. Then comparing the form of the letters with those of the earliest glosses, he dealt with the subject profoundly, and passed on to describe the ancient cults of Ireland, the Chtonic gods, and their connection with the rest of Europe, bringing his lecture to an abrupt end as he saw the ambassador glance at his watch. For it was to him he had spoken, anxious that the lecture might establish his identity. The Princess had listened with marked attention, and the Prince, with the courteous air he showed to all men, even when bored. She approached the table when he ceased, and expressed her deep interest in his discovery. Commenting on the resemblance between the archaic gods of Greece and the gods of Ireland, she appeared to forget that the lecture had

[4] The smith-god, or Vulcan in Irish mythology.

brought no new light on the pottery and metallic work of those countries.

After the Prince had looked at the inscription and thanked the Professor for his lecture, he returned to the garden with some of the gentlemen, where they busied themselves over trout and salmon flies. The Professor was then presented to the ambassador, who returned his bow in silence; and soon afterwards the Princess led the party with the grotto.

It was not till the Court circle formed again in the Lilac Room of Conversation (seomra immacallamae) that he had an opportunity of speaking to the ambassador. All the guests were expected to appear before the Princess there, but those who wished to play chess passed into a second chamber with the Prince. Music and intellectual conversation were the entertainment for those who remained; and it was well-known that young Princess Findebair of Ireland, and her brother the Righ-damna, seldom came to Tlachtga, which it was whispered they had said was the dullest place in the kingdom.

The ambassador was standing in the doorway between the two great rooms when the Professor walked up to him, and addressed him with his usual directness of manner. 'Your Excellency, I have been anxious to meet you,' he remarked.

The ambassador turned with an attentive air. 'I must thank you, Herr Professor, for the pleasure your lecture gave me,' he said in a strong resonant voice. 'You appeared master of your subject, and it was gratifying at such a moment, in the presence of a literary princess like her Royal Highness, that a German could show so wide a knowledge of ancient Irish literature. I was all the more gratified as I thought your special field was archaeology.'

'My real work is philology and comparative history,' the Professor answered, 'and I am considered an authority on Old and Middle Irish. Your Excellency, as a subject of the Kaiser, I am anxious to have a private interview with you.'

The ambassador smiled. 'To ask, Herr Professor, that I beg your Government to force a firman from the Sultan for another exploration.'

'No, not at all, your Excellency. I am taking notes on all I hear and see in this kingdom. If I might know what treaties exist between Germany and this country, it would be valuable information. There are also other and vital matters upon which I wish to speak.'

He received a keen glance that contained also a rebuke.

'Come to my room at one to-night,' the Count said shortly, and, turning abruptly, entered the second room.

He had scarcely departed when the Professor was summoned to join the circle round the Princess. She had that moment heard of the theft of the vellums from a gentleman who had seen an account of the affair in one of the evening papers.

'Is it true, Sai Schliemann,' she asked, 'that these priceless works have been stolen from the Historian of Connacht?'

'Yes, your Royal Highness, and under strange circumstances,' he answered.

'What a national loss!', she exclaimed; 'both books are original Pagan compilations.'

She questioned him further, listening with marked concern as he briefly gave an account of the theft. At her request, the Prince was brought from the chess-table to hear the story re-told; and, having shown sufficient interest in the matter to please his wife, he went back to his game. One of her gentlemen was directed to telephone to the Chief Detective Department in Baile-Átha-Cliath; and the interest of the Princess and her literary circle was further deepened when a reply was returned that the books had not been found and that Moss was still at large.

At twelve the Court circle broke up, the Prince retired to his own private apartments, and the gentlemen went to the smoking room. The Professor did not linger long with the smokers. Asking an attendant to direct him to that quarter of the palace where the ambassador was lodged, he was led to the threshold of a room where he was received by the Count's secretary.

'You will please follow me, Herr Schliemann,' he said, and crossed the room to a door which he opened. 'His Excellency will see you,' he added and signed that he was to enter.

The Professor obeyed. The ambassador was seated before a writing-table, resting one strong-looking white hand on a blotting pad, he motioned him to a chair. Then a silence followed, as if the Count expected him to be the first to speak.

'It appears, your Excellency,' Schliemann began, 'that Ireland is an independent and sovereign country.'

'An obvious fact,' replied the ambassador, 'that is scarcely a necessary introduction to what you have to say.'

'I wish to inform you that my identity has been mistaken. I am not the man these excellent people suppose me to be.'

'So I had noted. You have probably found it a useful mistake, widening your opportunities for observation.'

'I have been using it to the best advantage,' replied the Professor, 'and have taken a number of notes. Unfortunately I lost my notebook.'

'You used a cipher, of course?'

'No. I had not considered it necessary. The political condition of the country surprises me very much indeed. Does it not seem unusual to your Excellency?'

'You have come to that conclusion? Our Government, as you understand, is anxious to keep Ireland out of the Northern Alliance, and break up the recent treaty between Ireland and England which practically closes the two kingdoms to our exports.'

'Then!', exclaimed the Professor, 'Ireland is still in the power of England?'

'With her magnificent army and increasing navy, Ireland is a match for England should war break out between the two countries. But England does not forget that Ireland was once her tributary. It is the opinion of the highest personage in the German Empire that the visits of the King of England last spring, after his visit to Tara, to each of the Five Princes was a deep political move. These Princes are very haughty, with the pride of gods as regards their pedigree, and resent any slight shown to them. It is an anomaly that a small kingdom like Ireland, wealthy though she be, should have five Courts, as well as Tara. The country is not taxed to support them, each prince having immense wealth; but the situation is one that could be used to the injury of the central government and the monarchy of Ireland; and has

possibilities that have not escaped the astute eye of the English king. And I am here to counteract the effects of his visit to Tlachtga.'

The ambassador paused suddenly as if conscious he had said too much. The Professor had listened to him with profound interest and wonder.

'Why does your Excellency think the Courts of the Five Princes more anomalous,' he said, 'than the numerous ones in our Empire? The survival of these great regal families is most interesting, considering the great antiquity of their pedigree. In short, your Excellency, I am astonished at all I see and hear. The situation appears extraordinary, and I am anxious to ask you if it is possible for me to return to Berlin at any moment I desire?'

'As you are aware, your department does not come under my control,' the ambassador replied. 'But I could, of course, allow you to return to Berlin for either urgent private reasons or for those connected with your mission. But the loss of your notebook is a serious matter, especially as you were imprudent enough not to use a cipher.'

'It is an irreparable loss, indeed,' said Schliemann. 'Yet I hope to recover it. I dropped it into a dungeon in a ruin standing in the grounds of the Hereditary Historian of Connacht. On my return to Tir-da-glas, I intend to open a hole wide enough to admit of my person, so that I can descend and get the book.'

'I am relieved to hear it is safe from the eyes of any Irishman. From your remarks this evening I judge you have some information to give. But though this Court, Herr Professor, is devoted to art and literature, it appeared to me that you were indiscreet in your address.'

'Your Excellency is right. I have made a discovery that will be of deep interest to all Celtic scholars. But I must inform you that when I left Berlin a little over a week ago, Ireland was not recognised as an independent and sovereign kingdom by the Kaiser.'

'The ambassador raised his heavy brows. 'Are you sure of this?', he asked in a tone of astonishment.

'As sure as I sit here, your Excellency. It was the belief not alone of the Kaiser—'

The ambassador interrupted him; he rose to his feet. 'Another Imperial whim,' he exclaimed. 'But, Herr Professor, I should have

heard of this extraordinary act. It is war! I should be re-called. You were – you must have been misinformed.'

'It is universally recognised,' said Schliemann. 'I was filled with astonishment on visiting the country to find a German ambassador here. The situation is extraordinary, deeply interesting, and I am profoundly anxious for an explanation.'

'Which is not for you, Herr Professor,' said the ambassador frowning. 'You can retire; I will see you again.'

He rang a bell. 'We must telegraph to Berlin,' he said, as the secretary appeared. 'There is extraordinary news. Cipher IV is to be used.'

He looked at Schliemann. 'At eight to-morrow I will give you an audience.'

The Professor retired. At the door he paused and looked at the secretary, who had followed him.

'You know who I am?', he said with an eager emphasis in his voice. 'I am not the archaeologist.'

'We are aware of it, Herr Professor,' the secretary replied.

'Then,' exclaimed Schliemann, 'you know that I am—'

'Professor Schliemann of the Foreign Secret Service,' interrupted the secretary, lowering his voice, and he bowed the Professor out.

CHAPTER XV.

The Professor slept ill that night; but by morning he recovered his philosophic calm, and even felt amused at his countryman's mistake. To the ambassador and his secretary he was not the famous Celticist, but a secret agent of the German Government, especially equipped for his delicate and dangerous mission by his knowledge of the ancient literature of Ireland which enabled him to pose as a scholar and literary man. His keen sense of humour was stirred at this further confusion of his identity; and wondering whether his second interview with the ambassador would throw some light on his surroundings, and determined to make clear his own position, he went at the appointed hour towards the Count's suite of rooms.

On the way he was met by a gentleman of the Court, who told him that the Princess wished to see him in her private study. There was nothing to do but obey; which he did reluctantly. He found her dictating to her secretary, surrounded by manuscripts and proofs. She paused in a sentence, and smiling graciously, held out a white and beautifully shaped hand.

'Sorcha Nic Firbis and Geoffrey Keating were to be married at eleven this morning,' she said. 'But Sorcha has changed her mind, for a reason I have not yet had time to learn. Captain Keating has asked for an interview with you. They are in that room with Lady Clanrickard.' She pointed to a richly-carved double door, one leaf of which stood ajar.

The Professor bowed and passed on, followed by the sound of the Princess's clear, decided voice as she resumed her dictation. 'The English popular error that the Lia Fáil is the stone under the coronation chair of the English kings,' he heard her say, and as he heard, a sudden desire to see Tara sprang up within him. 'Tara; I must visit Tara,' he said to himself, 'before I return to Berlin.'

The room he entered was decorated in white and gold; the white brocade on the walls being broken by oval ivory panels, each painted with a reproduction of an illuminated page from the ancient books, a scroll beneath, inlaid with gold, giving the name of the work. The wide bay window commanded a view of woodland gardens; and there, like

a white fleecy cloud on the sunset-tinted rug, sat the veiled, bride-clad figure of Sorcha. Keating sat some distance off, his arms folded on his knees, his gaze fixed gloomily on the floor. A tall, sweet-faced woman standing in the window appeared to have been pleading with the girl, and Orchil, the cat, was playing with a newspaper, one of whose headings caught the Professor's eye.

Keating looked up at his step, and rose swiftly to his feet. There was a flash of steel in his glance. 'Health to you, Sai Schliemann,' he said icily. 'What books were those you gave me?'

The Professor met his gaze with a contemplative eye, then glanced at Sorcha; her face was flushed; she seemed absorbed in watching the cat's movements. Keating repeated the question.

'The books?', said the Professor. 'By a combination of errors they were not the vellums. The precious manuscripts were already stolen when those reached you,' and he told concisely the story of the theft.

'It was like the Tanist!', exclaimed Keating, 'to be suspicious of a great archaeologist. This scoundrel Moss has the books, and I suppose they will be recovered.'

He approached the girl. 'It is all clear now, Sorcha,' he added.

She rose dramatically, and unpinned her veil. 'Oh, no, Geoffrey,' she said, as she removed the jewelled pins, her eyes fixed across the room. 'Sai Schliemann has kept his word. But your vow has not been kept. The books were NOT the books. And—and—I know that a black cloud would rest upon our lives unless the oath is kept.'

'Then,' said Keating gloomily, 'you still refuse to marry me to-day?'

'Yes. I cannot. The Ollamh has been deceived.'

'But, *a ghradh,*' said the Countess of Clanrickard, laying a hand on her shoulder. 'Geoffrey has acted in all faith, and that constitutes the keeping of the vow. He believed the books were the ones he had vowed to recover. Moreover, *a chroidhe,* the Princess has graciously interested herself in your future, and the Prince has given permission for your marriage to take place to-day in the palace chapel, and her Royal Highness will make peace between your father and Geoffrey's. It will be an unwise act to lose her friendship, and your conduct will, also, appear ungrateful.'

'I am sorry if I offend the Princess,' Sorcha replied, her eyes lowered. 'But I will not—I cannot marry Geoffrey to-day.' She looked up suddenly and stretched out her hands. 'Oh, Geoffrey! you understand.'

He took them and held them to his heart. 'I do not understand,' he said. 'What I understand is that you are my promised wife. I have kept the vow. No cloud can fall on our lives.'

She turned her head aside, and drew her hands slowly from his clasp. Her face had grown pale, but her lips met in firm line. The cat was rubbing itself against her skirt. She suddenly bent, and taking it in her arms, retreated to the window.

'Is your decision made—really made? Think, Sorcha.' It was Lady Clanrickard that spoke.

'It is made,' she replied. 'I will marry Geoffrey when he finds the books.'

Keating looked at her in silence for some moments. He knew something of her will, and his eyes lost hope. Suddenly he swung round, and strode towards a door that opened on a loggia facing a garden. The Professor followed him.

'Where do you go?', he asked.

'To find and kill Moss,' was the angry reply, and the young man went out.

Remembering his interview with the ambassador, the Professor hastily bowed to the ladies, who were both too absorbed to notice him, and went out on the loggia. Thence, passing to the garden, several rose trees caught his attention, and it was some time before he found his way again into the palace. When he reached the ambassador's room, he learnt that he had left Tlachtga at nine that morning.

He met the Princess again at noon, who told him she approved of Sorcha's decision. Later he heard from Lady Clanrickard, what he had already guessed, that the Princess had interested herself in the lovers in order to heal the centuries-old feud between the Keatings and the MacFirbis clan.

'Otherwise,' said the Countess, 'her Royal Highness would never have encouraged the disobedience of a child to its parent. But the

issues are so important, and the circumstances are so romantic, that the Princess feels justified in acting as she has done.'

The Professor expressed a wish to see Tara, and the Princess learning this, declared that he should not only see the palace, but that on the following day she would take him herself to the world-famous University of Clonard. Later on in the day he was told that a motor car, ready to convey him to Tara, stood before the door leading into the Visitors' Hall. He found his own chauffeur there conversing with the driver of the Princess's car. Saluting Schliemann, he asked whether he should accompany him to Tara; and the Professor, willing to have the society of so cheerful and intelligent a young man, bade him mount by his side.

Soon after leaving the park, the car entered a wide highway planted with double rows of trees on each side. It appeared, indeed, to be two roads, with well-kept footpaths between the trees. The motor followed one road, and the Professor noticed that all the carriages they passed were on the other. A low wall, crowned with hazels, separated the way. It was Slige Midluachra, one of the five ancient royal roads that led through Ireland to Tara. By the High King's order these roads had been widened and divided, and no motor might travel along them at a pace that exceeded twenty miles an hour.

The car ran through a populous country, with root and grain crops growing in the fields up to the first gates of Tara. The plough had been everywhere, it seemed to the Professor, as he passed cottage after cottage, and saw men working in the fields. A contented and prosperous race they looked, strong-bodied and well-clothed.

Five gates led into the royal park, one for each road, and all after traversing the demesne, ended, the chauffeur told him, at the foot of the great terrace that encircled the palace.

The gates stood open from sunrise to sunset, so that all who wished might enter. Gatekeepers in white and crimson, the royal arms worked in gold upon their breasts, entered the names of those who passed through, two standing to each gate.

'The Ard-Righ is in Dungeanain,' one of these men said to the Professor when he had given his name. 'A hundred welcomes to you from the High King of Ireland. Take the noble foreigner by the

Avenue of the Kings,' he said to the Princess's chauffeur, 'for many strangers like that way.'

The car moved on, keeping to the Avenue Slige Midluachra for some distance, passing through wood and pasture-land, and fern-clad hollows, where herds of deer could be seen, and fine breeds of sheep and cattle under the charge of the keepers of the herds. Then turning to the right it followed a road that ran through a more open part of the park, reaching at last the Baile of Tara, the little town that was dependent on the Court, filled with artisans and labourers, whose houses stood each in its own garden. Beyond the Baile rose the Dun of the Royal Fianna, the King's Guards, the Lucht-Tighe or House Company. It was a handsome limestone building, able to quarter two thousand men; and the Professor saw five hundred of these soldiers exercising on a large level sward, the *faithche* of the Dun, dressed in uniforms the colour of heather, which was that worn on active service.

The road ascended gradually on passing the Dun winding for some distance through woodland again; then, suddenly, at a turn, a white marble archway sprang into view. It held three iron gates wrought with floral designs and winged heads, interlaced work running among the flowers and faces. The central arch was crowned by the gigantic figure of a warrior bearing sword and spear, his right foot on a fallen foe.

'It is the Gate of Heremon,' said the chauffeur, 'and those heroes to right and left on the second and third arch are Heber and Ir.'

The car drove in slowly as a gate-keeper opened the central gate, and entered Slige-na-Riogh, the Avenue of the Kings. On each side of the way stood marble statues of the High-Kings of Ireland, with smooth lawns spreading away behind them, and terraces ablaze with flowers; while cascades of water, brought from the spring Nemnach, emerging from a grotto on a terrace before and around which stood or rested graceful figures of water-goddesses, fell down from fern-fringed stone channels bordering the sides of a double stone stair, filling basins guarded by sister nymphs.

Along the way rose statue after statue, all the kings of Erin from the coming of the Sons of Milidh. There stood Tiernmas, the gold ore in his hand, first to smelt gold in the kingdom; and Enna Airgeach of

the Silver Shields; and the Law-Giver, Ollamh Fodla; and early in the double line Macha of the Golden Hair, the one Ard-Rioghan Ireland has ever seen. Ugony Mor, first to lead the Scots of Ierne plundering over western Europe stood prominent there; and Lowry of the Ships, the mariner king, his fleet carved on the pedestal, rude, naked slaves at the oars, rowing long-haired warriors over Muir n-Icht. Conn of the Hundred Battles, surrounded by heaped and broken shields, seemed about to give the warrior-shout; and Conaire Mor, who had ruled Ireland justly fifty years, looked towards Tara, the great wheel-brooch that reached from chin to waist fastening his cloak as on that fatal night at the Court of Da Derga. Art the Lonely gazed upon the rushing waters as if searching the face of each divinity, seeking her whose song had allured his brother from the Court of Tara, while the boat of the woman of the Sidhe bearing Connla to the Land of the Ever Young, seemed to sailed forward on the marble face of the pedestal. Others the Professor recognised. Conn, son of the Lonely, sitting throned in all his splendour as in the Banquet Hall. And Niall Naoi Ghiallach, holding himself as conqueror and king, the Nine chained at his feet; and Dathi, one foot on the slope of Slieve Ealpa, advancing to meet the lightning-stroke; and Laeghaire, with his eyes towards Slane; and Diarmid, last High-King to reign at Tara, grasping the King's Spear, as he listens to the dream of Mungan, his wife, with proud, sorrowful, but resolute face. And Finnachta, the gay, wise High-King, remitting the tribute of the men of Laighen; and Muirchertagh of the Leather Cloaks; and Mailsechlan, contemporary of Brian; and the great Brian himself, kneeling in prayer as on the day of Clontarf; scenes of the battle in bas-relief on the four white sides of the pedestal.

Then the lines broke, and in the centre of the way rose a column, bearing the grim figure of a woman. She held a human head to her lips with both hands, gnawing the dripping skull, while at her feet other heads lay heaped, and on her shoulders perched a scarecrow.

'Macha! 'Mast-feeding' on the slain,' said the Professor, looking up at the vast and terrific figure. 'Macha or Badh, Celtic goddess of war.'

'Now we ride between 'the kings with opposition,' said the chauffeur, 'eight in all till the Norman came.'

The car passed by the right of the column, and moving slowly between the eight who had wrested the throne of Ireland from the legitimate kings, soon reached a line of marble columns with a highly sculptured entablature filled with scenes of battle and heroic figures. The whole was crowned by the statue of a woman, who, standing with one foot chained, rested her right hand on a sword, while her left shaded her eyes as she gazed with proud set head towards the north.

'Here, noble one,' said the chauffeur, 'is epitomised the four centuries in which England claimed tribute from us. She never got it in the north, and Aodh I broke the chain from Eire's foot.'

Beyond the columns the line of the Hy Niall kings was resumed, terminating in a statue of Niall III. The long succession of statues were the works of great artists, the chauffeur told the Professor, and sculptors form many countries came to see them.

As they drove through a second archway, the palace of Tara came in full view, portions of it having been seen along the Avenue of the Kings. It stood on its ancient site, a vast magnificent building with towers, pinnacles, and sculptured walls, encircled by three great terraces, the five Royal roads of Ireland radiating from the lowest.

'Never was a palace so built as the palace of Tara, for it was all Ireland raised those walls,' exclaimed the chauffeur. 'Yonder stands the Forradh where the Ard Fheis is held.'

Carriage ways wound at intervals along the terrace to the principle entrances to the palace; but the Professor alighted and made his way on foot, accompanied by the chauffeur, to the gateway of the Forradh, where two of the Royal Fianna stood on guard. As they entered the courtyard one of the keepers of the Forradh came forward, and offered his services as guide. He led them through a great vestibule thronged with statues representing men whose names he mentioned as if they were familiar to the Professor, to the Hall of the Delegates, and thence to the Hall of the Nobles, whence they entered the Throne Room, a vast, oblong chamber, whose walls, inlaid with mosaics broken by panels of yew richly carved with scenes from the Tales of the Tuatha De Danann, met a frieze of priceless tapestry worked with representations of the Feis of Tara under the High Kings to the reign of Diarmid.

At the upper end of this noble chamber stood the Coronation Chair, on a white marble dais reached by a double flight of shallow marble steps, divided by a great stone twelve feet in height. The contrast of the rude column to the polished marble of the dais and stairs, standing there in naked gauntness amidst brilliant-hued carpets from the world-famous handlooms of Uladh, held the eye of all who looked towards the throne. Framed between the marble, its top level with and fitted to the floor of the dais, encircled with a band of gold a foot wide, it stood a few paces from the throne, a chair whose sides and supports were covered with plates of beaten gold, cushioned in purple velvet, and standing under a canopy of purple that held shades from the palest lilac to the deepest hue, changing like shimmering silk as the sunlight reached it through the windows of the chamber. A gold spear resting in a socket stood on each side of the throne, the ancient emblems of the Ard Righ's authority, and above it hung a shield of the same metal richly engraved with stars surrounding a crown. At the base of the dais to right and left of the stair was a couchant elk with giant antlers carved in white marble.

'You look now on the Lia Fáil,' said the guide. 'That great stone has a longer historic and legendary interest than that attached to any throne of any monarch in the world. On it, legend records, the gods stood, and it was they, the Tuatha de Danann, who placed it at Tara. Upon it, too, the High Kings of Ireland were inaugurated for a thousand years and more, and a shout came, it is said, from the stone in salutation when the prince who had best right to be Ard Righ placed two feet upon it. But when our Lord was born the spirit of the stone was silenced before the power of the King of all Kings. Nevertheless the descendants of Heremon must stand on the Lia Fáil, each on his inauguration day. That gold plating on the throne, the shields, the spears, the circle about the Lia Fáil were made from the gold that the princes and chiefs, together with the nobles of the Gall, gave Aodh I to decorate the King's Chair at Tara.'

He led the Professor from the Forradh into the House of Cormac, a great circular chamber which at the first view looked like a room within a room from the row of slender columns of green marble that encircled it at a distance of thirty feet from the surrounding wall,

supporting a frieze decorated with frescoes in rich colours of scenes from the Stories of the Fianna, from the cornice of which rose at intervals fluted and frescoed shafts connecting the circle with the roof. Between the lofty windows, the walls beyond the columns were hung with apple-green brocade worked with garlands of pink flowers, brocade of the same hue embroidered with roses covering the chairs and couches. Inlaid cabinets stood by the walls, bearing rare and priceless china and treasures of jade and gold crystal and precious stones; and an ivory-chess table, its spaces of inlaid gold, its chess-men of the same metal, stood in the central room.

'This double chamber,' said the guide, 'was built thus to resemble Teach Cormac which was circular, and the space between the columns and the wall represents the circumvallation that ran round the ancient palace. And now I will lead you through the State apartments, of which this room forms one.'

They passed into a long gallery magnificently decorated and furnished, and hung with pictures which were among the masterpieces of the world; and from it through one stateroom to another, obtaining wide views of the park through great bay windows, till at last the guide reached a vast hall eight hundred feet in length and ninety in width, with seven doors on each side.

'This is the Banquet Hall of Tara,' he said, 'and stands on the site, and occupies the same space, of the ancient Teach Midhchuarta.'

A line of shields ornamented with concentric circles and bosses of gold, bearing coloured devices, ran along the walls at the height of ten feet from the floor. Below and above them were richly carved panellings of black oak; on the upper panelling were paintings set round by garlands entwining spears, shields, swords and other fancies of the great artist who gave his whole life, the guide said, to their carving. Down the length of the hall on each side stood the dining tables, one line of seats to each, placed by the wall. The southern end was occupied by a dais reached by three steps that ran its whole breadth, stair and dais covered by the carpets of Uladh. A great bay window behind the dais, lighted it and the steps, and gave a view of the Avenue of the Kings. Here the King's table stood, and in their order, the tables of the Five Princes of Ireland. A carpet that the

handlooms of Uladh had taken fifty years to make covered the centre of the hall, reaching from the lowest step of the dais to the other end of the vast apartment.

'Those shields,' said the guide, pointing to the line on the right, 'each belong to a prince or noble. When this hall was built, following the ancient precedent of Tara, the head of each great territorial family sent a shield to be hung in the hall, and his place at the State Banquets is beneath it. The shields on the left have been hung there by officers of distinction belonging to the army and the navy, and by others who have won honours in the service of Ireland. That is the shield of Padraic Sarsfield that you see by the fourth door, a brilliant general who lived at the end of the seventeenth century. His descendant sits to-day beneath it. The shield of a great captain who repelled the invasion of Cromwell, the English dictator, that of Eogan Ruadh Ua Neill, hangs on the right, for he was of royal blood. To hang a shield in the Banquet Hall of Tara is one of the highest and most coveted honours of the kingdom.'

From the Hall they went up a magnificent double stairway to a gallery, and passing through a suite of rooms visited the private apartments of the Ard-Righ. The Queen's gallery joined them, leading to those occupied by the queens of Ireland. The sitting-room and bedroom of her late Majesty Queen Maire remained just as she had occupied them; an exquisite white marble statue of the Queen standing in the first.

Descending a private stair from the King's study, they entered the King's cabinet, a long room, panelled in white wood with gold mouldings, with portraits of the queen and his children, and one great painting representing Christ's descent into Hades, covering the whole space of the wall above the white and beautifully sculptured mantel-piece.

'That is the famous 'Christ in Hades,' said the guide, 'the work of Ua Neachtain. You know his story, how, as a peasant boy minding his father's cows, he would spend his time drawing on the stones, and how one day he ran away and climbed Cruach Padraic, where he had a vision of this very picture which years afterwards he painted. The Ard-Righ, when at Tara, spends two hours in this room every day,

where he sees any of his subjects who wish to speak to him, the sentry at the door of the vestibule which opens directly on the east court having orders to admit all. The people wait in the vestibule, where two aides-de-camp learn their names and petitions, enter them in shorthand on slips of paper, which are taken to the King, who sees each person then in turn. Strange visitors have come; men and women from all parts of Ireland, even children and beggars. And the Ard-Righ listens to them, standing beneath that picture of our Lord preaching to the souls in prison.'

They left the cabinet and visited the Rath of Laeghaire, two great rooms frescoed with scenes from the Life of Saint Patrick and of his visit to Tara, and then entered Saint Patrick's Chapel and the Chapel of Erc, till at last the Professor's eyes were wearied gazing at the magnificence and beauty of Tara of the Kings. Eventually leaving the palace, they crossed the upper terrace and looked towards a wing of the building, marked by its many windows and carved decorations, that looked to the south.

'That is Rath Grania,' observed the guide, 'called after a daughter of the Ard-Righ Cormac Mac Art. Many a famous tale is told of her and of her love for Diarmid Ua Duibhne.'

Just as he spoke a young girl with golden hair came through a window and stood on the balcony. The guide uncovered his head. 'That is the Princess,' he said, 'Findebair of Ireland. Yesterday she came to Tara.'

The Professor looked upwards. A lovely joyous face was gazing across the terrace. The slender form of the Princess was robed in white. He bared his head. For a minute he stood still, his eyes on the High King's daughter.

'It is Grania herself,' he said, 'I have seen,' and went down the terrace.

CHAPTER XVI.

He had left the park before he realised that he had not seen the library of Tara. It was too late to return, for the sun was setting, and the Five Gates would soon be closed.

'What an opportunity I have lost!', he said, aloud, and asked the chauffeur if he knew in what quarter of the palace it stood. The man told him that it stood in the wing called Duna-na-nGiall, or the Mound of the Hostages, built on the site of the rath of that name where formerly the hostages of the Ard-Righ had been kept; but the hostages were now the printed thoughts of the great minds of the world.

As they drew near Tlachtga a man passed on a bicycle. Twilight had fallen, but the Professor thought it was Mac Suibne. He looked back, but the figure had disappeared round a corner.

The following day the Professor drove with the Princess and a party of her guests to Clonard. They were received by the dignitaries of the University, who conducted them through the twelve Colleges, which were named after the twelve Apostles of Erin. To a Drumcli and Fer-leginn of his College, a broad-faced portly gentleman, the Professor attached himself, and learnt the course followed in the University and the number of the schools. A student's course was generally six years, when he took out his degree as Cli.

'We have a tradition,' remarked the Fer-leginn, 'that the University was strongest in ancient times on its classical side, which, as science was then crude, was to its credit. But since the rebuilding of Clonard three hundred years ago, we have had such names on the roll of our colleges as Ua Cathain, Mac Donnchadha, Ua Ceallaigh, Ua Caoimh, Ua Suilleabhain, Ua Murchadha, Mac—'

'And these,' interrupted the Professor, 'in what branch did they excel?'

The Fer-Leginn threw a glance of astonishment. 'Surely Germany -which, I think, you said was your country – benefits by their discoveries. Their names are known to the scientific world.'

'No doubt, no doubt,' said the Professor quickly. 'I questioned idly. Now, Ua Caoimh – to take one name?'

'Yes, Ua Caoimh, to take one name. The domain of knowledge was widened not alone by his discoveries in astronomy but by his discovery of the White Ray, which has even greater and more extraordinary properties than Radium, as you are aware of.'

'And the world owes much to Mac Donn—'

'To Mac Donnchadha, yes. His discoveries in the eighteenth century in electro-magnetism opened the way for men like Ampere, Faraday, and Arago.'

'And your library? You must have valuable works,' said the Professor.

'We have, and the most noted are in Saint Brendan's Gallery. It contains many rare manuscripts, and a metal-work book shrine made by Saint Foirtchern, grandson of King Leagaire, before whom Saint Patrick preached. I led a most intelligent visitor through this library yesterday, a gentleman of the name of Mac Mossa. He lingered long before the shrine.'

The Professor stopped suddenly. 'Mac Mossa,' he said; 'was he a tall thin man in a fawn-coloured overcoat, who spoke Irish with a foreign accent?'

'His appearance and accent agree with your description,' replied the Fer-leginn. 'But he wore our native dress, kilt and brat.'

'Do you know where he went?'

'He told me he was going to England.'

'The post office, where is the post office?', said the Professor abruptly. 'Where I can send a telegram?'

'The University post office is in the quadrangle we are about to cross,' the Fer-leginn answered, and led him to the building.

With a rapid hand the Professor wrote— '*Moss visited the University of Clonard yesterday. Is wearing a dark blue kilt and brat.—Schliemann. To Mac Suibne, Detective, Baile-Átha-Cliath.*'

From the post office he went to the library, from which an hour later he was torn away by the Princess, who had accepted an invitation to take tea in the Ard-Fer-leginn's house. There his thoughts were entirely diverted from Moss as he conversed with two of the Professors, the Drumcli of Old Irish and the Drumcli of Gothic and other early Teutonic languages.

On his return to Tlachtga he found a note in his room from Sorcha. She was most unhappy, she wrote, at having disobeyed her father, and was also miserable lest Moss should hurt Geoffrey. Would the Sai ask her father to forgive her, and tell him how dearly she loved him? And would he ask him, too, to forgive Geoffrey? The next day, when he was leaving, the Princess gave him a letter for the Historian, and expressed a hope that all might end well for the lovers.

'Interested as I am,' she said, 'in their happiness, I am still more interested in reconciling the families. When the books are recovered, as I have confidence they will be, I shall ask that they be placed in my library at Tlachtga where the Historian and the Ollamh shall each have access to them, and thus the dispute will end.'

'Before then,' thought the Professor, 'I must take them to Berlin.' But he said aloud it would be a worthy deed to reconcile two such excellent men.

A swift run west that day brought him by noon to within sight of the Shannon. As the car crossed the Bridge of the Bulls the chauffeur suddenly stopped at a sign from a policeman, who advanced and spoke to him. When the Professor asked what he had said, the chauffeur answered that the man had given him the ticket issued at the bridge, and the Professor accepted the statement.

On arriving at Tir-da-Glas, he found the Historian pacing the terrace in company with the priest. He greeted Schliemann warmly, expressing his pleasure at his return. Having read the Princess's letter, he gave it to Father Fitzgerald, and, sitting down, remained silent for some time.

'You have seen my child?', he said at last.

'I have,' said the Professor, and gave him Sorcha's message.

'She is forgiven,' replied the Historian. 'Who am I to fight against the will of God? For, as I knelt at the summit of the sacred mountain, I saw that He would heal the feud between two ancient houses, and had brought the hearts of the children together.'

'And this proposal of the Princess about the books?', said the priest looking up.

A light flashed into the Historian's eyes. 'They have been a thousand years in the possession of my house, and in my house they must remain.'

The Professor presently asked if the Tanist was at Tir-da-Glas; and learnt that he was away. He then told that Moss had been seen at Clonard, news which cheered MacFirbis, who thanked him gratefully for communicating with MacSuibne. After some further conversation the three men separated, the priest leaving for his own home, and the others returning to the house to meet again later at dinner.

At the table the Professor spoke of his visits at Tlachtga and Tara, and praised the intelligence of the chauffeur. 'A clever, well-read young man,' he remarked, 'he proved a most agreeable companion.'

'This is a new character for Seaghan Dubh, as we call him,' replied the Historian. 'Hitherto he has been noted for his taciturn tongue and ignorance on all subjects except machinery.'

Cormac, who had just filled his master's glass, bent over his ear. 'With your leave, Historian, and your pardon for the freedom of my tongue,' he said, 'it was not Seaghan Dubh, but a young man from Baile-Átha-Cliath, whom the Tanist knew, who drove the Sai.'

'See that he is well entertained, Cormac.'

'I have opened a bottle of the '89 vintage for him, and have invited him to my own room, Historian.'

Early the next morning the Professor visited the ruin. He found MacBuan standing near the keep with a spade in his hand. The man touched his cap, and remarked that there was about to be a change in the weather.

'I am making a flower-bed here, noble one,' he added, 'if it is not in the way of your excavations.'

The Professor's eyes followed the direction of the man's finger. The ground had been cleared of some of the stones on the right side of the keep, and fresh loam spread over the place.

'I was about to dig there, Attacotti,' he said. The gardener appeared put out. 'Ah, noble one!', he exclaimed, 'you know how I wanted Midir's body for my black rose. It was no good to ask the Historian. So—'

'What?'

'So—well, noble one, I stole it. And I have buried him by the keep, and here is my black rose.' The man bent, and drew a rose tree from a casing of straw.

'It seems to me,' said the Professor, after a pause, 'that everyone is bent upon deceiving your master, a most kindly, honourable gentleman. You have taken the dog from its grave?'

The gardener nodded. 'It is true, noble one. But when the Historian sees the black rose blossom, the wonder of the world – black, with a crimson heart, many petaled, great sized, with the perfume of all the roses of the East, he will be well pleased. And the fame of my rose will run through Europe and the world.'

'Your border is where I meant to dig, and must dig,' said the Professor. 'Why did you not put the dog in one of the gardens?'

'Because it could not stay there. Those that work under me would have found it, and told the Historian.'

'Why did you choose this spot?'

The man looked at his flower-bed. 'For three reasons, noble one. First, the travelling sun strikes the wall as it goes west, and flings great warmth on the place. Second, the Historian does not come here often. Third, this is the ground where the blood of many men has been shed, and blood poured out when men are angry has virtues in it that the plants and trees and flowers gather up. It enriches the earth more than the blood of those who die in their beds.'

'There are clouds in the west,' said the Professor, looking skyward, 'and rain is coming. Now, listening to me, Attacotti; I must dig where your bed is, for there is a dungeon beneath it, into which a valuable possession of mine fell the other day.

'You would not wait till the spring, noble one?'

'Certainly not, man. I hope to be in my own country long before then.'

'Well, there is another way to get into the dungeon, which runs under the mound. It is longer, but an open way once you clear the masonry and earth. I will show you where the door lies.'

They left the keep, and crossing the interior of the castle, want out through the archway. The gardener paused before a block of masonry and stones.

'It is here,' he said. 'This wall fell down eighty years ago. Duwardach Ua Beirne, a man of ninety, told me that his grandfather when a boy got into the dungeon by this entrance. But it was closed before the wall come on it. There are steps leading down.'

The Professor regarded the steps for some moments. 'If I dig here I shall not bring down the keep,' he thought. Presently he said aloud that he would commence to clear way the obstruction to the entrance on the morrow.

'May your life be long!', the gardener replied, and went back to his rose tree.

Just before lunch the Professor received a telegram. He opened it with the interest with which he now looked at his letters, always in the hope that one amongst them might be from his sister or de Narbonne.

But a glance told him that the telegram was form neither.

'Can you meet me at Ua Maille's Bruighean in Caislean-an-Barraig,' he read, 'at four this afternoon? Important. – V.A.'

MacSuibne had telegraphed, and had used other initials than his own as a precaution, the Professor concluded, after a brief reflection. Seeing Cormac near, he asked him where Caislean-an-Barraig lay, and its distance from Tir-da-glas. Cormac told him the town was fourteen miles to the south-west. At lunch he mentioned that he had got a telegram from MacSuibne, who wished to meet him that afternoon. MacFirbis at once ordered that a motor-car should be ready for his journey; and he and the Professor, when alone, discussed the meaning of the summons.

Schliemann was pleased to find that the young chauffeur from Baile-Átha-Cliath was his driver as he stepped into the car. As they drove along, the man told him that he should soon have to return to the city, as the Historian's head chauffeur had a violent temper, and it was impossible to get on with him. He had driven the Tanist for a year, and for that reason had come to Tir-da-glas. But he would have to go; it was impossible to stay.'