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HOLY ROMANS  
A YOUNG IRISHMAN'S STORY

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TOWARDS THE REPUBLIC.

THE SHIP THAT SAILED TOO SOON, AND OTHER TALES.

SONGS AND SATIRES. [*Bilingual*.]

THE DRUID'S CAVE. [*A Tale for Boys*.]

# HOLY ROMANS

## A YOUNG IRISHMAN'S STORY

### BY AODH DE BLÁCAM

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MAUNSEL AND COMPANY, LTD.  
DUBLIN AND LONDON. 1920

10 May  
1940

*To DENIS ROURKE, Esq.*

MY DEAR DENNY,—

You are one of those people who go about doing kind acts so lavishly that everyone becomes their debtor, and yet the indebted can never find means to express their gratitude. In common with so many, I am under uncountable obligations to you ; I owe to your kindness, indeed, the three things I most value in life : and yet the best that I have ever been able to do to signalise my esteem is to inscribe this book to you as a token thereof.

My story is a true one in substance and descriptive detail, but it is not to be mistaken for autobiography, nor are the characters to be taken as drawn from living people. In the tale's truthfulness to some unfamiliar phases of Irish life it is my hope that you and others will find interest. You may disapprove of the views expressed by some of the actors, but truth required that I should set down accurately the factors governing the evolution of Shane's opinions. In a later book I hope to describe the development of Shane's mind in the days that followed the feverish period with which my later chapters are concerned.

Yours as in 1909,

A. DE B.

FALCARRAGH,

*Saint Patrick's Day, 1920.*

N.B.—I am indebted to Máire Nic Chearbhaill for the use of the verses, *Amergin Invokes Ireland*, in Book II. Chapter ix.—A. de B.

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# HOLY ROMANS

## BOOK I—BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON

### CHAPTER I

#### BORN IN EXILE

When, like a mighty ship caught in the pride of her strength by some gigantic maelstrom, the lusty, colour-bright Ireland of O'Connell's prime was stricken by the incalculable horror of the Great Starvation, and wrecked, there began that scattering of the race—that Irish *diaspora*—that peopled the refuges of all the earth with Irish mourners. Like wreckage, this sad humanity was washed up to many a foreign strand, and not least, to the English capital. Little colonies of Irish refugees gathered here and there in the labouring districts of London, added to by new immigrants every decade. Catholic churches distributed over the map of the metropolis mark the neighbourhoods of these little communities, for wherever Irish workers were gathered, there was the nucleus for a new Catholic congregation. Visit any of these churches on Sunday morning, and you would hear Irish voices—maybe the Irish tongue. You would see around you every Irish soul in the locality.

The Redemptorist Fathers' Church of the Seven Dolours stands in a commanding position on a hill

in the Northern London suburbs. Its architecture is Byzantine, barbaric and august, carrying a strange flavour of the exotic that harmonises with the conception of "Roman Catholicism" which the passing public cherishes. Mysterious incense odours float from the door, and a glimpse within shows glimmering candles and vivid scenes of the Way of the Cross, confession-boxes, penitents praying on beads before the red and blue robed statues. . . .

Behind the church is the monastery with cloisters and stony corridors, and gardens beyond. There are school buildings, too, and not far away, up the road, a Convent is set behind high walls and myrtle-crowded grounds. The Church of Rome has struck her roots deep in this district. It follows that there is no small Irish population in the neighbourhood.

Artizans, labourers, small shopkeepers, petty clerks, the Irish refugees dwell in the mean streets behind the main roads—a floor to a family. They do not strive much after riches, but they are scrupulous to maintain appearances of decency, and they preserve habits of cleanliness that mark them and their abodes out from the squalid surroundings. They help one another with a tender charity. Old differences, provincialisms, political feuds, are forgotten. Their patriotism is purified and runs high.

A mile or so from the Church of the Seven Dolours, and set in the busiest part of a crowded region, Lambert's Drug Stores stands on the main thoroughfare. Robert Lambert, a portly Ulsterman, with the blue Norse eyes of Carlingford Lough, used, thirty years ago, to stand behind that counter, dealing forth medicines and soaps and scents and tooth-brushes, while little seven-year old Shane, his only son, sat on a tall stool behind the tiny gas-jet

used for melting sealing-wax, and watched the tide of trade with wide-eyed interest. One day, many of the customers wore sprigs of green in their coats.

"You're not wearing shamrock, Mr. Lambert," said one of them, a tram-driver who looked in at early morning for a bottle of eucalyptus for his cold. "Didn't you get any sent you?"

"Man, I had forgotten the day," said Lambert, with a little laugh. "I'm a queer sort of Irishman. Can you spare me some of yours?"

"Begob and I can, sir, and welcome," said the tram-driver, as he cut a pinch of green from a large bunch in his peaked cap. "And here's a piece for the little man, too," he said, smiling at Shane. He fastened a piece in the boy's jacket. "A fine little Irishman, Mr. Lambert. You should be proud of him," he said, pinching the red cheeks.

Shane ran away to the dispensary end of the shop, where in a glass-roofed shed Todkins, the bottle-boy, was washing bottles at a sink, and singing the while :

Ta-ra-ra-ra-boom-de-ay,  
I did go to church one dye,  
*And I 'eard the clergyman sye*  
Ta-ra-ra-ra-boom-de-ay.

"Why are all the people wearing this stuff to-day?" Shane asked his special friend.

"Wy, don't you know that?" answered Todkins. "Them Irish—the people with the hextrahordinary haccents—always wears shamrock on Saint Patrick's Dye to show w're they come from."

"Why did that man give some to father then?" asked Shane.

"W'y, the guv'nor, your dad, came from Ireland—not as I mean that 'e's a real Irisher. You see, 'e ain't a Roman Catholic like the rest of 'em, so 'e

don't count as a real one, see?—Blime, look at 'Oly Joe!"

Here Todkins pointed into the shop where a very stout and bonny-faced priest, who wore shamrock in his lapel, was handing an envelope to Robert Lambert.

"'E's selling tickets for 'is concert—five bob every go, *I know*," said Todkins. "The guv'nor 'as to take them; seeing 'e gets all the 'Oly Joes' business, 'cause of 'is being a Irishman. That's 'ow they get the profit back. They ain't as green as they look, my eye!"

Father Kearney was at that moment presenting complimentary tickets to the chemist, and saying:

"We have a little Patrick's Day concert coming off on Thursday night in aid of the new schools. But the Fathers would be glad if you would come as our guest and bring that sturdy young son of yours. . . ."

The priests and people of the Church of the Seven Dolours loved Lambert, though he was not of their faith. In the poor tenements, Robert Lambert's was a name often mentioned in prayers. When the poor workman fell sick, and saw unemployment and disaster ahead, Lambert would give his medicines and his skill freely, and wonderful was their potency. The poor bought their soaps and sponges from him, and paid what they could afford, and when they could afford, for the succour that he offered, and which the doctors would only have given at high cost. There was another reason for their esteem for the chemist. It was whispered how Lambert after the Fenian fiasco of Newry in the seventies had. . . . But the story was only told in whispers. The English had never identified Robert Lambert, M.P.S., a loyal and respected citizen, with the man whose description once appeared in the *Hue and Cry*, and his friends were not the people to give him away now.

Lambert did not go to the Irish concert. On Thursday evening, he entered the kitchen, full of choking steam, in which Nana, Shane's nurse and housekeeper to the shop, was ironing clothes, standing as she did so on the cat's tail, oblivious to the animal's agonised cries and struggles to get free, for she was very heavy and very deaf.

“Nana,” said he, having released the cat.

“Sir?” said she.

“Would you like to go to a concert to-night?” he shouted.

“Is it the Police Minstrels?” asked Nana, with her hand at her ear.

“No, an Irish concert.”

“Oh!—As you wish, sir.”

“Here are the tickets. And you can take Shane.”

“Very good, sir. As you wish, sir.”

“And here's a shilling for your tram fares and some sweets, Nana.”

“Thank you, sir.”

Shane was mothered by Nana almost as long as he could remember. He had dim memories of a golden-haired woman singing at a pianoforte in a rich room, with a sunlit conservatory beyond, on summer mornings, and he playing in a garden full of flowers. She had a voice with notes in it like the chords of a harp, and he could faintly remember the songs she sang :

Blow, blow, sweet and low,  
Wind of the western sea. . . .

Or, from a big, green-bound, gilt-edged volume :

The harp that once thro' Tara's halls  
The soul of music shed  
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls  
As if that soul were fled. . . .

a song that called to his mind strange visions of wet green castle chambers with the trails of vanished pride. The young and lovely woman of the songs was long since dead, and now deaf Nana was his mother—Nana, with the black hair pulled back to a skimpy bun, who ruled the dark, big, rickety house over the shop with a firm if clumsy hand. During the week she was too busy to give him much attention, but on Sunday afternoons, when his father, after the fourteen-hour Saturday, was sleeping in an armchair before a fire in the living-room, she would entertain him before the kitchen fire with some book drawn from his father's miscellaneous library. The book she best loved to read to him while he sat on the mat looking after the roasting chestnuts on the bars, was one called *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*. In one story, a murderer told how he buried his victim under the floor-boards—how the police officers sat above the corpse—how a hideous tick-tack came from the floor—how he ground a chair to drown the noise, walked up and down, talked loudly, laughed ; but ever the ticking grew louder and louder and more terrible to his ears, till the officers *must* have heard : so that his patience broke, and he cried, “ Tear up the boards : his body lies here : it is the beating of his horrible heart !! . . . ”

Beside the story of “ The Tell-Tale Heart ” there was one called “ The Black Cat,” that disputed with it first place in Nana’s preference. This told how a ghastly cat was walled up in the plaster with the corpse of a murdered woman. . . . Another favourite story was “ The Murderer’s Confession,” in *Master Humphrey’s Clock*. Nana had a queer taste in literature, Shane thought. She would read him *Andersen’s Tales* only as a great favour, and obviously

without relish, though "Ole Luk-Oie" was a story that set him dreaming of heavenly things.

Nana duly took him to the Irish concert, which was held in a schoolroom behind the church. He went with a sense of venturesome enterprise, for a grim fear hung about those church buildings. He remembered how one day Todkins had come into the kitchen, crying, to tell Nana that the guv'nor had given him, amongst other errands, a parcel of medicines to take to the Redemptorist Monastery.

"I dурсent refuse to go," he said, "the guv'nor's that 'ard and stern. And I'm afraid that if I got into them stone corridors I'd never be let out again. They're all dark and winding: I saw them from the door once. Praps they've got a rack in thère somew'ere."

The end of the incident had been that Nana had accompanied Todkins on the errand, to fortify his courage. When the servant opened the little postern door, they had pushed the parcel in as though it were a live coal.

. . . . .

"There'll be lots of people at the concert to-night," said Nana. "So I'm sure we'll be safe. . . ."

Shane saw, in the concert room, many a face familiar to him from the shop—kindly old ladies smiled at him and old men patted his head. Nana, with a cheek stuffed full of peppermints, sat beside him and nodded affirmatively in answer to the stream of questions which he fired at her, but (through shyness) in too low a tone for her to hear. The concert opened with a chorus from a choir of white-attired convent girls—Shane pricked up his ears, for the song was *Let Erin Remember*, one of those in

the green book that his mother had used to sing from. There was a pianoforte recital next that bored him sadly. Then a young man in evening dress, whose voice was less markedly Irish than the others, sang a song of the sort that had delighted Shane at the Hollogate Empire—a roistering, funny song, about one O'Lannigan, who went to sea with a cargo of pigs which manned the guns when the ship was attacked, and brought her safe :

Said O'Lannigan, “Praise the pigs—  
For—I'm—O—Lannigan, Sir,  
And you wouldn't call *me* a liar! . . .”

The classy people in the front seats laughed and clapped, but hisses broke out from the back of the hall—which puzzled Shane, for the song fascinated him like a good fairy story. An old woman in a shawl shook her fist at the singer, and her companion cried : “Shame! How dar you sing that here?” The singer knitted his fine brows and frowned with fierce grey eyes at the interrupters—Shane was thrilled with his grand defiant look. Nana bent and whispered loudly : “What's all the fuss about?”

“They're stopping him from singing,” said Shane, and as the protests increased he crept closer to Nana.

“I 'ope they won't begin fighting,” said Nana, apprehensively, “I think we'd better be going.”

“Ah, no-o, Nana,” said Shane. The singer had bowed himself off the platform with a look that seemed to say : “Don't ask me to give an encore to *this* audience.”

A handsome girl in a green cloak with a splendid barbaric brooch at the shoulder now recited something about shamrocks, and was applauded by all. For encore (at this concert everything was encored)

she gave a poem about the Union Jack. She first glanced through the tail of her eyes at Father Kearney, the stage manager, and then stepped forward and spoke out defiantly, as though she was making a pointed appeal.

Shane was roused, for he expected references to the Union Jack to entail fine Henty-esque bombast. But somehow, instead of glorifying that flag, the recitation dispraised it, and there were two lines that the reciter spoke out with fierceness :

Then take the blood-stained Saxon shilling,  
Sell your Motherland—and die !

There was now a storm of applause at the back of the hall from those who had before protested, but the people in the front rows sat up straight and did not clap. There was a shout from one side, and a counter-shout about "Anti-Recruiting" from the other—and then a babel of angry voices, till Father Kearney, looking very flustered, went up to the platform and appealed for order. "This entertainment is strictly non-political," he said, "and to prove it," says he, "I'll sing yez a little ditty myself."

Therewith he took a deep breath and began in the most exaggerated brogue to sing *Father O'Flynn* :

Here's a health to you, Father O'Flynn,  
Sláinte, and Sláinte, and Sláinte agin.  
Powerfulest pracher, and tinderest tacher,  
And kindliest crature in ould Donegal !

At once good humour was restored, and scarce waiting for the cry of encore, the reverend vocalist went on :

Not far from old Kinvara in the merry month of May  
When birds were singing cheerily there came upon my way  
As if from out the skies above an angel chanced to fall  
A little Irish colleen in an old plaid shawl.

The smile on Father Kearney's red face seemed to spread over the whole of his jolly great body as he rollicked out the last lines :

A-and peace of mind I'll never find until my own I call  
That little Irish colleen in her old plaid shawl.

This was the first item that Nana clapped. She laughed till tears ran down her cheeks. "That ain't arf a bad un from 'Oly Joe," she said. Amid thunders of applause that filled the hall, Father Kearney had to come forth and bow half-a-dozen times, and it was in the midst of the hubbub that one of the convent girls, about two years Shane's senior, slipped out of the door beside the platform and shyly made her way to the bench on which he sat with Nana. She had hair as black as a raven's wing, and bright cheeks.

"Lor' bless me!" said Nana, "if it ain't little Miss Teresa! Master Shane, 'ere's your little cousin, Miss Tessie Murnane. Make room for 'er. And 'ow are you getting along at the convent, Miss?"

"Nicely, thank you, Nana," said the young apparition, whose eyes were fixed in shy curiosity on Shane. Shane was wondering who this remarkable new cousin—whom he had never seen before—could be. He handed her the peppermint bag.

Just then the accompanist, a lady with greying hair, was singing *My Snowy Breasted Pearl* at the piano. For encore, Father Kearney announced that she would sing the song again—but in "the old Irish tongue." Shane looked wonderingly at Tessie. He had heard of a French language and a German language, but not of an Irish language. The song was to Shane's ears more beautiful than any that had gone before, for there was a wild romance in the strange, musical words. He wondered how this lady had

learnt the old tongue, which must be the same as the tongue that was spoken by the "chiefs and ladies bright" in Tara's halls of old. It was, to him, as if she had sung in the language of the mysterious Egyptian hieroglyphics that he had seen in the Mummies' Chamber at the British Museum. Thereafter there were other songs, a violin solo, and a dance by two youths (who could hold their bodies still while their legs worked with unimaginable agility)—but Shane gave no heed. He was dreaming of Tara's halls and the glories that the fisherman sees beneath the waves of Lough Neagh—moving through scenes like those of a "Lost Continent" story.

"Was there really an Irish language?" he asked Tessie.

"Why, yes," said she, her eyes wide open. "My grandfather can talk Irish."

"Is he my grandfather, too?" asked Shane, appealing to Nana.

Nana could not hear. Shane shouted. Tessie pulled his sleeve and whispered: "Hsh. No, he's not your grandfather I'm talking about. It's my father's father. . . . Look, Father Archer's coming. He's dreadfully strict."

A priest with grey hair and black eyebrows and the look of an Anglican clergyman (which was what he once was) was approaching. "Don't be making so much noise, children," he said, "or I shall have to ask you to leave the hall." He sniffed. "Which of you is eating peppermints?" he asked. "I am surprised at you eating smelly sweets like that and making your presence disagreeable to everybody around you. Give me the packet."

Shane was ashamed and shrank close to Nana. Tessie squeezed his hand, smiled, and made off.

Nana gathered her brows, and slowly turned to survey Father Archer with a look that ran up and down his stately soutane.

" You must tell this son of yours to stop eating peppermints, my good woman," said he.

" Wot's 'Oly Joe saying ? " said she to Shane, shifting a peppermint from one cheek to the other.

Father Archer elevated his eyebrows as he overheard the name. " I said, my good woman, that you must ask your boy to stop chewing peppermints," he said in a louder tone, while the people turned round to see what was the nature of the interruption.

Nana ground her umbrella on the floor and tossed her head. " I'd have you know, sir," said she, tilting her bonnet back into position, " that I'm not accustomed to be hordered, not by no-one, but I shall *heat* peppermints when and w're I like. I am a good Protestant woman, I am, and always went to chapel regular till I got the rheumatics, and I'm not going to take orders in my *hold hage*. Come along with me now, Jack," said she to Shane. " We'll show we know our place if others don't know theirs."

Father Archer was " took aback," as Nana afterwards described it in a hero-account of the incident.

" Excuse me, my worthy woman," he said. " Pray don't misunderstand me. I did not mean to wound your susceptibilities. I was only anxious for. . . ."

But Nana had grasped her umbrella in one hand, and having clapped Shane's cap on his head, gripped his hand in the other, and then swept forth amid amazed gazes, her bonnet bobbing up and down with her indignation like the lid on a bubbling kettle.

" Well, I never," she said, in the tram, after extracting her purse from her petticoat and fishing out two pennies, " I don't know what possessed me

to be inveigled into going among all them Romanists. I didn't like the look in that one's eye, *I tell you*. 'E knew I wasn't one of 'is sort. They might 'a' kidnapped us if we'd 'a' stayed any longer. I've 'eard tell of such things. It's lucky I 'ad presence of mind and put on a bold face."

Shane looked up to her with admiration. They had been playing with fire in going near the monastery at all, he felt, and Nana had adroitly beaten that strategic retreat just in the nick of time!

When they reached the shop and Nana opened the door with her private key, Robert Lambert was sitting before the kitchen fire with his feet above the range and a cigar in his mouth. He laid down his adventure novel as they entered, and asked how they had enjoyed themselves. Nana told of her encounter with Father Archer. Lambert leant back in his chair and laughed till the tears started. Shane thought this mirth very heartless and inappropriate.

"They'd have a hard task making a Holy Roman of you, Nana, even if they caught you," said he. "But next time you go, I must get you a safe conduct from Father Kearney. . . ."

"It's all very well for you to laugh, Mr. Lambert," said Nana, bridling. She thrust her hands to her hips and stood before him. "I may be a pore ignorant woman, but *I've—read—things*—that would open your eyes. 'Ere"—and she opened a drawer in the dresser—"look at this, *The True History of Maria Monk, the Escaped Nun*." And she handed Lambert a small book with a lurid cover.

"Where did you get this?" asked Lambert, rising. His voice had suddenly gone hard.

"I got it at the Mission Rooms last Sunday night. Mr. Armstrong was giving copies free after a sermon by the Reverend Trott about the Scarlet Woman."

Lambert lifted the kettle from the range, and thrust the volume into the heart of the red flames. When he turned, those blue East Ireland eyes had in them the Berserker wrath of the old Norse from whom they came.

“Don’t dare to bring such a book into this house again, and don’t dare read a line of it to this boy here,” he said with vibrant anger in his voice. “And let me remind you of this: the Roman Catholics pray to the same God as we, even if they do it in a different way, and backbiting and slandering people of other sects does more harm than good. I’ve seen sorrow enough caused by religious bigotry, God knows.”

He picked up his papers and walked from the room. There was a sad and distant remembering look on his fine face, Shane noticed, as he went through the door. As soon as he had gone, Nana, who had been thoroughly awed by his angry manner, collected herself, and with a pair of tongs fished the burning book from the fire and quenched it at the sink. “I ‘adn’t finished reading it, and I want to know what the villains did to that pore creature in the end,” she said. “And my!—fancy Bob Lambert coming out that strong on the side of the Romanists. But what about supper? It’s ‘igh time all little boys was abed and asleep. . . .”

Shane dreamed that night of the great log halls of Tara, lit by crimson torches set in iron clamps; with proud, serene people at the feast, and all his good friends among them—Nana picking him special treats from the dishes, and Tessie Murnane whispering to him in the melodious language of the antique songs. But in the black shadows beyond the torches, there moved dark, sinister figures, clothed in cassocks. . . .

## CHAPTER II

### THE COMPANIONS OF FIONN

Robert Lambert had the air of a sad man. His manner was, indeed, genial and kindly, but he was lonely—made no friends, paid no visits, rarely left the shop premises, and was behind the counter from eight in the morning till nine o' nights. When the shutters were up he would sit by the kitchen fire, with a box of cigars beside him, reading into the small hours of the morning. His taste in literature was for romantic novels, and in a little apartment opening from the kitchen there were scores of paper copies of Wilkie Collins, Poe, Dumas. . . . This compartment was in reality a recess in which a boiler had once stood. It was high above the fire level to one side. Shane could reach it by climbing on a little ladder brought from the shop. One day he constructed, with a sawn-up bamboo and a clothes line, a rope ladder that he tied to a joist in the roof of the recess, and could pull up behind him after climbing up. When there, he used to build a rampart of books along the opening, so as to conceal himself, and then play at Robinson Crusoe's cave. A fanlight which had been set into the roof gave him light to read in the books from the shelves around, and provided a secret back egress from his cave, which he more than once used when Nana was hunting for him to go on some unpleasant errand. It was one of his chief pleasures to browse for hours among the

*Wide World* and *Strand* magazines that he found in the "cave" before him. There were tales about wild Thibet, the mysterious "Lost Continent," the strange cities of old Egypt. . . . 'Twas an enchanted cave, that !

Lambert had no visitors save Mr. Opkins, the manager of his branch shop at Hornway Hill, who talked only of "new lines" and "advertising wheezes"; and a certain young man named Fergus O'Cryan, scarce twenty years of age, to whom Shane took a curious liking. O'Cryan, who taught drawing at some local school, carried a pocket-book with him in which he was wont to make sketches of all the curious or picturesque things he saw. One Sunday evening, when Shane came in from Sunday-School, O'Cryan was at tea with Lambert, and jotted down a sketch of Shane's curly head that so delighted Lambert that he insisted on having it extracted from the book. While O'Cryan was touching up the torn-out sketch and mounting it on a photo-mount from the photography show-case, Shane ran through the sketch-book, unnoticed by the owner. There were comical heads of old countrymen, bits of rural scenery—a jotted note of how the shadow fell from a bridge on running water—foreshortened yachts heeling at awkward angles. But what interested Shane most was that, in the early part of the note-book, there were sketches of warships and sailors in some foreign uniform. These were followed (evidently as the note-taker travelled inland) by notes of land fortifications and soldiers. Then came several pages with little diagrams formed of black and white oblongs scattered among stars representing hills, and crosses showing "bridges." The black oblongs facing the white would be broken up in fragments in a second

diagram. Also there were drawings of parts of rifles and the loading of shells. Then followed English scenes again. Shane wondered how O'Cryan had come by these outlandish studies. . . .

There was not much in common between Lambert and O'Cryan, you would suppose, but their common interest was photography. Lambert had an affection for inventions and ingenuities of all kinds. When electric flash-lamps were put on the market, he had a window show of them. Model steam engines of every build were shown in his shop each Christmas—and toy gyroscopes and other scientific novelties. A drawingroom cinema lantern was amongst the curiosities that he introduced to the public with as much enthusiasm as that with which the colporteur who sold religious books pressed his wares on people. And there was no photographic appliance that did not appear in Lambert's Drug Stores as soon as it was invented. O'Cryan and he used to talk of "exposures," "intensifiers," "hypo," "rapid plates," "printing-frames," "enlargers," and the like, but Shane never heard them discuss any other subject, unless it were chemistry. Fergus spent much time in Lambert's dispensary, between the shelves of bottles and the dark room. Shane liked him for no particular reason, save that a curious fascination went with him, his freckly features and brown tweed clothes. There was a sort of tacit comradeship between the boy and the young man.

Yes, Lambert was lonely. "W'y don't the guv'nor marry again and get someone to liven 'im up a bit?" asked Todkins once of Nana. She was offended. "Don't I manage 'im and 'is 'ouse well enough, and ain't I done so for eight years?" she asked. "'E's better off as 'e is, without some flighty young woman worrying 'is 'ed off."

On Bank Holidays, Lambert used to take Shane for day-trips to Brighton or Ramsgate or Clacton-on-Sea or Southend—most often of all to Southend. It was there that Shane saw the sea for the first time, and to this day he has not forgotten the thrilling sight of moving masts over the sky-line and at last the full view of the salt waters. At the station, the train would pour forth swarms of trippers, while Lambert, with white yachting cap and navy suit, and binoculars slung on his shoulder, would take Shane through streets full of wonderful sights: windows crowded with toy-boats, from little penny rowboats to great five-sailed models, or packed with fishing-tackle. Down at the sea, the sands stretched mile on mile, broken by mossy breakwaters and lines of boats and bathing machines. Here niggers in striped suits were tuning their banjos, there a ventriloquist was gathering a crowd. Elsewhere, a preacher was leading hymns accompanied by a collapsible harmonium, while a mysterious individual with a metal flask on his back was tramping along the sands beside the promenade shouting “Hokey Pokey, penny a lump.”

A huge pier stretched into the sea almost to the horizon. At the land end, the green waters lapped in the cool shadows among a network of girders. At a line of booths old salts in blue jerseys were selling cockles and oysters, some in little trays, with vinegar and pepper. Twopence admitted Lambert and son to the pier itself. Here there was a bewilderment of penny-in-the-slot machines. In some, little figures kicked a rubber ball the size of a marble. In others, miniature yachts raced over Reckitt’s-blue waters as a handle puffed wind. Others yielded surprise packets, containing a necklace of rich blue beads or a brightly-coloured brooch. Lambert put

a penny in every one of the machines for Shane's delight, and Shane put in his pockets a whistle for Todkins, a wire bracelet for Nana, and a pair of cuff-links that he fancied might be turned into an acceptable trinket for cousin Tessie.

Then the pier electric cars were mounted, and after rattling through iron girders came to the surface of the pier, and raced through the salt wind, mocking the pedestrians who faced the mile odd walk along the footpath. The mile was covered in less than ten minutes, and Shane and his father alighted at the pier head, where a great iron island supported concert houses, with tea gardens and a band on top of them. Steamers smelling of hot iron and steam, and vibrating with force, called every half-hour, and were moored to capstans until voyagers were taken aboard or disembarked, by little gangways adventurously moored across six feet of water. It never occurred to Shane that all the nautical pomp and posing at Southend was one vast piece of play-acting, *pour épater le Cockney*.

At a lower deck on the pier head, men were fishing along the girders with lines spun on small wood frames. From here, Shane and his father once embarked on a two-masted sailing vessel to the cry of "Just about to sail," "This way for the *Skylark*," etc., by the Bo'sun. Sails were bent and the yacht went shouldering through the waters with some sixty people crowding its open deck. Lambert stood scanning the receding shore through his glasses, but Shane felt very sick, and every time the boat heaved under the wind he fancied she was going to capsize; his fears were not much allayed by the talk of the fat man at the wheel, who gloomily remarked: "We've got too much canvas on her," "She'll never stand the

turn," "The water's three miles and five hundred and sixty yards deep hereabarts," "The lifeboats only\* carry twenty people—and *they're* leaky," etc. In the midst of Shane's misery a man with a cornet rose near the mainmast and played very noisily, *A Life on the Ocean Wave*, and *You are the Honey-suckle, I am the Bee*. He seemed arrogantly callous thus to play frivolous tunes while the ship was like to founder. But she did not founder. She made her way right around a great P. and O. liner that was moored two miles from land, when they could see the gunboats looming in the haze at Sheerness across the channel. It was a thrilling moment when she tacked and the snowy jibs shot across the deck while the vessel leaned over from her left to her right side for the return journey. And so, with much skilful seamanship and despite the steersman's tales of how the last boat that was lost was sunk just in reach of the pier, she came safely to the pier-head and the voyagers landed once more.

In the tea rooms at the pier-head exquisite little rolls of bread with pats of delicious salt butter, and tea in huge cups on which the arms of Southend were graven, were sold. It was very pleasant to satisfy a healthy appetite with this nectar and ambrosia in the great, cool dining-hall, with the sea wind blowing through the shade from the open windows, while the cornet's music came from far off, from another boat.

At another of the white-spread tables there sat an old gentleman with the snowiest of hair, but with an athletic and well-trimmed appearance. His look was singularly good and gentle, and reminded Shane of the picture of one John Ruskin, set at the front of *The King of the Golden River*, a tale given him at

Christmas. Lambert had *The Standard* on the table beside him. "Pardon me, sir," said the old gentleman, "but might I be allowed to glance at your paper?"

"By all means," said Lambert.

The old man scanned the pages with curious eagerness; there was something like anxiety in his manner as he ran down the news columns. Then he returned the paper with a courteous word of thanks.

"I perceive," he said, "that this is a London edition, from which I gather that you are visitors from London. Perhaps you could tell me what train I could catch for London this evening."

Lambert went on to give the stranger the information he desired.

"There is an up train at half-seven," he said, "but the half-five (if you could catch it) would not have so many trippers crowding it."

"'Half-seven,'" the old gentleman quoted with a little twinkle. "I observe that, like myself, you are an Irishman?"

"But not a very good one, I fear," answered Lambert, smiling too.

"Which of us is?" said the greybeard, rising, and offering his hand to Lambert across the table. Shane looked on with some surprise as the two men, strangers to each other, warmly shook hands.

"You are from the North, I notice," said the old man. "I am from the West myself. Peter Joyce is my name."

"And mine is Lambert—Robert Lambert."

At these words, the old man seemed bereft of speech. A strange excitement seemed to take the strength from his frame, and he sank back to his chair trembling.

" You — are — Robert — Lambert," he breathed.  
" Lambert of Newry ? "

Lambert, obviously embarrassed by the turn the interview had taken, nodded assent.

" My God ! " said Peter Joyce. " To think that you should be the first man I should meet on landing — Why, it was I who was Edmund O'Tierney's companion on the night of the Rising. . . . It was I whom you. . . . "

His voice was as if choked with tears and his face sank on his hands.

" Hsh ! " said Lambert, with a new note of concern in his voice. It was his turn to look surprised. " That happened long ago. Long ago. Let us talk of other things now. "

" But, Lambert, it was a great thing you did for us that time, and it's not I that would meet you without telling you of my gratitude. And you were not of our way of thinking that time ; that made it all the nobler of you. I'll warrant you're with us now."

Lambert shrugged his shoulders uneasily. " I was never much of a politician one way or the other," said he.

Joyce looked disappointed, and changed the topic of conversation.

" This is your little son ? " he said. " He has your eyes. Rear him carefully. It's the young Protestant Nationalists who are going to save Ireland. They can afford to stand up against the priests. Who is Mrs. Lambert ? Nora MacArdle, I suppose ? "

Lambert looked yet more uneasy. " No," he said, shortly, and, " Mrs. Lambert is dead."

" God forgive me for a clumsy fool," said Peter, and was silent for a while. " Where are you living now ? "

“At Hollogate in North London.” Lambert did not add an invitation to call. “What are you doing yourself?”

“Faith, nothing in the world. I am landed here only this day from—*thar sáile*, no matter where. *Britanniam non sponte sequor*. I must look for something to do in London to keep me going.”

Shane somehow connected old Peter’s new arrival on English soil with his eager scanning of the paper. . . .

But Joyce *did* call at the Drug Stores, and that many times, for though Lambert was not effusive he was silently helpful, and it was through his good offices that old Peter (who had once been a schoolmaster) became reader to a firm of classic publishers. As if by way of thanks old Peter took upon him to teach Shane, as he said, “a little Latinity,” and on two evenings every week, Shane went to the old man’s lodgings and studied his conjugations and declensions—for Latin was taught only to senior youths, and as an extra, at “St. Alban’s School for Young Gentlemen.”

Old Peter sweetened the lessons by telling Shane long stories on evenings when he had done well. The old man had an extraordinary store of tales about old Greece and old Ireland, and Shane loved to hear him tell of the Argonauts, but still more of Fionn and his Fenians. He laughed many times at the tale of the Hard Servant, or thrilled at the march of the King’s Son of Ulster to join the Fenian warriors at the Battle of Fiontrágha against the King of the World. He liked these stories better than “The Tell-Tale Heart.”

He made more progress with his Latin under old Peter than he did with any of his subjects at St. Alban’s.

" You are happier with me," said Joyce to him, one day. " It's easy seeing you don't like the school."

The old man's gentle manner invited the boy's confidence.

" I'm only a shopkeeper's son, you see, Mr. Joyce," said Shane, " and so I'm not let into the Cricket Eleven. . . ."

" Oho ! that's the way of it, is it ? " said Peter.

" Albert Edward Fitzgerald is Captain of the team. His father is something under the Government, and he's awfully rich. Why, Albert wears silk cricket blazers and his bat cost two pounds ten. He won't let me come in because Father keeps a shop."

" Faith, I know those damned English snobs," said Peter. " Ignorant clerks, sons of Hodges, always in arrears with their bills ; I know them. That name, by the way, has a smell of soup about it."

" What do you mean by soup, Mr. Joyce ? "

" Ach, you'll know soon enough. Albert Edward doesn't go well with Fitzgerald, that's all. By the way, do they know what sort of shop your father keeps ? "

" No, I suppose not."

" Well, tell 'em it's a *chemist's* shop, an apothecary's hall : that's semi-professional, you see. They'll let you into the Eleven then. I know them, damn them. Let us talk about something more cheerful now. Did I never tell you the story of how Fergus of the Sweet Lips healed the quarrel between the two clans of the Fenians with his music at the Brawl of Allen ? Well, it goes like this. . . ."

That night when old Peter took Shane home to the shop, who should be there before them but Fergus O'Cryan, who was buying sensitised paper. Shane could not help thinking that Fergus of the

Sweet Lips must have been something like this gentle namesake of his. Lambert introduced the old man to the young. Fergus's eyes lit with a cordial admiration as he took Joyce's hand.

"I am proud to meet you, sir," said he. "I am proud to meet a Fenian. . . ."

A Fenian!—Shane looked at the two fine specimens of old and young manhood: Fergus and a Fenian! He did not understand. But there was something in the look of the two that made it easy for him to fancy, for the moment, that these were truly of the Companions of Fionn.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ROAD FROM ROME

"Do you go to church or chapel?" asked Albert Edward Fitzgerald, when Shane explained that his father's was a *chemist's* shop. "You know it's only rabs and roughs that go to chapel. Gentlemen go to church. If you go to chapel, your father must be one of those Radicals and Liberals."

"I don't understand," pleaded Shane.

"Well, Church is Church," said Albert Edward. "Chapel is the Nonconformist's place. If you're Methodist or Baptist or Congregationalist, you're not Church. See? Some of the Presbyterians are Church in a sort of a way. Now which are you?"

"I'm afraid I'm neither," Shane had to admit. "I don't go to church or chapel, except to Sunday School at Mr. White's. Sometimes my nurse—I mean my housekeeper—takes me to the Mission Hall."

Albert Edward's aristocratic features curled with scorn.

"And — you — want — to — be — in — our — Eleven ? ? ? "

Albert Edward whistled long and wondrously, and turned on his heel. . . .

"Nana," said Shane next Sunday, "why don't we go to Church?"

Nana looked so surprised that he had to shout the question to her three times to convince her that she had not misheard it,

"Oo's been putting that idear into your 'ed?" she asked. "And do you mean to say that you've been going to Sunday School regular and to your dear Grandpa's magic lantern lectures and don't know better than that? Why, them Churchpeople isn't much better, some of them, than the Romanists as prays to painted idols, and they reads their prayers out of books, instead of saying them proper, like a speech, which I never could find the place in them prayerbooks. Besides, the people as goes to Church are all toffs, an' 'ow would we look going up and mixing with the gentry? I wouldn't know w'ere we stand up and w'ere we sit down. You'll come along to the Mission with me to-night as usual. . . . Now, now, don't be looking blubbery like that: I didn't mean to be cross. 'Ere's a bit of my 'ome-made Everton toffee, what I 'ad saved up to surprise you with"—and Nana petted Shane until they reached the Hall.

At eight o'clock, after the usual Sunday evening service, the congregation would depart with a noisy rasping of starched linen and swishing of stiffly-ironed Sunday dresses, all save a few Earnest Social Workers, who remained to assist at the Sacred Music and Pictures Meeting for the People. It was to this meeting that Nana took Shane. Crowds of servant girls, costers and their fancies, poor children from the back streets, families from small shops that could not keep up appearances sufficiently pretentious for the "Evening Service"—in a word, masses of the proletariat—filled the little chapel. A white sheet was hung before the pulpit, and the lights were lowered to the overture of a hymn tune played on the harmonium. A lime-light design was thrown on the screen, to wit, the

word WELCOME in decorated letters. Then the Reverend Trott spoke from the foot of the sheet.

“ Dearly beloved brethren,” he said in a chanting voice, “ for I do not hesitate to call you brethren, however poor and ignorant you be: even as the Scripture says, ‘With God there is neither Jew nor Greek’ (Galatians, three and twenty-eight)”—here a large number of the congregation feverishly hunted for the reference in their Bibles by the dim light, and having found it, stuck their fingers in the opening and resumed attention to the speaker. One girl near Shane could not find “ Galatians,” and searched to and fro, getting more red and ashamed every minute. The minister, however, did not pause, and Shane picked up the thread of his speech at the point of his saying: “ in order to deepen our spiritual life and insure a measure of good things to the souls of all. It is to this end, deah friends, that our indefatigable co-worker, Mr. Pinkstone, comes here every Sunday evening to work our lantern as he alone can, and that our talented sisters in the harvest-work give so generously of the gift of song. And now” (for there was beginning a clattering of feet and chattering of tongues in the gallery) “ I will stand between you and the pictures no longer, and Mr. Pinkstone will begin by showing us some views of the Holy Land.” (Applause.)

Therewith, a view was thrown on the screen which resembled nothing that Shane could recognise until he saw that it was a group of men standing on their heads. It was withdrawn and then shown sideways to the left and sideways to the right, until, after cries of “ Good old Pinkstone” and “ Git on with it, Guv’nor,” it was at length shown right way up, displaying a missionary addressing Arabs under a

palm tree. Views of Biblical scenes were then shown, and at the end, a lady sang *There is a Green Hill Far Away*, a hymn that covered Shane with cold awe. After some pictures of the horrors of the Reformation, a "story-hymn" was sung, accompanied by a picture series. First there was a view of richly dressed children playing among the flowers :

They sang as they played in the garden,  
The children of high degree,

but one child was lame and could only look on, while through the great iron gates, a wasted child of the poor gazed hungrily in. It seemed the lame rich child and the barred-out poor one fraternised and on a tragic occasion the rich one fell into the canal and the poor one, trying to save her (or him) was also drowned. [Picture of the canal—black and gloomy between dingy black walls.] So that the souls of both went together to the real Children's Garden above :

For the ways of men are narrow  
But the gates of Heaven are wide.

The moral was excellent, but the ghastly scene of the canal was more convincing, and horror went with Shane for long weeks after hearing the song. There were other dismal songs about death and poverty, and there was a hymn, *Rock of Ages*, that was accompanied by pictures of two ladies *en deshabille* clinging to a little rock on which was a cross, set in the midst of black, raging, infinite waters. Shane wondered how they got there. There were many mixed metaphors in the words of the song. The second picture showed them staring over the calmed sea in the morning sun, and seeing no

succouring sail. Next they were rising through the clouds, with the sea distant beneath them, and the verse explained that they were soaring "through tracts unknown" only to find the rock on which they had been wrecked there before them. Shane was hopelessly puzzled, and this harping on death under miserable circumstances seemed to heap lead upon his heart. He was more interested (and so was Nana) in pictures of Two Brothers' Lives. Series No. I showed six scenes in a youth's career. He smoked a cigarette, then drank a bottle of stout ; got to playing cards among flashily-dressed folk, one of whom, a gaudy young lady, leaned over his chair, and pointed out the wrong cards to play ; he was ruined, shot the moneylender, and ended on the gallows. His brother, in Series No. II, went to Sunday School, conducted street services, and ended up in the bosom of an enormous family and the odour of sanctity. It was the life of the former that fascinated Shane and Nana most.

In the middle of this picture, a collection was taken, to which Nana contributed a penny and the nursemaid on the other side of Shane a button ; and when the Minister had said a few words on the blessings of seeing edifying pictures in place of sitting in a publichouse, the meeting rose to join in a rollicking hymn that ran :

Pull for the shore, sailor,  
Pull for the shore,  
Heed not the rolling waves,  
But pull for the shore,

dispersing simultaneously. The Rev. Trott stood at the door shaking hands with everybody. When Shane and Nana reached him, he bade them wait in

the vestibule as he "had something of importance to tell them."

Nana titivated her hair while they waited, and then the minister bustled up. "Mr. Samuel Armstrong asked me to send you both to his house if you should be present at to-night's meeting," he said. "Was it not a delightful meeting? I trust you reaped great spiritual benefit. I feel we are uplifting the people and bringing the spirit of true religion into many an arid heart. Good-night, my deah friends. Good-night."

Mr. Armstrong, Shane's maternal grandfather, was an Earnest Worker at the Mission Hall, and its principal financial supporter.

"I 'ope your grandfather 'asn't 'eard about 'ow Mariar Monk was put in the fire," said Nana. "I wonder what 'e wants us for to-night? and why wasn't 'e at the meeting same as 'e generally is?"

When they reached Beulah Lodge, a suburban villa near the Hall, Samuel Armstrong himself opened the door, and that very promptly, as if he had been anxiously waiting for their knock. He was a tall, grey man (some red lingering in the fringes of his beard), with the hard blue eyes common in the North of Ireland. The black shop-made Sunday suit sat awkwardly on him, and the detached cuffs, folded funnelwise, kept falling over his knotty hands. The frightened face of Shane's Aunt Rebecca, a thin and miserable looking woman in black, peeped over his shoulder.

When Armstrong saw who was at the door, the excitement that had glittered in his steely eyes died down. "You are welcome," he said, in his usual formula. "Wipe your boots and step into the parlour, both of you." He was almost ceremonious

in the stiffness with which he ushered them into the room and pointed Shane to a place between the glass-case of imitation fruit and the bookcase, with its *Clarke's Commentary, Faiths of the World*, and various versions of the Bible. Nana was placed directly under the portrait of Mr. Gladstone, and Samuel Armstrong seated himself in his big, hard chair with its iron-stiffened back. (He never used a soft chair.) Aunt Rebecca slipped humbly into a chair behind him, as was her wont, and folded her hands in her lap. Shane wondered what was coming.

“ . . . I don’t know oo’s told you about Mariar Monk, Mr. Armstrong, sir,” Nana began.

He turned to her. “ What about the book? Have you read it? I trust you have marked its important lessons. But it is not of that book that I wish to speak to-night. It is with you, my boy, that I am concerned.” (Shane felt a throb in his bosom.) “ I have a matter of great importance to open with you. Are you listening? ”

“ Yes, Grandpa,” said Shane.

“ Pay attention to what your grandfather tells you,” said Aunt Rebecca from behind Armstrong. “ It is all for your good.”

That phrase had an ominous sound.

“ I have pondered this matter,” Armstrong proceeded solemnly, “ with much prayer and searching of the Scriptures. I am an unlettered man, and never had the advantages of a good education like the young generation of to-day. I was sent to work in a Belfast shop at the age of seven, and if I rose to enjoy a moderate competency, like my brother, a minister of the Word in Donegal, not to us, but to Him be the glory. You may laugh at an old man’s bad grammar; but I warn you to listen to what I have to say. Are you listening? ”

“ Yes, Grandpa.”

“ Now tell me, have you or have you not been paying surreptitious visits to a person named Peter Joyce ? ”

“ What does surreptitious mean, please, Grandpa ? ”

“ Have you paid visits of any sort ? ”

“ Ye—Yes. Mr. Joyce teaches me Latin.”

“ Aa—a—a—ah ! ”—Armstrong gave a great release of breath and sat back in his chair like an advocate who has won his point in cross-examination. Then he sat up again and banged the table, saying :

“ *Those visits must cease !* ”

Anger and strange hatred were blazing in his face. “ This thing has gone farther than I expected. Teaching you Latin, was he ? I know what that was for. It was to make a Popish priest of you. That man is a Jesuit ! I knew he was a Papist, but I did not guess this.”

“ Tct ! Tct ! ” clacked Aunt Rebecca, and looked up at the ceiling with her head on one side.

Armstrong walked twice up and down the room. When he spoke again his voice was choked, and water was in his eyes, while his whole figure vibrated with emotion.

“ My boy, my boy,” he said to Shane, who was feeling mightily frightened and amazed, “ if you want to save yourself from the wiles of Jezebel, go down on your knees now, and resolve that you will have no more to do with her myrmidons. God has visited me with this trial in my old age—my two grandchildren going from me to the grasp of the adversary. But I will save them, I will save them. . . . My boy, I will wrestle for your soul as I am wrestling for your cousin’s.”

“ I hope you’re attending to your dear Grandfather’s words,” said Aunt Rebecca.

"I never did 'old with them Irish," said Nana.

Armstrong sat down before Shane. "I have brought you here to-night because I want you always to remember it. Your cousin Teresa—but you will see. Now listen. This man Joyce is an Irish Papist, and that is to say a Fenian, if you know what that means."

This was the second time Shane had heard the word outside of Old Peter's stories.

"These Fenians are plotting to overthrow England and the Protestant religion, and they are prepared to dynamite any loyal citizen who stands between them and their aims. Now, my boy, your poor father is a worldly man, and does not give proper attention to spiritual things."

"I've known him read a newspaper on a Sunday," put in Aunt Rebecca.

"He has not been duly circumspect in this matter," Armstrong proceeded, "and has allowed you to mix with strange Irish people who are working to ruin your soul. I appeal to you direct because I believe that, though tender in years, you are a sensible and well-meaning boy. I want you to promise me"—here Armstrong shook with earnestness, "that you will have no more to do with these Papists."

"Promise your Grandfather like a good boy," said Aunt Rebecca.

"I 'ope you don't lay any blame on me, Mr. Armstrong," said Nana.

Shane himself was mystified. Peter Joyce had been so kind to him that he could not understand this hostility to the old man. His eyes smarted and it was hard to keep back the tears.

"Now, my boy, you are seven years old, I believe, and you are old enough to know something about the

world. I am going," Armstrong went on, "to tell you something about your elders' affairs, in order to impress on you the serious view I take of this Irish plotting. I have suffered greatly at the hands of the Lord in the affairs of my children. Your poor mother married Robert Lambert against my wishes. Well, she is dead now, and I do not want to dwell upon a daughter's disobedience. Your Aunt Rebecca married a man whom we all thought well of, for he used to come to our week-night services regularly, but, alas! the devil can quote Scripture, and this man was but a wolf in sheep's clothing. . . ."

"He ran away and left me, the brute," said Aunt Rebecca.

" . . . And my eldest daughter, your Aunt Matilda, was my saddest trial of all—for *she* married an Irish Papist, a man named Vincent Murnane, in a registry office. I had hopes of winning him to better things, and I let them live in lodgings in this house. But I could not allow a man under my roof to do as he did when Mr. Gladstone—that good man who begins every day with prayer—denounced Mr. Parnell. I told him one day that I could allow no Parnellism here, and he said to me—straight to my face—that he would shoot Mr. Gladstone if he met him!"

"Tct! Tct!" said Aunt Rebecca, and drew a long sigh.

Here Armstrong pointed a trembling hand at the portrait of the Liberal leader.

"I never agreed with Mr. Gladstone's policy of Home Rule for Ireland," Armstrong continued, "but when he cut himself free of the Papists, I could not allow them to threaten that God-fearing man in my house. I ordered Murnane to leave it, and he went, taking my poor daughter with him, though I offered

her a home if she would choose to stay. But for the time she said, as it were, 'Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God.' Nevertheless, my prayers have not been in vain, for I am glad to say that she is now of another mind, even as the Psalmist says, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.' And to-night she is coming home to the house of her father ! . . . . That is why I brought you here. I have been expecting her all the evening and she is to bring. . . ."

"Hark!" said Aunt Rebecca.

There sounded in the distance the noise of car wheels and trotting horses with the tinkle of cab-horse bells. Aunt Rebecca stole into the hall. Armstrong followed her. Shane, left alone with Nana, ran into her arms, and sobbed on her spacious bosom. "O, what is it all about, Nana?" he asked.

"I can't say 'as 'ow I understand it all myself," she said. "But be a good boy and do as your grandfather tells you, and it will be all right."

"Don't you turn against me, too, Nana," said he. She squeezed his hand and said, "Sh, listen."

The front door had been opened, and there was a babble of voices in the hall. Shane saw Aunt Rebecca and a woman who looked in all things like her twin sister, embracing. Armstrong stood beside them with an air of triumph on his features. And behind them, hatless and dishevelled, looking tired and alarmed, was—Cousin Tessie.

Shane went forward to speak with her, and her face brightened with glad recognition. But Armstrong intervened. "This is no time for party-making," he said. "Rather should we give thanks to God that He has bared His arm in our behalf this day. Boy—remember this day, for I have plucked a soul from

the Scarlet Woman. As the Psalmist says, the net is broken and we have come free. Go you home now with your nurse, but remember what I have said."

So Shane went home with Nana, not a little bewildered, and with the memory before him of Tessie's frightened face peering out from among the group of Armstrong and his daughters.

## CHAPTER IV

### CLERIC AND ANTI-CLERIC

During the absence of Shane and Nana, Robert Lambert received two unexpected visitors. On Sundays, the shop door would be left ajar, but all the red blinds would remain drawn. Lambert, with a stove and a gas-jet, would sit in the dispensary at the end of the shop, reading. There would be a dozen or so customers in the course of the long evening wanting Teething Powders or urgent prescriptions. Occasionally passers-by would conceive a sudden desire for a box of tooth-paste, a bottle of scent, or a *cachet* for banishing moths. These would-be customers were sharply refused, with a reminder that there were other days in the week for buying frivolities. Sometimes 'Arry would call to buy glycerine jubes for 'Arriet.

The street lamp outside cast coloured rays through the three great flagons at the top of the shop window, and a band of lurid blue showed Lambert the features of old Peter Joyce. He wondered what could have brought the old man to the shop to-night, seeing, that with no trams, he must have walked the long distance from his lodgings. Something important—but what could it be?

He made Peter welcome, and invited him to be seated in the little dispensary. Talk ran on general matters for a while, and then—

“ So he’s lost the election,” remarked Old Peter.

"Ay," said Lambert. "But what chance had he?"

"He was pretty cocksure himself of winning it," said Joyce, "or let on to be. Parnell's just that sort of a man, he'll never admit defeat, but this ought to show him that his wings are clipped. I always said the clergy would wreck him as they tried to wreck us. And now they've done it, and Home Rule too. They've shown their hands."

Lambert selected and lit another cigar. "You know my way of thinking," he said.

"If it wasn't for the priests we'd have men like you with us. But I tell you I'm glad—glad—that Parnell's fallen. I was always for letting him play his hand, because I knew he and his Parliamentarianism would smash on the Church sooner or later, and the right men would get their chance then. We could never get the Protestants to stand in with us while the national movement was being run by the priests. . . ."

Lambert's cigar was out, but he did not light it.

"You talk of the priests standing in the way," he said, "and you are a Catholic. Now, I am not a Catholic. So far as I am anything I suppose I am a Church of Ireland man, and I vote with the Conservative Party at elections because they have a sound commercial policy. But I tell you that the power of the priests doesn't weigh *that* with me"—and he snapped his fingers—"in my opinion about Ireland. Why wouldn't the priests have power? The clergy will have power—and I don't care what denomination you take—just as long as the people neglect to think for themselves. When the people educate themselves the priests will no longer be the outstanding educated class, and their supremacy (what there is of it) will cease automatically. From my experience of the Catholic clergy, they're a mighty decent type of man, and I

for one have no quarrel with them. But look at my own Church. Isn't *that* priest-ridden enough without my going further afield for subjects to criticise? And look at the Presbyterians and that man Hanna. . . ."

Old Peter slapped his knee. His eyes were twinkling with delight. "Faith, you'll be an extremer man than any of us yet, Lambert," said he.

"I'm afraid not. You'll never make a Nationalist of me. It's not that I don't wish Ireland well. But what's the use of crying for the moon instead of trying to do what lies to our hand? It's not the priests, it's the English interest in Ireland, that brought Parnell down. I always knew they'd stop his flight one way or another in time to save themselves. They won't let Ireland go. . . ."

"Not till we make 'em," said Peter.

" . . . A mouse can't fight an elephant," said Lambert. "Let's get to work and *do* something. All this political hustle and bustle is just diverting the Irish people from what really lies in their power. Look how emigration goes on almost unstopped. Look at Ireland's industries closing up one after another. If I were a politician I would tell the Irish people to stop agitating in Parliament—ay, to call their members home and forget all about politics for ten years, and take to solid constructive work at home. . . ."

"I'm with you as to giving up Parliament. It's handling pitch to go there," said Peter. "But as to constructive work and industries and the rest of it: we must get our freedom first. We can do nothing without that. And we won't get it till blood is shed again." He uttered these words in the mildest and yet most resolved of tones.

"The time has gone by for that," said Lambert. "But you'll see the country will come round to my

way of thinking yet. I wish it were otherwise, but . . .” He sighed. “Perhaps I see things differently from you through being reared differently.”

“I’m not so hopeless as you, Lambert,” said Peter, “though I’m an older man, and I’ve seen more disappointments than you. I’m as sure as there’s a God above us that Ireland will be free yet. We’ve only got to keep on fighting so as to keep the spirit of the nation alive till the time comes. There’ll have to be a fight—

“ . . . *nova bella moventes*  
*Ad poenam pulchra pro libertate vocabit.*”

you know.” He was speaking softly, with the gentle smile of the scholar. But now he spoke more intensely, and repeated a sentence that he had once spoken to little Shane :

“I have dreamed it, and believe it, that *the child is born who is to free Ireland!*”

Therewith he fell silent and stared into the red heart of the stove-fire with the rapt gaze of the visionary. Lambert knew not what to say, and fell to watching the flames too, but he wore the fallen features of a man who has found no hope.

It was he who spoke first.

“Did you call to-night to talk politics with me?” he asked with an uneasy laugh.

“No,” said the old man, rousing himself. “I came here about a—a business matter. But I am glad we have had this talk. It has made me understand you—and trust you, for I see you are with us at heart, like all the good men of Ulster. And it makes it easier for me to ask a favour of you.—A friend of mine, who has just come from France, wants to meet another man about a—an affair of business. They have no common *rendezvous* of

sufficient privacy for the matter they have to discuss, and to put it in a sentence, I wanted to beg the hospitality of your roof to introduce them to each other."

"I am not sure that I rightly understand, but if I can be of any help. . . ."

"You can be every help. I merely want you to favour me by letting us use a room in this house, some day next week, for an hour's conversation in private."

"Indeed, you're welcome then," said Lambert. "You can have the back room any time you like. But it serves as kitchen, so you mustn't collide with Nana's washing-up. An earthquake wouldn't get her out of the way if she took to washing. What day would suit you ? "

"You're a good man, Lambert. Let me see. Saturday's a busy day in the shop, isn't it ? That day would suit us best. We'll come on Saturday morning when your worthy housekeeper is doing her shopping."

It was on the tip of Lambert's tongue to inquire why a *busy* day would suit Peter's friends best, when a big man who had entered the shop coughed loudly. Then the newcomer tapped on the counter. At last he cried :

"Mr. Lambert, Mr. Lambert, are you there ? "

"That sounds like an urgent prescription for you," said Joyce. "Don't let me keep you, now, from the shop." A moment later he heard Lambert's voice.

"Good-night, Father Kearney, and what good wind has blown you here to-night ? "

"Twould need a hurricane !" Father Kearney found time to say, and then, very seriously : "I have urgent business with you, Mr. Lambert, most urgent business. And it is rather a delicate matter. . . ."

Old Peter took his hat and made his way towards the door to give the two privacy.

"Good-night to you, Lambert," said he. "I am indebted to you for your courtesy. Good-night to you, sir," he said, bowing to the priest. And he went out into the night.

The priest resumed. "It is difficult, Mr. Lambert, very difficult, to ask you this question. But we are old friends and good friends, and I know you will not take it the wrong way. Now, you are, I think, the uncle of a young girl who is being educated at the Convent beyond, Teresa Murnane?"

"An uncle by marriage. But what on earth are you coming at, Father?"

"Why, that young lady disappeared from the Convent to-night!"

"Disappeared?"

"Yes." Father Kearney looked relieved, now that he had told his news. "Wait till I tell you the whole story from end to end. Now, Teresa's mother has been visiting her every month, and she came to the Convent as usual this evening. She went walking with the child in the Convent grounds. Neither of them was seen again. Mrs. Murnane might well have taken her departure without returning to the Convent to bid good-bye to Reverend Mother (for, to tell you the truth, that I daresay you could guess for yourself, they were not particularly fond of each other). When the children were assembling for night prayers the Mistress of Schools noticed Teresa's absence. Her dormitory was searched. She was not found. Her clothes were untouched, and she had not even taken a hat. This was curious whether she had left with her mother or otherwise. All inquiries failed to trace her. A message was sent to the Monastery and I at once made for the Murnanes' house at St. John's Wood. But Murnane himself was out, and Mrs. Murnane had not returned since

she left for the Convent. So I came to find out if you knew anything of the matter."

"I am as much mystified as yourself, Father Kearney," said Lambert in a concerned tone. "Mrs. Murnane has not called here and I have no word of Tessie. I don't think," he added, "that they'd be coming here anyway."

It was at this juncture that Shane and Nana arrived home. As they entered the shop a notion seemed to enter Lambert's mind, for he called Shane to him, and said :

"Did you see your grandfather at the Mission Hall to-night, Shaneen?"

"No, Dad, but I saw him at his house. And, Dad, Cousin Tessie was there. . . ."

"What!"—This was Father Kearney's exclamation. Shane shrank from the priest (remembering his grandfather's warnings) against his father's side, but the chemist's cool, strong hand about his face reassured him.

"Cousin Tessie came in a cab with a woman that Nana calls my Aunt Tilly, and Grandpa said—O, I can't remember it all—Nana, Nana, come here. . . ."

"That's enough for us," said Lambert. "Run away to Nana and get your supper.—Father Kearney," he added, when Shane had gone, "you heard that. So Mrs. Murnane has Teresa safe at Mr. Armstrong's house on the New Green Road. You can send word in the morning and make your inquiries. It's well you thought of calling in here. . . ."

But when Father Kearney called at Beulah Lodge next morning, it was only to learn that Mrs. Murnane was not in, having left with her daughter for an unnamed destination by an early train.

## CHAPTER V

### COUNCIL OF WAR ?

Shane never had occasion to tell his father of Armstrong's warning as to the Latin classes, for Old Peter was not to be found that week, and thereafter . . . . But the story will tell.

On Saturday morning, Nana went out shopping. It was a wet day, so Shane must needs stay indoors. But the rapid tide of customers in the shop kept Lambert and Todkins so busy that there was no diversion for the boy there and he wandered about the house looking for amusement. Wet days are restless days, and he got no satisfaction from mountaineering among the bales of soap in the storeroom upstairs and his favourite steam-engine needed a washer on its safety-valve, without which it could not be made to work. Shane crept along the narrow passage in the drug room with its dust-thick shelves loaded with odorous higgledy-piggledy brown-paper parcels, and so to the landing window that allowed him egress to the fanlight of his den. He was Robinson Crusoe, now, entering his cave from the rear to avoid observation by the cannibals upon the beach—and thus, with a feeling of satisfaction, he clambered neatly into the little book-recess. He had a *cache* of pilfered ginger biscuits behind a row of medical journals, with a small bottle of *syrupus limonis*, and a flask of water. With these he made a delicious and refreshing desert island meal, a copy of *Swiss Family Robinson* before him the while.

Despite his restlessness, *that* book could fascinate him enough to charm the time by, and he hardly noticed the passing of an hour before his father opened the kitchen door below him and ushered in Old Peter and a stranger, saying : "Here you are, gentlemen. This room will be at your disposal for the morning."

Old Peter's companion was a middle-aged man of military carriage and abrupt gestures. He had a red goatee beard and wore American clothes. His rapid eye travelled around the room, and he nodded, as though to dismiss his host. He did not speak.

Lambert was turning to go, when the noise of other persons coming down the passage was heard. Then Todkins appeared at the kitchen door and said :

" 'Ere's a gent 'as says 'is nime is Mr. Stewart asking for Mr. Joyce. I showed 'im strite in, Mr. Lambert."

Peering through a gap in his barrier of books, Shane saw a tall, proud man in an Ulster overcoat, enter the room. There was something so remarkable in the worn white face contrasting with a black beard, and the sad and wonderful eyes, that Shane could not take his gaze from this newcomer. But he observed that his father, as this second stranger entered, looked suddenly startled, as though he recognised some wholly unexpected personality. For a second, Lambert seemed unmanned. "Good God !" he said beneath his breath, and then went out into the passage to the shop. Old Peter introduced the two strangers, and then followed Lambert, closing the door behind him.

The two strangers stood watching each other for a few moments. Then the man with the goatee beard half-sat on the kitchen table. He began to speak slowly and deliberately : .

"I suppose, Mr.—er, Stewart, that we need not beat about the bush. You know what I stand for, and we understand each other. The last time we met was in Eighty-Three, and you know what arrangement we arrived at then. My people gave you your chance. We let you play your hand. And now the thing has happened I warned you would happen. That woman. . . ."

The tall man standing by the fire raised his hand :  
"I allow no discussion of my private affairs."

The man at the table shrugged his shoulders.

"If it wasn't her, it would be something else that would be used as the excuse to down you. But she was your weak point. If you're dealing with these pious English you mustn't be found out. That blasted old holy hypocrite knew all about your affairs and was always ready to go on the moral high horse against you. . . ."

The man at the fire placed his hat on his head.  
"This conversation has gone far enough," he said.  
"My private affairs concern only myself. I will bid you good-day." He made for the door.

The man at the table rose, and moved quickly over to the door, placing his back against it.

"Don't be so cussedly thin-skinned," he said.  
"I'll leave that subject alone. Listen to what I have to say to you. It concerns more than ourselves."

"Confine yourself to the business before us then."

"Very good, Mr.—Stewart. Now, I suppose you'll admit that yon election ended your chances."

"I admit nothing. I came here to-day to meet you, because Peter Joyce begged me to do so. He warned me that you had some sort of new scheme on hand. Well, I am ready to hear what it is."

"I would remind you, Mr. Stewart, that we are

under no obligation to tell you any of our plans. Your aims and ours are the same, and I have approached you in the hope that we may have your co-operation.”

“What do you propose to do?” The question was asked half indifferently.

“Before I answer, I must ask you how far you are prepared to go with us. Are you ready to give up your own fight? You are beaten. The English have you down, and the Bishops are on top of them. . . .”

“I don’t admit I am beaten. The Irish people will stand by me yet. I will bring my enemies to heel again as I have done before.” The man called Stewart spoke with fierceness. His hands were clenched and his figure rigid.

The man with the goatee beard shrugged his shoulders.

“You were always headstrong,” he said, “but I thought you would have realised the futility of your Movement now. Well, we must act without you. You are down, but we have given you your chance to stand in with us. It seems we must march over you. . . .”

The speaker rose as if to end the interview but this time the other restrained *him*.

“Don’t go,” he said. “I have a right, by virtue of our old understanding, to know what you propose to do. You agreed to hold your hands till I had played my policy out. I said that if I failed I would no longer stand between you and your designs. You must let me play my hand to the end. . . .”

“But how much longer do you want?” the other man asked. “We are sick of waiting. We are weakening instead of strengthening by the delay. We want action. *Action*, I tell you. This is the

psychological moment. The uselessness of your methods and the vileness of the men you were dealing with is so glaring that the country will rally to us. Listen, our plans are well laid." His voice now turned from intensity to pleading. "Stand in with us. You will bring your own followers over, and you'll save yourself from oblivion. . . ."

The man in the Ulster coat walked nervously up and down the room as though indecision had seized him. Then he stopped dead before the other.

"No," he said. "No. It's useless asking me to come over to you. If I quit political action it will be to retire absolutely from the field. You know my views about your movement. If you can do anything, God prosper you: that has always been my prayer. I never injured you or told my followers to leave you. But your movement's not mine. And I must stand or fall by the movement I made. I won't give up till they *kill* me. Give me till the Spring to win through. I'll have the country behind me once again by then."

He spoke with such passion that the other man's sour manner left him, and now he spoke with chords of gravity and friendliness in his voice:

"To do you justice you have been fair and straight with us at all times. That's why we are giving you the chance to stand in with us. We are ready for action next month. . . ."

"*Next month?*" The words were shot out with surprise and alarm.

"Yes, next month. We are sending the 'stuff' in as fast as we can—not from America this time. We are landing it in England first—Peter Joyce saw a consignment in only the other day—and sending it across under cover of merchandise. We shall be

thoroughly supplied this time, so your old objection can't stand in the way. . . .”

The man Stewart had been musing while these words were uttered. Then he said, hurriedly :

“ It's madness, *madness*, I tell you. It will end our chances for half-a-century.”

“ It will purify the country. . . .”

“ You must hold your hand,” Stewart went on, ignoring the interruption. “ Give me time, time. Give me till the Spring, just till the Spring. Do nothing till then. I'll make good yet by the Spring. . . .”

The man with the goatee beard watched the speaker with eyes narrowed to slits.

“ If—we—give—you—till—then,” he said, “ will you stand in with us ? ”

Once again the man in the Ulster coat walked nervously up and down the room.

“ *No !* ” he said. Sweat stood on his forehead as though he had been wrestling in some great struggle. “ I can't. *You* can see that. But I will do what will suit you as well. I will stand aside. If I can't make good by next April, I will resign and take my movement out of your road. But you must do nothing till then. Say you will hold your hand.”

The other man sat silent under an anxious gaze for a few moments. At last he said : “ If that is a firm promise, we will give you till the Spring, as you ask. But you must stand absolutely aside, so that your people are entirely free to come over to us. Will you promise that ? ”

“ I will. Only you must promise me to cease moving the arms.” (Shane in his den started at the word.) “ I don't ask to interfere with your affairs, but if the arms got into hasty hands they might go off of themselves.”

Shane was a thrill now, wondering what strange plotting this should be that he was overhearing. Tales coursed through his mind of how discovered spies were killed, and he crouched low in his little chamber, fearing that he would be seen and maybe executed. . . .

The man with the goatee beard was speaking :

“ I can’t myself promise anything about our movements, except that we’ll give you a free hand till April. But we won’t quarrel about details.” The speaker rose. “ I daresay you’ll see your way to stand in with us in the end.” He extended his hand. The man named Stewart gripped it and a look of cordiality passed between the two.

“ I am long enough here now,” said the man in the Ulster coat. “ I suppose you have nothing further to say to me ? ”

“ I can send you any further message through Peter Joyce. I must lie low for a week or two, for they’d give me hard law if I were spotted this side of the Atlantic. I shall ask this man Lambert (he seems to be the right sort, and he’s not a suspect, which makes his house all the safer) to let me put up here for a while. We shall meet again—when April draws near. Let me help you find your way up this dark passage. . . .” The two went groping up the passage towards the shop.

As soon as they had left the kitchen and Shane could hear their clothes swishing against the great bundles of drugs, he rose from behind his barrier of books, slipped through the fanlight, and out over the shed roof to the yard where emptied crates and heaps of cracked bottles made a wilderness in which, with elastic catapult, he was wont to stalk the cats that roved hitherward from distant gardens. He got into

a private place among the boxes and found himself trembling all over with excitement. Or was it fear? He dreaded to return to the house, lest that harsh-voiced, soldierly man should be there still and should suspect him of having spied. How was it that Old Peter, who was so gentle and sweet, should introduce a desperate character like that to his father's house? Perhaps Old Peter did not know his real character; did not know that the man that he showed into the kitchen was a man that talked of arms and plotted mysterious "action."

Shane crept along a passage between the crates and spied into the kitchen window. To his surprise, his father and Old Peter and the stranger were all there. Old Peter was pleading with Lambert, and the stranger was looking on at the two sharply. Lambert at last nodded his head as if in assent. The decision was communicated to the stranger, who then for the first time put off the overcoat he had been wearing, and sat in a chair at his ease, while Old Peter went out with the chemist.

That night the stranger slept in the house over the shop—using Shane's bedroom, while Shane slept in Nana's room. The man spoke very little, and did not go out of doors at all. He spent almost the whole day in the bedroom, reading and writing, telling Nana that he was afflicted with a cold. Shane regarded him with mingled fear and suspicion.

Nana clearly shared his sentiments. "'E's a rum 'un, so 'e is," she said, when she was putting Shane to bed. "'E talks like one of these Irish, but 'e don't be'ave like one. 'E's too quiet-like and too 'ard."

Shane told her of what he had overheard.

"Lor' love us!" she said. "I 'ope 'e ain't one

of them dynamiters. There's something wrong with 'im anyway, you mark my word."

"What shall we do, Nana?" asked Shane apprehensively.

"Well, 'e ain't likely to 'ave any dynamite with 'im, 'cause if it went off 'e'd be blown up with the rest of us. We'll be all right if we don't infuriate 'im."

And that was all the comfort Shane received before a restless night, in the course of which he heard his father pacing to and fro in the room beneath right into the morning hours.

## CHAPTER VI

### SCHISM

Next day, Sunday, Robert Lambert spent wholly in the shop, and the stranger wholly in the bedroom. Nana did not read to Shane—though they had the kitchen to themselves—as she was wont to do on Sunday afternoons during Lambert's *siesta*. The presence of the sinister stranger upstairs disturbed her peace of mind. So as soon as dinner was finished and Lambert had sent in his plate from the shop, she brilliantined Shane's hair and arrayed herself in her most crackly linens, saying :

“ We'll go to the Bible Class this afternoon at the Mission 'All, and 'ave tea with your dear grandpa.”

The services at the Mission Hall were graded in three degrees. There was the afternoon Bible Class, attended by the esoteric few who supported the hall. After tea, there was the general evening service, attended by the respectable public, and finally the People's Picture Service for the proletariat. Shane had been taken to the Bible Class once before and had enjoyed it, for although much of it had been beyond his comprehension, there had been much talk about the Prophetic Books of the Old Testament that woke in him pictures of occult happenings in Assyrian halls, and visions of a dissolving world yielding place to the fair fields of Heaven. His anticipations of an enjoyable afternoon were quickened by the thought, too, that maybe he would meet Tessie Murnane again.

They reached the Hall early. Little groups here and there were gossiping, and a boy sitting near Shane boasted that his Bible had more maps at the back of it than Shane's. Shane's, however, had a ground plan of the old Temple, as well as maps, and some pictures of Egyptian mummies, and the skull of Rameses. The other boy's had red-under-gold edges and an overhanging morocco cover. Shane's on the other hand, had cross-references and some white pages for writing in family records. The other boy could recite the titles of the books of the Old Testament in correct order, and the titles of the New Testament too, except for the epistles of Saint Paul. Here Shane had to admit himself excelled as he could only go as far as Ruth himself, and the other boy turned up his nose in the style of Albert Edward Fitzgerald. By this time, the hall was filling up and Samuel Armstrong entered. He proceeded to his place in the front row of seats, followed by his two daughters, who seated themselves on each side of him, turned their veils over their noses and placed their right hands to their brows, elbows on knees, for ten seconds. There was, to Shane's great disappointment, no sign of Tessie. Finally, the Reverend Trott took a chair below the pulpit, smiled around the hall in breezy bedside manner, and began to hunt through his notes while a hymn was sung by the seated gathering.

Then the Reverend Trott rose. Little V's of benignity formed at the corners of his eyes as he beamed on the gathering. "Deah Brethren," he said, speaking in his throat and intoning the words, "before we begin our studies in the Holy Writ this afternoon, I want to tell you that it has come to my knowledge that a great blessing has descended on one

of our households since we last met. Our dear and respected brother, Mr. Samuel Armstrong, has received liberally of the Laird's favour. I need not remark to you that our worthy co-labourer deserves richly of Heaven. Without him I think I may justly say, the mighty work for souls in which we are privileged to participate at this Hall, could not go on. Who is the man to whose generosity this great work is due? I answer, Mr. Samuel Armstrong." ["Hear, hear," "Praise the Lord," "Amen," "Hallelujah."] "I say then, dear friends, that we rejoice in our generous and righteous friend's happiness." He looked across to Armstrong, who slowly nodded three times.

"I am but betraying an open secret," the speaker went on, "when I tell you in what way our brother's work has been prospered. He has, since we last met, saved a young damsel from the Dragon of Rome." ["Hallelujah," "Glory be."] "Doubly blessed is this work to him, in that the damsel is his granddaughter, a sweet child (inheriting much of her grandfather's high qualities) on whom the Adversary had sought to set his seal."

Shane gathered that the preacher was alluding to Cousin Tessie. He looked towards his Aunts. Aunt Rebecca sat bolt upright, meeting the eyes of the gathering with proud returned-gaze. Aunt Matilda was dabbing at *her* eyes with a little piece of cambric.

"I will ask you, brethren," the speaker concluded, "to stand for a moment as a mark of our sympathy with Mr. Armstrong."

All present rose to their feet, and Armstrong, stepping forward beside the Reverend Trott, raised his hand as in benediction, and uttered a prayer in a voice full of tears. The gathering then sat down, in a chorus of Amens, and a flutter of opened Bibles.

"Now, friends," said the Reverend Trott from his armchair, briskly, "let us resume our study of the First Epistle of Saint John, the Fifth Chapter. The brother in the first seat will read the first verse, the sister in the second seat the second, and so on, as usual."

So Saint John's beautiful words were read, and then the class settled down to the discussion, verse by verse.

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous." Reverend Trott read the verse, and then : "What do we think upon this verse, deah brethren ?" said he, swinging his glasses on their cord.

Mr. Pinkstone, a consumptive young man prematurely aged, pointed out that the prophet Micah (Six and Eight) provided elucidation in a parallel passage, which he read. "How are we to keep God's commandments ?" he asked. "How but by doing as the Prophet tells us ? We may derive from this the lesson that sacraments and ordinances are the vain invention of man." Another speaker, however, was of opinion that "to live justly, etc.," was a vague command. Ordinances were necessary to man in his present state. He appealed to Reverend Trott.

Reverend Trott appealed to Samuel Armstrong, who, it seemed, was unwontedly silent. Armstrong nodded : "I have nothing to say on the present text. I shall give a few Thoughts later."

All this was too abstract to hold Shane's attention. His eyes wandered around the walls and fastened on a picture showing the four great world-empires, with what appeared to be a map or sectional diagram of the end of the world. In it, a rectangular city between hills was collapsing in sectors, and red fire was rising

in geometrical figures for the engulfing of a queerly-dressed man with three crowns on a white hat. A note below the design said that it had been drawn in strict accord with directions in the Scriptures, but Shane could recall no such detailed account of the coming destruction. He hoped it would not come to pass in his days. But now another member of the study class was reading out verses for consideration :

*“For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the World, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. . . .”*

The tremulous voice of the woman reader was broken by Samuel Armstrong's loudly uttered : “NO !”

The class fluttered with surprise. Armstrong turned in his seat to face the gathering. His manner was more than usually assertive. “Those words are SPURIOUS !” he said, and paused to watch the effect of his declaration.

Looks fluttered from him to the Reverend Trott, who was as surprised as any present, and nervous.

“W-will our brother please explain ?” he asked, trying in vain to make his glasses stay in their place.

“Yes,” said Armstrong, putting a deep breath into the word. “I will. . . . Now, Mr. Trott and brethren, I want to tell you that we have all been dwelling in error. We have been believing and spreading Trinitarian doctrine in this hall for the past ten years. This week, I have graciously been permitted to see our error. This verse, dear Brethren, is not to be found in any of the Greek MSS. written before the fifteenth century. It appears only after the fifth century in the Vulgate and the African Fathers. What does this tell us ? Why, that it was inserted by the Romanists to bolster up their religion. . . .”

"Do we understand, Brother," interrupted the Reverend Trott, "that you attribute the doctrine of the Trinity to the Romanists?"

"*Certainly!*" said Armstrong. The gathering stirred with amazement. Mr. Pinkstone was first to find his tongue.

"You are a Copasite!" he almost shouted. "You have been reading the tracts written by that man Copas!"

"I have, young man, I have," said Armstrong. "I am not ashamed to light my torch at any man's candle and I am grateful to Sampson T. Copas for guiding me to the truth."

"I suppose you have brought some of his tracts with you to convert us," said Pinkstone.

"Hsh, gently, brother," said the Reverend Trott in a purring voice. "Brother Armstrong, I am sure we all have an open mind and will consider what you have to tell us prayerfully and hopefully."

"I protest against the propagation of unsound doctrines in this Hall," said Mr. Pinkstone, standing up and pointing his Bible, in which one finger was stuck, at the chairman with a Cassandra-like gesture. "I demand that this be stopped at once, or I shall retire from this hall and shake the dust of its portals from my sandals, writing *Ichabod* upon the lintels thereof."

Hubbub ensued. The Reverend Trott looked to and fro anxiously, but Samuel Armstrong sat unmoved as a rock. "Brother Armstrong," he faltered, "we shall hear what you have to say. . . ."

At this Mr. Pinkstone, followed by a dozen men and women, ostentatiously walked out of the Hall and began to form a meeting at the corner of the street. When the noise had fallen to the distant sound of

Mr. Pinkstone's voice afar off, Samuel Armstrong crossed his left over his right leg instead of his right over his left, and taking a breath, began to deliver a summary of Sampson T. Copas's tract, *The Truth about the Trinity*.

"I am not a Greek scholar," he said; "I am a poor uneducated man who made his way without any schooling, and I can only tell you what Brother Copas has gleaned from the best Greek scholars. Praise the Lord, we have the Bible in our own tongue, thanks to the overthrow of the Papists, but to understand this question, we have to go to the original. . . ."

Shane found it impossible to understand the disquisition on versions and Septuagints, Codices, Vulgates, etc., etc., that followed. He saw the Reverend Trott nodding his head like a China Mandarin's, at the end of each of Samuel Armstrong's sentences. The V's at the reverend chairman's eyes grew wider and wider, and his dangled glasses swung more and more twistily . . . and Shane was asleep.

When he woke up, Nana was shaking him by the elbow and offering him a cup of tea. The hall was nearly empty, but the Reverend Trott and a little group of the Mission's chief supporters, were standing apart taking refreshment in preparation for the evening service. Samuel Armstrong was saying to the preacher :

"I am most highly gratified at the receptive and humble spirit in which you have heard what I have to impart."

"Yes, brother," said the Reverend Trott, "and I trust you will immediately supply me with some of Mr. Copas's literature so that I may study the points that you have summarised with (I may say) great lucidity, and illustrated from your great familiarity

with the Holy Scriptures. (Thank you, Sister, another cup if you please.)”

“I will certainly supply you with the tracts,” said Armstrong, “for I feel sure that the spirit of truth will bring you to see eye-to-eye with Brother Copas and myself. As regards what you were saying about the Hall, you need have no fear. I shall not desert the Lord’s work in this place if you can see your way to continue in the path with me, and I shall write out my usual subscription if I am assured that the truth will be preached here in the future as it was, according to our lights, in the past.”

“Thank you, thank you, dear brother,” said the missioner, putting on his glasses (they stayed on this time at last). He rubbed his hands. “I hope your tea is to your liking. Ha! your bonny little grandson, I perceive” (noticing Shane). “Truly the Lord has blessed you. ‘You shall see your children’s children and peace upon Israel,’ says the Psalmist.”

Samuel Armstrong turned his eyes on Shane, “Come here, boy,” said he. Shane grabbed a piece of cake and advanced.

“Well, my boy,” said Armstrong, “I trust you profited by this afternoon’s study. And by the way, have you seen that man Joyce again since I warned you against him?”

“Yes, grandpa, once. . . .”

“*Hwat?*”

“Don’t be angry, Mr. Armstrong, sir,” said Nana, at this point. “‘E obeyed you and didn’t go to get his what-you-may-call-it lessons.”

“But how did the child come to meet that dynamiter again?”

“‘E called at the ‘ouse, sir,” said Nana, with a gesture between a bow and a jerk.

“What for?” thundered Armstrong.

"Visiting Mr. Lambert, if you please, sir," said Nana. "'And sonny wasn't speaking to 'im at all, sir. 'E only over'eard 'im. And there was rum goings on, too, sir," she added, jerking her head significantly.

"Proceed, woman. What was it that came to pass?"

"Sonny could tell you better than myself, sir. We 'aven't felt safe since it 'appened, not knowing wot moment was going to be our next. Tell your grandpa all that 'appened yesterday, sonny."

Searched by Armstrong's steely eyes, Shane faltered out his story of the conference in his father's kitchen.

"The man in the big coat," asked Armstrong, "what was his name?"

"They called him Stewart, grandpa," said Shane. "I didn't hear the other man's name—the man that's staying at the house."

"I arst 'im 'is name," said Nana, "when I took 'im 'is dinner, and 'e said I might call 'im Mr. Murphy."

"H'm, a likely name to be assumed," commented Armstrong. He meditated. "I must think over this," he said. "Are you two staying to the evening service? You had better do so." When Armstrong said "*better do so*," it was a command. "I will tell you what to do after the service," he added. And he went off to advise the Reverend Trott that the evening service was to be strictly non-Trinitarian.

Shane found the evening service as dry as that of the afternoon. There were readings from the Old Testament and the New, hymns and a sermon on the text, "The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart." He was puzzled a little by the action of his grandfather. The Reverend Trott was concluding the Old Testament chapter :

Wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts ?  
Give us help from trouble :  
For vain is the help of man.  
Through God we shall do valiantly  
For he it is that shall tread down our enemies.

He closed the great book on the velvet lectern.  
"Here endeth the First Lesson ; may God bless to  
us the reading of His word. Let us now sing together  
hymn No. 367 (Old Hundredth)."

Samuel Armstrong, who had been musing during  
this, suddenly rose and before the harmonium gave  
the signal to the congregation to rise, made his way  
out of the Hall. His face was set as though he had  
come to some weighty resolve.

## CHAPTER VII

### INFORMER ?

Shane was glad when the long service ended, but a sinking feeling succeeded when he remembered the sinister stranger at home. Tired as he was, therefore, he persuaded Nana to stay on for the Picture Service. There was no Mr. Pinkstone to work the lantern. The Reverend Trott explained that Mr. Pinkstone had a cold.

"No, 'e ain't, 'e's got the 'ump," shouted a democrat from the gallery, who had seen Mr. Pinkstone at the street corner in the afternoon. "Give us a sing-song if you ain't got no pictures," shouted another. So the service proceeded with music and songs alone.

When Nana and Shane went home at last, lights were appearing in the upstairs windows of the houses and the streets were falling silent. A man was standing under the lamp-post opposite the Drug Stores, his face in the shadow of a Trilby hat. He scrutinised the two as Nana opened the door with her key.

"Wot's 'e up to, I wonder?" she asked.

In the dark shop the last fumes of a cigar mixed with the odour of drugs and scented soaps, so that Nana judged that Lambert had only just returned to the kitchen. Shane clung close to her as they felt their way to the passage door. They were surprised to hear a clatter of heavy footsteps come down the

quiet street, and stop abruptly outside the shop, while a hoarse voice barked out what seemed to be an order. Steps again, and a loud knocking sounded at the door.

"Lor' bless us," said Nana, "wot's up?"

"Don't leave me, Nana!" cried Shane, as she moved to the red-blinded door, and opened. He saw by the street lamp light three men in plain clothes, who wore them awkwardly upon their big bodies, and beyond them, two uniformed police.

"Acting on information received," said the foremost man, "I have orders to enter this house and search it for the person of a fugitive from justice believed to be hiding here. Stand aside, my good woman."

As Nana afterwards said, she was too flabbergasted to make any reply, and the three plain clothes men and one policeman marched in, their heavy boots creaking loudly. The policeman was posted at the foot of the stairs, with the kitchen door behind him, and the three others, using his bull's-eye lantern, tramped up the stairs.

Nana and Shane stood trembling in the shop. Lambert came out from the kitchen asking what was the meaning of this intrusion. His face bore marks of alarm. The policeman barred him from the stairs, and repeated what the plain clothes man had said to Nana.

"Speaking for myself, sir," he said, "we all know you ain't any way complicated in the affair. You wouldn't 'arbour a criminal knowingly, and the 'tecs won't trouble *you*, you'll see. Don't be alarmed, sir. Just let 'em do their dooty."

It was at this moment that the noise of a banged-open door was heard from upstairs, followed by a

shout and angry voices in a Babel, with the thudding and thumping of a struggle and—in sharp succession—two reverberating pistol-shots and a scream.

“Let me pass,” breathed Lambert, making for the stairs.

“Stand where you are, sir,” said the policeman, “something serious is transpiring.”

In the shop, Nana collapsed into a chair by the counter, as if a bullet had hit her. She beat her bosom with the palm of her hand, panting, “Oh ! Oh ! Oh !” while her head rolled backward and forward from one side to the other. Shane whimpered and crouched in beside her.

The noise of the struggle upstairs now grew less violent, and those below could hear fierce deep gasps, like those of a hunted animal at bay. Orders were shouted. “Hold down that arm !”—“Keep him from the window ! (Damn it, he’s bitten me to the bone !)”—“Tie that leg now : truss him up.”—“That’s got him. Here, you, tie up that hand of yours and go for an ambulance to get him away in.”

One of the men, his collar torn, his face bruised, and his hand tied in red-tinged cloth, passed down-stairs and out of the shop. A crowd was gathering, and, roused by the shots, people were standing at the doors of the other shops. To enquiries as to what was happening, the policeman at the door was answering that he “was not aware that anything was transpiring.” In a few moments the ambulance arrived, and the plain clothes man returned. He went upstairs, and he and his comrades began to bring their prisoner down.

They had the man with the goatee beard tied hand and foot in such a way that he could not move without agony. He was half-dressed, and the front

of his shirt was soaked with blood—a rough bandage running from neck to armpit, showed the wound to be in the lung. He was coughing and panting as he was carried down on his captors' shoulders.

When they reached the foot of the stairs, the wounded man writhed his head round to face Robert Lambert.

“ ‘Twas *you* brought me to this ! ” he shouted. “ I mistrusted you from the start. . . . You have the bad blood in you. Curse you for the blackest informer yet. . . .” He struggled for breath. “ But I’ll not go back . . . to their prisons. This in my . . . in my lung’ll save me . . . from that. . . .”

The man with the Trilby hat struck him in the mouth ere Lambert could intervene, and growled : “ Keep your mouth closed, will you.” And they carried him into the shop, strapping him there on to a stretcher before they took him into the street. Shane screamed as the rolling bloodshot eyes fell for a moment on his frightened self.

In the street the crowd had grown to a crushing mass, and heaved to and fro in the effort to get a glimpse of the centre of the sensation. Just before the stretcher was thrust into the brown hood of the ambulance, the bound man shouted, as if with his last breath :

“ Remember Robert Lambert—informer, informer ! Ah-h-h-h ! ”

“ Is ‘e a burglar ? ” asked someone in the first line of the crowd as the ambulance was closed and the police began to wheel it away. “ P’raps ‘e’s a hanarchist,” shouted another voice. Then from somewhere the cry went up that the prisoner was a Fenian, and there were howls of animal fury. To and fro the mass of people swayed, falling in behind

the ambulance. But ere the crowd had left the frontage of Robert Lambert's shop, a big stone, hurled from an unknown hand, crashed through the plate glass with a ringing and splintering noise, and smashed into a shelf of bottles just above little Shane's head. A deluge of broken glass and .88 Ammonia fell to the floor.

The pungent smell roused Nana, who lifted Shane completely off his feet and hugged him to her bosom, carrying him into the kitchen.

"Never mind, sonny," she said. "There's no need to be afraid now. They've got 'im safe and there's a Bobby on duty at the door."

"But, O, Nana," cried Shane. "Why did they smash the window? What has Dad done to make them angry?"

"What's that?" asked Lambert, whose face was ashen in hue. "What did they do?"

"Someone broke a window in the shop, Mr. Lambert, sir," said Nana. "It might 'ave been a haccident."

"O God," said Lambert, as if speaking to himself —"do they believe him?—do they believe him?" and he went out muttering like a demented man.

Two days later there was a paragraph in the paper that Shane noticed his father to have read during breakfast (Lambert took little more than a cup of strong tea) with agitated interest.

#### MYSTERIOUS SHOOTING AFFAIR FATALITY FOLLOWS ALLEGED ANARCHIST'S ARREST

An unknown man who succumbed to a bullet-wound yesterday in the Hollogate Infirmary was arrested by the police the previous evening at the establishment of a well-known North London chemist, on a charge which is not

announced. It is stated that he fired once at the police, but seeing them to be too many for him turned his weapon upon himself. It is rumoured that he was a Continental Anarchist whom the police had been wanting for some time past on a charge connected with a certain East End mystery. This cannot, however, be verified, as the police are reticent.

Shane read this with much puzzling, but when he asked Nana for an explanation, she, like the police, was reticent—and he dared not question his father, who was in a morose mood. A curious change came over Robert Lambert. He spent longer hours than ever before behind his counter—stayed up nightly till the small hours, and rose again before sunrise. He ate little and talked not at all, resigning Shane wholly to Nana's company. When Bank Holiday came, instead of taking Shane to the seaside, he merely gave Nana half-a-crown to take him to Hampstead Heath, and himself stayed in the shop. When Shane came home in the evening, after Nana had gone through to the kitchen, he himself looked for his father to thank him for the day. He noticed that his father, who was at the dispensary end of the shop, hastily shuffled some bottles. The chemist looked strangely at his son as though not recognising him, and then said sharply: "Get inside, get to your bed. This is no time for you to be up." He had never spoken so abruptly to the boy before.

Todkins and Nana were gossiping when Shane reached the kitchen.

"Was 'e taking 'em again to-day?" she was asking.

"All dye long," said Todkins, "and they make 'im so ratty that there's no pleasing 'im. Wot's come over 'im at all?"

"'E ain't been the same since that shooting, so 'e ain't," said Nana, "but w'y should 'e take it to 'eart, I ask you?"

" Do you know," said Todkins, " I b'lieve that anarchist chap was one of these Hirish—that's wot I believe. 'Cos w'y : all them Hirish as used to come into the shop 'ave stopped coming ever since. Not as 'ow that ought to upset 'im, seeing they never bought anything but penny packets, they're that poor."

" You—mark—my—words," said Nana, "*there's something be'ind all this.*"

" Well, I 'ope 'e'll come to 'issel soon," said Todkins, "'cos I've 'eard of some as killed 'emselves like that. There was a chemixt at Hislington. . . ."

" Hullo, you young bundle of mischief," cried Nana, noticing Shane, " what are you listening to here? . . ."

In the days that followed, Lambert's health grew rapidly worse. One night, after being more short than usual with Shane, so that the boy lay awake, wretched and half-frightened, he did not retire at all, but spent the hours till dawn between the kitchen and the dispensary. A cold, grey dawn broke—wet and chill—and Shane, as things grew clearer to his eyes, heard the sound of a fall in the passage below, and lay trembling in his bed. In the morning when Nana came down, Lambert was dozing in the kitchen basket-chair, his clothes all disturbed and dusty. She looked closely at his red and swollen face, and shook her head. In a couple of days, he was confined to his room with a violent cold. In the night again he rose and went to the dispensary—with a flaming temperature. Next day he was worse, and the doctor, called in by Nana against the chemist's will, looked grave, and said : " Pneumonia."

In three days, Lambert was reduced to a quaking skeleton, fighting for breath. Aunt Rebecca and

Aunt Matilda came and took turns in watching him, much against Nana's will. "I'll take no responsibility if anything 'appens," said Nana. "I know 'is ways better than anyone." But Samuel Armstrong insisted, and Nana was overruled. She appealed, indeed, to Lambert himself, but the sick man could only gesticulate with his wasted brown hand. Samuel Armstrong spent two hours in the sick-room each evening reading aloud from the Bible and Sampson T. Copas's tracts, *All Damned Save the Chosen Few*, and *Are Death Bed Repentances Valid?* (the tract's verdict was, Probably not).

Lambert paid little heed to the readings. He tossed wearily from side to side on his tumbled bed. Shane heard him moaning, between his rattling breaths, "Informer, informer . . . they think I am an informer. . . ." Once Lambert's fevered gaze fell on the boy: "Come here, come here," he breathed.

Shane went to the bedside, and his father caressed him with those lean hands. "Sonny-bunny," he said, "be a—be a good man. I am sorry—sorry I was cross with you lately."

And then Shane knew that his father was dying. Aunt Matilda heard the words, and knew that Lambert was aware of his approaching end.

"Stand aside, boy," she said. "Don't trouble your poor father. Can't you see he wants more air?" And she went forward to re-arrange the sick man's pillows, disentwining Shane's arm from his father's neck.

"Is there anything you have on your mind, Robert?" she asked in a business-like way. "Shall I call my father to you?"

The figure on the bed tossed violently, and between hard-drawn breaths, Lambert said: "Find a—find a

messenger. Send to Father Kearney. Tell him—tell him I want to see him. . . .”

“*Father Kearney* indeed! And what do you want to see a Roman Catholic priest for, Robert?” asked Aunt Matilda in a shocked tone. “And it was that man that tried to find out where I had taken my daughter Teresa to, when I had her safely in the Girls’ Home down in the country. Indeed I will do nothing of the sort, Robert. I think your mind must be weakening at the end for you to suggest such a thing. I will go and tell my dear father to come to you.” She flounced out of the room.

Lambert at once drew Shane close to him. “Don’t believe them, sonny-bunny,” he said, “if they ever tell you that . . . your father was an informer. Tell Father Kearney to say to the people . . . to say to them that I didn’t inform. . . . Go to him, sonny, when you can. He’ll tell you how to live so that . . . so that you won’t die the way I’m dying . . . all deserted here. . . .”

“But you’re not going to die, Father,” Shane cried desperately.

“Yes, I am, sonny. I know a—a fatal case. I’m going. Remember about Father Kearney. We had good times together, hadn’t we, sonny?—at Southend on the holidays. . . . I’m sorry I didn’t make you happier. . . . I wonder if I’ll meet your mother? . . . God have mercy on me . . . a sinner.”

Samuel Armstrong entered the room.

“Lambert,” he said, “I hear that you have been asking to see a Romanist priest. I am surprised and disappointed. I shall consent to no such thing as to allow a Papist with his holy water and scapulars, to take advantage of your reduced state. Now, I want to speak to you about your will. . . .”

But Lambert, as if stirred to anger by Armstrong's tone, sat bolt upright in the bed, and then fell back with a choking noise in his throat. Armstrong ran to him.

"Say you are repentant for your lifelong rebellion against the truth," he said.

"Let—me—be," ejaculated Lambert. "God. . . ."

Shane hid his eyes in his hands, and tried to close his ears with his thumbs to the dreadful noise. . . . Suddenly there was silence. He felt a hand on his head and saw his grandfather looking down with almost a sympathetic expression.

"You are an orphan now, my boy," he said. "The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away. . . ."

In the corridor Nana was sobbing into her print apron as if her heart would burst. Aunt Rebecca and Aunt Matilda hurried into the room, and making for the white thing on the bed, zestfully set about their grim task. . . .

Samuel Armstrong took Shane out to a cemetery in the country to decide on a grave. A little man in ostentatious black, and with the same breezy manner as the Reverend Trott, showed them to the unconsecrated section of the grounds, and explained to Shane, with a cheery smile, how pneumonia carried off its victims. He wound his right hand round his black-gloved left, saying that the phlegm wound itself in that way round the dying person's lungs. . . . Armstrong decided on a grave in which a suicide and an unknown foreigner had already been buried.

Shane was driven to the funeral in a carriage with his aunts and grandfather. Todkins and Nana came to it in Todkins' father's donkey-car. This little group shivered at the graveside as the remains were

laid to rest. A few yards back, Peter Joyce and two elderly men of upright carriage like his own, stood bareheaded, having arrived Shane knew not how. When Shane looked at Peter the old man smiled kind recognition and sympathy. By Armstrong's instructions there was no religious ceremony.

After the funeral, Armstrong returned to the closed Drug Stores, and dismissed Nana and Todkins. There was a busy day unlocking boxes and searching papers. Finally Armstrong closed up the premises and took Shane to Beulah Lodge.

"This is to be your home now, boy," he said after supper. "You have now entered on a new phase in your life, in which I trust you will learn to follow truth and hate iniquity. Cut yourself from the ungodly past, and if ever you are tempted to think of the worldly life to which your poor father would have led you, remember the fate of Lot's wife, who looked back upon the burning Sodom and Gomorrha. Let us close the day by reading the Word of God together."

Aunt Matilda put aside her knitting and closed her eyes—Shane wondered whether she was sleeping or not—and Aunt Rebecca nudged him, saying: "Pay attention to the holy book." Then, shading his eyes from the porcelain lamp, Samuel Armstrong feelingly read forth the lines :

By the waters of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.

For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song, and they that had wasted us required of us mirth, saying Sing us one of the songs of Zion;

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of

Jerusalem, who said ; Rase it, rase it, even to the foundations thereof.

O daughter of Babylon who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be who shall reward thee as thou hast served us.

Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

And from the New Testament he read :

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held :

And they cried with a loud voice, saying : How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ?

And white robes were given unto every one of them ; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

“ Are you listening, boy ? ” asked Aunt Rebecca  
“ Isn’t it nice ? ” Shane had been distracted by a  
little snore from Aunt Tilly. Armstrong’s voice  
rolled on :

. . . After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands ;

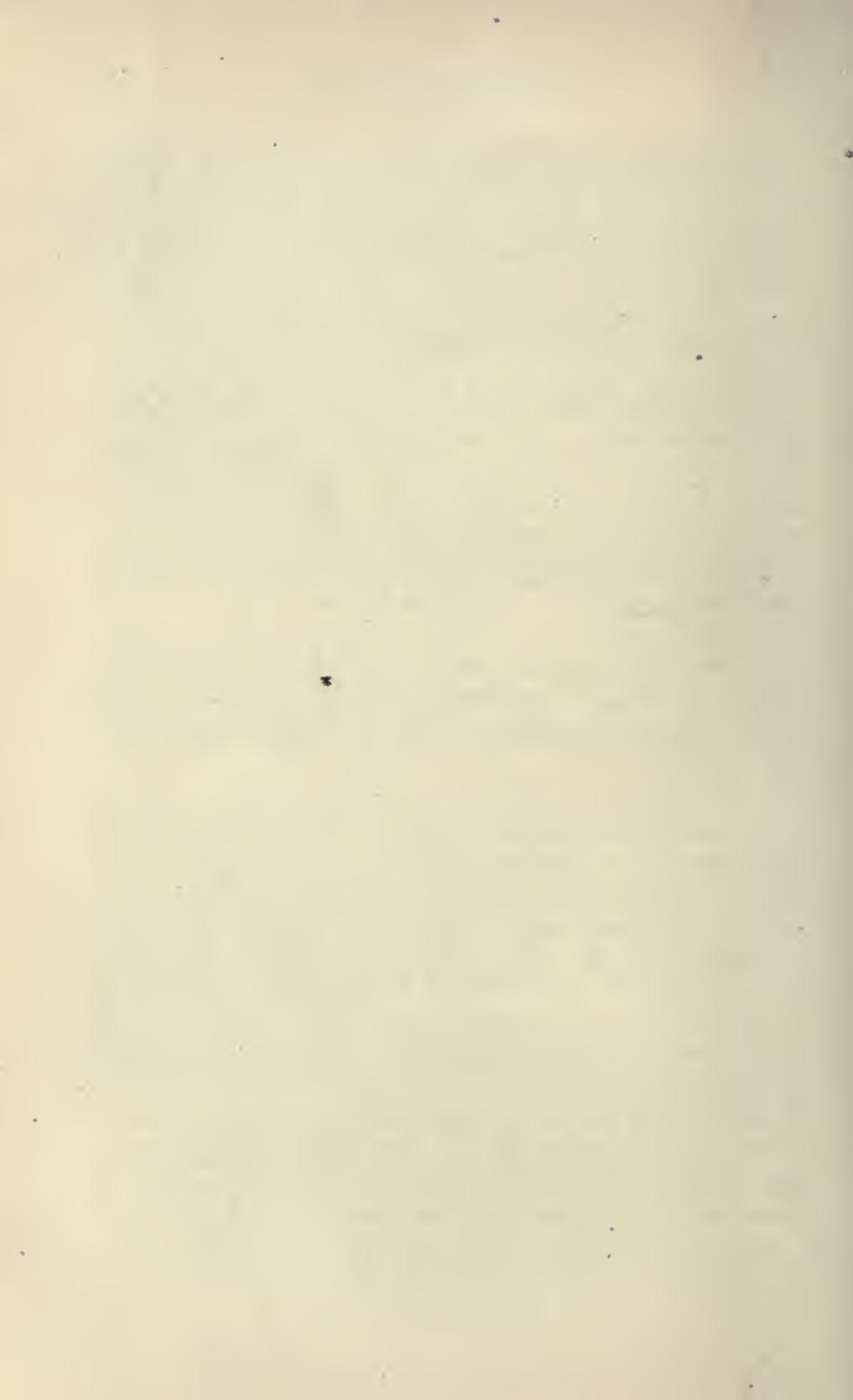
And cried with a loud voice, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? And whence come they ?

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.



## BOOK II—*IN VIA*

### CHAPTER I

#### THE WATCHER IN THE WOODS

Shane's twenty-first birthday fell on a Sunday, He came down to breakfast wondering whether anybody would give him the day's greeting. Armstrong presided at the table-head, facing Aunt Rebecca, who dispensed the tea. Aunt Matilda and Cousin Tessie (who had now been one of the household for some years) sat opposite to him. Nobody said more than the usual "Good-Morning," but Tessie lightly kicked his foot under the table, and as she bent over her egg, shot a glance at him through her eyelashes which cheered him. He was asking himself what point of doctrine or ecclesiastical history his grandfather would expound at that meal: it proved to be The Second Coming. After a reference\* to Dean Farrar's book, *Eternal Hope* (what a pity it had been that the Dean could not see his way to come outside that Daughter of Rome, the Established Church), and to the dexterity with which the author had "bowled out" the advocates of orthodoxy by a reference to the Septuagint (or the "Seventy"), Armstrong went on to prophesy of the time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation that shortly must engulf the world,—as Brother Copas had proved in his book on the Time Prophecies. "Then," he said, "then will the empires of this world be overthrown,

and their armies and navies be brought to nought. Then shall God use the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. Look to it, you young folk, I shall not live to see that dreadful day, but you will go through it all. And when you see the Jews go back to their land and Jerusalem built up once more as the capital of the nation, remember what I have told you in advance. . . .”

There was a rattle at the letter-box, like the pushing in of a post ; but as this was Sunday it must be a message delivered by hand. Aunt Rebecca slipped into the hall and brought in an unstamped envelope, the back and front of which she examined closely, for it was her custom thus to inspect the post before it was delivered. “ *Mister shon lamburt* ” was the name on the envelope. As Shane broke the seal, Armstrong ceased talking, and all at table watched him. “ Who is it from ? ” Armstrong asked. No private letters were allowed in his household.

Shane was gazing at a gaudy crimson-and-gold tinselled card, bedecked with coloured birds and flowers and musical instruments, all, apparently, dancing with joy. The words “ Many Happy Returns ” were blazoned from corner to corner, and on the back a spluttering pen had written : “ *To dere master shon his 20-first berthday with love from nana god bless him x x x.* ”

There was no address on the card to indicate the sender’s whereabouts. Shane had not seen nor heard of Nana since the day of his father’s funeral, and this message, with the remembrance it implied, roused in him something between laughter and tears. He mutely handed the card over to his aunt’s extended hand. It was passed to Armstrong, who put on his glasses to study it.

"Have you had any other communication with this woman?" Armstrong asked commandingly, looking over his glasses at Shane, while Aunt Tilly peeped furtively at the card and signalled to Aunt Rebecca.

"It is the first I have heard of poor Nana for twelve years," said Shane.

"'M," said Armstrong, "I hope you are telling the truth. In any case, a young man of your upbringing should not be thinking of such worldly vanities as birthdays."

"Aunt Matilda leaned forward. "That woman came from *a Home*," she said, and leaned back, pursing her lips.

Shane did not understand.

"You are old enough to know about these things," said Armstrong. "The woman that you call Nana was taken by your father from a Home for unknown orphans—nobody knows who her father was. I strongly protested against such a person being brought into your mother's house. As was to be expected, she was never more than lukewarm in her religion, and I dismissed her at your father's death. I believe she found some relative of her unfortunate mother's to live with. . . . Her relationship with him was most obscure. Most obscure. . . ."

"Tct! Tct!" said Aunt Rebecca.

" . . . So you see," Armstrong concluded, while Shane's mind was revolving the suggestion in his last words, "my fears as to that woman's soul were unhappily borne out."

After breakfast, Armstrong filled his pockets with bundles of tracts and bade Shane join him.

"We'll do all the houses in Oakley Road and Addington Road to-day," he said. "I'll do the even number side and you take the odd."

Tessie found a moment to corner Shane privately. She thrust a leather purse into his hand. "A birthday present," she whispered with a little laugh. He wondered how she had been able to get it for him. The price of butter had fallen twopence three weeks before, and Tessie had pocketed the coppers on all the butter she had been sent to buy in the interval, not announcing the reduction in price till she had a shilling saved.

"Don't let them see it," she said in Shane's ear, "or they'll ask you where you got it. I'm glad you're going delivering tracts this morning."

"Why?" asked Shane. "I can tell you I'm *not*. Sometimes the people tell me to go away, and sometimes they ask me questions about the tracts, and I'm not good at explaining like grandfather."

"Poor boy!" said Tessie. "But if you're out with tracts in the morning, you'll only have to go to chapel in the evening, and I have to go to morning service, so we'll have some of the evening together."

When Armstrong and his daughters went to Sampson Copas's great meetings in the City, Shane would be told to go to the Baptist chapel, and Tessie would mind house, going to meet him midway in the Queen's Woods on the way home after the party from Mr. Copas's meeting had returned. The Baptists, it was true, taught Trinitarian doctrine, and were held by Armstrong to be granddaughters of Rome, but Shane must go to *some* place of worship, and the Reverend White was at least evangelical.

The sun was setting and the green woods were shot through with golden rays, when Shane, lying on the grass looked up from "*Hé Kainé Diathéke*," the

Greek Testament that he had been reading. The cloud-broken sky overhead was like blue marble with white stains ; the green fretwork of branches against the low red west was like a wall of glorified sardonyx, he thought, and for a moment he dreamed that this calm, cool nature was the very Temple of the Lamb of which he had just been reading. The music of birds was in the still air, and the tinkle of a little stream that glittered through the grasses. The noisy city beyond was to-day fallen quiet. The Sabbath calm of the book he had been reading seemed here over all. By his grandfather's wish, he had learnt enough Greek to read his Testament. He loved best to linger with Saint John, and thrilled as he read :

And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it. . . . And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day : for there shall be no night there. . . .

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth : for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea.

. . . And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. . . .

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

He did not know why these passages filled him with a strange interior serenity, but it was good to read them at the sunset calm.

Looking up, impelled by that odd consciousness of being watched, Shane noticed on the brink of the hill above him, the figure of a man leaning on a walking stick and looking down with a half-expectant look. He was too far away for Shane to judge more

of him than that he was stout in figure, and well dressed. . . . He moved away among the trees as Shane's eyes scrutinised him.

Shane was annoyed at the breaking of his solitude. He had seen the same figure before, among the trees. But when he turned, he saw to his other side, black against the red solar targe, the figure of another intruder. This was a younger man strolling down the path that led to where Shane sat, as from the sun's heart. Down the path he walked, till he was near Shane, at whom he looked sharply. Shane returned the gaze and fancied there was something vaguely familiar in the freckly open face and the brown tweed manner of attire.

The stranger stopped, threw up his hands, and said : " It's Shane Lambert, or I'm raving."

" Yes," said Shane, " but you have the advantage of me."

" Don't you remember Fergus O'Cryan ? " asked the other, leaping to a seat beside him.

Shane remembered. He shook hands with Fergus shyly. Said the latter :

" I was often hoping to run across you again, to find out what was becoming of you. What have they made of you at all ? "

Shane was taken with the smile and smiled back.

" A civil servant," he said, " an Assistant Clerk—a ' guinea pig,' you know, so called from the salary. At Cloisterham House."

" Was that your own choice ? " asked Fergus a little sharply.

" No," said Shane, " I'd rather be an engineer. But my people couldn't afford to start me in that, unless I began in the workshops, and Aunt Rebecca said the service was more genteel—there's a pension, too, and all that."

"You're a learned sort of guinea pig," remarked Fergus, picking up the Greek Testament. "And by the same token, there's an old friend of yours would be glad to know you have Greek; he's often talking of you."

"Who's that?" asked Shane, with curiosity.

"Old Peter Joyce," said Fergus. "He's living with me now. You must come and see him some day. He is getting very old, and he's beginning to romance. You see, he's downhearted because there was no racket in Ireland during the Boer War. He thinks we lost the best chance we ever had to break away with a short, sharp fight."

Memories of dark passion and those violent scenes before his father's end thronged into Shane's mind. His mood of Sabbath peace was shattered by his companion's words. O stormy-hearted race that knows no calm, carriers of wrath where'er ye go!

"And what are you doing here with a Greek Testament?" Fergus inquired.

"I'm supposed to be at chapel," said Shane, "but nobody was with me, so I played truant. I'm getting tired of the sermons—stuff from Browning and *In Memoriam* made into essays like the ones I used write for the Civil Service exam. I keep thinking all the time that I could bring out the points better! When they ask me at home what the sermon was about to-night I tell them something from what I'm reading to myself out here in the woods."

"You are a right artist," quoth Fergus. "Mitching from the service and conducting your own for yourself! You're like my young brother, who went stealing apples and called in at the graveyard on his way home from the orchard, to say the Rosary for the souls of our dead relations. But tell me, have you settled down to this Civil Service life?"

“ *No!*”—The word was spoken with emphasis. “ I hate it. I hate going up to the city every day in the train and writing up a stupid register all day, among those people. I want to *do* things—out in India, or Canada, or in the Rockies.”

“ And what are you going to do there? ”

“ Oh, I don’t know. If only I could have learnt engineering, I’d be able to build bridges, and cut roads (like that story, *The Bridge-builders*, you know), but I suppose I’ll never get a chance like that. . . . ”

“ And how do you make these Kiplingese ambitions fit in with reading about the New Jerusalem in the Greek Testament? ”—There was a twinkle in O’Cryan’s eye.

Shane laughed, and Fergus liked him all the better for being able to laugh at himself. “ It does sound a bit incongruous, I know. But somehow I feel as if I want to *act*—to see real things done, here and now. And, you know, there seem such great possibilities out in those big unspoilt countries.”

“ Cows in Connacht have long horns,” said Fergus drily. “ But why are you so dissatisfied with Old England’s sweet self? ”

“ It’s all luxury and snobbery and smallness at home,” said Shane. “ But there’s real life out there on the prairies. Can’t you think what it will be like when we have a Republican Empire—all full of free, strong men? ”

“ No, I can’t,” answered Fergus, “ and what’s more, I believe if you knew something about the real conditions out in those colonies, you’d be sickened as you are by London life. You’ve been reading Kipling and Swinburne as well as the New Testament, I can see. But maybe we’ll find you some adventures yet as exciting as those you’d get in Canada, but nearer

home, and maybe, too, you'll have your chance to build bridges to the glory of God some day. . . ." His voice changed from banter to low, earnest tones: "Don't look up or give the alarm," he said, "but tell me—did you notice a man on the hill above watching us? Look up gently as if by accident."

Shane raised his head. The man whom he had noticed among the trees was again peering down towards him.

"Yes—and I saw him earlier in the evening. I've seen him there several Sunday evenings when I was—what do you call it?—mitching from chapel."

"Other evenings, have you? Then he's not watching *me*. Have you any reason to be watched like that?"

"None that I know of. What would anyone watch *me* for?"

O'Cryan had his notebook on his knee and in a few dexterous strokes had limned the figure of the watcher. "Very much like Velasquez' *Cavalier*, isn't he? Maybe this sketch will identify him some other time. But likely it's only imagination that he's watching."

"Look here, I must be going," said Shane, looking at his watch. "It's well past eight and Tessie is due to meet me."

"Tessie?"

"Oh, she's only my cousin. We're both at grandfather's house now, you know—Beulah Lodge."

"And is she in the secret of your bogus sermons?"

"I'm afraid she is. But she's a trump. She never gives me away. Here she comes."

Tessie, swinging her straw hat by the ribbons, was coming down the path from the sunset that Fergus had come down a few minutes before. The last red

rays fell on her dark hair and made a dusky aureole around her head.

"Tell me," said Fergus (his eyes were on her), "does she live the same life as yourself? Does she hate it too?"

"Why, yes," said Shane, "she's the same as myself. But I don't know that she dislikes it—she's a girl, you see. But *I* feel being cooped up."

"Hm," said the other. "But I'd best be going. You'll fined me at . . . ."

"No, wait till I introduce you to Tessie. . . ."

Fergus hesitated. Then he returned to Shane's side. "Introduce away," said he.

Tessie came up. She had deftly donned her hat, and she stood with questioning eyes, and just a touch of colour in her cheeks.

"This is my cousin, Teresa Murnane," said Shane. "Tessie, this is an old friend of Father's, Fergus O'Cryan."

Fergus bowed, and then, "Not all that old," said he to Shane, and "Don't you know you should always introduce the gentleman to the lady?"

There was a ring of laughter that eased Tessie's momentary shyness. The man whom O'Cryan had sketched was at this moment looking down on the little group from the other side of the tree-clad valley, but none of the three noticed him. He was watching tensely, earnestly. . . .

"I was telling Fergus," said Shane, "that you were meeting me after I was what he calls er—er—" He was trying to get the word *mitching*, but Fergus interrupted him.

"Do you see that yellow-hammer? Quick!—There, he's away up the green. That's the first time I've seen one in these woods," and O'Cryan

went rattling on about the birds he had observed when sketching in the woods, while the three walked leisurely towards the gates of the wood.

"So you're an artist, Mr. O'Cryan?" asked Tessie. "You did not tell me that, Shane," she added, "and you know it's not often we meet a real-life artist!"

Shane suddenly remembered that while talking about himself, he had not made a single inquiry as to his companion's fate or fortune.

"A humble dauber only," said Fergus, "teaching young people at school to draw cylinders and cones. But," and he screwed up his eyes, "I think I am talking to a musician? Is it the violin you play?"

"How did you guess that?" said she. "Yes, I play the violin. I got some lessons from M. Towianski, but I don't get much practice. . . ." She did not add that the classes were taken surreptitiously, that she could only practice and play (secretly with her mother at the piano) when Armstrong happened to be out, for hymn-tunes alone were permissible when he was at home. She uttered the last words with a bitterness that Shane had never heard in her voice before. Usually, she was so cheery, so uncomplaining.

"How did you know me to be musical?" she asked, looking up.

"Anyone could see that. You have musical hands. . . ." O'Cryan looked at her with a quizzical air, and then ventured: "And musical hair."

"You are very observant," was all she could say.

Shane thought this conversation was going far enough. He interrupted to ask Fergus if he had read. . . . But Fergus was asking Tessie if she had ever had the ambition to get a continental training.

"I'm afraid not," she answered. "That's not likely to come my way,"—with a little sigh.

" You ought to have it," said he, and went on to tell of the music he had heard at Cologne and Freiburg, while she listened as to a glamorous story. Shane was not musical, and felt somewhat snubbed. But they paid no heed to him. . . .

• • • • •

" Shane," said Tessie, that evening at home, " what does Mr. O'Cryan do for a living ? "

" Why, teach, I think," said Shane. " I didn't ask him where."

" I suppose you were talking about yourself the whole time," said she. " You have no manners at all."

" No manners ! " said Shane, heatening. " And where were your manners, never letting me get in a word ? "

" Don't bother me," said Tessie, and—" Did you tell him about playing truant from chapel ? "

" Y—Yes, why not ? "

" Trust you to have no sense. A nice pair of fools you made us look. You've no more sense than a small boy."

Shane was overcome with surprise at this unusual anger in Tessie, and exasperated by her aggrieved tone.

" What on earth are you in such a fizz about ? " he asked. " Why, you've never seen O'Cryan before and maybe you'll never see him again. . . ."

" Oh, you—you—fool ! " Tessie cried, and ran upstairs with tears bursting at her eyes.

Somewhere at the back of the house, Armstrong's voice could be heard singing :

O, the Lion of Judah shall break ev-ry cha-ain  
And shall give them the vict'ry again and again.

## CHAPTER II

### SOWING THE REVOLUTION

It was a year before Shane met Fergus again.

In the springtime, when the streets were full of shower-fresh wind and pale sunlight thrown from stormy skies, Shane would go down to the city each day with undefined desires racing in his blood. He would look hungrily at the birch-bark canoes and heaps of produce, with photos of the Canadian wilds that filled the emigration shop windows. In the office he would look up from his ledger in the midst of entering piles of invoices, to watch the hurrying crowds of people going about their multitudinous concerns—journalists, travellers, merchants, explorers, colonials: what not? He longed to go out among those active people, those people who were really alive. . . .

At lunch time he would wander across London Bridge, eating furtively from his brown-paper parcel of sandwiches, and watching the great vessels unload beside the tea-yard wharfs, and the hoarse-syrened, foam-kicking little tugs bustle down the great brown waters beyond the Tower Bridge, into the mast-crammed confusion beyond. He would recall stories from pious magazines of strangers who were struck by young men's earnest features and offered them commissions, openings, opportunities. He would look wistfully at the great busy men who passed him—but none ever took him by the hand and opened

his way into the great world of life, the real world. Year after year, since he was fifteen years of age and had entered the service, he had waited and watched for adventure, but the springs had grown old, and the dusty summers had come, and still he was an outsider, a soul ignored by Fate.

He would return after his hour on the Bridge to Cloisterham House, where the Second Division Clerks, his superiors, would be returning from the restaurants, repeating to one another daring things that one of them had said to the waitress. Before they resumed work, an hour or so would be spent discussing amatory adventures, and boasting against one another of the number of their intrigues. There was one big-boned stage-Irishman, whom they called Ballyhooly Pat, formerly an amateur champion in the Ring, who was unanimously admitted to excel the whole number in profligacy. None could boast of wilder and more daring exploits ; none could garnish accounts of his doings with a more subtly suggestive wit. All agreed that Ballyhooly Pat was the daringest fellow in the office. Pat had big, red, clammy and slightly shaking hands, and Shane could never watch him moving his great, ungainly figure awkwardly through the room without a curious physical revulsion. — Yet Pat had never been known to lose his temper. He was the kindest of the staff, and he alone never ventured sarcastic allusions to Shane's youth and innocence.

One day two nuns visited Cloisterham House, calling on the First Division Clerk who sat in authority in the next room, with a request for donations to some charitable fund. When the two black-robed figures with downward gaze, glided forth of the buildings, a clerk spying from the window leaned

over to Ballyhooly Pat with a smirk and a whisper. What followed took the room by storm.

Pat had been bent over a handful of documents with unusually fixed attention. When the words were whispered in his ear, he suddenly rose with a flaming countenance. Seizing the whisperer by the throat, he shook him like a rat, and then in one tremendous effort, and with a mighty shattering of glass and woodwork, hurled him through the great windows into the stone court below !

Shane never saw Pat in Cloisterham House again.

Shane puzzled over the incident but could not understand the mentality of a man who, though so loose in his personal life, could ruin his career by a violent act, in indignation at a mere remark. His experiences among the clerks soured his mind. Their constant preoccupation embittered his outlook. He began, as he walked through the streets, to see vice in all things around him ; he could not believe in innocence ; he looked for double meanings in every jest and distrusted the credentials of every virtuous action. The fact that Armstrong and his daughters were constantly watching him lest he should exchange a sentence with any woman save Tessie, deepened his suspicious obsession. More and more did he long to be away to lands where men strove with wild nature and lived in constant manly strife with the beasts—the clean, stark places of nature undefiled. But then Fergus O'Cryan's words haunted him. What if those brave pioneers with whom he longed to range were men like other men. . . .

" I don't think much of 'er choice, do you ? "—a passing girl asked her companion, overheard by Shane.

" No, 'e don't get much, do 'e ? " answered the other.

The "warehousemen" with whom Shane did part of his work,—the physical workers in the room below that of the clerks—were also easy in their life, but they talked less about their doings than the men with the haughtier accents. One or two of these leather-aproned workers were of a religious turn, and quoted long Biblical passages to their comrades. Others were racing men. One, who was a publican's son, had financial resources that made him better off than the clerks—to whom he lent money, in the last fortnight of the month, at an interest of fifty per cent. Another—Dicky Bulpitt—was as lean as the money-lender was rotund, as pale as he was florid. A nervous eagerness was always burning in Dicky's black-rimmed eyes, and his emaciated hands moved twitchingly at his work as he folded and tied up the great parcels and talked the while of "Socialism, the Hope of the Working Man." He loved to talk with Shane.

"These chaps here," he used to say, in his panting way of speaking, "don't read anything. They're an ign'rant lot. Don't know their own interests. Got no pride in their class."

"But why do you want them to be class-conscious?" Shane asked. "Isn't it better to ignore classes altogether? Why should I be crowded over by a warehouseman any more than by a duke?"

"Marx and Engels answered that forty years ago," said Bulpitt. "Just you read Hyndman and Blatchford. See for yourself. The proletariat must dictate. Only hope of civilisation. Working classes on top." He stopped and coughed till his face was crimson. He rarely spoke more than a few sentences at a time with ease.

"I haven't read all those fellows," said Shane. "In fact, I never heard of them, and I don't believe

anybody else here has either. But look at all the great men of English literature. *They* didn't believe in class war. . . .”

“ Because they owed their griteness *to* class war,” said Bulpitt. “ Anybody could write fine stuff if he was fed well enough. And had nothin’ else to do. What price my youngsters? Why shouldn’t they be writers? ’Cause I can’t afford to edjucate ’m. Look at me. Twenty-five bob a week. Married. Big family. How ’m I going to give ’m a chance on that? It’s un-bloomin’-possible. Wait till the working-class gets its rights. Then we’ll have Shikespeare’s by the ’undred.”

Huh huh! huh-huh!—Dicky was out of breath with the effort of speaking.

One day he called Shane to him. “ An old friend of yours was asking for you,” he said. “ Huh—last night at the Socialist meeting. Had a name something like Feargus O’Connor the Chartist. Same sort of man too. Fine chap. Red-hot for revolution.”

“ Was it Fergus O’Cryan? ” asked Shane.

“ Yes, that’s it. Come to our meeting at Hollogate Archway to-night and you’ll see him.”

So Shane, with a mixed sense of curiosity, went to the open-air Socialist meeting—telling Aunt Matilda that he was taking a pair of shoes to the cobbler’s. From a grey sky a bitter east wind whistled down the streets and roared in the kerosene blazes, as three or four young men with red ties shouted in turn the revolutionary gospel to a small gathering of loafers or children or passers-by who stayed for a moment out of curiosity and then hurried on with upturned collars.

Of the propagandists, Fergus alone seemed heedless of the chill weather. He stood beside Shane, whose

hand he quietly pressed, a lithe, athletic figure, with a 'country-reared man's contempt for weather hardships. Bulpitt, whose shivering, skeleton-figure showed sharply through his threadbare greatcoat, was speaking from a soap-box, eyes closed, voice shouting, explaining the doctrine of Surplus Value and the Workers' Right to the Whole Produce of Labour. He expounded the economic thesis with glibness and lucidity, and yet with some scientific thoroughness, quoting passages from *Capital* by heart. Even when he was talking in figures and financial facts, he lost nothing of that fiery enthusiasm that sustained him through the whole: he seemed like one possessed or inspired, and the broken-windedness of speech that afflicted his conversation, quite disappeared. And yet, in the hardening pallor of his cheeks, and the drawing of the facial muscles, it was obvious that the effort was straining his system to breaking point.

"Bulpitt's killing himself," Fergus whispered to Shane. "Night after night, wet or fine, he's out, speaking at these meetings. We've tried to make him take it easy, but he's resolved to burn himself out before he dies. I think he knows he has one foot in the grave."

"The surplus value of your toil, comrades," Bulpitt was shouting to the little crowd of stolid listeners. "The wealth that you've created by your long day's labours, and that has been stopped from you after you got your paltry little wiges out of it—that's what the governing classes and the *borjoicy* are livin' on. *Your* money. *Your* wealth. Stolen from *you*. You don't take off your hat to a man that lives on charity. But you bow and scrape to the gen'leman who's dressed in finery that he stole from your children's

backs, and fed on food he stole from your larder. Thieves ! That's what they are. The big people in the big 'ouses. Look down there. . . ."

He pointed down from the hill on which they stood to where the lights of London were glittering.

" . . . Big houses. Avenoos. 'Otels. All yours. And you don't get admission. Not you. You built 'em and paid for 'm. Other people enjoy them and then claim the right to govern you and order you about. 'Tell you what it is, comrades. We workers have come the *suaviter modo* too long,. We'll give 'em a taste of the *fortiter re* one of these days. We'll go down to the West End and help *ourselves*. That's what we'll do. Take the law into our own hands. Take our own property. Take our own land. We'll have practical Christianity in this country, *we* will. I tell you, the great day's coming. Our grandfathers used to sing about it in the Chartist days :

There's a good time coming, boys,  
There's a good time coming,  
We may not live to see the day,  
But p'raps our little children may,  
There's a good time coming bye and bye.

That good time's at hand, comrades. You can have it if you're brave enough. We'll live to see it. We'll *all* live to see it. . . ."

The speaker was shaken with violent fits of coughing and came down from the box, a hand-kerchief at his mouth on which there were great crimson spots. There was a little rustle of applause, and Fergus excused himself to Shane, making his way towards the rostrum.

A stout man near Shane was saying : " These 'ere Socialists ain't no good. The atheists ~~is~~ is better. Still, they wile away a 'arf-'our all right."

" I didn't know as 'ow you 'eld with the atheists,"

said the lanky, bowler-hatted democrat to whom his remarks were addressed.

"I'm not saying as 'ow I do. I always go to chapel regular. But there's ole Dr. Nikola in the Park as speaks against the Bible. 'Lumme, the good stories 'e tells 'ud do you good to listen to. I always give 'im sixpence at the collection. A man as can make you larf is worth sixpence. These Socialist fellows ain't got no sense of humour."

Fergus O'Cryan was on the soap-box now. The playfully-spoken, slightly-unapproachable young man was transformed as he shook his head in the cool evening wind. His nostrils were dilated, his figure braced, and when he spoke, with clear, sonorous Irish vowels, he at once commanded his audience. He spoke quietly and slowly for a while, but with dexterous skill he worked up attention. He told of the land war in Ireland, of whole mountain-sides cleared of population at the whim of a landlord, of eviction and starvation, of famine and disease, and he told of Captain Moonlight's method of redress—a lad and a gun and a shot from behind a ditch.

"I tell you," he cried, "Irishmen will be freemen before you English yet, for they're not afraid to answer force with force. Step by step we're getting back our soil. But *you*—when will *you* be masters of the wealth of England? When will you ever be more than wage-slaves? Stand in with us, I say. We're fighting your battle for you—come and do your part, and help us in return."

A few of the listeners applauded. "Right enough," said one man, "them Irish 'as got more go in 'em than we 'ave. If we 'ad 'alf their go-a'eadness, we'd 'ave better wages every week."

"My people have suffered," Fergus was saying. "Generation after generation, they have faced prison

and death and exile. It's still the same. We shall have to fight again to-morrow, and there 'll be more prison, more mourning, more ruins. We'll have to buy every inch of the road to freedom with blood and grief. But you English, you have your heroes, too, and freedom means sacrifice for you as well as for us and all other nations. It's all one cause—the struggle of the workers of the world against their exploiters and oppressors. Remember this when we in Ireland go out to fight again. Don't let your masters bring you out against us. Throw in your lot with us instead, and do your part to spread the Revolution. There's a new Heaven and a new earth at the end of it. Don't you remember—you Bible readers—the great throng of all nations and peoples and tongues and tribes such as no man could number? I tell you that the world we live in will be shattered to atoms before we are old, and I bid you be ready for the new order that is to take its place."

Something in Fergus's delivery moved the gathering in a mood to which his words sounded half-prophetic. The clouds in the west were rent as if by a slow explosion as the sun went down, and the sky was aflame with burning shards of mist. Shane looked into the crimson chaos over London, and fancied that he saw a pageant of the world's dissolution. The gilded houses in the clear air seemed like new-created things. The revolutionary dream seized him. His grandfather's Bible readings came home to him now with meaning. Revolution meant a clean start for the world—a new chance for each life in it: an end to futile yearnings and disappointments, seedy surroundings, degenerate manners—a new heaven, a new earth. Words he had often heard declaimed thronged to his memory: *And He that sat upon the throne said: Behold, I make all things new.*

## CHAPTER III

### EXILES ALL

Another summer came. Aunts Rebecca and Matilda were together on holiday at Southend. Samuel Armstrong left after breakfast to attend a convention addressed by Brother Copas at a city hotel. Before going, he instructed Shane and Teresa to go to Mr. White's chapel in the evening, and, "I rely on you, young people," he said, "not to dishonour the Lord's day by frivolous reading or conversation or music. You may play hymns on your violin, Teresa, if you wish." No sooner was he away than Shane faced Tessie: "Tess," said he, "are you game for an adventure?"

"Of what sort?" said she.

"Will you come to the Epping Forest for the day?"

"O Shane, how could we? It would be deceiving grandfather. . . . And suppose he found out?"

"How could he find out? And what right has he to coop us up like this?"

"Shane!—I won't listen to such talk."

"But listen, Tess. We'll go to the chapel this morning and hear the missionary sermon. Then we'll do no harm by going in the afternoon and we'll get back before grandfather. . . . There's a lot going," Shane added.

"A lot? Who do you mean?" Tessie asked with surprise.

"Why, it's an outing got up by a society called

the Gallic League or something of the sort. Fergus O'Cryan invited us. You'll come, won't you?"

"Why didn't you tell me of this before?" asked Tessie. She seemed to be trying to make time in which to think out a proposition that had taken her by surprise.

"I thought you'd give us away by looking guilty."

"You make us look like thieves to talk like that," said Tessie. "But I haven't a thing to wear. . . ."

"Ach, you look fine as you are. What's the use of dudding yourself only to get dusty again?"

"You men are too stupid for words," said Tessie. ". . . There's my navy coat and skirt. . . . If I were just to iron my tussore blouse. . . ."

"That's right, old girl, we'll call it settled," cried Shane. "And now I'm off to chapel."

"But wait a minute. I have no money for the expenses."

"Don't worry. I'll stand treat. There's only our fare and sixpence each for tea in the woods."

They started out after dinner. It was a glowing afternoon, with the well-tilled country and the distant hills shimmering through the summer haze. The walk to the station lay through a colonnade of cool umbrage, and Tessie's parasol was little needed. She was not very talkative, and Shane could not rouse her to interest in his plan for the holidays of going out with the trawlers from Southend for a week's deep-sea fishing: an idea that he had got from a fellow-worker at the office.

"You're lucky," she said, "to be able to choose where you'll go for holidays. That's the advantage of being at work. Now as for me, I don't know that I'll get a holiday at all."

"But your life's *all* holiday," said Shane. "If I get a fortnight's leave I have to go to work every day at the office. I wish I was not bound down, but had my time to myself, like you."

Tessie cast a glance at Shane that had a wry look in it.

"You're a boy still, Shane," said she, "and you don't understand much about things."

Shane bore the rebuke patiently, and privately reflected that Tessie had not, as yet, much knowledge of the world.

When they reached the station, most of the excursionists were away on an earlier train, but on the lonely platform, they saw the tweed-clad figure of Fergus O'Cryan.

"You missed the train that the crowd went on?" asked Shane.

"I did," said Fergus, not mentioning that he had purposely done so. He was looking at Tessie, and Shane, looking on her too, was surprised by the bright unusual glow in her face.

"I hope you will enjoy this little trip, Miss Murnane," Fergus was saying. "You will get a whiff of Irish air, anyway, and a taste of our informal way of enjoying ourselves."

"Shane said it was got up by the Gaulish Society or some such name. . . ."

"The Gaelic League. We aim at making Irish the spoken tongue of Ireland once again. Did you ever hear Irish spoken?"

"I heard my grandfather speaking the language," said Tessie, "but I did not know many people could still use it."

Something moved at the back of Shane's memory. He vaguely glimpsed a torch-lit hall with regal figures

at a board. Was it something he had seen in a dream or in reality? It was vivid enough for the latter—but no, that kingly chamber so vivid, so real, was something outside his experience. Then he remembered how, when a small boy, he had heard a song in the antique tongue, and had seen with clear imaginative vision the halls of Tara. . . .

O'Cryan somehow succeeded in keeping with his two companions without ever seeming to thrust himself upon them. His quietly courteous manner and conversation made them at home even in surroundings wholly unusual to them. After a little walk through the forest, they heard the soaring cries of the war pipes, and soon their path opened on a little glade with a glassy lake beyond, and they saw beneath them a score of people old and young, resting on the grass, while the piper, in proud saffron, marched up and down, the ribbons of his pipes fluttering in the air. Fergus found a convenient place for watching and hearing, and interpreted the items of the little *al fresco* concert that was taking place.

After the piper, there was a song, and next a recitation; and then a tall, bowed, gnarled-faced old man, beckoning his listeners to sit nearer, began to tell a folk-tale in the Gaelic tongue. He had the large strong features, great cheek-bones, mobile expression, and lively eyes popularly associated with the old Hibernian type. As he warmed to his story he drew himself up till his arms were extended to his knees; then he slipped an elbow down to the knee, and again drew up sharp: flung his arms wide, and grew again, as it were, confidential, bending forward. As he went further and further with the tale, his motions grew more rapid, till his whole

figure as well as his swift and modulated speech, was eloquent with expression. His hearers' attention was held fast, and their interest clearly commanded, and ever and again, as he dropped his voice and spoke slowly, a subtle twinkle in his eye, they would burst into gusts of the most exuberant laughter Shane had ever heard.

"This is what we call *fiannraigheacht*," Fergus said, whispering to his two companions, who bent their heads to listen. "He is telling a story about Fionn Mac Cuail and his companions."

"Old Peter Joyce used to tell me those tales," said Shane, with kindling interest, and he watched the expressions of intellectual relish on the faces of those who were hanging on the shanachie's words.

They were seated too far back from the story-teller's group for their speech to cause interruption, so Fergus went on speaking in a low tone. He talked of the poetic beauty, the delicate wit, the refining spirit of the folk literature, and began to tell stories himself. When he had finished the tale of the Children of Lir, loveliest of all tales of enchantments, Tessie remarked: "I heard that story often from my grandfather"—and when Fergus looked a little fallen, she added: "But he never told it half as well as you."

"Did you ever think," said Fergus, "what a fine theme that story would make for musical treatment?—the sad music of exile at first, with the swan's magic song repeated as a *motif* through what follows: the storms of the Scottish coast, of Irrus Domhnán, and so on. At last the music of home-coming, mingled with sad notes of loss, and then the sacred music of the monastery and chords of peace and triumph at the end."

"It's a pretty idea," said Tessie. "It would take a Wagner to execute it, though."

"We'll have an Irish Wagner yet," said Fergus.

When the storyteller had finished, a youth with earnest eyes behind big glasses got up to sing.

"That's Dan Donnell, the London-Irish vocalist," said Fergus, with a little play of laughter about his lips, and the singer began :

Cathleen Mavourneen, the grye dawn is briking,  
The 'orn of the 'unter is 'eard on the 'ill. . . .

Later Dan Donnell told Shane with bubbling confidence the story of his conversion to the Gaelic movement by picking up a pamphlet on *Land and Language* from a book-barrow. He asked Shane how he had been brought into it. "I'm only beginning as yet," said Shane. The incident suggested a curious comparison between this gathering and the meetings of the Copasites. At both people exchanged testimonies about their conversions. At both enthusiasm was expressed in stirring choruses. At both there was informal brotherhood and an emotional cordiality: The Gaelic League, he thought, was very like a religious society.

Tea was taken in a big wooden house, and the three had a little circular table to themselves, from which Fergus pointed out interesting personalities. A little man with dirty linen and a wonderfully active face was holding forth at a neighbouring table to two girls who, much to Tessie's disapproval, were smoking cigarettes.

"D'you see that leprechaun of a man?" asked Fergus. "That's Peadar O'Connor, the Gaelic novelist, never known to have the same address two weeks in succession. All the spring he was living

well in Belfast as a preacher for the Dippers—said he was a Papist brand saved from the burning—and made no end out of them. If he's in a mood for it, maybe he'd repeat one of his sermons for us this evening. They're hot and strong. He's working in a foreign restaurant in Soho at present, collecting local colour for a realistic novel on London life."

Nearer, a very youthful priest was describing his experiences on the London mission to a group of listeners.

"The diocese was too full up at home, d'you see," he was saying, "so I have to serve my time this side till there's room for me. Man, I wish I was back in Maynooth: these Old English Catholics are too much for me. When I arrived, what must my Canon do (bless his heart) but give a hooey in my honour. There's one thing about the English: they're hospitable anyway. Too much so. Half-a-dozen of his distinguished parishioners came to dinner, and I'm telling you I felt mighty out of place in my aisy-going get-up. The Canon himself was starched up enough for a Cardinal. And the talk! 'Fawther,' says one dandified aristocrat, 'and what do you think of the relations of the Anglicans and the Orthodox Easterns?'

"Don't know anything about the question, ma'am," says I.

"And then they went *ráiméising* about the Blacks and the Whites in Rome, and whether the Gothic vestments are better than the old, and was the Pope right to revive the title of Archpriest, and whether Newman or Vaughan got the better of some newspaper controversy thirty years ago.—Give me people that can talk about the weather."

"And what did you say when all this was going on, Father Doalty?" someone asked.

"Man, I never opened my bloody bake (beak)," said the young Levite.

Shane overhearing this last remark, felt his conception of the typical Roman priest curiously shaken.

A very old lady, with exquisitely gentle blue eyes that won Shane's affection, was telling the people at her table of her recollections of the Great Famine.

"I mind Black '48 right well," she said. "I was a wee girsha then. The soldiers came and took all the corn in the place and the potatoes had all blackened. I used to see people—just skeletons they were—sitting at their cottage doors looking at their destroyed fields, too weak and miserable to do anything. Ah, deary, deary, those were the bad times. They got some yellow male in the end. It was dealt out at my father's house. Many's the time I saw six or seven big men—and they wasted to shadows—standing in a row along the kitchen wall just waiting to get their share. And then they'd get one or two handfuls of male to take home to their families. Sometimes when they got home, the children would be dead before them. . . ."

She stopped, her voice quavering and her eyes full of tears.

The Cockney singer, who had listened to every word, clenched his hands and said explosively: "Christ damn England," and one or two voices chimed "Amen." Shane was surprised to find himself, too, hot with indignation, but Tessie showed a doubtful lip.

"Why do they blame England?" she asked. "England didn't cause the famine?"

Fergus answered with an abruptness that was new in his conversation:

"There would have been no Starvation but for

England." Then he added, more mildly : " Most of the younger people here are sons and daughters of people that had to fly from Ireland after the famine years. The story of the Starvation comes home to them all. This little company is just a tiny fragment of the wreckage in the great dispersal of the nation. . . . But all this is too serious. Thank goodness, tea's over and there'll be a dance and a game or two."

Away to another grassy glade the company went, and there Shane saw Irish figure dancing for the first time. A buxom *cailín* from Connemara showed him how to make the side-step, and then helped him through the " Walls of Limerick," in which he felt as though his shoes had grown to the size of portmanteaux. Lasairfhíona Ní Mháille—that was her name—laughed heartily at his perseverance, and assured him that fifty years of further practice would make him a Feis prizewinner. Later, for the benefit of the many, like Shane, who were not practised dancers, there were games. The favourite was " Highgates," played by a ring of people, one chasing another in and out of the ring until the fugitive was touched and made pursuer. Lasairfhíona, having been caught in the ring by the young priest, the late pursuer, now touched Shane, wherewith he was pursued and hunted in and out of the circle, sliding, slipping, and falling on the grass slope, springing up again and pursuing the chase.

Afterwards with a face that blazed and throbbed with the exertion, he made his way towards the shelter to find Tessie. He had not enjoyed such a romp since schooldays, and an unfamiliar springiness pervaded all his limbs. He felt exhilarated and reflected that never before had he spent a Sunday evening to better advantage in point of gaining vigour

and refreshment for the week's drudgery. As he came near the shelter, he heard the violin's strains plaintively soaring in the measure of *Chansons sans Paroles*, and rightly guessed that Tessie had taken the fiddler's instrument during the games. When he looked into the big tea-room, he saw her rapt in her music, with slightly-knit brow, swaying as she played while her fingers vibrated as they touched the strings. Seated on the grassy threshold of the other door, his eyes on the player as though he were forgetful of all else, was Fergus. The last wavering notes were drawn from the instrument and on one throbbing chord, Tessie jerked away the bow and broke the spell. Fergus thanked her. There was almost the sadness of exile in his tone.

"I wish," he said, "I wish I could hear music like that often. It is all full of rich, luxurious images. It should be played in great castles and amid the pride of life. It's unlike Irish music—which is all I usually hear. We have none of that pomp and circumstance in our wild tunes. Our history is in our music. I suppose we'll never have gorgeous music like yours till we are a prosperous nation and prosperous individuals too. . . ."

And as he spoke, his eyes were on her, drinking in her proud image, and dwelling on her abundant wavy hair. Shane interrupted him, asking the hour.

"Oh! . . . Are you back?" Fergus asked. "The time? See, I make it half-seven."

"What!"—This was Tessie.

Fergus showed his watch.

"Half—past—seven!"—This was Shane. "And our train goes at seven-twenty!"

## CHAPTER IV

### INTO THE WORLD

The train which was to have brought them home at eight-thirty in time to have the house lighted before Samuel Armstrong's return, was lost, and the next train would not bring them home till half-past ten ! That meant that he would be home an hour before them, and as they had the only key of the house with them—only one key was allowed by Armstrong lest any member of the household should take advantage of a second key to keep late hours—he would find the house locked before him.

Tessie, mightily put about, explained to Fergus that she had promised to be home on the earlier train, but Shane blurted out : "We're playing truant, and there'll be the dickens to pay."

Tessie, vexed to exasperation, cried out indignantly on Shane : "What possessed you not to keep an eye on the time . . ." and continued to upbraid him as though all the blame were his.

"You overlooked the time as much as I did," said he. "Don't hold me solely answerable."

Fergus discreetly slipped outside. The quarrel expended itself when both realised that the one thing to do was to put a bold face to the situation. "Grandfather can't kill us anyway," said Shane wryly. "Let's enjoy what's left of the evening as much as we can." But Tessie could not be roused from her brooding by all the gaiety that followed.

The whole party went home by the second train. While waiting for it on the lonely platform, a little group began a four-hand reel, but the stationmaster begged them to desist, it being Sunday. The phrase "Sabbatarian sourface" on Lasairfhíona's lips wakened a mixed feeling in Shane's bosom. In the carriage there was song after song, in chorus, and Shane felt strange sensations, like memories of somebody else's life, move in him as the hymn-like words of *Dark Rosaleen* were sung by a youth near the window. He was not tempted to smile at the line :

O, the Erne shall run red  
With rebundance of blood. . . .

They went through all the songs they could recall, Gaelic and Anglo-Irish, down to the *Shan Van Vocht* and *Lord Waterford is Dead*—

Says he : " I've had a fall  
Praps I've made an awkward call ? "  
Says the devil " not at all, "  
Says the Shan Van Vocht.

An inebriated Britisher, the only person not of the party in the carriage, gradually woke up as the singing went on, and comically beat time to the tunes. At last, when all memories had failed to find new songs he put in :

" You've (hic) sung mosht of 'em (hic). But you've forgotten (hic) the besht—the besht o' the bunsh. Gi' us (hic), gi' us *Bold Robert Emmet*."

" Where did you hear *Bold Robert Emmet* ? " someone asked.

" Uzhed sing it (hic) at camp fires. In the war. Irish sholdiers (hic). Comrades of mine w'en we were waiting for the Boersh. Both of 'em shot jusht w'en they were shinging it. Uzhed sing *Nation Onsh Again*, too, and *Wearin' o' the Green*."

"Do you know it?" Fergus was asked by Father Doalty.

"It's a maudlin thing," he answered, "and I doubt if I can remember the words."

Then he began.

"Bold Robert Emmet, the darling of Ireland."

Tessie was eyeing this parley with a drunken man with disfavour, and was not comforted when he began to shout the chorus, waving a shaky hand in the air. Still less, when, his faculties seemingly roused by the singing, he appeared to recognise Shane and began to wring his hand.

"Mast'r Shane Lambert," he said. "Same a shever was. Fancy meetin' you!"

Shane, covered with confusion, stared without recognition.

"Don't you recernise me?" said the man. "Don't yer know Todkins?"

It was Robert Lambert's former bottle-washer who sat beside Shane, almost crying over him with affection. He cast his arm around Shane's neck, and begged him to come and see him at Woburn Mansions.

"The missus 'll give you a bite and sup and mike you welcome (hic). I 'eard as 'ow you was a civil servant nah. Is that right?"

"It is, but—hsh—I'm getting out at the next station," said Shane, wondering within him who had talked to Todkins of his doings.

"Don't tell me (hic) as 'ow yer too prahd to recernise me before yer fine noo friends," said Todkins. "That's not wot I'd expect from Bob Lambert's son. . . ."

But sure enough, the next station was that at which Shane and Tessie had to alight. Fergus left

the train, too, to see them on their road home. Tessie's evident nervousness was reflected in his own distressed expression.

"I don't like to ask when I shall have the pleasure of seeing you both again," Fergus said, as he bade them good-bye.

"Oh, we'll come to another what-do-you-call-it this summer," said Shane bravely. He was curiously afire with excitement from the songs he had heard, and the jarring exchange with Todkins had worn off. "By the way," he said, "I want you to lend me some books about Ireland. . . ."

. . . . .

The rest of the journey home was by road in the gathering twilight.

"What will grandfather say?" Tessie asked, as soon as Fergus had gone.

"We must just face the music," said Shane, "We'll have to stand up for ourselves sooner or later."

But for all his brave words, he fell silent, and it was Tessie who broke the silence with abrupt question:

"Do you think I could get work in the city?"

Shane was nonplussed.

"I'm quite serious," Tessie went on. "Do you think I could get a clerkship or something that would give me enough to keep me?"

"But what do *you* want to go to work for?"

"For everything. Can't you see how wretched I am, having to live under restraint because I have no way out?"

"*You* wretched?"—Shane looked at his pleasant-featured cousin in amazement. To him she always seemed a figure of serenity, a charming flower of domestic peace. He thought of the women he had

seen in city offices—girls with faded cheeks, with premature lines between the eyes, eating frothy pastry at lunch-time, ever in nervous fear of angry orders or insults from their male employers.

“ But no woman would go out to work unless she was driven to it by hunger,” he said.

“ There’s worse things than hunger,” Tessie declared. “ I want a chance in life, and how will I ever get it if I stay at home? I never meet anybody or see anything. I can’t even practise music except secretly when grandfather happens to be out for his morning walk. Mother and I slip into the drawing-room and have an hour’s practice then, but I had to give up my lessons with Towianski. I’ll never do anything at music. And we haven’t had a visitor to the house for years—except Mr. Trott and some of the Elders.”

Tessie was speaking quickly and she went on almost without taking breath :

“ I never get any pocket-money—I hadn’t five shillings in the last five years—and I have to ask Mother whenever I want to buy anything, and then in nine cases out of ten she won’t let me ‘ waste ’ the money on it. When I do the shopping, they count the change I bring back. . . . And look at the clothes I have to wear. They’re years out of date. And on top of it all, look at the row we have to face to-night. Isn’t it humiliating for me to have to scheme and plot and deceive just for a day’s outing? But what can I do? ”

“ Do you know what I have been thinking? ” Shane asked.

“ What is it? ”

“ Why, I was thinking, when we heard all that Irish music, why don’t you try to get in touch with your father? ”

"With my father?"

"Yes. Don't you see, he can't be an old fogey. He'd be worth knowing."

"*Worth knowing!*—Is that how you think a girl should look upon her father?"

Shane was uncomfortable.

"Don't be so bitter," he said. "I can't understand you. First you say you're not content, and then you snap me up when I give you my ideas. You say you want to meet people. Well, I say, if you go to your father, you'll get plenty of chances." He spoke irritably.

"But, Shane, listen. Don't you understand, my father is a Roman Catholic. The people he moves among would be all worldly people. What good would it do me to go to them?"

"That's grandfather's talk," said Shane. "When he says 'worldly' he means people who are not always fussing about Greek texts. If you really were to go out to work, you'd find that almost everybody is worldly in his sense. Maybe they're as decent as if they weren't too. Fergus O'Cryan is as fine a fellow as I ever met. If you object to Roman Catholics, why did you go and mix with them to-day?"

"I know we oughtn't to have done it," said Tessie, awed. "But Mr. O'Cryan doesn't seem a bit like a Roman Catholic. Maybe he's not really one at heart and will see the error of his ways some day. Don't you think so?"

"I never thought about it," said Shane. "But he seems to me like a fellow that knows what he means. He's polite and all that, but I can tell you, there's fire in him when it's roused. You should see him at the Socialist meetings. He just surprised me."

"Is he a Socialist?" Tessie inquired doubtfully. "I don't think grandfather would approve of Socialism. . . ."

They were nearing the house now. It was, of course, in darkness. Involuntarily they ceased conversation. There was no sign of Armstrong. Shane drew the key from his pocket and opened the door, his hand trembling a little. Something rustled at the end of the hall, and the two home-coming ones started. It was but a card shaken from its place by the wind of the door's opening. They felt as though the house were haunted. Shane found a match and lit up. Tessie doffed her hat and set about her household duties hurriedly. Neither of them cared for food.

"Where can grandfather be?" Tessie asked at last breaking the anxious silence.

RAT TAT !!

Two echoing knocks at the door rang out. Tessie's face blanched, and Shane felt alarm tingling in his nerves, as he went to open the door.

Samuel Armstrong entered. He did not reveal whether he had been waiting in a neighbour's house for the prodigals' return, or whether he had spent his hour's vigil in a walk. Indeed, he said not a word. Silently he divested himself of his coat and rolled detachable shirt-cuffs, and silently he proceeded to his place in the sitting-room, while Shane and Tessie awaited the explosion. He slowly unlaced his boots, and drew them off. Tessie laid his slippers before him. He made no acknowledgement. He took his supper without uttering a syllable, and the young people began to wish that he would break the silence by any commination conceivable: the suspense was intolerable.

After supper, it was still Armstrong's custom to read from the Bible and deliver an extempore prayer. To-night he took down his Bible and opened it while Shane and Tessie composed themselves in their usual places. His face was shaded from the lamp by his hand, so that they could not see his features. He had found his place, but he did not read aloud. They waited for him to begin, but at last, not words, but a deep groan, came from his hidden lips.

"Are—are you unwell, grandfather?" Tessie asked. He did not answer directly. He closed the book solemnly and said slowly and gravely:

"I cannot read the Word of God in this ungodly and disgraced house."

The young folk said nothing.

"Has either of you any explanation to make?" Armstrong asked.

"We went out to-day, grandfather," Shane said, "and missed the train home. We—we thought we were doing no harm. I went to chapel this morning."

"NO HARM!" Armstrong turned on Shane with blazing features, and shouted the words. "*No harm?* And you living in deceit, lying to me, tricking and plotting and intriguing? How long have you been playing this game?"

"This was the first time, please, grandfather," said Tessie.

"*And it shall be the last!*" Armstrong thundered. "Where were you, tell me that!"

"At the Epping Forest," Shane answered, and then, with a sudden boldness that he had never felt before, his words coming with a coolness that he could not explain—he heard them coming from his mouth as though another person were speaking—"you talk of deceit," he said, "but it is you that

drove us to it with your harsh rules and your suspicions. If you will not be fair to us, how can you expect us to be fair to you?"

"What! Defiance! Rebellion! Self-defence! This is outrageous. There is something behind all this. Who put you to this conduct?"

"Nobody," said Shane, growing colder and calmer as Armstrong grew more violent. "Even if we went on Fergus O'Cryan's invitation, I take all the blame. It was I wanted to go, and I persuaded Tessie to come with me."

"Fergus O'Cryan! An Irish Papist! This is the last straw!"

Armstrong seemed completely overcome as he spoke. With difficulty only could he control his voice. His eyes lost all human seeming, and it seemed to Shane that a passion that was more than human looked out of his eyes: a dreadful, indescribable hatred. He remembered to have seen it once before: the same hatred, as of one possessed, had blazed in those eyes in that same place, fourteen years before—on the night when Tessie was brought home from the Convent.

At last, with much clutching of the hands and gasping, Armstrong recovered himself sufficiently to speak distinctly and with resolve.

"Woe, woe is me," he said, "that ever I brought you beneath my roof, you on whom the Devil has fastened his fangs, you wolf in sheep's clothing. I see it all now. *You are a Jesuit!*"

Shane was taken aback by the accusation, but Armstrong was in deadly earnest.

"Cunning, cunning is the Adversary, and cunning are his servants," he went on. "Who would suspect that one of such tender years—one reared

under my care and instructed in righteousness, should be a secret agent of that evil conspiracy ? I give thanks to the God of Israel that He has revealed this plot against me e'er worse befel. *You, girl* ” and he turned to Tessie—“ you I believe to have been led away by this creature, and you shall never see him again. Six weeks you will be locked in your room with suitable books on Jesuit intrigue to study, that you may learn how narrow has been your escape.

“ *And you, sir*,” (to Shane)—“ To-morrow morning you will leave my house, never to be seen here again. Righteous are Thy judgments, O God, and terrible shall be Thy vengeance ! ”

## CHAPTER V

### FORTUNE'S CROSSROADS

"Everything happens on Sundays with us," Shane had once said to Tessie: "our week days are all blanks." It was on a Sunday that Tessie had been taken from the Convent, that the Fenian had been seized at Lambert's house, that Tessie had met O'Cryan, and that Shane had been expelled from Armstrong's house. In the winter months after Shane's departure another Sunday brought changes into Tessie's life.

The Reverend Mr. Trott was to come to tea. In his honour, a fire was lit in the drawingroom, and the cretonne covers withdrawn from the chairs, sofa, etc., while the silver ware was polished and prepared for use. Tessie pouted when she was placed beside the little minister at table. His neck seemed longer than ever from his turned-down collar and white bow. He was effusively polite and was not perceptibly daunted by her distaste for those jams, cakes, etc., which he offered her. "Ah, Miss Tessie," he said waggishly, "I feah it is my clumsy attention and not the jam, which causes you to prefer the toast." Tessie's answer was a toss of her curls.

"Bai the way, Mr. Armstrong," said Reverend Trott, "I do not see your grandson here to-night. I trust no harm has come his way? . . ."

"His grandfather had to turn him out of the house!" said Aunt Rebecca.

"O my!" said Mr. Trott. "I trust I am not intruding into private affairs?"

"He openly rebelled against the head of the house," Aunt Rebecca went on, "and went off to kick up his heels with worldly people, so there was nothing to do but close the door on him and let him go his own way."

"What—ah—has become of him, then?"

"We don't know and we don't care, Mr. Trott," Aunt Matilda said. Tessie noticed with some surprise that Armstrong did not join in his daughters' vehement expressions of indifference to Shane's fate.

"I trust," said he, "that the erring youth will yet find his way back to the fold; but we have had no news of him since he left."

"Well, praise the Lord, brother, you have a granddaughter who has not erred, a handmaiden who is true to your righteous teaching."

Armstrong bent his brows on Tessie. "I am sorry to say," he put in, "that this young woman showed signs of rebellion, too, and was led astray by the youth. Together they went off to what, so far as I can gather from her admissions, was a Papist dancing festival like unto the feasts of Baal, breaking the Sabbath and insulting the Almighty. But she is corrected and repentant, I believe."

Tessie felt the hot blood surge to her head as the Reverend Trott turned a benign gaze on her and began: "Ah, 'tis hard to place old heads on young shoulders, brother. Youth is ever apt to have its fling. But prayer and reading of the Scriptures will overcome these temptations."

"I trust, Mr. Trott, that she will heed your good words," said Aunt Rebecca.

"Pay attention to Mr. Trott," said Aunt Matilda,

jogging Tessie's elbow. Tessie was ready to break into tears, and was on the point of rushing from the table, when there came a knocking at the street door.

"Who can it be?" asked Aunt Rebecca, as Aunt Matilda stole into the hall. The rest at the table fell silent and listened. Aunt Matilda turned the latch, and the door creaked open. Then they heard a half-shriek followed by panting breaths, as though Aunt Matilda had received a shock that took her breath from her. There were voices; a woman's and a man's, and Aunt Matilda, looking like a ghost, reappeared.

"It's . . . it's my husband," she gasped. "Shall I let him in, father?"

Armstrong stood up, trembling like his daughter. "Let him come," he said, after hesitation. "We will hear what he has to say. . . ."

"Pardon my venturing to interpose," said the Reverend Trott, the V's at the corners of his eyes wrinkling up, "but might I suggest, dear brother, that although this visit is doubtless painful to you, it would be well to receive Mr.—er—Murnane without showing your emotion. Allow him to come to the table, and in the course of the evening's social proceedings you will find leisure to deliberate on the attitude to adopt towards him."

"That is wise counsel, brother," said Armstrong.

Vincent Murnane came in, accompanied by Dora Josephine, his sister, a woman whose girlish dress contrasted with a streak of grey in her hair and who kissed Tessie effusively, though Murnane himself abstained from any demonstration. Armstrong bowed a cold welcome, and the newcomers sat down to the table. Tessie eyed her father and aunt eagerly. Murnane was a heavily-built, fine-featured man, with

the air of a *bon-vivant*, a lover of good fare and wine. His somewhat fleshy face was pursed, and he bore the grand manner of the old families of Clare. As he spoke, deprecating the pains taken for his comfort, he gesticulated with a manicured, gold-ringed hand.

His sister pulled up her chair as if to make herself thoroughly at home, and began a torrent of lively conversation in a broad, carefully-marked brogue. She seemed to be talking to put the company at ease. She explained that they had found the day free, and had decided to look up old friends. It was dreadful weather. She hoped her accent did not puzzle anyone. She was proud of it, and believed it was more Irish to-day than when she left Ireland twenty years ago. Yes, she was getting quite an old woman now. Vincent here was wearing better than herself. "Do-Jo," he had said to her yesterday, "do you know that you're qualifying for a retired pension?"

Tessie could not judge from her father's impassive features the nature of his emotions. When he looked at her, it was but with a glance: he had extraordinary restraint. She noticed that her mother had red eyes, and was in a state of curious agitation. But thanks to her new aunt's vivacious conversation, the meal passed off satisfactorily, though nobody save the Reverend Trott ate anything.

Somebody suggested music, and the company retired to the drawingroom. "I'm just dying to hear Tessie's violin," Dora Josephine declared. So Tessie, accompanied by her mother, played *Jerusalem the Golden* and *Crossing the Bar*. The Reverend Trott seated himself near the piano, in the light of the crimson-fringed standing lamp, and assisted Tessie in the placing of her music-stand.

" Do you know," he said, " I think that on so rare an occasion as the present Mr. Armstrong would permit just a *leetle* secular, though not giddy and frivolous, music. I am sure you have a selection of some classical pieces that, while not exactly sacred, are more serious than light dancing tunes. . . . I appeal to you, Brother Armstrong. I am sure you will allow this leetle relaxation to-night ? "

Armstrong nodded with some reluctance, and Tessie picked out a selection of pieces : the very things she had played to Fergus O'Cryan on the day of the *seilg*.

And now her talent showed itself. The nervousness which had afflicted her since her father's arrival, disappeared under the enthusiasm of her art. Her mother sat bolt upright at the piano, and picked out the accompaniment with mechanical accuracy, but Tessie, as the soaring notes leapt from her instrument, forgot her environment and played with abandon. She seemed to be pouring out herself in impassioned self-expression, and her father watched her with the wrapt delight that had shone in O'Cryan's eyes, too. And the emotion in his heart was the same : a sense of loneliness and of longing. How happy he could be were this daughter of his playing thus in his house each night, he thought !

When the vibrating melody died at last into silence, there was a little round of applause from the visitors. The Reverend Trott, who had been gazing soulfully at the player, was effusive in his praise. " My deah Miss Teresa," he said, " you overcome me with the beauty of your execution," and he busied himself in sorting out her music.

Murnane watched from his corner of the room with shrewd judgment. " Good God, Do-Jo," said he to his sister, " and is that damned little minister making up to my daughter ? "

Samuel Armstrong had been fretting at the floor while the music proceeded, and drumming with his hands on the chair. "I cannot understand," he remarked at the end, "what people can see in this tuneless stuff."

"Do you know, Mr. Armstrong," said Do-Jo, "I believe you're not enjoying yourself a bit."

"I am accustomed to giving my time to more profitable pursuits, young woman," said the head of the house. "The study of the Scriptures is my one thought and ambition."

"You must indeed be well up in the subject now," said she, "I'm sure it's terribly interesting."

Armstrong looked closely at her: she seemed fully in earnest.

"No doubt," said he, "you have been denied advantages in this respect, but if you would let me give you an *Emphatic Diaglott* and lend you a volume of Copas's *Studies in the Epistles*, I have no doubt that you would feel yourself absorbed in the new world opened to you."

"And have you those books here, Mr. Armstrong? —I mean the Emphatic Dialect or whatever you called it? I would so much like to read them. Father Mulryan says . . . ."

"If you are looking for truth, my daughter, do not heed what self-appointed teachers tell you. Think for yourself, and follow carefully the teachings of Sampson Copas. If you will come with me to the bookcase, I will present you with some edifying literature to take away with you."

And Armstrong led Do-Jo to the other room, where she revealed an altogether surprising interest in his books. Was it possible that Daniel had prophesied the Roman Church and the End of the

World? She had never heard of Daniel, she declared. Armstrong had no idea that the priests could blind their charges so utterly.

She had some doubt about the authenticity of Daniel, however, so Clarke's *Commentary* had to be consulted, likewise Cruden's *Concordance*. And was there really a book called *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*? Armstrong could not find it on a casual search. Ah, but she *must* have that particular book: half-an-hour went in the search for it. . . . Armstrong afterwards remarked that though he was kept from the company for an hour and a half, he felt the time had not been wholly wasted: that poor dark girl had shown an extraordinary thirst for light. . . .

Meanwhile Aunt Rebecca was washing up the tea-things and preparing supper. Tessie saw her father and mother in deep converse just beyond the fan of lamplight. What—O what—were they saying to each other after so long years? Wondering and wondering she paid ill-attention to the Reverend Trott, who was talking at her elbow. He was telling her of the grand new hall in the heart of the city to which the Disciples of Verity had transferred their London work; and of the comfortable apartments that had been allotted to him, their pastor, “unworthy as I am to hold so important a place in the Laird’s service.” The life, it seemed, was very interesting. So many visitors from the United States used to call there, and—it was a great secret, but he felt he could trust her with it—perhaps, perhaps, Mr. Copas himself would come over next year to take charge in London of the great English mission and he himself would go to America, to occupy the pulpit in the Great New York Tabernacle of the Movement. He felt sure that Mr. Armstrong would recommend

him. But ah!—attractive as the New York call would be, it would be very lonely to him if he had to leave *all* his friends behind. . . .

He hoped she would excuse his remarking on her somewhat pale complexion. He feared she was not enjoying the best of health. She wanted more change, more variety, more life. If she could only have a sea-voyage. . . . Perhaps, too, she was not happy? She needed more light society, more *sympathetic* society? Perhaps if . . . .

It was at this point that Tessie seized the drift of his talk. Turning to him abruptly, she interrupted his sentence with the question: "Are you trying to—to propose to me?"

"Propose? I? Oh, my deah young lady, pray don't take my remarks so amiss! Believe me that I am your very true friend. Though I am somewhat older than yourself, I am young at heart, and I have watched your growth from girlhood to radiant womanhood with ever-deepening . . . ."

"Tell me," asked Tessie abruptly. "Have you my grandfather's consent to all this?"

"Well—aw—I have reason to believe that he would not be altogether averse to your settling down in a home in which you would have true religious . . . ."

Tessie was half impelled to laugh and half to cry with vexation. She turned critical eyes on her companion. His handkerchief was spread square on the carpet, and he was hitching up his trousers at the knees. Was he preparing to kneel? A tremendous sob of laughter rose within her, and she fled from the apartment.

She went to her own room, while the Reverend Trott, a little disconcerted, discussed with Aunt

Rebecca, now returned to the drawingroom, the work of the Anti-Tipping Guild of the Mission Hall, making no allusion to his rebuff. All this time, Tessie's mother and father continued their conversation. At length Armstrong returned to the room with Do-Jo, who carried under her arm, with every appearance of reverence, a cheap Bible, several of S. T. Copas's volumes, a packet of tracts, and a copy of the week's *Sword of Gideon*. "I must have these very carefully tied up," she said to Aunt Rebecca. "Wouldn't it be dreadful if I lost any of them on the way home after all the pains Mr. Armstrong took with me this evening?"

Armstrong was looking at the Reverend Trott inquiringly. "Nothing definite so far," said the latter to him, aside. "But it is something to have broached the subject. We must not expect the young handmaiden to know her own mind at the first questioning, Brother."

Vincent Murnane was, at the same moment, speaking aside to his sister. "Bravo, Do-Jo," said he, "you kept the coast clear grandly."

"Is she willing?" Do-Jo asked.

"Wavering," said her brother.

"Where is Teresa?" asked Armstrong.

"She must have gone to her room," said Reverend Trott. "She was complaining of a little indisposition."

Her mother went in search of her. "Why did you leave the company, Tessie?" she asked, finding the girl lying face down upon her bed.

Tessie looked up with burning dry eyes: she seemed too sunk in her thoughts to have heard the question. Her mother repeated it.

"That man . . . ." Tessie said. "He proposed

to me ! Were you in it, too, mother ? Did you know he was going to do that ? ”

“ No ! ”—the surprise in Mrs. Murnane’s looks was obviously real. “ What did you answer him ? ”

“ What *could* I answer him ? I didn’t answer him at all, of course. He must have taken leave of his senses. Why did you leave me to be insulted like that ? ”

“ I was talking to your father, child. He had a very important proposal to make.”

Tessie’s interest was kindled by her mother’s significant tone. “ What was that ? ” she asked.

“ He wants us to go and live with him in Ireland. Now that you are of age, he is willing to promise not to interfere with your religion. He promises to treat us kindly and to give you a chance to continue your music. Isn’t that splendid, dear ? Wouldn’t you like to come ? ”

Tessie’s surprise at this was dominated by wonder at her mother’s last words.

“ Do you really mean that you are in favour of this ? ” she asked.

“ Why, yes, dear. I’m tired of this life,” her mother said. “ I’ve been longing and hoping for this all through the years. I’ve always been wishing for the day when I could take my proper place at the head of my own table. I’m your grandfather’s eldest daughter, and in spite of that, he lets Rebecca sit at the head of the table opposite him and serve out the tea just as she did before we came to the house.”

Tessie was amazed at her mother’s vehemence : she had never suspected the existence of this discontent.

“ I’m getting on in years now, dear, and if we

don't go now perhaps we never will. You'll be glad to come, won't you?—and—and—you'll go down now and break the news to your grandfather?"

Tessie was silent.

"Is there anything on your mind, dear, that you don't seem pleased with this good news?" her mother asked.

"Do you know, mother," Tessie said at last, "I'd like to know more about my father before we decided to go with him. . . . Couldn't we get to know him a little better before we accept this invitation? . . . He seems affectionate very suddenly: but he never sent me a single penny all the time we lived away from him. I never had any money of my own or any chance at all, and that wasn't *all* grandfather's fault. Why didn't he show an interest in me before this?"

"Oh, but, dear, we must let bygones be bygones," said Mrs. Murnane. "Your father always held that I had no right to take you from the Convent, and he wouldn't contribute to your keep till you went back under his authority."

"And did he want me to go back to the Convent?" Tessie asked angrily, her grandfather's influence blazing up in her. "If he is that sort of Papist tyrant, how could you ask me to go under his roof? How do you know what he would do once he had us in his hands?"

"Oh, Tessie, Tessie! You'll be sorry for this yet," her mother wailed in desperation, and speaking more truly than she guessed. "You are working against your own best interests. But . . . tell me, dear, is there something behind all this? Have you some motive for not wanting to come to your father's house?"

Tessie looked strangely at her, with parted lips as if to speak, and then shook her raven tresses and stared dumbly out of the window.

"Matilda! Matilda!" Armstrong's voice was calling.

"Quick: your grandfather wants us. What are you going to say?"

"Tell father to wait awhile: let us meet him again. Put off the decision. . . ." Tessie was thinking that if she had but a chance to see Shane and . . . his friend Fergus O'Cryan . . . before going to Ireland, it might be well to consider going. But if she went now without seeing Shane . . . and his friend . . . she might never see them. She wanted time, time.

When Tessie and her mother came downstairs, Armstrong beckoned Mrs. Murnane aside. He had Murnane already with him, and the father touched Tessie's hand and gripped it as she passed. The tacit expression of affection touched the girl sharply. She found herself again in the drawingroom, this time with the Reverend Trott and Do-Jo.

The little minister, apparently eager to win Do-Jo's favour to his suit, was striving to make himself agreeable. "I always wished to pay a visit to your delightful country," he was telling her. "I am told that the scenery is exquisite."

Do-Jo threw up her hands. "Oh, you can't guess," she said in a gushing tone, "how delighted the people would be to welcome you. Faith and it's to you they'd give the *céad mile fáilte*: the heartiest of welcomes and the warmest reception going away."

Tessie mentally remarked that this was a real Irish bull.

"Oh, do come, Mr. Toddle, I mean Mr. Trott," Do-Jo went on. "Come and open a branch of the

business in dearr dirrty Dublin, and I'm sure you'll get no end of support entirely."

None of the people at the *seilg*, Tessie reflected, rolled their *r*'s quite so forcibly as this aunt of hers from Clare.

"Man dear," Do-Jo was saying [the glasses fell off Mr. Trott's nose], "man dear, but they would enjoy your preaching in ould Ireland beyond the power-r of worrds to describe. And who knows," said she, "but we might find a wife for you among the colleens of Connemara or Killarney's lakes and fells?" [Mr. Trott's glasses simply would *not* stay in their place]. "Irishwomen make good wives, Mr. Trott: they are so vivacious, so homely, and so beautiful (though I say it that shouldn't)—if only you can prevail on them not to smoke their dudeens in the drawingroom. I'm sure you wouldn't approve of a minister's wife doing that, Mr. Trott, though of course, in high society, it could be excused as a piquant little eccentricity."

Tessie began vaguely to wonder whether her aunt was really serious in all she said.

"My deah Madam," the Reverend Trott began, jamming his glasses into place, "believe me that in desiring to visit the Emerald Isle of Erin, it is not with matrimonial intentions; such would be farthest from my thoughts when away from England" (this with a glance at Tessie)—"although I need hardly remark that I fully recognise the—ah—the charm and grace of Irish womanhood" (a bow). "Irish blood, pure, or mingled with that of the sturdier if less brilliant Anglo-Saxon race" (another glance at Tessie) "is notoriously responsible of the most superior specimens of the human kind, ah."

"What a very gallant speech from a clergyman, Mr. Totter," said Do-Jo, demurely.

Tessie was so bewildered that she had little time to wonder what was proceeding in the next room. She little guessed that her life-fate was there hanging in the balance.

"Mr. Murnane here tells me," said Armstrong to Tessie's mother when the door closed on them, "that he was proposing to you the setting up of house with his family once again."

"That is so," said Murnane.

"You would expect me to oppose this proposition perhaps," Armstrong went on. "But as Mr. Murnane has given me assurances that my granddaughter's religion shall not be tampered with, I am inclined to advise you to consider it favourably. It would perhaps make for your happiness and that of the child to go with Mr. Murnane."

Mrs. Murnane was overcome with surprise at this attitude in her father: her sister, Aunt Rebecca, seemed not less astonished.

"I am very glad, father, that you are so willing to let me go back to Vincent. But if we could put it off for just a little while—to give Tessie a chance to make up her mind—she doesn't want to go quite so suddenly: I was talking to her."

"She will have to do what she is told," said Armstrong.

"No," said Murnane, "I want her to come willingly if she comes at all. If she does not want to come, I'll withdraw the proposal altogether. Call her in and let us put the question to her." And after much talk to no purpose, this was done.

Tessie was between two minds when they called her in. Her father looked very fond of her: she liked his appearance. But to go to Ireland—that meant breaking with everything in England and with

the chance of seeing Fergus O'Cryan again. Besides, what if her father gave her over to the priests? There in Ireland she would have no protection against the perils that her grandfather so often described. She wondered why he did not see this. Something within her that was stronger than herself fought against the idea of going amongst the priests and their people. She could not analyse this curious feeling, as of a separate identity, that rose furiously within her when the thought crossed her mind that maybe she would be asked to go to Mass. . . . It was this odd impulse in her that conquered a more primitive one that it succeeded. She had wanted, first, to throw herself into her father's arms: and now she shrank from him with suspicion.

"I—I'd like time," she said. "Can't we wait a little before we decide? If mother is ready to go to Ireland, I'll stay with grandfather for a little while. . . ."

Samuel Armstrong received this suggestion with strange show of distaste.

"If your mother decides to go, you had better go too, child," he said. "And it would not be quite—not altogether convenient, perhaps, for you to stay on here. . . ."

"What do you mean by that?" Tessie asked with sudden heat, and Armstrong's daughters looked at him with wonderment that increased as he went on:

"If your mother leaves this roof, I might be making other arrangements," he said.

Aunt Rebecca's sheeplike demeanour broke. "You mean," she cried explosively, reaching out her hand and pointing in the seventy-year-old greybeard's face, "that you are going to marry again! I suspected it! I knew it! And to think that it should come

to pass!" She threw herself into a chair and sobbed.

All looked inquiringly at Armstrong. He was white, and speaking under restraint he said: "It may as well come out now as later—I *am*."

"That's why you changed the meetings from the Mission Hall to the city!" cried Matilda, joining in her sister's indignation. "You could carry on there without your daughters' knowledge! Oh, you men, you men! We guessed there was something behind that move."

Armstrong drew himself together. "I cannot allow myself to be talked to in this way," he said. "I have long been finding a want of sympathy in this household, a lack of interest in the good things of the Lord. I have been talking over my affairs, with a dear sister in the Vineyard Work, who is disposed to share her fortunes with me for the remaining span of life allotted to us. Sister Dorcas's interest in the teachings of dear Brother Copas is most edifying and comforting, and I look forward to many happy evenings spent in searching of the Scriptures."

"If you intend to bring that woman *here*," said Matilda vehemently, "I won't leave the house to make way for her."

"Nice state of affairs, indeed," said Aunt Rebecca, "me to be put out of my place at my age to make way for an old frump just because she flatters you about your books and such-like. Fancy you scolding about the children going out to an amusement on Sunday evening when you were skylarking with that Dorcas woman yourself."

Armstrong seemed abashed at this rebellious note.

"You are my daughters," he said, "I expect a more filial attitude of respect in you than this."

"Are we to be crowded over and suppressed in everything?" Aunt Matilda asked. "After pinching and screwing and slaving all our lives for you?" said Aunt Rebecca.—"And how would any stranger know how to look after you? About warming your flannels every night and feeding you properly?" demanded Matilda, etc., etc.

While the altercation was going on, Vincent Murnane spoke to his daughter for the first time directly. "Well, girlie," said he, "it looks as if your mother will be doubtful about coming now. Speak up yourself. What do you say? Will you come with me?" [With what suppressed eagerness he spoke!]

Once more Tessie was between two minds—half eager to accept this chance of a new start in life and a parent's love and pride: half suspicious of her father's intentions. The possibility of seeing Fergus O'Cryan again also counted in her thoughts. Once more she asked for time to consider.

There was a lull in the dispute now, and Tessie's mother addressed Murnane: "I am sorry, Vincent," said she, "to change my decision, but I cannot come with you and leave my father to the intrigues of this Dorcas woman, trying to worm her way into my place. I must stay with my father in his old age. . . . later on perhaps . . . , but you never did anything for me and Tessie in the years gone by, and my duty to my father . . . ."

"Did nothing for you," exclaimed Murnane angrily. "Nothing for you! Was I to support you when you refused to return to my roof—to support you when you stole away my daughter from her father and her religion? Stay with your father then, and I wish him well of you. But Tessie will come with me."

He turned to her. " You'll come with your father and have a chance in life, won't you, dear ? " he asked.

But Tessie had frozen. She shrank back from his outstretched hands and looked at him with hardened eyes. " You said something about religion, then, " said she coldly. " You said my mother *stole* me away from your superstitions and tyrannies. If that's your frame of mind, I'm glad you let it out. " She put her arm into her mother's and drew close to her. " I am *thankful* to my mother that she saved me from you, " she said.

Her fate was decided now.

" Don't be so down-hearted, Vincent, " said Do-Jo in the train on the way home after lifting her bundle of books reverently to the parcel rack. " You've done without them so long, you can wait a little longer. Maybe they'll change their mind. "

But Murnane seemed stricken now with a sorrow sorer than loneliness.

" Isn't Tessie a nice girl ? " said he. " But how the devil did they make such a sourface of my daughter ? "

Do-Jo had nothing to say to this. After a while she began, meditatively,

" Isn't it a good thing our priests are celibates ? What fools women would make of them if they went in for matrimony ! "

No answer.

" Fancy going to Confession to the Reverend Toddles, " said Do-Jo.

" Ach ! " said her brother.

## CHAPTER VI

### SHANE IN THE SHADOW

Old Peter Joyce lived in a top-flat not far from Euston Station, with Fergus O'Cryan, who loved him as if he were his father. There, overlooking the roofs of London, grey and crimson and gold at sunset, with the dusty trees waving in the dusk below, he dwelt frugally among his books, studying Platonism and dreaming of Irish freedom.

One autumn evening, Fergus, who had been spending a holiday in Ireland, came home, very brown-faced and very tired. "Back again to exile?" Peter asked, with his gentle smile.

"Back again," said Fergus, as he lifted a chair out to the flat roof to sit with his old friend and take refreshment.

"But I've something to work for now," said he.

"It is?"

"There's a man in Dublin means business at last," Fergus answered.

Peter looked very closely at him. "That is good news," said he, slowly, "if it's the right man."

"I think he is," said Fergus quietly, and they both fell silent for a while.

"I had a good time cycling through the country," Fergus said at last. "I don't know which was the loveliest spot I saw. I'd never be tired of the Irish roads; there's new wonders at every turn. The Boyne Valley, all woody garden country with the

duns of the gods at Grange ; the Shannon Valley, all green and open and windy. . . . ”

“ How did you find the spirit of the people ? ”

Fergus sighed. “ You’d think Emmet had never died,” he answered. “ They’d take anything—or nothing : all they want is jobs. Our crowd is just a few poor devils here and there—the language is as flat as if there was never a Gaelic League (barring at the Feiseanna and it makes a little show then)—it would be depressing if it were not for the Dublin men.”

“ So Dublin cheered you up ? ”

“ Yes. The meeting came off yesterday. The G-men were swarming . . . . ”

“ It’s a good sign anyway that the Castle thinks seriously enough of the Left Wing to keep it watched.”

“ It is that. We had a bogus meeting called at Rathmines, but we met afterwards at Phibsborough. They talked business there.”

“ How so ? ”

“ Arms and drilling. Mac says the country’s quiet is the quiet before the storm : the low ebb of the tide before the turn. He has great faith in a big national rally when the Party goes too far and gets dished over Home Rule. And then the new man said that when the time comes he’ll give a lead if there’s even six men in Ireland to follow him. They think there’ll likely be war with Germany. He said that would be our chance. It would rouse the people if it did nothing else, and it would put an end to cringing for crumbs. A good lead would set the country on the march to freedom anyway. I can go back to my chemistry now with some heart. There’ll be need for all the stuff I can make.”

“ What sort is this new man ? What does he look like ? ”

"Heavy-built; not handsome; rugged features; everything about him is plain and stark. But you should see him when he's speaking. He lights up like a lantern, and his voice would convince you like the Gospel."

"I wonder, I wonder," Peter mused. "Is he the man that is born to free Ireland? . . ."

After a while Peter spoke again. "I wonder," said he, "how young Shane Lambert is doing. I have been dreaming about Robert Lambert lately—again and again. He seemed troubled about the boy in my dreams."

Fergus started as though the question were in some way unwelcome.

"I suppose he's the same as ever," said he. "I heard he is turning up at the Gaelic League night after night. Some books I sent him got him interested, and now he is at the classes three nights a week, and working in the League office every other night. He seems to have the right stuff in him."

"Why wouldn't he, and he his father's son? Bob Lambert was a sound Irishman at heart."

"So you don't believe he turned informer?"

"Informer? You and I would turn informers first!"

"I believe you're right. I had as much faith in him as yourself."

"If it wasn't for the priests, Lambert would have been with us," said Peter.

"That's what you are always saying," answered Fergus, "but it's my belief that it was the want of being a Catholic that ruined his life. It just kept him a little outside the nation. These Protestant people want nationality at less than cost price, and they never get the real article. They never get fully ta home with us."

"Ah well," said Peter, "maybe you're right there. But we need some Protestant Nationalists so as to have independent men. Anyway, what about looking up young Shane?"

"You seem very earnest about that."

"And you seem very reluctant to take me up. . . ." Peter looked through eye-slits at his companion. "I'm not sure," said he, "that there's not something behind this. Tell me now, how long is it since you saw that cousin of Shane's—Teresa Murnane?"

Fergus stopped eating. He returned Peter's sharp gaze for a moment and then flung up his head in a burst of shrill, mirthless laughter. "You are keen," he said, "very keen. You have touched just the reason that I shirk looking young Lambert up. . . . I haven't seen her for six months now. I'm better not seeing her. I have something else to think of. . . ."

" . . . You mean that if you're going to fight. . . ."

Fergus nodded. "Besides," said he, "she would have nothing to do with a social revolutionary and an Irish separatist: a Holy Roman into the bargain. She as much as said so. . . . I met her by accident. Her father had just turned up and asked her to go to Ireland, with him, she said."

"You told me nothing about this meeting," Peter interrupted. "Why didn't she go with him, anyway?"

"Religion. That was it as far as I could gather. I took her answer to him for my own answer. . . ."

"That was where you were wrong," said Peter. "*Omnes vertuntur: certe vertuntur amores.*"

"Maybe so. But what was I to do?—If only you saw her bitterness, too! Would you believe that a girl baptized a Catholic could grow so bitter against the Church?"

"That sort *is* the bitterest," said Peter. "There's something gets into them that fights against their going back. . . . But listen.—You'll send a message to young Shane to come and see me?"

"Very well." Fergus assented, though circumstances were to arise rendering his message unnecessary.

"You have relieved me," said Old Peter with a sigh.

The light was glimmering now, and it was growing cool. The two rose to re-enter the house, which now was black and silent.

Peter suddenly spoke in an altered voice. "Saint John visited me again while you were away," he said, and Fergus looked at him sharply. "He told me," said Peter, leaning on the younger man's arm, "he told me to keep heart; that the days were hastening to the end now, and that I may yet live to hear the sounding of the trumpets and see Babylon overthrown!"

In a ricketty attic in the heart of the newspaper quarter, the Gaelic League had its headquarters, where every night, after a lesson in Irish grammar, young men toiled voluntarily through directories, listing the Irish names, or addressed hundreds of envelopes to carry the propaganda of Irish-Ireland into exiles' homes throughout the mighty city. Here, save on evenings when he lacked the fare, and stayed in his lodgings reading engineering books, Shane was to be found from seven o'clock to eleven-thirty, working with his pen, while in disjointed conversation he drank in knowledge of Ireland, her history, her legends, her ideals. He would fill with bitterness at the story of the score of thwarted efforts that had been made to win Irish liberty, and at the recounting

of the dragoonings, the starvings, the burnings of towns and clearing of counties, that had gone on year after year for centuries. And now, in this new century, a little slender society was all that stood for the great Gaelic nation of old, while the enemy's triumph roared in his ears from the busy streets. . . .

He picked up airs from his fellows singing at their work :

Carew is dead and Lane is fled,  
Now for Black Fitzwilliam's head—  
We'll send it over dripping red  
To 'Lisa and her ladies,

and the soaring melancholy of *Siubhal a Ghrádh* that filled him with the sorrow of a thousand bereavements. Sometimes he would rummage through the bookcase and try to riddle out the Irish Bible, many copies of which had been presented to the society—Shane was the first to open the dusty volumes. And now he strove to learn off the patriot psalms and prophets' words in Irish, for the passages so familiar to him in his grandfather's house, bore a new meaning, and it was with a strange exaltation that he dwelt on the Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones :

Then he said unto me, Son of Man, these bones are the whole house of Israel : behold our bones are dried, and our hope is lost ; we are cut off from our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, This saith the Lord God : Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves and bring you into the land of Israel.

He loved now to read anew :

Thy people also shall be all righteous ; they shall inherit the land for ever. . . . A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation : I the Lord will hasten it in his time. . . . And they shall build the old wastes ; they shall raise up the former desolations and they shall

repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. . . . Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah. . . . And they shall call them, The holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, and thou shalt be called: Sought out, a city not forsaken.

Among his fellow workers there was Patrick Zoest —of a Dutch family settled in Cork, who signed himself Pàdruig de Shóist, and held a string of Oireachtas medals for Gaelic song. There was Frank Doorly, who longed more than anything else to live in Ireland, yet had refused many good posts there because he would not leave his mother ("I must go home and show a good mother a bad son," he would say at eleven o'clock), an Englishwoman, who said to her husband, when he received a Fenian summons just after his marriage: "Go and do your duty, I do not want a husband who would desert his own people." There was Earnan O'Tórla [né Turner], proud of being the son of one of the fieriest Orangemen who ever left Belfast, destined to win fame by his defence of a critical outpost in Easter Week. There was Egan O'Rahilly, the only one born in Ireland, who had perfect Irish, having heard it about him in his youth, so that learning came easy: he wrote a play or two in the language, and some verse in the manner of his great namesake, and talked of his 'companions' "Irish-of-Stratford-Atte-Bowe." He it was who taught Shane to sing *An Cnotadh Bán* and *Máirín Ni Chuilleánáin* and other songs of the Munster poets, and told him of the genial, half-communal life of the Gaeltacht, so that it became Shane's ambition to live awhile in the Irish-speaking districts. He reflected that his grandfather's property at Portabeg must probably be situated in the Gaeltacht of the North, but wondered whether he would ever have the opportunity to visit it.

All these were the workers. There were also the distinguished folk. There was Roger Lynn, son of an Ulster clergyman, once editor of a Republican series of booklets in Belfast, and now winning fame as a brilliant journalist. He was loved for his gentle, almost pious, air, and admirers spoke of him as the new Davis who was to win Ulster to Ireland. But as he advanced in fame, he wrote less and less for Irish papers, though he taught an Irish class once a week—to salve his conscience, a sour critic said. This sour one was P. J. O'Herrity, a little fiery man who shot his words through his moustache like bullets, and never argued. His sentences were short, dogmatic, and violent. He was an expert on Irish history and wrote the praises of physical force in slangy Carlylese. He edited the society's monthly magazine, *Inis Ealga*, to which Shane contributed little tales and essays, his first efforts in journalism. Peadar O'Connor, the Gaelic novelist, would appear at long intervals, telling an enthusiastic circle of late adventures on tramp steamers, or with a gipsy caravan. There was Liam O'Briain, a bearded writer in Labour organs, who regarded the League as a school of souls seeking Life upon the Plane of Devarcham and once tried to get a class to resolve itself into a spiritualistic *séance*. And there was Mickey—a wildish youth who called everything bloody, and lived to sit in the Cabinet of the Irish Republic.

One evening, as he worked in the League office, Shane grew oddly sick. He noticed when he looked in the glass, that his face was sallow—the whites of his eyes were yellowing, and his hands were yellow, too. Next evening he was weaker, and the yellowness had deepened. Arthur Ryan, a grey *habitué* of the League office, a man who had lost his savings again

and again in support of the society, came over to Shane and spoke seriously :

“ You are not fit to be working here,” he said. “ You are burning the candle at both ends. I know. I’ve seen scores of young men doing it in this very office. And now you’ve got to lie up.”

“ But—but I’m not that ill,” said Shane, yet even as he spoke, he felt a swimming sickness in the head and sat down weakly.

“ You’d better let me see you home,” said Ryan, “ for the sooner you’re in your bed the better it will be for you.”

Shane went over to the glass, and was surprised to see that the odd yellowness in his face had suddenly intensified to an eggish colour. His limbs were weak and his head ached. Ryan took him to his lodgings in a dirty back street, and at the door Shane tried to dismiss his companion : he did not care to take a visitor into the seedy attic room that he rented for eight shillings a week. But Ryan insisted on coming up. “ I must see you safe into bed,” said he to Shane. “ Do you know what’s the matter with you—jaundice ! ”

Mrs. Boddy, Shane’s landlady, was a stout, unwashed woman, whose tousled hair seemed never to have known the comb. When called by Arthur Ryan, she stood with arms akimbo in the door, declaring that she must have next week’s rent in advance if Shane was going to lie up. “ I ’ad a tenant wunst as lost ’is job through being ill and never paid my bill,” she said. “ I’m a ’ard-worked woman as can’t afford bad debts.”

Ryan looked towards Shane, and understanding by his confusion that his pockets were empty, went to the door and whispered to Mrs. Boddy : “ That’ll be

all right : we'll see to that," slipping some silver into her hand. " And now," he said, " can you bring up a good warm meal of bread and milk—and, yes, you'd better let us have a change of bed linen. . . ."

Mrs. Boddy made difficulties. Her house was not a orseptital. Nor was she a millionaire. These things must be paid for. . . .

When at last she had retired, Ryan looked at Shane closely : " I think I see the way it is," said he. " What sort of food does that one give you ? "

" Bread and margarine for breakfast and the same for tea except when I can afford an egg. I get my dinner at the R. P. C., and after the League, I get a glass of milk and a bun at the Italian restaurant for supper."

" You are starving yourself," said Ryan. " I noticed it this while back, but didn't like to interfere. Look at your ribs ! "

Shane was stripped now and the bones stood out through his yellow skin.

" Have you any friends who can come and nurse you ? " Ryan asked.

" No," said Shane, sickly. " I'll be all right if I rest a day or two." His pride rose up against Armstrong's household learning of his plight. He heard as in anticipation the " I told you so's," and a series of moralisings on rebel youths' bad ends.

" You must have somebody," said Ryan, firmly. " Else I will have you taken to hospital. It would be murder to leave you in charge of that harpy below. Good heavens—look at that ! " And he crushed with his finger a creeping thing upon the wall. Shane did not know the names for the horrid things that crept about this attic.

" Think now," said Ryan, " Isn't there somebody would look after you ? "

" There was a decent Irishwoman and her husband, a tram-man called MacCarthy, living in the room under this till last week," said Shane, " but they've gone back to Ireland, after the man saved up enough from his wages to buy a little piece of land. She used to sew my buttons for me and she would have helped, but there's someone else in the flat now. There was a Lady-Something-or-other came slumming here lately. She said she was an Irishwoman. Mrs. McCarthy told her how she hated being here among the dirty-living English, and she said : ' Faith, it's the same with me, though I live in the West End.' "

" Who's in the flat now ? "

" Some drunken couple : they'd not help."

" Wait now," said Ryan. " When you were going home from a *seilg* a year or so ago—you don't mind my recalling it ?—there was a man in the carriage who said he lived in Woburn Mansions.—That's not far from here."

" Oh, yes," said Shane, with a feeble laugh, and he shivered under the bedclothes, " that was Todkins, my father's old bottle-boy."

" Well, I'm going round to hunt him out," said Ryan, and took his departure.

When he had gone, Shane found, left behind as if by accident, a little white-metal medal hanging by a ribbon on the bedpost. It bore a curious symbol of a cross mounted on a letter M with two burning hearts below. Shane could not understand it, and turned to the obverse side. A gracious figure, her head circled by stars, extended hands from which showers fell. Round the edge ran the inscription : " O Mary, Conceived Without Sin, Pray for Us Who have Recourse to Thee." He looked for a long while at that design, and felt for the first time, a bitter

longing for a mother's care. . . . He wished he could believe in *that* Mother. He hung the ribbon around his neck.

That night, Shane slept but little. About midnight, the head of the family in the room below returned and began to quarrel with his wife. Her shrill remonstrances and his sullen replies grew to loud tones and the banging of tables. "Ain't I *tryin'* to git work?" the man shouted. . . . Silence came at last, broken only by the loud-booming clock in a neighbouring square. Every quarter of an hour was marked by a light peal, and every hour by vibrating thunders.

Ding-dong, ding-dong.

Ding-dong, ding-dong.

Ding-dong, ding-dong.

Ding-dong, ding-dong. . . . BOOM!

Shane counted the hours till grey dawn came. About eight o'clock there was an eager knocking below, and after a few moments delay, Shane heard hard breathing on the stairs, and the noise of two people ascending: women's voices. "'Ere's the room, ma'am,'" said Mrs. Boddy, and Shane's door opened, to admit a stout, red-faced, smiling woman, who hustled to his bedside, plumped herself on the edge, and flung her arms about his neck, panting and puffing for breath.

Shane tried to release himself: he could not guess who this effusive stranger should be.

"Oh, my dear little pet, my dear little Johnny wonny," said she, "don't you remember your loving Nana?—your poor old nurse as 'as come to take care of you, same as she did of your pore father long years ago?"

## CHAPTER VII

### MYSTICISM AND MYSTERY

Samuel Armstrong's household was startled by a visit from Nana. Aunt Matilda, who spent a large part of every day in miserably watching the passers-by from her window, saw Nana coming down the road, and at once ran to Aunt Rebecca in the kitchen to concert a course of action. When Nana reached Beulah Lodge she had perforce to knock for nigh ten minutes while the council in the kitchen proceeded. But that she knew the habits of the inmates, she would have assumed the house to be empty, but suspecting unwillingness to open to her, she knocked louder and more persistently, till the neighbours looked forth from their houses to see what was the cause of the hammering. Finally, she raised her umbrella and battered at the door. Therewith it was opened for about six inches, being kept on the slot-chain, and Aunt Rebecca's face appeared at the aperture.

"How dare you injure the paint like that, woman?" she said. "My sister will blow the police whistle if you do not desist."

"I've come here on important business, I 'ave, mum," said Nana doggedly. "I've come to . . . ."

"I suppose you want money," said Aunt Matilda, squeezing Aunt Rebecca from the aperture.

"Not for myself, mum," said Nana. "But pore Master Shane's in trouble, and I come to tell you as 'ow . . . ."

"He made his bed and he must lie on it," said Aunt Rebecca, recovering her place at the opening, while Aunt Matilda tiptoed and peeped over her shoulder. "He had a good home here and he chose to throw it up."

"He says as 'ow 'e was put out of it," said Nana.

"What impudence!" said Aunts Rebecca and Matilda together.

"What's this? — What's this? — What's this?" Armstrong's voice rang out, while he banged the tiles of the path to the house with his stick. He had just returned from a tract-distributing walk with Tessie, who, with face now thin and pale, was standing behind him.

Aunt Rebecca unchained the door. "You are not going to allow that awful woman into the house, are you, dad?" she asked. But Nana pushed her burly figure into the hall before Armstrong could answer.

"I've come to tell you, sir, that Master Shane is lying ill at Euston. If it 'adn't bin for me gettin' word he'd be dead by now."

"That has nothing to do with us . . ." one of Armstrong's daughters began.

"Be silent, woman!" Armstrong thundered (he had regained and intensified his ascendancy after waiving his matrimonial plan)—"be silent! I will deal with this. Shall I shut the door on the returning Prodigal? Tell me the facts—you."

"Last night a man—'e called 'issel Ryan—called on Todkins at Woburn Mansions and said as 'ow Master Shane was lying ill. Todkins 'ad a drop taken and didn't tell me till this morning—me and my man lives in the flat over'ead. Off I goes at once and found pore sonnybunny as yellow as a hegg. So I nursed 'im and coddled 'im and got a cab for

'im, and took 'im away out of 'is nasty lodgings to Mister Joyce's at Euston near-by, and 'ad 'im lodged there in Fergus Crying's own bed. 'E didn't want me to tell you about 'is being ill, sunnybunny didn't, but 'e ain't got no money, and I says to myself says I, it's 'is people's place to look after 'im and get 'im the best of attention, so I come along 'ere straight. And there it is for you now."

"You took too much on yourself," said Aunt Matilda.

"Hsh," said Armstrong. There was an emotional quaver in his voice. "You did right, woman, according to your lights. I will call upon the lad and see whether affliction has brought him to a better state of mind."

Tessie managed to get a word with Nana. "Did you say Mr. O'Cryan was at Mr. Joyce's house too?" she asked.

"Lor' bless you, yes, Miss Tessie, dear," said Nana. "And, do you know, he's *such* a nice young man."

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Shane was vaguely conscious in the intervals of delirium, as he lay in Fergus O'Cryan's room, that Samuel Armstrong entered the room and prayed over him in a tear-broken voice; and that on a couple of evenings, Tessie Murnane sat by his bedside after tidying the place. Old Peter Joyce watched him during the whole period of his illness, and he grew to love the sight of the gentle grey hair on which his eyes rested in the lucid intervals between age-lasting nightmares.

There were times as he lay weak and wretched that his mind went back to his father's deathbed, and he

brooded on the dreadful thought that he was as lonely now as his father had been, for he had found no ray of faith. He had lost all belief in the religion to which he had been reared, since when earning his living he had found men of all creeds and men of no creed at all, much the same as one another. The Catholic faith, which occupied his mind not a little, was the faith of the people he loved best and that were kind to him : but as he knew it, it was a farrago of fantastic beliefs—beliefs in miracles that happened, not in the age of miracles, but right down to present times. The New Testament, however, still comforted him a little, and he got Old Peter to read to him from it from time to time. To Old Peter's delight, he said that he loved best the books written by Saint John—the Gospel, the Epistles, and the great Book of vision. One chapter in the Gospel he listened to again and again : the last discourse of Christ. The awful words spoken in the shadow of the Betrayal, calm, confident, austerely joyful, thrilled him so deeply that an unquenchable conviction stood in his mind that *this was true*. These words were spoken by God Incarnate : they were never invented by human brain :

These words I have spoken to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you shall have distress. But have confidence. I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD !

As he dwelt on that dread scene, he seemed to be present and share the amazed disciples' conviction : "*By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God.*" It was real. It was actual. But ah ! he was far removed from that event and that Incarnate Presence, and knew not what to believe save that those words were once spoken. What had they to do with Bible-

classes studying Greek words, arguments about the history of heresies ?

Between waking and dreaming, he dimly heard Old Peter speak : " I am glad you love Saint John. That is always the way with true Irishmen. Saint John loves Ireland. Often I have heard him say so. . . . You know he is still walking through the world, and I have spoken with him more than once. He told me that he stood by Emmet on the scaffold, and that he whispered comfort to Wolfe Tone in the prison-cell. He meant them and their kind when he wrote about the dead beneath the altar. . . . "

Was it Old Peter who was talking ? Or was it Samuel Armstrong ? Shane seemed to hear Armstrong's voice intoning, as of old :

I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the testimony which they held : And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth. . . .

Shane remembered that Armstrong had read that very passage just after the death of his father and the Fenian. Bitter memories thronged through his tired brain, and merged into a phantasmagoria. . . . He woke to see Old Peter's silvery head and hear his soothing voice. Peter uttered his whole philosophy that evening.

" Do you note," the old man was saying, " how Saint John writes of the Angels of the Churches ?—Not the guardian angels, for they are reproved for sin and admonished to repent. Do you know what he means by that ? He means that every nation has an immortal spirit within it—a great invisible Eidolon that lives on unchanged through the generations. That's why they can't kill Irish nationality : the immortal soul lives on no matter how they torture the

body of the nation. And that's why Ireland calls to all kinds of men, no matter what their blood may be. There's some like Parnell, that cleave to the nation because they are indignant at her sufferings. There's some, like young Hughie O'Tierney, that learn of Ireland through her literature. There's some that love her very soil. No two have the same reasons. What does that mean but that Ireland is a real person and appeals to her lovers in a hundred ways? Only a person, not a thing, can make a manifold appeal.

"Yes, that's why men reared in Unionist houses in Ireland, and men born abroad, feel the call, and why your feelings and mine are expressed in the poems of Columcille written fourteen hundred years ago. It's that unchanging Eidolon, that spirit or angel or *genius loci* that speaks to all. There is a Polish poet that says : '*To each nation is given some deep thought from the heart of the Creator.*' I tell you that the souls of the nations are the thoughts of God, for though all *our* thoughts are dead reflections like the light of the moon, God thinks only in living things. The daemon of Ireland stands ever before God ('Thrones, denominations, kingdoms, powers') and because of his devotion, Robert Emmet was given to see her awful face, aglow with the divine light—the same face that led Red Hugh and Owen Roe through battle flames.

"And that is the meaning of rich national life—life in harmony with the soul of the nation, the life of good pupils following their wise fosterfather. Decadent national life is the life of people living to themselves—rebelling against the thought of God and so against God's will. In Ireland, when our national life was not impaired, the souls of our people were so transparent that the light of God's thought shone

through them. It is faith in God that binds people and nation together. Countries that lose faith in God grow decadent and their people grow selfish. Saint Paul says that we strive not with flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. Ireland can say : I fight not against English men and soldiers and statesmen, but against the Eidolon of English power, strong in this world, a great angel turned from God, and through its fosterlings perpetrating dreadful sins."

With Fergus, too, Shane had many long talks. Once or twice, he woke to see Fergus and Tessie in deep converse, for Tessie came on many evenings to watch beside him and prepare his invalid food. Once Fergus talked to him of the stars, pulling aside the window-blind, so that the sparkling figures of Boötes and the Corona Borealis could be seen in the high sky.

" We can look into infinity from this room," he said. " Star-dust beyond the bounds of imagination. And all dead. Not a flicker of life in all the huge material universe except on this tiny little planet. Do you know, I believe mankind will yet populate the whole ! Look at Arcturus there—the orange star. It is millions and millions of miles away beyond the solar system : they say it is 375,000 times as big as our sun. Some day it will be habitable and we shall find means to cross the void. People will be looking out of their windows knowing that their kindred is walking on the stars that shine to them through infinity. They will see the stars in the sky like lights on comrade ships at sea."

" Ireland seems a very small thing by comparison," said Shane.

" No," said Fergus. " She is a vital link to all,

There will be no righteous order till she is free, and she will never be free while the powers of evil rule in this world. Her freedom will come when the world is worthy, and then mankind will go out to fill the stars with life and joy."

Shane reflected that Fergus's thoughts were scarcely less odd than Old Peter's.

"Did you ever," he asked, "hear Peter talking about Saint John? I don't know whether I dreamed it, but I thought I heard him say that Saint John actually visited him."

"That's right," said Fergus. "He says that the Saint actually comes to talk to him. . . . Peter is getting old: you must not mind all he says. I remember the first time he talked to me about it. It was not long after he came to lodge with me. I was coming in one evening and I saw a tall, slender man, with hair as white as snow and a face as gentle as a child's, coming out. He was the strangest mixture of age and youth. I asked Peter who was his visitor. And says he, as matter-of-fact as you could imagine: 'It was Saint John.' "

"Do you Catholics really believe that Saint John is still on the earth?" Shane asked.

"Peter does," Fergus answered. "He thinks Saint John lives on to comfort people who are working for the New Jerusalem on earth. I never heard of anyone else believing the old fancy. . . ."

"But I thought you Catholics had to believe what you were told."

"So we do," said Fergus, half-laughing. "But we can speculate on things we are not told."

"I wish I could believe *something*," said Shane, "but how can anyone believe to order? I could not surrender my freedom of judgment."

"Who's asking you to do so?" asked Fergus. "Look you here. How can I judge whether there's a Heaven or Hell, or whether there's a Resurrection of the Body? The only thing you can do on things not open to your judgment is take the word of somebody whose authority you can trust. I believe the Church about the Unseen because—well—I trust her. On other matters, where I *can* use my judgment, she does not lay down dogmas at all. None of the fancy religions allow that much freedom of thought. Old Peter would have to start a new religion if he gave out his ideas at one of your grandfather's meetings or in the Church of England. Look at myself—a sort of a Marxian and a believer in the Evolution of Species. Which of your creeds would admit me?"

"But some of the religions say Baptism is necessary, and some that it's only a trimming, and some have one doctrine about hell and some another: the sects are all permutations and combinations of a set of doctrines. I can't believe in one collection more than another."

"Nor could I," said Fergus, "if it wasn't that one set has authority behind it and holds together, while the others are all distorted from it, some one way, some another."

"Don't forget," said Shane, "that your Church wants me to believe in a whole lot of up-to-date miracles in addition to the rest."

"As a matter of fact, she doesn't. But what reason have you to deny them? Only that you can't bring yourself to believe in the supernatural existing nowadays. So why tell yourself that you believe in it in other ages if your faith fails at the test of Lourdes? But what is the good of arguing? If you can believe that the Church is what she claims

to be, you can believe anything, and if you can't believe that, you'll never build up a Faith in little pieces. It's all or nothing. Let us talk about books."

And Fergus went on chatting frivolously about literature, diverting Shane of set purpose from their former topic, for he had noticed a strained and morbid expression on the lad's face. "Shane is worrying about religion," said he to Old Peter later, "You'll want to keep his attention on other things or he'll get the blues." He went through to his little private laboratory.

One evening in the summer, when Shane was convalescent, Tessie brought her violin in order, she told herself, to entertain him with some of his favourite airs. She would not admit to herself that she was a little disappointed to find Shane with only Old Peter in the big kitchen-sitting-room. She began to heat milk to prepare his meal of arrowroot. When Old Peter had retired to his own room with books, "do you know," said she, "that you will soon be coming back to Beulah Lodge?"

It was as if a weight had been suddenly hung on his heart.

"Grandfather is not at all content at your lodging here longer," she went on. "You can guess why."

"Religion, I suppose," said he. "He's afraid they'll make a Catholic of me. Well, I'm beginning to think they might do worse."

"Oh, Shane!"—Tessie spoke with reproach in her voice. "Have they been trying to make you turn? I did not think they'd do that."

"No," said he. "They haven't. Fergus deliberately stopped me talking of religion, and as far as I can make out, Old Peter wants to see Protestant Nationalists to keep up the line of Emmet and Davis. No, my ideas are my own."

"But how can you talk favourably about a Church that interprets the Bible to you in its own way?"

"What else does grandfather do? An ancient Church has more authority behind it than he has, anyway. And I can't make head or tail of it without somebody's theory. Except just Saint John's gospel."

"I don't believe you," said Tessie suspiciously. "It's not like you to talk this way. And you the great Republican, always talking about human liberty and priestcraft."

"I can't reconcile myself to the priests," said Shane, "and I don't believe I ever will."

"I hope not, indeed," said Tessie.

They were so absorbed in their talk that they did not notice Fergus, as he stepped from the laboratory door, his hands brown and wet.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," he said, and made to return to the apartment he had just left, and from which a pungent chemical odour was diffused. As Tessie looked up, her vexed expression vanished.

"Don't go," said Shane. "Stay and hear Tessie play. What are you doing in that smell-factory? Making bombs?"

"There's many a true word spoken in jest," said Fergus lightly, as he immersed a reddish paste that he carried in his wet hands in a bowl of water at the sink. "But I'm only experimenting," he said to Tessie. "Shane will tell you that I always had a taste for chemistry."

Tessie excelled herself when she took up her violin to play. To Shane, sick and jaded, the music was like luscious streams of refreshment. To Fergus it was like a tide of images of a calm and joyous life. Now he seemed to be wrapt in Watteau's charming and idyllic world, and now to be following a gay dance

of gnomes beneath snow-weighted pines. And now the music called him through sunny heights of fancy into fields of summer peace, where he seemed to be wandering hand in hand with one who had cast aside the cloak of heaviness, and had dancing feet: a crimson band bound her raven hair. . . .

The fantasies that danced from Tessie's bow sprang from a heart bright with hope. Certain words lately spoken by Shane had been seized on by her anxious mind and twisted to a hopeful meaning. Shane had said that Fergus had stopped him from talking of religion. That argued (the wish father to the thought) that Fergus was weakening in his loyalty to Rome. Tessie, judging the world from Beulah Lodge, could not conceive any motive for declining religious controversy, save weakness of conviction. Fergus must be surrendering his Romanist allegiance! He must be thinking of her, and lowering the barriers! So her hopes leaped up and sang in her music.

Fergus spoke again of the advantages she would derive from Continental study, as the three sat round the fire.

"Do you know the Continent well?" she asked, curious to know more of his history.

"I tramped up the Rhine when I was quite a boy," he answered, "sketching and studying. I must show you some of my scratchings"—and he went to a press in the wall, from which he drew a number of yellow linen-covered sketch books.

"Is it drawing you teach, Mr. O'Cryan?"

"I am art master by rights, but I teach science too. You have to know a bit of everything in English schools."

"Why don't you teach in Ireland?" Shane asked.

"I'm afraid I'd never get a school if I were an

N. T.," Fergus answered. "There's no place for men with opinions in the national schools, and there's no living for laymen in the secondary ones. Only a slave can get on in Irish teaching, and for my part I could never endure to be a cog in that machine for murdering souls. So I'm here civilising young Saxons ! Anyway, I have work to do here that I couldn't do at home."

He did not add that the work in question was done in his little laboratory, and could only be done there because the Euston Road is out of Dublin Castle's range of vision.

"Here's some studies I made at the army manœuvres in Bavaria," Fergus went on, turning up an old sketch-book. Shane seemed to recognise the figures with the shining helmets, and the neat diagrams on the opposite page showing the area of action.

"Yes, that's Aachen," Fergus was saying, "and now we're in Holland—even my poor sketchbook is rich in studies here : I don't wonder it produced great art, everything is so clear and outlined and art-deserving there."

While Tessie was dwelling on these foreign studies, uttering little comments of admiration or praise, Fergus was emboldened to draw her attention to a later sketch-book.

"Do you recognise anybody there ?" he asked, a little shyly.

She looked, and saw herself, lightly but delicately sketched, walking down a woodland path from a bursting sunset : the drawing was idealised as if symbolically, for she seemed in the picture, to be coming forth from the opening skies, like good fortune or happiness from heaven. The artist had given to her features a radiant expression as if to display his own live admiration.

"It is—very flattering," said Tessie, softly, bending over the picture.

"Do you remember the occasion?" Fergus asked, in low tones, bending towards her, so that her hair touched his face.

She met his eyes and looked away with a laugh, colouring. He must have drawn the picture immediately after their first meeting, from a vivid memory.

"Wait, I have something else to show you," Fergus said, returning to his heap of books. Tessie lightly fingered the volume before her, eyeing that study of herself very intently and then turning over the pages half unconsciously. She turned forward from the portrait to the end of the book. Then she began turning backward.

But she had turned but a single leaf, when her attention was strangely arrested by the design before her. It was the light sketch of the watcher in the woods that Fergus had made just before Tessie had come into his life on that summer evening four years before. She stared at the drawing with starting eyes for a moment: then abruptly put the book from her. When Fergus turned to her again with a coloured portrait in his hands, he was startled to see her standing, white-faced, picking up her gloves.

"I—I think I must be going now, Mr. O'Cryan," she said. "I have to be back early."

"But I thought you were free for the evening, Tessie?" said Shane.

Fergus said nothing. He stood aloof, alarmed. Tessie avoided his eyes, and did not speak as she moved about the apartment collecting her things. Once she seemed to give a little gulp, and in her haste she tore her gloves as she was putting them on. Shane was bewildered.

"Is anything wrong?" he asked at last.

"No, not at all," she said in a queer, absent tone, and finding her umbrella, made to the door. "I can find my way to the busses all right," she said, "Good night!"—and she was gone.

Neither of the young men spoke for a while. They looked at each other wondering.

"What's wrong with Tessie?" Shane asked.

"God knows," said Fergus. "Did we say anything to offend her?"

"Not that I noticed," Shane answered. "She was just looking through those sketch-books of yours (and she seemed to me to be looking mightily interested in you, too), and then, all of a sudden, she froze up. I can't understand Tessie, and never could. She's the queerest creature."

Fergus slowly raised the book that had been in Tessie's hands. It lay open at the page on which, on that well-remembered Sunday evening in the woods, he had sketched the mysterious watcher from above—the stout Velasquez-like figure, with hand resting on a stick.

"Can you see anything in that picture to upset her?" he asked Shane, blankly.

"Indeed, no," said Shane. "Isn't that the man I used to see walking in the Queen's Woods on Sunday evenings? What could that picture mean to Tessie?"

Fergus sat and puzzled for a long time, but he could find no answer to that question. "Twas all a mystery. A sick presentiment warned him that Tessie was in some strange way parted from him forever.

"She couldn't have been in all that of a hurry," said Shane at last. "Why, look, she left my arrow-root boiling over. It's burnt now."

And Tessie never came again.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FAIR HILLS OF IRELAND

It was with a sinking heart that, on his recovering sufficiently to travel, Shane went home to Beulah Lodge. It was Fergus who prevailed on him to go. "I have a notion you'll find it to your advantage," O'Cryan had said: but he left Shane to discover, as a surprise, a certain decision of Armstrong's that had been communicated to him.

Aunts Rebecca and Matilda received Shane with restrained manner: they seemed to be biting their tongues, he said to himself, lest "I told you so" should burst from them. He dreaded an explosion of triumphant lecturing when Armstrong should leave him alone with them. Tessie was not to be seen: she remained in her room all that evening till prayer time, and then Shane had no chance of speaking with her. He was puzzled by Armstrong's attitude, which was one of rough kindness. "I shall not," the head of the house said, as he closed the Bible after reading the nightly chapter, "I shall not dwell in reproof upon the former conduct of the Prodigal Son restored to us this day: the more especially as I have hopes that he has come to a new frame of mind. For, once when I entered his chamber in the last month, I was agreeably surprised to find a New Testament opened at his bedside. I trust the Papistical society amongst which he was unfortunately cast had no counteracting influence to that of God's

Word. . . . "My lad" (here he addressed Shane directly), "I am above everything else anxious for your welfare, and as the doctor informs me that you require a change of air to complete your recovery, I propose to take you with me on a holiday to Ireland" (Shane's heart thumped). "You will easily get an extension of leave on the doctor's letter, and you will start with me by the morning train from Euston Station to-morrow. . . . And now let us commit ourselves to the Almighty in prayer."

In less than twelve hours Shane was seated with Armstrong in the Irish mail, hurtling through the suburbs and the green fields. At Euston, Fergus O'Cryan had seen him off, handing him a large locked Gladstone bag, saying: "Will you save me trouble by taking this to Dublin for me? It has breakables in it that I don't care to send by post. I have arranged with a man named Sheridan to take it from you at Kingstown. . . ." Fergus had stood on the platform waving to him till the train was out of sight.

Many a time Shane had wandered about at that same station in the evenings when his office work was done, enviously watching the crowds of un-English-looking people flocking to No. 14 Platform for the night-mail to Ireland. The tweed-attired aristocrats, the rosy-faced servant girls, the badge-wearing Gaelic Leaguers: all of them he envied, for they were homeward bound, while he was chained to exile. How homely a look they all wore! How they differed, too, from the seedy-looking city folk round about! He used to study the photographs of Irish scenery in the waiting-rooms, and yearningly watch the advertisement pictures of the cross-Channel mail boat sailing forth from Holyhead. And now—  
incredible fortune!—he himself was at last on the

way to Ireland. His nostrils were dilated, as though eager for the Irish air. He could not interest himself in the newspapers beside him—he cared only to dream, dream, dream of the swiftly-approaching first glimpse of his fatherland.

“I am thinking,” Samuel Armstrong was saying, “of selling out my little property in Donegal. Ever since it came into my hands through the death of my brother, it has been an affliction to me. So we shall call on my solicitor in Dublin, and then we may run up to Portabeg. The sea air will do you good, and the experience, I trust, will be beneficial. I hope that when you see the condition of the Irish Papists, it will be a lasting lesson to you.”

Onward they went : through the dark manufacturing area, on to Chester, an airy, clean, redstoned town in flat country—Shane remembered Frank Doorly’s story of how the Fenians had tried to seize the castle here, and fly to Ireland with its stores of arms—then turning westward, they were sped along the Welsh coastline, slaty and abrupt. It was the Irish Sea whose blue waters rolled before them, and now Shane was out of England for the first time in his life. He watched the steep and conical mountains of Wales with interested eyes. The scenery took on an air of the romantic when they rattled through an iron causeway by the piers of a great castle, and began to career across the broad and water-broken fields of Anglesey. They were quite near to simple life now : people were working in the meadows close to the line ; a shawl-clad country girl on the road to the village was chatting to a postman (in the Welsh tongue, no doubt) and children on the stiles waved to the train as it flashed by. And so to Holyhead and the quay.

The spring sky was cloudless and the sea was smooth, but a stiff sea breeze was blowing through the sunlit air, filling and refreshing Shane's smoke-accustomed lungs. There was no sail on the sea, nor any smoke, and Shane, unused to scenery that was not full of houses, thought he was looking at unploughed Homeric waters, or that this landing-stage, swept with windy light, was one at the end of the familiar earth. The clean, handsome, vibrating vessel to which the passengers were moving with their bags, might be faring forth to a new world.

During the first hour on board, Shane roamed over the boat. There were few travellers aboard. Down in the steerage he found a half-drunk man moaning. "Are you sick?" he asked. The man looked up with blood-shot eyes. "Sick? I am that. Sick of life. Look at me, would you. Going home without more money than'll pay my fare. I went across with the harvesters last year an' saved forty pounds on the season. Every penny was taken out of my pocket by some blasted pickpocket at the dosthouse in Kidderminster, an' I had to start an' earn my fare. The gombeen-man has come down on herself with his bill, and turned her and the childher out on the road. That's the sort of a life we lade, sir." He spat and rolled over on the bunk.

In the saloon, where he got cold ham and bread with salt country butter, Shane found himself beside a very foreign-looking ecclesiastic: a slender man with seamed brown face and deep-set brown eyes.

"You are an Airishman, young gentleman?" he asked, in curious English. Shane nodded. "I have travelled from de other side of Europe," the clergyman went on, "to visit your beautee-ful countree. It is for me a peelgrimage. De patron saint of my

leetle church came from de Island of Saints—Saint Cathaldus. Ah, my son, we other Catholiques, we have a great love for Ireland. In every place your countrymen are serving Mother Church from de ancient times to dese. It is Aireland, not Rome, should be de home of de Holy Father."

Shane saw in the stranger's face an enthusiasm for Ireland like that he had seen in Gaelic Leaguers'. It thrilled him to think of strangers from the East making pilgrimage to Ireland, and he was momentarily sorry that he could not admit himself an Irish Catholic. He was glad that Armstrong was not at hand. At the other side of the table a woman in a *chic* travelling costume drew forth a silver cigarette-case and offered the clergyman a cigarette. Both lit up.

"Lumme," said a red-faced commercial traveller on the other side of Shane, "did yer see that? She's a doctor at the Charing Cross Orsepitall too. Tikes down your respect for the profession, don't it?"

Looking at his watch, Shane found that in two and a half hours' time, they would be due in Kingstown. Up he went to the deck, and sat on a coil of rope in the bows watching for the first sight of the Irish hills. Looking back, he noticed that Armstrong had buttonholed the foreign priest and was pressing tracts upon him, arguing vehemently.

Long he peered into the pearly haze ahead, while the wind sang in his ears. "This is your first time across?" asked a sailor who came to the bow.

"Yes," said Shane, with surprise.

"I thought so," said the sailor. "I know the signs. We shall see Ireland soon now."

Low down in the haze, the mists seemed to thicken

into clouds—faint clouds with wavy outlines, like the gold-washed mountains in the sky that had often set Shane dreaming at sunset. Or were they *really* clouds? Yes. . . . No!—They were unmistakeable now: his eyes at last were on the Fair Hills of Holy Ireland!—“Inisfáil!” he breathed.

Was it the strong sea wind blowing cold on his weakened body? Or was he a-quiver thus with emotion? A passion of thankfulness from unsuspected depths welled up in him as he watched those delicate lineaments grow clearer and clearer—green hills with purple heights beyond, grouped cuplike round a bay that was aglow with the radiance of the declining sun. . . .

A woman in neat but outworn clothes stood near him, lifting a year-old baby in her arms. “Look, sonny,” she was saying eagerly, “Ireland, sonny, Ireland!”

Samuel Armstrong came forward, and without speaking to Shane, stared, too, at the nearing vision of Dublin Bay, with the sunset on the calm Wicklow Mountains. Shane wondered whether, beneath his rough exterior, Armstrong, too, felt joy at the approach to Irish soil?

On the jetty at Kingstown, when they stepped off the boat and crossed to the Dublin train, forcing their way through a swarm of *gamins* selling papers or offering to carry bags, a strong-jawed young man pushed his way towards Shane and his grandfather, eyeing them as though identifying them from description, and said to Shane:

“I think you have a message for the name of Sheridan.”

Shane handed over the Gladstone bag he carried, and the young stranger disappeared in the crowd. The train steamed out for Dublin, Shane watching the landscape through the moist and lens-like air, with insatiable eyes.

But the young man who had given the name of Sheridan made his way to an attic overlooking the harbour, where, having cautiously locked the door, he carefully opened the bag. . . . A puzzled and anxious expression spread over his face. He drew out, one after another, little newspaper parcels—large “clinkers” screwed up in pieces of that day’s *London Times*!

“Good heavens!” he exclaimed, “someone must have tampered with the stuff *en route*.”

Shane had not noticed the heavy-faced, semi-military man in plain clothes who had seen Fergus hand him the bag, and who had therewith travelled to Holyhead in another part of the same corridor carriage, taking an unpetitioned loan of that bag when Shane was away from his luggage. . . .

• • • • •

The little town of Portabeg is sheltered from the roll of the Atlantic by a great arm of mountainy land, and the little bay is further sheltered by a sturdy pier and breakwater. A little way outside the rocky and loch-broken outskirts of the town the brown bog from which it takes its name stretches, till a sudden lift of moorland slopes up to the foot of majestic Arrigal, king of the mountains of Tirconaill.

Crochur MacSweeney, the ballad-maker, whose Gaelic songs are known from the Rosses to Inishowen, and whose English songs are sung throughout the Lagan, dwells in a little white house by the quay. Students

in search of Irish lore often go there, but only to the elect will Crochur unbend. He has his own circle of friends, to whom his door and fireside are open every evening, and to these alone his heart is open, too.

So young Faragal Faal, founder and secretary of the Land and Labour League, a Trade Union that had won unexampled terms for the harvesters who crossed to Scotland, had imposed Sunday closing on the local shops, and given the workers a new self-respect, was proud when Crochur at his half-door said to him one morning :

*“ Cad chuige nach dtig tú a’ cuartuidheacht chugainn am inteacht ?—Why don’t you call on us one of these evenings ? ”*

Like other natives of the town, and unlike the people from the countryside, Faragal was reared an English-speaker : but of late he had set to learning the Gaelic, which he understood well enough on Crochur’s lips.

“ I hear,” said Crochur, still in Irish, “ that you are a poet too.”

“ I make an odd verse in the *Béarla*,” answered Faragal, “ but I cannot be named with you, king-poet of Tirconaill.”

Crochur was pleased at that. “ You’ll be making the flower of good verses in the tongue of our fathers yet, since it’s in you the nerve of poetry is,” said he.

Faragal was proud and happy to sit in the red circle of the turf-light, saying nothing, but smoking his big pipe and staring through his big round glasses at the company while Crochur and Paddy-Wanish took turns in telling old Gaelic tales, or Jimmy the Cope held forth on the prospects of co-operation. Crochur would turn to Faragal from time to time,

saying “*dtuigeann tú sin?*”—repeating this or that useful idiom or rare word in the conversation.

One evening, Faragal found nobody before him in the cottage save Crochur’s venerable self and Jimmy the Cope.

“*Goidé mar tá tú?*” says Crochur.

“*Tá go maith,*” says Faragal.

“Health is a good thing,” said Crochur, and broke into a story: “There was a man in it once. Columcille used to visit him every day. He began to get tired of the saint’s visits, so one day he let on to be sick and lay down in bed. Columcille came in as usual and they told him the man was sick. He made his way to the room and stretched his hands over the man. ‘*Má tá tú tinn,*’ says he, ‘*bí slán. Mur’ b’fhuil tú tinn bí tinn*’—‘If you are sick, be well. If you are not sick, BE sick.’ And the man took sick and died that night.”

“*Maith sin!*” said Jimmy and Faragal, “*is maith a thuill sé é.*”

“I hear,” said Jimmy then, “that the Forsythe property is to be up for sale next week. There was an advertisement in the *Refuter*.”

“I mind well the time,” said Crochur, “that the Armstrongs got it from young Sir Marcus. He came down here and had the place put into order, and no sooner was that done than off he went with himself again. Jimmy Liam that was working for him then was telling me that young Forsythe thought the house was haunted, and I wouldn’t wonder but it was.”

“How did the Armstrongs come to get it anyway?” asked Jimmy. “I was working in the docks in Glasgow when the sale came off.”

“Sure, Armstrong the Methody bought it over the

heads of the people that had the best right," said Manus O'Friel, who had just come in, a farmer from the Kiloonan side, where the Forsythe demesne is situated. "The O'Friel's and McGonagles and McGurks had a right to any land that was going and their holdings so small: and I'm telling yez there'll be bad work now if those that ought to have it don't get it."

"And I'm thinking they won't," said Jimmy the Cope, "for McScollog has cast his eye on it. Canon Quish will back him too. It wouldn't be easy for the McGurks or the McGonagles to stand against the gombeenman and the Canon in an auction."

"Where did he get his money from anyway?" said Manus hotly. "And how was it made? Putting whatever price he liked on his goods. Buying the *báinín* and the ducks and the eggs at half nothing because we had nowhere else to sell them, and then getting the market price himself. Taking the fish off the men that risked their lives to get them at fifteen shillings a *cran* and selling them at three pound. It's with our own money he'll buy the land over our heads. He's worse than the landlords; we knew where we were with the Forsythes."

"And isn't that what I've been striving to insense into you farmers ever since I started the store beyond in the barn?" Jimmy asked.

Manus was about to answer when Crochur checked him. "Jimmy is in the right here," said he. "We that bought from the *bodach* put him in the saddle. We should buy and sell for ourselves. And whisper! —wouldn't the Forsythe Hall be a right place for Jimmy's store if the people could buy it among them?"

Faragal pricked up his ears. "Dá dtiocfadh linn

*sin a dhéanamh . . .*" said he: "Ach, I'm not able for an Irish speech yet. But listen. If the Cope would make a dart for the Hall, it would be a great place for an industry later on. I could get the League to stand in for some of the purchase-money and . . . ."

Jimmy the Cope slapped his thigh. "We'll try for it, anyway," said he.

"If McScollog gets the notion that the Cope is in for the place, he'll spend his last penny to buy it against yez," said Crochur. "Anyway, I doubt yez wouldn't have enough."

"We'd get a stranger to bid, so he wouldn't know it was the Cope," put in Faragal.

"Wait till we see is there enough money between us," said Crochur. "Yez' ud never believe it, but I have a wee stocking myself . . . ."

The company resolved itself into a conspiracy forthwith.

Shane went on to Portabeg alone, after a few days in Dublin, during which he saw the Book of Kells and the cross in the ground where the Phoenix Park murders took place. Armstrong's business kept him longer with the lawyers in the city than he had, apparently, anticipated. He had little opportunity to point out to Shane the broken door handles and careless gardens characteristic of a Papist community. "You can go ahead by yourself," said he, "and I'll follow you up to Donegal when I have affairs squared up here." Shane was a little surprised at Armstrong's readiness to let him go on alone, but was glad of the freedom, and liked the feel of fifteen Bank of Ireland notes in his pocket.

So at the end of a long day's travel, he came to the station of Portabeg Road, close under the mountains with the Atlantic in sight far beyond the heath and bog. The lighthouse flashed at intervals from Inis More far out at sea. A violent wind was blowing from the west, for even in the calmest summer weather there is wind here on the heights, and stupendous blue clouds from over the ocean were climbing a luminous green sky. The smell of turf smoke in the damp, clear air was to Shane the most exquisite of scents. As he stood on the windy platform, he felt as though his body had been etherealised to the lightness of pure spirit. Great gusts buffeted the breath from his mouth as he tried to ask the stationmaster the way to Portabeg, and when he heard that, through not ordering a car, he had a seven-mile walk before him, he felt ready for the venture. But a side-car came bowling into view soon after he had started out, and he had not travelled far down the road before it overtook him again, carrying a young priest who had got off the train. It slowed down, and the priest begged him to accept a lift into the town.

Shane was a little nervous at the swaying of the car, and clung tightly to the side-rail as they went swinging along the rough road ; but the priest behind him leaned back easily on his elbow to talk. They commented on the weather, and then : "I think I've met you before," said the priest. "Let me see"—and he seemed to search his memory. "London—the Gaelic League : was it at some *seilg* ; perhaps ? You see, I have a priest's memory for faces ! "

It was no other than the young priest Shane had seen at the Epping Forest *seilg*.

"Ah, Ireland's a small country, and you're always

meeting old friends in it," said Father Doalty. "Have you come home for good like myself? I'm on the mission at home now: and the English must be civilised without me."

The car was creeping up an incline. An old man by the road pulled off his hat.

"*Go mbeannuighidh Dia dhíbh*," said he, and the priest raised his hand in acknowledgement. The car crested the height and began to run down swiftly to the calm lowlands.

"It's grand to hear Irish again," said he. "Did you notice how he used the plural instead of the singular to me? That's a beautiful custom with the Donegal people."

Shane had read somewhere that "God bless *you*" instead of "*thee*" was used to a priest, in case he should be bearing the Consecrated Host. He was a little confused by the readiness with which it seemed always to be taken for granted that he was a Catholic—and, curiously, a little pleased.

The houses grew more frequent, cream-coloured in the gloaming, with mellow glows at the doorways. The town below looked like a toy village (Shane thought) in Belleek pottery. Children's cries—all in the Irish tongue—rang through the air. Somewhere a fiddle played dance music. The cleanliness and calm and beauty of it all affected Shane almost to sadness: he felt as though he had won his way to the land of dream and desire, only to feel conscious of intrusion.

"What is yon big house on the right?" Father Doalty was asking the car-driver, as they went past a tree-girt residence near the road on the outskirts of Portabeg.

"That was Sir Marcus Forsythe's place in the old days, your reverence," was the answer, "and it was

sold to a Methody minister named Armstrong." [Shane opened his ears wide.] "It's to be sold again, and twenty acres round, next week. There's a good deal of hot feeling about who'll get it. Some of the families that were evicted in the Forsythe times are in for it—but there's others in the field too. I doubt there'll be dirty work over it."

Shane had learnt enough from books and from the talk of his Gaelic League companions to sense in these words, *agrarian trouble*. He had no liking for his position as an associate of a landlord. So when he took a room in Farmer's Hotel, he made no mention of his relationship with Armstrong. He supped on stirabout and golden cream, oat-bread and heather honey, and no sooner did he lay his head on the cool pillow that night, than he sank into profound depths of dreamless slumber, like a pebble into the ocean.

The hotel-proprietor, known to the people as Teague McScollog, but calling himself by the translated name, Timothy Farmer, J.P., appeared in the kitchen that night. "What do you make of that young fellow Lambert?" he asked Bessie, cook, housemaid, clerk, and hostess combined. "He's too innocent to be a commercial traveller, and from the way he said he didn't know how long he'd stop, he doesn't seem to be on holidays. He has a queer sort of English accent too."

"I think he must be one of these Irish scholar fellas," said Bessie. "He tried to talk to me in Irish, but I couldn't make head or tail of his prate. He's not a Catholic anyway, for I axed him what Mass would I wake him for, and he said he wasn't going to Mass at all."

McScollog wagged his head knowingly.

"One of these Gaelic League fellas," says he,

## CHAPTER IX

### MAIWA<sup>1</sup>

Shane could hardly believe that he was not dreaming when he woke next morning and put his head out of the window. The whole scene—from the mountains to the foam-lined Inis More on the far horizon—was radiant. Light danced on the blue sea, and gleamed in the green hillsides. Never had Shane opened eyes on so expansive a prospect: sky and ocean seemed of hitherto inconceivable magnitude.

When he had broken his fast, he went wandering along the quay and up the smooth-grassed cliffs beyond, rising higher and higher above the harbour as he walked. The old women coming over the sheep-sprinkled hill to Mass in crinoline-like petticoats and coloured shawls and head-kerchiefs had the manners of *grandes dames* of the past: all greeted him with the kindest “*maidin mhaith.*” When at last he met no more, and found himself in solitude, he lay for a while on the cliff-top drinking in the sight. And then near by, he saw the square tower of a church. He rose and approached it: an exquisitely clean red-stoned building in the midst of a grass-grown graveyard. It was Saint Eunan’s, the Protestant Parish Church. Shane went through the gate and paced along the gravel path, noting the names on the few gravestones. He found himself wondering why a patch of land should be set apart

<sup>1</sup> Maiwa—Ulster pronunciation of *Meadba*, the Connacht Meave.

for burying so few people: there were not twelve graves in the whole half-acre, though the Catholic cemetery on the other side of the valley was thick-leaved with crosses and gravestones. What odd division set just a few families apart from their fellows in death? An unnaturalness in religious divisions seemed emphasised by these lonely graves.

The names on the stones were mostly foreign-sounding: Richardson, Peckover, Forsythe (on a mausoleum), and Wright. But one green-moulded stone, in a solitary corner beneath the trees, bore the inscription: *Sacred to the Memory of Rev. Calvagh O'Donnell, who departed this life January 14th, 1870. Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Matt. xxxv, 21.* This grave was unkempt, overgrown with grass, as though the memory of the deceased had passed from the place. Shane imagined this bearer of an historic name as minister here in exile: he tried to picture the loneliness of such a man, a Gaelic speaker probably, among Richardsons and Wrights. What had he preached to them about on Sunday mornings, this kinsman of Colmcille? Surely no other O'Donnell in all Tirconaill had a lonelier end than this Calvagh, whoever he was. Had he foreseen this end when he 'verted?—for the Irish Christian name suggested that he had Catholic parents.

While Shane was thinking thus, he saw three or four prim figures approaching the Church. The minister, a man with lantern jaws and sallow skin, alighted from a car, and walked slowly down the path, while the sexton went through the formality of tolling the bell. Shy of being seen loitering without attending church, Shane went in with the congregation of eight. He got a prayer-book from the

sexton. He did not understand its manipulation, so he pretended to be following, but really was engaged in thought.

“ Deah-ly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us-in-sundry-places-to-acknowledge-and-confess-our manifold-sins-and wicked—nesses.” The clergyman was intoning, but Shane was wondering why all the joy of the sea and sky-and air outside seemed to be chilled within this church, as though in a burial crypt.

He noticed that the drone was broken when certain prayers for the English Royal Family were reached : these were recited with a slight defiant emphasis that puzzled him. He reflected with a sort of interior smile, that no Nationalist and Republican would find this service attractive. There was no room for Wolfe Tones in the Church of Wolfe Tone’s fathers ! When the prayers and hymns were ended, the minister left the table in the chancel and ascended the pulpit. He pulled out a manuscript from which he read his sermon. The most of the discourse Shane listened to unheeding. But towards the end, the preacher grew almost impassioned : he ceased to read, and spoke extempore. Whatever the drift of the sermon had been hitherto, he drew it round to a denunciation of Roman Catholics, their creed, their practices, their politics.

“ And behold brethren,” he cried, ceasing to speak in measured periods, “ behold this symbol of their idolatry.”—He shook what seemed to be two cloth labels tied with brown tapes in the air before his little congregation. “ Do you know what this trumpery article is ? It is what they call a Scapular. This flimsy piece of cloth is what they rely on for salvation instead of on the Word of God. I have seen them bathing yonder in the bay, and carrying these

scapulars on their bodies even in the water!—Such is the superstition of the misguided creatures to whom they would subject us—yes, *us*—placing their foot upon our necks and reducing us to being mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. Let us pray, my brethren, that the Lord will avert from us this calamity and confound their designs. Yea, and if need be, may He send forth the legions of war to our aid. There is, dear brethren, *one* Protestant Power left in Europe: the land of Martin Luther. And if England betrays us, our leaders will not hesitate to call in the aid of a Second Protestant William!"

Shane had it in his heart to walk out of the church as these words were delivered; but he sat out the service, and at last came away, vowing never to set foot within a Protestant place of worship in Ireland again. He had entered in a mood of benignity, drawn from the sweet summer morning's air: he had found, not refreshment, but fanaticism; not inspiration, but insults to his attachments.

Shane was not disappointed when a letter from his grandfather announced that he would not be coming North for another week at least. "Perhaps I shall not be able to leave Dublin even in time for the sale," Armstrong said, "for my business here is proving unexpectedly difficult to transact." (No hint was given at the nature of the business, nor did Armstrong mention that he was maintaining a daily interchange of letters with the Reverend Trott in London.) Shane was warned to conduct himself as befitted a youth brought up in the fear of the Lord, and some tracts by the Reverend Dr. Bullinger were enclosed for his perusal. He was surprised to find that these

tracts were defences of Trinitarian doctrine. . . . As for the week, he was for that space to be free in his Earthly Paradise ! Each day he went rambling to some new scene teeming with interest to him : one day to the Great Fair of Doon, another to Saint Finian's Well and Saint Colum's Cross : and on yet another to Cashelbeg, the village far away at the crossroads in the shadow of Muckish, to see the home-weavers at work on their looms ("look at yon sky," said an old woman to him, " and pick any colours in the clouds, or from the moor and the mountain, and I'll make you a piece of tweed with just those colours. . . .")

It was returning from Cashelbeg footsore and tired that Shane came through the townland of Kiloonan. Here and there the farmers were beginning to cut their oats, and big gashes appeared down the sides of the yellow fields. The road here was but a track over the rocks, with high, blackish stone walls on either side, like the walls of a maze. Shane reached a branch and could not guess which arm to take to get back to Portabeg. He looked over the ditch. A *meithiol* of reapers was resting by the field's edge, with a half-cut field before them, scythes lying at their feet. He greeted them, and asked the way.

A big, grey-haired man rose and approached. "I'd best point out the path to you," says he, coming through a gate. "Are you travelling far to-day?"

"I'm making my way back from Cashelbeg," said Shane. "And I've lost my way twice already and did five miles of a round."

"Ah, man, you're tired out," said the farmer. "And you've a long step in front of you still. You'd best drink a drop of buttermilk."

Shane sat down beside the two men in the stubble.

"Wait a while," said one of them, a powerful figure with a rough chin. "The can's dry but The Scientist is bringing some more."

He pointed up the field with a jerk of his thumb. Shane looked in the direction indicated, wondering who The Scientist should be. At the top of a stone-walled field, there was a little line of scanty, storm-beaten trees with the lime-washed walls of the house showing between them. A girl in a blue print overall was coming down the edge of the field bearing further refreshment for the workers. Shane could see even at the distance that her cheeks were brightly glowing ; vigour and joy were in her light step, and pride in her easy carriage. Something within Shane leapt as if to welcome her coming. . . .

"You're just in time, Maiwa," said Manus O'Freel. "Here's a traveller all the way from Cashelbeg dropping with the drought. Give him a drink of buttermilk, will you ? "

Shane found himself tongue-tied with sudden shyness, as he watched her pour out the drink ; he noticed that her arms, bare to the elbows, were freckled, but of a wonderful whiteness and gentleness : somehow he could not look at her face. He had never tasted buttermilk before. When he found it sour in taste, he thought there must be some mistake. But with martyr-like resolution, he drank it down. He was surprised to find it cooling and invigorating in effect.

"Nothing like buttermilk to quench the thirst and put a new man in you," said Manus. "I think you're not used to it : you looked as if you didn't like it when you drank it. There was another young Englishman" (Shane winced) "staying hereabouts last year. I heard him say it was what he called an

'acquired taste,' and that you got to like it through time. I suppose you've acquired a taste for tea before this. Maiwa, would you have a kettle boiling?"

"But I'm not an Englishman," said Shane. "Taw b'gaun Gaolinga ogum agus tau me abalta ar Gaoling a lawert."—This was Munster Irish as spoken in London.

"What sort of parley-voo is yon?" said Manus.

"*Sin Gaelig na Mumhan*," said Maiwa laughing: "It's Munster Irish he has, father," and addressing Shane in Munster idiom, she said: "Where did you get your share of Irish? *You* are no Munsterman. Come into the house till I see if you make faces at tea, too."

Strange emotions shot through Shane under her inquiring eyes. Their gaze was like an electrifying caress. He began to tell her, in his limping Irish, she helping him here and there with words, about the London Gaelic League. He grew enthusiastic, and his tales of Cockney life clearly amused her.

"'Tis you are the great Gaels," she said. "Any place that there is a branch of the Gaelic League the London Gaels are known in it."

A hot fear rose in Shane: was she laughing at him?

"I don't know what yez are talking about at all," said Manus. "If that's the Irish they talk in Dublin, Maiwa, yez may understand it between yourselves, but head nor tail, *I* can't make of it. You can show this *stócach* his way back to the village when he's ready to go. This is too good a day for me to lose more time." Off he went, with a nod to Shane.

It was a spacious, airy kitchen, that: cool and light. Shane had never known such quiet as was over all the world this afternoon. Through the window he

could catch a glimpse of a calm distant sea. The quietude was only broken by the faint swishing of the scythes and the occasional cackle of hens. Maiwa moved busily about the wide apartment. Smoke-seasoned pictures of Saint Joseph and the Sacred Heart looked down from the wall near the rafters. The kettle was steaming on the tripod over the turf, and home-made bread was appearing on the table. Shane acquired a taste for tea that day that never left him. He was shy, but oddly at home, and he talked with an openness and eagerness that surprised himself. He had never had a friend—not even Fergus O'Cryan—who met his thoughts more comprehendingly than this new friend. It was like a jarring discord in sweet music, when the thought welled up in his mind : *What if the Armstrong household could see him now?* Their probable comment half suggested itself, but with an effort he forced it from him.

“ I wish I could live my life in the Gaeltacht,” said he to Maiwa. “ I think I would find all the wishes I had ever fulfilled there. I used to wish to go away to the Colonies to be building bridges : but look what chances there are in Ireland with the unspoilt Gaelic life behind you. I was looking at the river yesterday : look at all the power that is going to waste there. We might have rural industries along the mountain valleys in the heart of the farming districts if we only had the engineering and the management behind it.”

“ That’s what Faragal Faal, the trade unionist leader, is always saying. You’ll meet him if you go to Sunday’s *Céilidhe*. And Jimmy the Cope that started buying the people’s flour and fertilisers for them. Jimmy saved us seven shillings on every bag

of fertiliser and three shillings on every sack of flour this year, and he wants the people to put the money to an industry of their own."

"Lord, but I wish I belonged here," Shane said. "Isn't it well for those men that can be doing real work for Ireland *in* Ireland, instead of having to read about it only—like me?"

"Don't mind now," said Maiwa laughing. "Who knows what luck you'll have yet? You have Irish anyway. Wait till I get my shawl to see you as far as the crossroads. You are strong enough now to be marching."

Shane, as he watched her draw the shawl about her shoulders to accompany him (very beautiful she looked, with the brown folds falling proudly from her shoulders), felt dumb desire and dumb despair struggling in his heart. That feeling which had been about him since he came to Tirconaill, that he was walking in the land of dreams while bearing the brand of exile, was now redoubled in intensity. He knew himself to be oddly out of place, oddly not-at-home, and yet in the place to which all other places would seem exile. He was silent as they walked through the quiet, stone-walled lane; nor did Maiwa speak: and though his reflections were bitter, and his mind filled with yearning, the little journey at Maiwa's side etched itself into his memory, to come up vividly before him in the months that followed. Ineffable stillness was upon the world. The bay below them, as they reached the brim of the hill, was like a blue mirror, with the folded mountains reflected. Birds chirruped in the lightly rustling trees. Distant laughter told of children's play. To Shane, all was peace, beauty, holiness. . . .

"You can find your way now: this is the main

road (*go mora!*) right down to the town."—They had reached the crossroads all too soon for Shane's wishes. He turned and confronted Maiwa, whose hand was extended.

" You will . . . . "

She was going to say: "*You will be at the Céilidhe?*"—but checked herself. Shane was looking at her very directly. It was the first time he had looked into her eyes: they were brown, he saw, and had a laughing light. He was wondering at himself: that he had spent the last hour in familiar talk with this bright vision. It was the first moment that he had been conscious of her sex. [In England he had never spoken to a woman without shyness, as he had been speaking with Maiwa.] As his gaze took in her fair appearance, from the crisp dishevelled hair down to the dainty shoes, he had the impulse to bend before her womanhood, and kiss the extended hand with reverence. She turned her eyes away with a faint expression of confusion: but Shane had seen an answering light of recognition in them that stabbed him with an emotion that he could not analyse: was it fear or wild joy? He found himself trembling. . . .

As he went down the hill past Forsythe Hall, walking as it were on air, Shane began to realise that he had fallen madly, fatally, in love.

At supper time, when Bessie brought him hot milk and biscuits (which he was too *exalté* to touch), he began discussing with her, in as casual a manner as he could assume, the Christian names common in the locality. Yes, the Maggies were Máiréads in Irish. The Fredericks were Faragals. The Hudys were Aodhs.

" And what's that name something like Mayo? " Shane blurted out,

“ Do you mean Maiwa ? ” said Bessie (and Shane thrilled at the sound). “ Some of them call it Maidgie, and there’s a new-fangled shape they put on it, Madge. Did you never hear tell of Queen Meadbha of Connacht that used to keep the Ulster-men going ? It’s after her they call the Maiwas. There’s a good share of Maiwas about here. There’s Maiwa McGinley, the Meenbwee school-tacher ” (Bessie eyed Shane shrewdly). “ And then,” says she, “ there’s Maiwa Golligher of the Post Office—a brave girl the more she has a squint. And let me see . . . oh, there’s Maiwa O’Freel ” (Bessie saw Shane brighten)—“ the daughter of ould Manus O’Freel. She’s a great girl and very larned they say. I hear them saying she knows all about every mortal thing that grows or creeps—frogs and dandelions and God knows what. She’s as innocent in her way of going as anyone, too. She’d come in here to the kitchen and take her bite in her hand with the rest of us. The devil a bit of capers about Maiwa O’Freel. But mind you, ould Manus is a hard nut to crack, a crusty ould lad. It would be God’s pity of you if you’d let ould Manus catch you speculatin’ round the Kiloonan lanes.”

Shane flushed red and retired at that.

He lay awake most of the night repeating to himself every moment of the evening’s experiences, and was sorely tantalised by the fact that he could not call Maiwa’s picture up before him, though every detail of scenery, and the features of the other people he had met, were vivid in his mind. Only sometimes, when he ceased to try to recall it, her picture would, for an instant, flash before him, and again he would be stabbed by that ambiguous pain. He found time to wonder how Manus O’Freel’s daughter

came to have a perfect knowledge of Munster Irish as well as of her native dialect.

For the rest of the week, Shane did not go far afield from Portabeg. He gave up his intended trips to Bloody Foreland and Gweedore (both to the westward), and haunted the eastern townlands. He would climb Cruckanure, that looked down on the townland of Kiloonan, hoping to catch a glimpse of a certain blue print apron in the fields. He had not the courage to "speculate in" or to invade Kiloonan townland. By Saturday, he was despairing of ever seeing Maiwa again. And then he remembered that she would certainly go to Mass the next morning. Perhaps he would see her in the crowds going to church! He wished he were going himself. He had a curiosity about that service. One evening, going past the Church of the Seven Dolours, he had felt an extraordinary impulse to enter: it was as though some metal in his bosom were being tugged at by some strange magnet within those walls. *Something* was in there that pulled him with almost physical force. Yesterday, glancing through the open door of the chapel, he had seen flowers upon the snowy altar, bright in a shaft of sunlight, and an old woman praying at the altar rails: therewith the same mysterious impulse had drawn him a few steps towards the door. . . . With a mixture of motives, he resolved to hear Mass next day.

With a penny prayer-book, Shane went up to the gallery of the chapel before the congregation had assembled. He found an inconspicuous corner seat and watched the unfamiliar scene. The day was stormy and the chapel was dark; the wind howled

outside. The old women in their coloured shawls were prostrate before the altar with almost exaggerated tokens of devotion. The men, on the left side of the church, jerked their knees awkwardly as they crowded to their places. The only women in the chapel wearing hats filed into gallery seats, so that Shane knew he was seated among the *élite*. He could see no sign of Maiwa, though he searched the floor of the church eagerly, but near the altar, among the menfolk, he saw Manus O' Freel fingering his beads. The prayers before Mass were read in Irish by Father Doalty, surpliced. After retiring, the priest returned in snowy vestments, four altar boys preceding him. He found the places in the Missal, and returned down the altar steps, genuflected, and made the Sign of the Cross: and then the half-chant of Latin verse and response began its rapid flow. After a few moments, Shane was quite lost, and could not guess what part of the ceremony they were at. Once the priest moved before the Tabernacle and a rapid change of interjections rang out, and a little later, one of the altar boys carried the Missal to the left side of the altar, and the whole congregation rose, touching forehead, lips, and breast with a rapid motion. After a few moments they sat again, while Father Doalty turned to a sort of desk serving as a pulpit at the end of the altar steps. He began to speak in slow, carefully enunciated Irish. Clearly he was not a native speaker: and Shane was able to follow a good deal of the little sermon. Some of the old men on the crowded floor of the church, leaned on the altar rails with crossed legs and with hands to their ears listening critically.

"The parish priest has asked me," Father Doalty was saying, "to say a few words to you about the

education of our children. I am afraid that you are, a good many of you, careless about your duty in this important matter. I see from this report before me that in our schools for the past year, less than thirty *per cent.*—less than three in ten—of the children on the register have attended. That means that seven in ten of our children do not go to school ! *Nach milteanach an scéal é !* And more than fifty *per cent.* of the children are hired out before they reach fourteen. You parents, do you not know what a sin you are committing by bringing this about ? Do you think you are good Catholics because you come to Mass regularly when you are murdering the children's minds like this ? How can the *páisdi* get on in the world later on, and they scarcely able to read or write ? How can they have a proper knowledge of our holy religion when they are hired out to be watching cattle instead of going to school ? “Another thing, cherish the Irish language and do not be letting the *Béarla* get the upper hand in Temple-Colm parish. Irish is the strong bulwark of our nationality and of our faith, too. There is no more effectual way to make our children good Catholics than to make them good Gaels in the first place. Keep the children Irish—talk Irish to them—and there be no fear for them in after life.”—The priest turned back to the altar.

The sermon had been brief, and it was earnest. But Shane thought most of its simplicity. It was like a friendly piece of pleading in a little family circle, and something apart from the real business of worship that was resumed. It was in curious contrast to the sermons Shane was used to, delivered from high pulpits set in the prominent place here assigned to the altar, where the priest prayed with bent head,

his back to the people, in inaudible Latin, as though his words were really for the Unseen to hear, not the worshippers. The choir behind Shane chanted the Credo to the music of a whinging harmonium, and then was silent.

The chapel was darker than ever now, and in the roar of the storm the voices at the altar were quite drowned. A bell tinkled, and all the people bowed their heads. The whole gathering was still, as though an awful moment were approaching. . . . Again the bell, and Shane, though his head was bent, was conscious that the congregation bowed deeper again as though in awe, and men beat their breasts. A third time the bell sounded. This time, Shane peeped between his fingers at the candle-lit altar. He saw the priest, in a swift motion, raise the shining chalice above his head. . . .

Where had he seen this before?—the dark temple, with stormy winds raging outside; the quiet candle-lit altar, the priest's back, and the lifted chalice? Vaguely the story of the Holy Graal, read in some old book of romance, floated through his memory. He recalled the Pure Knight's arrival at the Temple of the Holy Graal on wild Mount Salvat, and the lifting the Vessel, the flashing of white samite, and the miraculous filling up of the chalice with the Precious Blood. . . . The story had thrilled him when he read it. But these people around him, he knew, believed that that same Blood was in the lifted chalice just now before his eyes. It was for this that they were bent with awe. . . . If he were one of them, he would believe that he had seen with his living eyes the same act as had taken place on that dread night described by his loved Saint John when the Graal had first held strange wine.

The Mass moved rapidly to its close, while the choir again sang, this time an Irish hymn of which Shane could catch but a few words :

*Ag soillsiú ár slí.*

*Ag soillsiú ár slí,*

*Mar réalt geal na mara ag soillsiú ár slí.*

When the congregation's prayers had been asked for deceased folk whose names were handed up on paper slips to the priest, the people began to disperse. Shane genuflected awkwardly at the end of the pew, before he turned to ascend the few steps to the back of the chapel. His absorption in the ritual had passed, and now he was feeling disappointed that he had not seen Maiwa. The huge back of a policeman moved away from before him—and looking down on him from the little organ-loft—he saw her !

It was she indeed, and, such tricks had stricken fancy played, she was utterly unlike what he had expected ! The picture he had tried to call before his mind these three days past was quite unlike this radiant face before him, with the tantalising, inscrutable smile and odd air of brown woodland beauty. . . . But the little smile of recognition that had thrilled him passed—the big policeman got in the way again—and Shane found himself in the outer air without getting another glimpse of that apparition which teased him again by once more refusing to be called up before his fancy.

*“ Dia 's Muire dhuit.”*

A black-haired youth with big circular glasses and a peering manner—something of the air of the visionary that was familiar to Shane among Gaelic Leaguers—addressed him in Irish.

" My name is Faal," he was saying, " Faragal Faal. Aren't you Shane Lambert that writes for *Inis Ealga*?"

" I am," said Shane. " How did you know that?"

" Well, you ought to know that a stranger can't go into a country town without everybody knowing his name and discussing his business. They said you were an Irish speaker, and I guessed at once who you were. I get *Inis Ealga* every month, you see. The new curate knows you, too, for a Londoner. Now, what I want to know is, will you make a speech at the *Céilidhe* that we're having in the Parish Hall to-night?"

" A speech?" said Shane amazed. " Why, I never made one in my life. And anyway, what have I got to say to anybody?"

" Oh, just tell them what fine fellows they are, and how their Irish is the best you ever heard. It does them good to get a word of encouragement from a stranger. There's none so poor that they won't take him seriously. I'll write you a speech if you like."

Shane was half amused, half puzzled, by Faragal's manner, but his heart jumped as he remembered that Maiwa was to be at the *Céilidhe*.

" We'll take that as settled," said Faragal. " What do you say to a walk along the cliffs now as the rain's clearing? I suppose you know O'Herrity—P. J., you know."

" I do, of course. By sight that is."

" And Peadar O'Connor, the novelist?"

" A little." And Shane found himself drawn into an eager gossip about the contributors to the London Gaelic paper. He was surprised at Faragal's intimate knowledge of the writings of the men they spoke of. He did not notice that all the time his companion was searching his mind and character. Twenty

minutes had not gone before Faragal was satisfied that they stood on wholly common ground.

"Listen," then said Faragal. "I have something very important to talk to you about. It's easy seeing you dig with the right foot, and I think you can help us here if you will. You are as good a Gael as any of us, and a Protestant too, which will help in this case. . . ."

"How did you know that?" asked Shane, smiling.

"Why, the crows know you went to Atkinson's church last Sunday," said Faragal. [Shane reflected with some disappointment that Maiwa, too, must know him for a Protestant: he wondered whether she classed him with the Peckovers and Wrights and Atkinsons.] "And I see you are by way of being a Socialist, like the rest of us."

". . . I wouldn't expect to find Socialism here in the Gaeltacht," Shane put in.

"Well, we call it by another name but it's the same thing at root. We're out against Capitalism, private profit-making, the wage-system and the rest of it, just as if this was an industrialised centre. And this is where you come in. . . ."

But at this point, Faragal was distracted by the view of the folded mountains across the bay, where a change of wind had torn back the clouds and let great silver shafts of light pierce down their sides and lighten the broken waters.

"Look at that," said he. "Don't you think Ireland must have looked like that when the Milesians were sailing in?—I made a poem the other day at just this place. Do you mind if I recite it to you?"

So Faragal turned from talking of Socialism and the Wage System to declaim the following:

AMERGIN, THE MILESIAN BARD, INVOKES  
IRELAND TO RECEIVE THE GAELS

Ireland ! Ireland !  
Cry we to thee,  
Long-sought in our wanderings  
O'er the bleak sea ;

We cry to thy mountains,  
Heathery, high ;  
To thy glens green and golden  
River-holding, we cry ;

To thy fierce-foaming torrents  
And slow-winding streams ;  
To thy calm mountain waters  
Long seen in our dreams ;

To thy pools full of fishes,  
Thy forests bird-filled ;  
Thy lawns and thy meadows  
And pastures cool-rilled ;

To thy plains broad and misty,  
Where towers shall stand ;  
To the hillocks for aonachs  
And the duns of the land ;

To thy wide windy uplands,  
Where the wild deer feeds,  
And the Gael shall hold races  
With fire-faster steeds ;

We cry to these, Ireland,  
And by them to thee—  
Open and welcome us,  
Thy people we.

## CHAPTER X

### MISUNDERSTANDINGS

When Faragal Faal had recited his poem on the cliff top, he did not pause for praise from Shane, but continued what he called his "discourse" as though there had been no poetical interruption. He told Shane of Jimmy the Cope's new plan of co-operative buying and selling of the people's necessities. Jimmy, he said, had come home to Donegal from work on the docks at Greenock when a small holding had fallen to him from a deceased brother. He had begun by buying artificial manures and flour for the farmers with commonly subscribed capital, and his little store in Manus O' Freel's barn had saved them £200 in six months. [Shane started at the name of Manus O' Freel.] Now he was urging that a general stores be opened so as to provide all the people's requirements and sell their produce for them at fair prices, giving them back the profit in both cases.

"Do you know what gombeen means?" Faragal asked. "It means what Marx calls *surplus value*. It's stolen profit. And McScollog, J.P., the gombeen man, rules us all by stealing the profit on our dealings. That's what Jimmy is out against. Look at the old women crossing the strand home from Mass," he said, pointing to scarlet-petticoated figures below them on the sands. "The women used to cross that strand every Saturday to bring McScollog their

knitted socks. He'd give them a penny a pair. Jimmy's mother died of pneumonia after a day when she crossed the strand and was kept waiting in the rain and cold outside McScollog's shop to sell her week's work. And he sold the people's socks again at about 2,000 *per cent.* profit. Why shouldn't we be Socialists in Portabeg?"

Shane had no answer to that. "My God," said Faragal, "it's not Socialists, it's dynamiters we want! McScollog built the chapel beyond for Canon Quish with the money he made that way. When Jimmy came back from Scotland and saw it there, he said he'd never put a foot or say a prayer in it. He says it is cemented with the blood of his murdered mother."

Faragal went on to tell of his own endeavours in the Land and Labour League. And then he led up to the object of his talk.

"It's this way," he said. "There's a fine house and twenty acres of land up for sale here next week by a man called Armstrong." ["What on earth is he leading to?" Shane asked himself.] "The people that have been getting the land on conacre (that's the eleven months system, you know—you do the work and the owner takes most of the fruit of your labour without doing a stroke himself—Oh, yes, we have the problem of Property even here at the back of beyond!)—they want the twenty acres divided between them, for they all have uneconomic holdings. But McScollog will be in against them to buy the lot, because it happens they are of the co-operative crowd (that man O'Freel is on the committee and the other two have money in it). Well, the Cope and my League have their eye on the house. We worked it out at old Crochur MacSweeney, the

ballad-maker's : the intelligentsia meets in his house every week. McScollog would beggar himself to keep us out of it. The farmers and the Cope and the League between them can put up, say, £1,600, and that's £250 above a fair price. But McScollog would go beyond that itself to beat us. They say he has £50,000 of a pile, so we could never win against him."

" It looks pretty hopeless," said Shane.

" That's where you come in," said Faragal.

" *What!* " [Shane was aghast.]

" Yes, I know you are in sympathy with us, and it happens you can just get us out of the difficulty."

" How is that? "

" Why, listen. In the ordinary way, if we got a stranger to bid for us, he'd be a suspect. It's an old dodge to bring strangers in. But as it happens, you have given McScollog the notion that you are a Gaelic League crank, and you're a Protestant with an English accent (excuse me) like some of those well-to-do artists that come studying the language from Oxford and Kensington. I think, too, you were spouting about the grand place this would be for an Irish college. . . ."

" I was," said Shane, still mystified. " I said something about it to Bessie, the hotel girl."

" Splendid! " cried Faragal. " Why, you just played into our hands! Now do you see the way of it? You're a toff from London, acting for a group that wants to start an Irish college. You never had any connection with co-operation or bold bad horny-handed Land and Labour Leaguers. (By the way, you'd better let on you were walking with me to-day to pump me on the college question as a member of the local Gaelic League). McScollog would like to

see an Irish college here, for it would bring good paying visitors to his hotel (the professors get pots of money from the Government Boards and the gombeen-man knows how to lift if off them)—so he won't bid against you if he sees you beating us. We will go down and bid up to £1,200. You can bid as much farther as is necessary to beat McScollog, up to £1,600. But I think he'll drop out once Jimmy and myself are beaten at twelve hundred. So now do you see how you can serve your country?"

Shane understood, and was seized with a fit of laughing. Faragal laughed too, but not knowing Shane's relationship with the seller of the property, he did not see the more humorous side of the situation that now was amusing his companion.

"I'm your man," said Shane, with a joyous emotion of adventure, and the details were settled then and there.

As they came down the hill again into Portabeg a stout priest with a little touch of crimson at his collar met them. Faragal raised his cap. The priest ignored the salute, looking out to sea as he walked by. Faragal seemed a little disconcerted. In reply to Shane's questioning look, he said :

"That's Canon Quish, the P.P. He's not too fond of Jimmy and myself. He spoke about the League from the altar once—said it had red atheists at the back of it."

"A fellow in London who belonged to an old English Catholic family told me that no Catholic could be a Socialist or Labour man," said Shane.

"Don't mind him," said Faragal. "English Catholics are English, only more so. It's well for religion that we can't shift our clergy like you Protestants. The Canon is against the Gaelic League

and *Sinn Féin* and everything else but what falls in with the interests of the gombeen people. If we were Protestants, we'd have a feud in the parish over him. But someone has got to put up with him, so why not us?"

"I wouldn't expect his spiritual influence to be very great if he's so unpopular," said Shane.

"That's where you're wrong. It's curious, but these bad politicians are often good priests. He is the best of confessors. The office is bigger than the man and works independent of his temperament."

This was to Shane curious language.

"By the way," said Faragal as they parted, "here's your speech for to-night. You can memorise the chief points during dinner. I thought we'd come to an agreement, so I wrote it in advance." He handed Shane a folded piece of foolscap.

Shane drew a breath.

"They should call you the Organiser of Victory," he said.

. . . . .

After dinner at the hotel, Shane studied Faragal's "heads for a speech," The following was the wording of the foolscap page :

*Introduction.*—Proud to be among Gaels of Portabeg. Often heard of Portabeg in Oxford and always wished to see it. [Butter them up about scenery, etc.] Never heard more beautiful Irish than theirs.

*Body of Speech.*—How were they in Portabeg to serve their country? You would answer by spreading the knowledge of the national language. What a splendid place Portabeg would be for a Gaelic college! This thought had struck you, and you could tell them, between yourselves, that **MAYBE THEY WOULD YET SEE ONE IN THEIR MIDST.** [N.B.—Be very secret and mysterious. Tell them not to let it go

farther : otherwise it might not.] Something about all creeds and classes here. To put McScollog off the scent.

*Peroration*.—Wish you could live and end your days in Portabeg. Hope often to revisit it when Irish college comes. [Rub it in.] Will stand between them and the night's enjoyment no longer. Quote any old tag of Gaelic poetry to wind up :

*Seo sláinte Uladh dhubh na nGall*

*I gcomhnuidhe fior gîdh minic mall.* [Applause].

Shane worked hard at memorising these points and preparing his address. Then he jotted down skeleton heads of his own and burnt Faragal's manuscript. A couple of hours remained to him before the *Céilidhe*. A certain anxiety about appearing on the platform conflicted with eagerness to see Maiwa again, so he knew not whether to wish the hours longer or shorter. Endeavouring to quieten his mind, he sat down to write a letter to Fergus O'Cryan describing his experiences :

These ten days have been *Tir-na-nOg* (he wrote). Do you know, Fergus, Ireland is a hundred times better than I had dreamed. It is like a great Cathedral to me. All the time I have been here I have not heard an obscene word once, and you know how in England men of any class are never left together five minutes without talking dirt. It's like coming out of hell to cross the Channel. You're in a different world ! How I wish I need never go back to England. If I knew how to sweep crossings I would do that to stay in Ireland. Do you remember saying to me once that I might yet be building bridges to the glory of God ? That's what they are doing here in Portabeg—the co-operators and Labour Leaguers. Such prospects as there are before Ireland if only there were enough workers. Oh, that I could be here to carry a hod in the building work !"

When Shane reached the Parish Hall, "*Dia 's Muire dhuit*," said he to Faragal Faal.

"*Dia 's Muire dhuit, agus John Knox*," said Faragal, who took him aside and directed him to the platform.

"Am I to go up there?" Shane asked, alarmed.

"You are," said Faragal.

"I hadn't reckoned on that," said Shane.

"I took care you shouldn't," said Faragal.

He led Shane to the back of the platform, where Father Doalty, chairman for the night, was waiting.

"What is the programme?" asked the priest.

"I have it written down for you here, Father," said Faragal. "There's a couple of songs and a jig before the speeches, and as soon as they are over we can get on with the dancing. The Scientist is to sing '*Barbaro*.'"

Shane had heard that name before. "Who is the man you call the Scientist?" he asked slyly.

"She's not a man at all," said Faragal. "She's a girl called Maiwa O' Freel, B.Sc., who's just back from the University."

Reared in England, Shane had an almost religious awe towards universities, and supposed that degrees were not only the privilege of unfathomably profound learning, but available only to the aristocratic and the well-to-do. Hence the news that Manus O' Freel's daughter was a Bachelor of Science embarrassed him. "Lord!" said he to himself, "how she must have been laughing at me and I blathering away to her as if I knew more than herself!"

"I suppose you'll give us a recitation yourself," said Father Doalty to Faragal.

Faragal seemed pleased. "As you ask me," said he, "I may as well inflict the poem I wrote this evening while waiting for the meeting," and he pulled a paper from his pocket. The noise of the assembling audience echoed in the hall.

Shane never knew how he got through that meeting. His consciousness seemed to be outside his body and

to be looking down at his own queer, squeaky-voiced figure on the platform. He saw, as in a dream, Maiwa O'Freel stand before the piano, and heard her voice soar mellowly in the traditional spinning song ; he heard Faragal Faal recite, but if he afterwards knew the words of the poem, it was because they were later repeated to him :

Not in the mart, the cottage, or the hall,  
 Not by the shallows of the weary sea,  
 Not in the heights where lonely eagles call,  
 Not by the sunny lea,

Shall you find our dethroned and banished queen,  
 Sweet Peace, whose feet have fled the ways of men,  
 For Wrong's empire is set where she was seen,  
 So ill we served her then—

Yet tremble in the blackness of the night  
 The sentinels of evil, seeing still,  
 The crimson campfires of the rebel Right  
 Flash hope from hill to hill—

And through the clangorous camps, calm and serene,  
 Where trumpets blare and swordwrights' smithies roar,  
 She walks, the one you seek, our gentle queen,  
 Among the men of war :

Soon shall her banner ride forth through the blast,  
 And Insurrection's clarion summons call  
 All who love Peace, to rally to the last,  
 The greatest war of all :

For we must bring the forts of Evil down  
 For Peace's sake, in arms, tho' many die—  
 And then on Freedom's bloody field, we'll crown,  
 Dear Peace our queen for aye.

Then from the distance, Father Doalty's voice sounded, introducing Shane to the gathering as " a brilliant young worker in the language cause," and farther still in the distance, Shane heard his own voice thinly speak. As his eyes flitted round on his

audience, their faces looked like odd white masks. Here and there one flashed back an interested expression as in personal converse—Faragal's and Maiwa's. . . . He was surprised at the rocking laughter that some not-very-witty phrase called forth and found that mass-humour is tickled by things that private company would not smile at. Emboldened, he introduced an anecdote of London life, imitating the Cockney dialect, and as the gathering roared, he sat down, with an intoxicating consciousness that he had made a successful speech. The clapping continued for some minutes, and Father Doalty leaned across the little green table to compliment him. He vaguely wondered whether he had brought out all Faragal's points, and was thankful when Faragal met him at the foot of the platform and congratulated him on having done so.

In the *céilidhe* that followed, Shane found himself introduced to many of the Gaels of Portabeg, but his eyes watched a certain red head of hair moving about the hall. He saw Maiwa go out to dance once with Faragal and once with a youth whom he knew to be a national teacher from Cashelbeg. The latter dance was the difficult *Rinncé Mór*, strange to himself. With what fierce bitterness he watched ! He saw that Maiwa was laughing, too, when she swept past the place where he stood, not noticing him. . . . Suddenly he seemed to see himself as being foolishly out-of-place. Here he was watching her jealously—he, a stranger, and divided from her in a thousand things that these of Portabeg shared with her. He wished himself away, and longed for solitude. He excused himself, and moved away from the group with whom he had been talking. He stood now near a corner of the hall, and had lost

sight of Maiwa. And then as a dance ended and the medley of young folk drifted to places round the walls (by what seemed to him the strangest, as the blessedest, of chances) she came passing across the head of the hall and by the corner where he stood, alone, and serenely oblivious of his presence. There was a look of surprise on her face as she faced him, and she acknowledged his greeting kindly.

"You're dancing none," said she. "I suppose you don't know the Irish dances?"

"I do then," said he (they were all the dances he did know). "At least I know the easy ones. But I know nobody to dance with," he added, with a pointed boldness that surprised himself.

"I wonder at that," said she. "Surely all the *cailini* must be dying to dance with the orator of the night. It's not often we have great speakers from London amongst us."

Shane felt that fencing with Maiwa was an unequal duel. "I'm afraid," said he, "that that's not the first time you laughed at me." He looked rueful.

"Take your places for the 'Walls of Limerick,'" the M.C. was shouting.

"I suppose they dance *that* in London?" Maiwa asked, looking away from him. "That's one of the easy dances, I think. . . ."

In a few moments Shane held the tip of her fingers and was enjoying the happiest dance that ever he danced in his life. . . .

"Is it true we are likely to have an Irish college down at Portabeg?" Maiwa asked as he led her to her seat after the dance.

"Oh, yes," said Shane hastily. In the confusion caused by so direct a question, he answered at random. "It—it may be started at the Forsythe demesne. . . ." Then he reflected that this was

akin to impromptu lying, and made a mental resolve that if the demesne was actually secured for the workers, he would advocate that an Irish college be held there, too.

They did not dance again, Maiwa and Shane. They talked.

"How did you get to know Munster Irish?" he asked.

"Oh, I met plenty of law-braws in Dublin," said she.

"At the University, I suppose?"

She nodded and went on to talk of young Ireland in the capital, while Shane was torn between delight at the music of her voice and the kindness of her manner and bitterness at the reflection that to the circles of which she spoke, he had no *entrée*. At the end of an intoxicating hour of talk, the time came to part.

"Good-luck on Thursday," she said when he bade her good-bye.

So she knew all about Faragal's plot! She had been laughing at him again! He miserably made his way from the hall before some of his new friends could find him to bid him good-night. The night-air beat cool upon his heated face as he looked up at the stars. The sea swished below the wharf. He walked along the quays slowly, towards Farmer's Hotel. At the end of the quays a lamp blazed whitely. Two figures passed into the fan of luminescence. Shane's heart stopped and then throbbed. He knew the poise of that shawl-wrapped head. . . . He even saw her face lifted for a moment to the light as she raised her hand to push back a vagrant curl beneath the shawl: it was Maiwa. Beside her walked Faragal Faal!

It was that same day that Vincent Murnane revisited Beulah Lodge, with a fresh appeal to his wife and Tessie, his daughter. Again his visit was unexpected. This time, he was alone, and when Matilda opened the door, she was not only surprised by his coming, but by the change that had come over his appearance. He was no longer the well-groomed Clare gentleman. He had grown gross in feature—there were puffy bags under his eyes, and his figure was almost dropsical in bulk. His reserve, or self-control, had gone too, and he was scarcely seated in the house before he was pleading with an entire abandon of pride.

"You will come with me now, won't you, Tilly?" he asked. "I'm on the westward road, Tilly. The doctor gives me another year, or two at the most." [Wine and good living, the resort of the lonely man, had done their work.] "I would like to spend my last days with my family, Tilly. All through the years I have been longing to have my wife and daughter in my house. You wouldn't blight my last days by refusing, Tilly? . . ."

Matilda had a hard face. "And all these years, Vincent, I have been longing, too, to take my proper place in my own house. Oh, how I have looked forward to living with my husband and daughter in happiness. But you have left it to this—till you want me to go and nurse you. Why didn't you come earlier, when you were strong, and could give us a happy time? You are being rewarded, Vincent, for your stubbornness over religion. If you had not wanted Tessie to be brought up by the priests. . . ."

"Ah, don't raise all that again, Tilly. Come and comfort me in the evening of my life. You will not regret it. We will be happy these two years. And

you will be comfortable afterwards—and independent. I have money saved up. . . . Will you let Tessie decide?—Call her in."

Tessie came in. She did not address her father, but stood, hands behind back, waiting for him to speak. She, too, had changed since their last meeting. Her face seemed ten years older. Its girlish sweetness had yielded to a drawn sourness.—Murnane made his appeal, again. Tessie listened in silence. He noticed that her eyes did not meet his—she was watching his lips, and her own were curled. When, faltering, he had finished, she spoke:

"That is a nice story," she said. "To listen one would think *you* were the sinned-against. You tell us nothing about your intrigues against me!"

"Intrigues? What do you mean by intrigues?"

"You know well enough.—Putting Fergus—Fergus O'Cryan up as a screen for yourself, to help you trap me."

Her mother, with an air of amazement, sought to interfere, but Tessie silenced her with a gesture. Murnane was bewildered.

"Fergus?" said he. "O'Cryan?—I don't know what you mean. I never even heard the name."

Tessie broke into a shrill, half-hysterical laugh. "O—O—O," she cried, "you will lie like that to our very faces! If you had been open with me, even now. . . . But you lie, you lie. I have proof that you lie. You clever plotters, your jesuitry failed you this time! You will pretend you never knew Fergus O'Cryan. *Then how does it happen that he has your portrait in his sketch-book?*"

To Tessie's mother this outburst was quite inexplicable. To Murnane it was not less so. He had never heard of Fergus O'Cryan, and little could he

guess that, on a certain Sunday evening, four years ago, one of many on which he had walked in the Queen's Woods to feast his longing eyes upon his daughter, he had been noticed by the quick eye of the artist and sketched in a notebook. Fatal sketch that now blasted the fate of three with blind misunderstanding !

In the midst of the bewilderment, a knock sounded at the front door. Tessie, as if eager to quit the room, moved to the door of the apartment : there was a scuffle in the hall without (Aunt Rebecca moving from the keyhole), and then the noise of the front door opening, followed by an intoning voice :

“ Ah, my deah sister, I am doubtless an unexpected visitor. Not wholly unwelcome, I trust. I will thank you to put my goloshes to the kitchen fire. Your good sister is enjoying good health, I hope ? And the young damsel ? . . . ”

The drawingroom door opened, and the Reverend Trott entered, working his shirt-cuffs down with his little fingers. Vincent Murnane surveyed the newcomer with disgust more intense than on their first encounter, which had taken place in this very room. The little preacher seemed disconcerted as on the former occasion, by Murnane's presence. He was visibly relieved when Murnane (without waiting to enter into conversation) bowed to him and made to leave the apartment. Matilda made no step to follow her husband from the room, though he paused at the door, and looked at her as though to give her a final opportunity. Tessie remained at the window, her back turned to the whole company, staring out.

Murnane hesitated. He extended his hand. Matilda looked away. He took his answer and went silently into the hall. Aunt Rebecca bustled up.

She was sorry, she said, that he must be going so soon ; the weather was bad to-day ; she hoped he would catch his train. He heard the drawingroom door closed from within and a hum of voices arise. He never saw his daughter or his wife again. . . .

“ I have remarkable news—remarkable news from dear Brother Armstrong,” the Reverend Trott was saying. “ In his letter to me received last night he asked me to communicate the tidings to you to-day. You are aware, my deah sisters, no doubt, that our beloved brother and myself, studying prayerfully and humbly the writings of the Reverend Dr. Bullinger, have come to the conclusion—have been led to it, I should say—that poor Brother Copas’s view regarding the Trinity are erroneous. Our studies have been supplemented by books from the pen of Sir Robert Anderson (whose righteous activities directed against the Papist Fenians redouble the authority of his theological pen), with the result that we are fully convinced. Fully convinced. I think Miss Teresa is not following me very closely. Shall I repeat ? ”

Tessie turned from the window. She had just seen her father’s dejected figure pass from sight at the corner of the road. It seemed to her that a chapter of her life had closed. Was the next to be a repetition of the old ? Was she to know no change, no break, no new beginning ? . . .

“ Oh yes, I’m listening,” she said, absently.

“ Well, my deah sisters, our brother writes to me from Dublin declaring that he has decided to see a temple of truth established in the British metropolis, from which lovers of verity shall have means to confess their convictions and confound the erroneous doctrine of that unhappy man, Sampson Copas, by

whom we have been so largely led astray. By the sale of his Irish property, our brother finds himself in a position to aid the Lord's work most generously. I am sure, deah friends, that you will congratulate me in that (however unworthy) Brother Armstrong has esteemed me fitting to be the humble mouthpiece of Truth in this new endeavour."

The Reverend Trott thanked Aunt Matilda for her kind offer of tea. He regretted that Aunt Rebecca was already engaged in catering for his creature comfort, but he would very much like an egg with his tea, for he had to preach to-night. And if he might have some toast? She would pardon his troubling her.

When Tessie's mother had left the room, the little preacher moved over and closed the door.

"Miss Teresa," he began. "Tessie. . . ."

This time she did not repulse him.

## CHAPTER XI

### AN ARROW FROM THE PAST

On Tuesday morning, when he came down to breakfast, Shane found a letter and a paper on his plate. The letter, from Samuel Armstrong, told him that his grandfather would not be present at the auction, but would arrive next day for the signing of the transfer. The paper was the tri-weekly *Portabeg Refuter*, two passages in which were blue-pencilled by whoever had left it for him. One column reported the *Céilidhe* at length. "Miss Maiwa O' Freel, B.Sc., won deserved applause by her skilful rendering of *Barbaro*. Miss Kate Gallagher officiated at the piano with her usual brilliance of execution"—everybody was mentioned and complimented. And Shane's speech appeared in glorified form. So closely did the report follow Faragal's "Heads" that Shane wondered whether it was another piece of the Organiser of Victory's handiwork. A leaderette on "A GAELIC COLLEGE FOR PORTABEG ?" intensified the suspicion.

"I see where the *Refuter* says something about us getting an Irish college down here," McScollog said, after chatting about the weather to his guest. "I often thought myself that a college would be a good thing for the district and the students too."

Shane smiled inwardly at McScollog's profession of interest in the language movement, but played his part well. "It would bring a lot of visitors into the place," said he.

"It would that," said McScollog, "and I may tell you that if any parties were thinking of getting up a college, they'd meet with no opposition here: we would all be eager to help them. In fact," he said, "between you and I, I wouldn't think much of putting a little money into it myself—for the good of the cause."

Shane looked back at his host with an expression that seemed to say: "We understand one another, we two, but mum's the word."

It was the mildest of summer days with the ineffable mellowness of the Donegal air softening and sweetening the whole scene. Shane set off for Forsythe Hall to give an appearance of prospecting. The way lay along the main road, now dusty and deserted. Harvesting was proceeding in the ripe yellow fields. Somewhere from the blue stillness a bird fluted. Shane entered the demesne and wandered down the grass-invaded paths and beneath the odorous pines. The Hall itself loomed up green and damp-looking, with the tall bay windows black and deathly. From a height behind the barns, Shane looked into the townland of Kiloonan, and unseen himself could see Manus O' Freel at work in the field. Below him the broad fields of the demesne, set in conacre, stretched to the little stream that bounded O' Freel's land. He lingered long there, hoping to see Maiwa. He even returned in the afternoon, a book in his pocket, prepared to play vigil in the grass. This time, as he came through the lonely demesne, he saw a flash of blue in the orchard beyond the house. . . .

He stopped. It was the same blue that he had seen that day week in Kiloonan. He went on slowly. The blue had disappeared, and he came right to the orchard's edge before he saw it again. There was

Maiwa—where the sea shone silvery between the slender tree-trunks, and in the shade of the gold-flecked leaves. She was sitting there, looking out to sea with a wistful look. A book lay face-down beside her. Shane tried to tiptoe away: what would she think of him if he thrust his presence upon her? But so intently was he eyeing the sun-flushed profile, it seemed, that she grew conscious of being watched and turned. Shane jerked quickly, and trod on a twig that cracked beneath his shoe and drew her gaze upon him. Her eyebrows went up in obvious surprise and confusion. Shane hesitated and then went towards her.

"I am sorry," he said. "I did not know anyone was here. . . . I was looking at the demesne. . . ."

She had recovered self-possession now. "I hope it pleases you," she said, with a spice of mockery in her tone, "for I would like the college to get it. I am very fond of this little nook—I have spent many a summer's day reading here since the Hall was empty."

"But you know," said Shane, "it's not really for a college I am going to bid on Thursday. Why do you tease me? And how did you know I was going to bid at all?"

"Oh," said she, "Faragal Faal tells me all his plottings."

Jealousy again shot through Shane, again followed by the sore consciousness of being a stranger, an outsider.

"He's very lucky," said he grimly, "for you to take so much interest in him."

Shane looked at her with such eagerness that she coloured a little and looked away. Her lips pouted a little as if she was about to speak, but the sentence was not uttered.

"I wish I were in his position!" said Shane desperately.

"Do you really?" Maiwa asked, turning on him with sudden laughter. "Would you really like to be—my nephew?"

Shane was staggered as if by good news hard to credit.

"Are you—are you—his aunt?" he asked.

Maiwa nodded, too full of laughter to speak. The light in her eyes was too much for Shane. He flung his hat into the air. "I . . . ."

But Maiwa raised a finger almost to his lips. "Sh!" said she. "I'm afraid you're—a little bit in the sentimental mood of the exile-come-home since you came to Ireland. You must—wait and see!"

And she ran away through the sun-lit trees. Shane picked up the book, fallen in the grass, that she had been reading. It was the *Vita Nuova* in Rossetti's translation.

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Everybody came to the auction, which was held at the porch of the Hall. The auctioneer, a thin, grey weather-worn man in a rubber coat, stood on a chair and extolled the house, the land, the condition of both. McScollog stood directly before him in the front of the crowd of curious men, women, and children. Shane was to his right. He could not see Faragal Faal, but a man with red hair, fierce blue eyes, and a determined manner was before him. Near to Shane, Manus O'Freel leaned forward on a heavy stick.

"Now, gentlemen, what am I offered for this splendid property?" the auctioneer cried. "A magnificent opportunity for any gentleman desiring

a high-class residence" (a glance at McScollog) "to which to retire, or for any society or institution seeking a suitable country abode for its operations" (a glance at Shane). "There's no need for me to enlarge further on the merits of the Hall, gentlemen. Come now, what do you say? Who'll give me a bid?"

No answer. The auctioneer continued his patter, and again called for bids. McScollog and the red-haired man were shooting side-glances at each other.

"Eight hundred," said the red-haired man through his teeth.

"Good man, Jimmy," said someone in the crowd.

"Eight hundred and fifty," said McScollog without troubling to look up.

"Eight-seventy-five," said the red-haired man.

"Nine hundred," said McScollog.

"Nine hundred twenty-five," said the red-haired man.

"ONE THOUSAND!" said McScollog, with the air of one who should say, "enough of this fooling!"

The red-haired man hesitated. But after a moment he said: "A thousand and fifty."

"Eleven hundred!" said McScollog.

The red-haired man was silent. "The Cope's bate," said someone. Shane, high-strung and trembling, knew that the moment had come for him to play his cards.

"Come now," cried the auctioneer. "Any advance on the bid of eleven hundred by the gentleman before me?"

"Eleven-fifty!" said Shane. All eyes turned on him.

"The college fella," said one of the crowd. McScollog looked doubtfully at the two bidders on

either side of him, and seemed about to bid, when Jimmy the Cope, the red-haired man, glaring at Shane, said :

“ Eleven-seventy-five.”

He spoke in the tone of one who had bid his top figure. McScollog cleared his throat to bid again, when Shane interposed :

“ Twelve hundred ! ”

“ Ach ! ” said Jimmy the Cope, throwing down the paper in his hand. “ You can have the blasted place for all I care.” And he began to elbow his way back through the crowd. Angry voices were raised, and Manus O’Freel ground his stick into the earth. “ We don’t want any of your fancy undertakings here, young man,” said he across to Shane. “ The Cope would have had it but for you, and you’ll soon find out you’re not wanted. . . . ”

McScollog stood unmoved in the midst of the hubbub. “ Any advance, any higher bid, gentlemen ? ” the auctioneer cried, his voice ringing over the angry growl. “ The property is going to the gentleman on my right at twelve hundred. Any advance, now, for the last time ? ”

McScollog was silent. No one else was bidding against Shane.

“ Going-going—GONE ! ” The hammer fell, and Faragal’s plot had succeeded.

Babel followed. Manus O’Freel waved his stick in Shane’s face, but McScollog shook his hand and wished him and his college every success. Grasping in his pocket the forty £5 notes which Faragal had entrusted him with overnight, Shane followed the auctioneer into the Hall. Out of the cool shadow, Faragal Faal rose to meet him.

“ Good man,” he said, blinking through his big

glasses at Shane. "I knew you'd manage the business for us. What did it go at?"

"Twelve hundred," said Shane, surprised that Faragal took the thing so lightly. "Why were you not in the crowd with everybody else?"

"I had a poem to polish up," said the Organiser of Victory. "Maybe you'd like to hear it? It goes:

Time like a grim slave-driver has us chained  
And drags us past the sunny days that glow  
Like flower-full gardens, where we had remained  
Were we but free, to dream and dally so:

O happy hours that laugh like lovers' eyes  
By crystal waters where the lilies sleep,  
And Joyous Gard's tall turrets in calm skies  
Upstand, and cuckoo calls from forests deep;

But Death, good Quixote, wandering on our ways  
Shall slay old Time and make us freemen yet,  
And then we'll hie again to those dear 'days  
That once we passed, but never can forget.

"Excuse me, Mr. Faal," said the auctioneer. "Excuse my interrupting your beautiful poetry. But I expect Mr. Lambert here will be glad to get through the necessary formalities of purchase as quickly as possible.—I presume, Mr. Lambert, I am to put you down as purchaser 'with others'? You know the conditions of sale, ten *per cent.* down and . . ."

"You can put me down," said Shane, "as purchaser on behalf of the Temple-Colm Co-operative Agricultural Society, Limited."

The auctioneer's rugged face went blank. "Well, I'm damned," he said.

At this moment, Jimmy the Cope entered, bringing Manus O'Freel with him.

"Ha, youngster!" he cried. "Here's a man was wanting your blood, and I've had ten minutes hard work explaining that you were acting in his behalf."

Manus patted Shane on the shoulder. "You're a right lad," said he, "and I took you for a rascal."

"These three gentlemen can sign your agreement form for themselves," said Shane to the auctioneer, handing the notes to Faragal. This was done, and the party retired to a neighbouring bar-parlour. It was there, exhilarated by the afternoon's excitement and two glasses of wine, that Shane remarked to Faragal that he was, in a sense, allied to both purchaser and seller.

"How do you make that out?" asked Faragal.

"*I am Samuel Armstrong's grandson!*" answered Shane.

Consternation.

"And—you—bought—for—the—Cope?" Faragal asked, amazed.

Shane shrugged his shoulders.

Jimmy the Cope put down his glass. "You may think yourself the hell of a smart fellow, Faragal," said he, "but this lad bangs Banagher for coolness!"

But what pleased Shane most was a wave of the hand that evening from Maiwa, and her smiling: "*Maith thú!*"

Samuel Armstrong went north from Dublin with a warm feeling of satisfaction. During his absence (*and Shane's*) from Beulah Lodge, the Reverend Trott had succeeded in his suit: so the latest mail from London announced. It was well that Shane had not been at home to disturb Teresa's mind. . . . Shane found his grandfather unusually cordial.

"I trust, my boy," Armstrong said, "that you are now well recovered. We must be returning to London forthwith. You will find some pleasant

surprises awaiting you. The good folk at home have been planning surprises in our absence—ha-ha!"

Shane had a shrinking sense of disappointment at the prospect of so early a return.

"I trust also," Armstrong went on, "that you have studied the literature I sent you. I want you, my boy, to come to a full knowledge of the Truth as befits my grandson. It is for us to acknowledge we have erred, and to find our way back humbly to the Fold."

"Do you mean Dr. Bullinger's pamphlets?" Shane asked. "They seemed to be Trinitarian in their arguments."

"I do mean them," Armstrong said. "The dear Brother Bullinger has guided our feet from the morass whither we were led by that mistaken and misguiding man, Sampson Copas. Moreover, Sir Robert Anderson, whose righteous character was proven as with fire in his conflicts with the Fenian rebels, supports Brother Bullinger's views, and where two such servants of God agree, who am I, Samuel Armstrong, to oppose the light?"

"Are you turning Trinitarian again after all?" Shane asked abruptly.

"You may put it that way if you wish," Armstrong answered. "But rather should you say. . . ."

Shane laughed almost bitterly. "Oh, what do you want me to believe?" he asked. "You change and change, and I am always to change, too, on your authority! The Catholics here *know* what they believe, anyway."

"My boy," said Armstrong. "It is not in my heart to be angry with you on account of your foolish words. You speak hastily. Study and prayer will guide you to wisdom. And in the new Tabernacle

that I am privileged to raise for the propagation of the Truth and the confounding of that man Copas (with whom God deal) you shall have ample opportunities for enlightenment. . . .”

Shane did not tell his grandfather of his part in the purchase of the estate, but he was present when the co-operators with their solicitor and the auctioneer came to the hotel next day for the signing of the transfer. Manus O’Freel and Jimmy the Cope acted for the purchasers. Both of them nodded to Shane, and Jimmy winked. Jimmy, as usual, was cheery and exuberant, but Manus sat and was silent, turning his hat in his hands and watching Samuel Armstrong darkly.

The business was transacted in a few minutes, and Shane signed the indenture as one of the witnesses. Armstrong rose, as though to bring the interview to an end.

“ You’re not as good an Irishman as your grandson, Mr. Armstrong,” Jimmy said, when he saw that neither luck-penny nor the conventional refreshments were forthcoming.

“ I hope,” said Armstrong, turning a frowning gaze on Shane, “ that the boy has not been dabbling in politics since he came to Ireland ? ”

“ We have no politics in Portabeg for him to dabble in,” said Jimmy. “ Self-Help is our politics. What they call *Sinn Féin* in Dublin.”

“ I have every sympathy with such a policy .. .” said Armstrong with a touch of condescension in his manner. “ I fully approve of co-operation, for I desire as strongly as any to see Ireland a prosperous country, though I fear she will never be prosperous until she turns her back upon the Church of Rome. . . .”

"She'll never be prosperous," said Manus O'Freel in a growling voice from the back of the room, "till she has cleared out the English and their hangers-on, lock, stock, and barrel."

"I can listen to no disloyalty," said Armstrong, drawing himself up. "English rule is our only safeguard against a restoration of the Inquisition."

Manus O'Freel stood up too: Shane could see the big veins knotted on the hand that grasped his ash-plant. He was inarticulate for a moment, and then in an intense voice: "Do you dare talk to us that way?" he asked. "Will you damned Protestants never learn to keep a civil tongue in your heads? Do you think after holding the land from us for two hundred years, and bleeding and bludgeoning us to maintain your ascendancy, you have the right to talk down to us about 'loyalty' to you and your friends? Do you think, damn you, that. . . ."

Jimmy the Cope stood before Manus and caught his hands: "Sh, sh," said he. "*Ná biodh corrughe ort!* Don't be angering yourself. Sure, you wouldn't even your wit to that ould daftie." [This in an undertone.] "We'll agree to disagree. We have no quarrel with the Protestants *as such* . . . ."

"No quarrel, do you say?"

"Now, now," said Jimmy, "we all know there's many a Protestant has been a good Irishman. Look at young Lambert here."

"Not many!" growled Manus. "You've only to scratch them to find the blackness. . . . Young Lambert's a decent lad, but I mind there was an informer of his name in London that our people trusted and that sold one of our men that had a price on his head."

"NO!"

Shane had been dazed when the dispute began, and had looked on with puzzled eyes and sinking heart. But when Manus's last sentence was uttered, a scene from the distant past flashed before his mind and its significance became clear—his dying father, white and gasping, saying piteously with hard-drawn breaths : “ *Don't believe them if they ever tell you that your father was an informer. . . . Tell Father Kearney to say to the people . . . that your father didn't inform.* ”

“ No ! ” had burst from his lips, and now he saw that all eyes were turned on him : surprise and wonder on every face.

“ You mean my father ! ” he said in fierce tones that surprised himself, addressing Manus O'Freel. “ You coward ! —You slanderer ! —My father was *not* an informer. He—he told me so on his deathbed. . . . ” Speech faltered on his tongue as the image of his dying parent came again before his eyes.

“ I think I can explain this interruption from my grandson,” said Samuel Armstrong, in cold, hard tones that jarred the gathering and broke the spell of surprise. “ Robert Lambert, this boy's father, and the man to whom you, sir, doubtless allude, harboured a dangerous character in his house one week-end, a few weeks before Mr. Parnell died, eighteen years ago. I am inclined to believe that my son-in-law acted innocently, not knowing the character or aims of this person. However, this boy here, Shane, who was then a mere child, overheard an intrigue, conducted by this stranger with another calling himself Stewart, though his real identity I can guess at, and dutifully repeated what he had heard to me.”

Shane listened, horrified. A second image floated before his memory out of the dim past : a small boy, himself, telling his grandfather of a mysterious inter-

view at Nana's command, and Armstrong leaving the Mission Hall, his face set as though he had come to some weighty resolve. Armstrong was still speaking.

"It was my privilege to be the Lord's chosen instrument for the frustration of the schemes of the Scarlet Woman and the Adversary. My suspicions were aroused by my grandson's news. I went forthwith to Scotland Yard, and that same night the malefactor was arrested, and his nefarious schemes brought to naught. There, now, is the truth for you: not that I glory in the deeds of the flesh. But, sir, if you use the word 'informer,' you must apply it to me—or to my grandson, not his father!"

The words went like swords to Shane's bosom. He, he himself, was an Informer! He, he himself, whom these new friends of his had called a good Irishman, had given a Fenian, a man of Wolfe Tone's lineage, to death and (what was worse) to the frustration of his labours! This, then, this awful realisation, was what his late few days of intoxicating joy and hope had ended in! It was as if an arrow from the past had dashed the cup of happiness from his lips. Manus O'Freel—Maiwa's father—was staring at him, not with the kindly or the brusque expression of yesterday, but with anger and contempt. . . . Those in the room who looked at him, saw a face go bloodless with horror and eyes that stared as if with frenzy, till the slender figure, drawn taut, relaxed suddenly in a dreadful sob, and with a flood of tears, Shane ran from the room.

## CHAPTER XII

### BEFORE THE ALTAR

Next morning Faragal Faal called at Farmer's Hotel, only to learn from Bessie that Armstrong and Shane had left Portabeg by the morning train.

"The young fella seemed all on pins and needles to be away," said Bessie. "He kept hurrying the old man for fear he'd miss the train. Do you think somebody has been jiltin' him since he came?"

"I'm afraid it's something more serious than that," said Faragal.

"H'm," said Bessie. "Jiltin' is serious enough, as I hope you'll find out some day.—There's the boss coming: I'd better not be seen talking to you: he's death on co-operators now."

McScollog came down the yard.

"Hullo, you," he said fiercely to Faragal. "What do you want here?"

"I've just come collecting funds for the Irish college," said Faragal. "I believe you declared yourself in sympathy with our aims, Mr. *Farmer*."

"Get er a that," said McScollog.

Shane at that moment was lying face-down on the seat of the railway carriage, as the train wound through the sunny highlands of Donegal. He had no care now, to watch the mountains filing past and the reedy lochs glittering with light. The brown

turf-heaps, the laughing children at the doors of limewashed houses, were sights that embittered the sense of nostalgia in his stunned heart. From all this well-loved life he was forever branded an exile! —that was the thought that hammered in his brain. He wished he could slough his identity and begin life all over again. The prospect of returning to London life was sickening, too, for he must break with all the associations of London Gaeldom, and he would be haunted in all the places where he had moved with Irish friends, by the fear of seeing their reproachful faces.

In Dublin a letter from Fergus O'Cryan awaited him that came as news of release might come to a prisoner.

“I hope you delivered my message safely at Kingstown,” the letter ran. “I can understand your wish to stay in Ireland, and I have made some inquiries for you. Paddy McPoland, the editor of *The Launawaula*, the weekly story paper, is going on to one of the dailies as leader-writer. I have written to him with some samples of your work from *Inis Ealga*, asking him to recommend you for the job if you care to take it. Call on him as soon as you get this.”

Shane lost no time in calling at *The Launawaula* office. Paddy McPoland was a dapper young man who seemed incapable of taking anything in the world seriously. “You’re welcome to the job,” said he. “I’m fed up with it. I have my launawaula of *The Launawaula* long since. Thirty hours work a day and thirty bob a week: that’s the size of it. Me for the daily—to educate the public on every damn subject under the sun. Come along and see Boag—that’s the Alderman, our proprietor.—Laugh at all his jokes and don’t let

on that the Irish Parliamentary Party is less infallible than the Pope."

Alderman Boag, the fattest man Shane ever saw in Ireland, with ostentatious gold chain and big brilliants, listened without attention to Paddy's recommendation of Shane, saying he had not time for a prolonged interview. His time was money. He had so many functions to attend that he could not spare five minutes. The Library Committee was to meet that evening, and meanwhile he had to address a gathering of the W. N. H. A., Her Excellency having said that she could not possibly get on without him. He was a self-made man himself—began life as a copyholder in the old *Stalwart* office. Young men nowadays were not what they were when he was young, etc., etc. A hurried but lengthy autobiography followed. When twenty-five minutes had passed, the Alderman pulled out a gold watch as big as a small clock.

"I really can stay no longer. Her Excellency will be most annoyed at my delay," he said. "Mr. McPoland, I have complained before of your habit of detaining me unnecessarily."

Shane disappointedly saw the Alderman hunting for his hat: he had not so much as referred to the subject of the interview.

But the Alderman turned as he was about to leave the room. "I'm sorry I haven't time to go into the question of this appointment. McPoland there has upset me most disagreeably—most disagreeably—by leaving me. If you care to fill his place at twenty-seven-an-six (and that's more than I can really afford) you can come for a trial. Now I really must run for the car: I hope you will not annoy me again by taking up my time with talk."

—And he was gone at last.

Shane walked through the city to the hotel with a sort of sombre joy : this mellow, crumbling, memory-redolent city was now to be his home. He would live here, obscure but content, breathing Irish air at least. From the busy street, he could see the dome of the Dublin hills above the roofs, and he thought of how he would spend his Sundays rambling in their recesses. But how much more joyfully would he have walked a few days earlier with these tidings. What hopes would have leapt in him then, from means to live in Ireland ! He would need to return to London for a month or six weeks to serve that period at Cloisterham House : would he stay at Beulah Lodge the while ? He shrank from doing so. But Armstrong must be told here and now of his decision.

Yet he shirked making that declaration. He nursed his secret during the rest of their stay in Dublin : he tried, when on board the mail-boat, and again when in the train, to tell Armstrong of his resolve. Only when they reached Euston, and went to the refreshment room to breakfast before the final stage of the journey, did he muster courage to begin :

“ Grandfather,” said he, “ I don’t think I shall come on to Beulah Lodge to-day.”

Samuel Armstrong put down his knife and fork and stared at him, so that he averted his eyes.

“ What is the meaning of this ? ”

“ I—I am thinking,” Shane said, “ of taking up a post in Dublin next month, and—and it doesn’t seem worth while to upset the house just for a month’s stay. . . . ”

He wondered why Armstrong did not speak, and at last looked into his face : he saw there *something* that he had seen only twice before, something inhuman, diabolical—a look of *possession*.

" My suspicions are confirmed at last ! " Armstrong said, voice and body vibrant with passion. " I know the meaning of this. I know what you are contemplating. Do not try to hide your face from me ! I can see through to your sinful soul ! You are planning to become a Roman Catholic ! "

Shane was surprised by the charge, though he knew that one thing alone transformed Armstrong with that look of passionate and uncontrolled hatred.

" I am not, " he faltered. " I am not planning any such thing. . . . "

" Don't lie to me ! " Armstrong thundered, smashing his hand down upon the table so that the delph danced. " I could forgive you any youthful follies. I could forgive you giving up religion altogether. But to go over to that accursed City of the Seven Hills !—do it, if you dare, and never will I acknowledge you again. Wherever you go, you will know that you have brought my grey hairs in sorrow to the grave. May the curse—the curse of . . . . "

" But listen, " Shane cried. " You are wrong ! I never thought of doing what you say. I don't want to do it ! . . . . "

Yet as he spoke, he suddenly found that he was speaking without conviction. It was as if Armstrong's words had revealed an unsuspected intention to himself. He found his denials die upon his lips, as if he had found himself denying his mother. . . .

. . . . .

He left Armstrong at Euston Station, and with a storm of mixed emotions in his bosom, hurried to Fergus O'Cryan's rooms. Old Peter was out, but Fergus had not left for his daily work—he sat alone in the living-room in an odd

attitude of dejection that raised foreboding in Shane. Fergus did not look up when he entered, but sat there brooding, a letter in the hand that hung beside the chair.

"I have come," Shane said, "to thank you for what you did for me. I am going to stay in Dublin."

Fergus looked up unseeingly. "Oh yes," he said absently. "I am glad to hear it."

"Is there anything wrong?" Shane asked. "Are you not well? You look . . . ."

Fergus roused himself, and gave a little laugh. "I was shaken a little," he said (and his face worked as if with a spasm of agony). "Look, you can read this letter . . . it tells the whole story." He tossed the letter in his hand to Shane. It was in the hand-writing of—Tessie!

*Dear Mr. O'Cryan [the letter began] I think nothing will be gained by writing further. I cannot, as you suggest, appeal to my father on the point at issue, for you are doubtless aware of what I myself only learned from the newspaper, that he died yesterday morning.*

Shane read this much aloud. "What is this all about?" he asked. "What have you to do with Mr. Murnane?"

"That's what I'd like to know myself!" Fergus said savagely. "Your cousin got it into her head that he and I were some way in collusion against her. God knows, I never saw him in my life that I know of, but she swears she saw his portrait in one of my sketchbooks. She seems woefully suspicious and untrusting."

"Anyone would be," Shane said, "that lived long at Beulah Lodge. But maybe she'll change her view even though Mr. Murnane isn't alive to put her right."

"Read on," said Fergus, grimly.

“Good heavens!” said Shane. This is what he read :

*This must be the close of our correspondence. I have nothing more to say. I am sending back the music you gave me by parcel post.—You may be interested to hear that I am to be married in August to Rev. Aaron Trott.—Truly yours, TERESA MURNANE.*

“And her father scarcely cold in the grave!” Fergus commented. “What has come over her at all?”

“The voice is the voice of Samuel Armstrong,” Shane said bitterly. “You—did you . . .”

He looked at Fergus, and never asked the question that had been on his tongue. Fergus’s secret was an open one now. Shane understood, and that with a sort of kindred consciousness.

• • • • •  
Vincent Murnane had taken to his bed the day after his visit to Beulah Lodge, and had never rallied. He seemed to have lost desire of life, and in less than a week, was dead. Shane went to the funeral, though he had never seen Murnane. He was impelled by a strange whelming of pity for this Clareman who had died in exile after a lonely life.

Murnane was buried in a far corner of the Catholic cemetery, where the grass, fresh after rain showers, grew long, and the trees, flecked with sun out of a stormy sky, waved leafy branches in the breeze. Hither the coffin was borne from the little chapel in the greenery. Shane noticed, as the mourners moved behind it through the thickly-grouped tombstones, that the names of the dead lying here were almost all Irish—there was just a sprinkling of Continental names. His memory turned for a moment on that

other churchyard at Portabeg. . . . Here in death the Irish exiles were gathered together as in "Ciaran's plain of Crosses" where the battle-banners of the Gael their final hosting kept. Gael and shoneen, rich and poor, patriot and traitor, gathered here to be together at the Last Day. . . .

The vested priest and surpliced acolytes chanted above the grave, and one by one the mourners shook water from the aspergum down on the unseen coffin. A veiled woman in tears (it was Do-Jo) was the first. Shane was the last.

The priest and his attendants moved away through the sunny grasses, and the mourners lingered a little while to exchange memories of the dead. A well-groomed man of handsome features near Shane was speaking: "I remember Vincent taking first place in classics at the college at Ennis. He promised well. . . ." "I remember him at college, too," said another. "He was a great Fenian in those days." These exiled friends of Murnane's youth called to Shane's mind some verse about "Corca Bascinn and the ruined hearths of Clare." Ruined hopes and broken pride were the meaning of this burial. . . . \*

A wizened, shabbily-dressed little man with a notebook was moving from group to group. "May I have your name?" he asked Shane. "I represent the London office of the *Irish Post*.—Relative? Friend?"

Shane said that he represented Mrs. Murnane's family. Inquisitive looks were flashed upon him. . . . A tall, powerful figure at the rear of the group seemed familiar to him: it was "Ballyhooly Pat, whose scarred face was drawn now to a solemn intensity. Murnane had been a Civil Servant, too

But what else had he in common with that reckless soul? Nationality and faith: and among exiles these bonds held the strangest contrasts together. . . .

As he walked back through the thronged graves, thinking how these dead awaited resurrection together, the bond which held in life lasting in death, Shane grew eager to be of that company, to be sealed with that same citizenship. He saw the Church as the mother city of good and frail alike. In the minds and lives of his friends, he had seen, as it were, broken fragments reflected—aspects or features. In Fergus the scientist he had seen that the Church could be modern. Old Peter the mystic had shown him that a Catholic could be a visionary and dreamer. Faragal Faal had taught him that a man could be a devoted Catholic and no slave. Ballyhooly Pat, the faith-respecting *roué*, had shewn him that even in vice the Catholic carried with him a knowledge of values that might bring him back, some day, to goodness. The Church that meant something to each of these stood up now before him not in fragments, but a city on a hill. . . .

That evening, as he went towards home by the Church of the Seven Dolours, and saw the candles flickering in the dark interior, an impulse that seemed to have been long struggling within him, triumphed. He went in.

There were very few in the church at this moment. He sat for a while in the dark apse before the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, watching the red lamp's steady glow and the crimson glare of the sunset in the robes of the Figure in the stained window behind the altar. When a servitor came tidying the pew, he asked if he might see a priest. The man bowed and went into the sacristy. In a few moments, an aged grey

priest, wearing a biretta, appeared, genuflected at the altar rails, and came down the apse. When he saw Shane he motioned with his hand towards the door of a Confessional. . . . Shane moved along the pew, opened the door, and entered the darkness. . . .

The darkness was soothing. He knelt. The white feet upon a large crucifix glimmered before his eyes. A little door before his face was shot open and he could faintly see the profile of the priest whose ear was bent towards his mouth. The priest was reciting something, but shortly addressed him.

*“ Well, my child, and how long is it since your last confession ? ”*

The mild words seemed to waken Shane from a trance.

“ Father, I never was at Confession before. I am not a Catholic. I want to know how to be taken into the Church. I did not know whom to ask. . . .” It all rushed forth like a release of pent-up anguish.

The priest showed no surprise, but when Shane had finished spoke gently, bidding him have no fear. How long had he been thinking of this ? He did not know, but some late disappointments had suddenly brought him to a decision. Had he any difficulties ? Was he instructed in the Catholic Faith ? Had he anything serious on his mind ? He had better come to the Presbytery next week for instruction. He was not to be anxious. He must say his prayers and should go to Mass on Sunday next. No, he need not give his name, nor tell anything about himself. . . .

So three days later Shane went under instruction. Twice a week he went to the Presbytery. He debated nothing, questioned nothing : he listened only, and found that since he had taken the first step he could accept all. One Friday evening his instructor said :

"I think you understand enough now to be received ; I am satisfied as to your intentions. You can be received on Monday evening." Shane thrilled with a strange new joy. "You can complete your instruction afterwards. I suppose you have nobody you would like to be present ? No ? I shall want your name, now."

"My name is Shane Lambert."

"And are you," the old priest—Father Kearney—asked, turning from his book with interest, "are you Bob Lambert's son ?" He wrung Shane's hand. "Thankful I am," he said, "to do this for Lambert's son : I often wished to do it for Lambert's self."

Shane was received late on Monday evening, two days before he went home to Ireland, in a dark little chapel at the back of the high altar, away from sight of those in the body of the church. He knelt before the little candle-lit altar, made his declaration of faith, and received conditional baptism, confessed and read alternate verses of the *Te Deum* with Father Kearney. Then, aglow with consciousness that he was now a son of Mother Church, he went off the altar into the sacristy. As he passed from the lonely chapel he caught a glimpse of a figure kneeling at the altar-rails, like a sympathiser who had come to give thanks—a still, silent figure, whose strange features arrested his attention. Father Kearney could not tell him who it could be. "Nobody has access to the little chapel," the priest said, "except our Fathers, and I think none of them could have been there. . . ."

When Shane got back to his lodgings that night, Mrs. Doogan, a homely old Irishwoman, his landlady, asked him why he looked so unusually bright.

"I was received into the Catholic Church to-night," he said.

She opened her eyes wide. Then she flung her arms around him and kissed him. "God bless you, *avic*," said she, "and if you only knew how I have prayed for this! But I knew it would come for this twenty-five years past."

"This what?" he asked.

"When you were a baby," said she, "myself and my poor husband said, 'Bob Lambert's son must be baptised.' We got your nurse to come into the house one day, and I baptised you in the kitchen when she was in the parlour. I always knew you'd show the good of it. But you mind the fire now, and I'll run out and get some jam and oranges for the tea. We'll have a feast in honour of the event."

Shane slept little that night. An unearthly exaltation filled him. He went over the momentous ceremony again and again in imagination, and wondered often what strange fortune or blessed guidance or influence had brought him to this. He found himself thinking of the man at the altar rails. He could visualise the features. . . . Where had he heard them described before? Who could that strange personality have been who gave thanks as he was received—that slender, aged man, with hair as white as snow, and face as youthful as a child's? . . .

## BOOK III—*IN PATRIA*

### CHAPTER I

#### WARS AND RUMOURS OF WARS

Evil and oppressive peace brooded on the earth: the peace of wrong enthroned and unchallenged, ruling with the bribe of material prosperity. Men scoffed at war, and dreamed that this peace of luxury and indolence would never be shaken. And all the time, in the still calm, the clouds of war hung lower, lower, lower . . . till in a single flash, they burst, and the peace was shattered by the fiercest storm that ever raged over the world. Fortunes of men and nations, that seemed to have been sealed unchangeably, now came up again for decision: there was no people, no individual, whose destiny was not brought up for judgment. As the trump of battle sounded, long-slumbering hopes awakened, and the age-enslaved lifted ears, hearkening if maybe the ancient dream should come to pass at last, and the despaired-of freedom yet come riding thitherward in arms. The Pole and the Russian, the Ukrainian and the Bohemian, rose in hope and joy; and in Ireland, too, old aspirations stirred and men learnt anew the art of arms, awaiting the moment when the signal should come to raise once more the flag of O'Neill and Tone and Mitchel. . . .

In the first months and years of Armageddon, doubt and fear and confusion mixed with hope and desire and resolution, and mingled emotions were

blown about by every new rumour. In the cafés of Dublin men argued for Germany and against, and discussed rival policies and plans of campaign. Some were for armed neutrality. Some for going to Belgium's aid in the armies of France, and then demanding Irish freedom after the war with weapons in their hands. Others scoffed at the propaganda regarding German atrocities and spoke of Central Europe standing "alone, undaunted and defiant against a world in arms," saying that it was Ireland's moral duty, as well as her wisest policy, to aid this last of England's victims if and when the chance arose. A very few stood out against all these views, saying that the International Social Revolution alone should call Irishmen to arms, and their business was to start *that* so soon as war exhaustion should begin to tell on the military powers.

To the cafés one evening came the rumour that an early secret session would be held at Westminster to impose conscription on the young men of the United Kingdom: Ireland would not be exempt. "You'll have to fight now," said the Pro-Germans to the Neutralists, and the Pro-Allies were silent. The Social Revolutionaries went contentedly to their secret attics and redoubled their efforts, sewing bandoliers, preparing pikes, studying street tactics.

The smoke-room of the Egyptian Café, near Stephen's Green, was the resort of young literary Dublin. There the revolutionary journalists and the *intelligentsia* met evening by evening. That evening Shane Lambert sat in a yellow-plush corner watching Andy Malony the economist, with French gestures, hold forth cynicism on the "unpreparedness of all parties" to a group of restive listeners. Shane had no *entrée* to the circle, but he heard Malony saying:

"There's one good thing about it all. The English will stop our talking. We'll *have* to act, now. We have been talking here since the year dot and we've never done anything. Look at Barney Duhy there. Blathering about art in novels ever since we knew him, and always too lazy for the physical effort of writing one. Look at Gettigan. Always talking and writing about home industry and leaving it to the Unionists like Plunkett to do any practical work that is done. Dublin is rotten with talk, talk, talk—and I'm almost as bad as any of you."

Paddy McPoland was Shane's one friend in Dublin—for Shane had found Dublin *clique*-ridden, the Gaelic League branches and other societies apparently regarding a stranger as an intruder—and now was drinking tea with him, while a weedy young man of military age, special correspondent of a London Liberal organ, was asking Paddy for news.

"And if this Bill goes through," he was saying, "do you think—aw—that there would really be riots in this one-horse tahn?"

Paddy squeezed Shane's knee under the table, and with gleeful grimness answered the Englishman. "Riots?—why, they'll kick the moon out of the sky. It's the best-organised thing ever planned. I'm in the know. You mustn't print what I tell you, else I'd be shot for telling, but between you and me and the teapot, we're in for the biggest blaze-up in Irish history. You see that hairy fellow there?" [He pointed to a thickly-bearded, shock-headed, famous Irish poet who was taking a vegetarian meal at the end of the room.] "Why, that's a German general in a wig, just here from America with a special plan of Frightfulness for the occasion. Doesn't he look benevolent, too? Clever fellows, these Huns. I'm

told, too, that every Englishman found in Ireland—commercial travellers and *journalists*, and so on" (his hearer blew a tremulous whiff of cigarette smoke through his nostrils) "is to be seized and held up as a hostage. Ruthlessness is to be the order of the day."

"You—aw—*surprise* me," said the English journalist, nervously knocking the ash from his cigarette with his ringed little finger. "I had no idear of the Sin Finners going so far. . . ."

"That will do him to go on with," Paddy said to Shane when the Briton had gone. "We shall see revelations in his rag to-morrow. That's journalism as it's conducted on the dailies!"

"We live and learn," said Shane.

"And the worst of it is," McPoland continued, "that those swallow-anything bosthoons have our fate in their hands. That same idjit was here in 1911 when the Home Rule Bill was coming on. 'What the Government want to find out,' says he to me, 'is whether this Ulster business is bluff. They'd pay well for sound information. If it's bluff, they'll run Home Rule through; if not, they'll hold it up to let the agitation blow over.' And it was 'corrs.' like him that the Liberals were using to get their estimate of public opinion."

"All the same," said Shane, "I'd like to be on a daily. There's some chance there to do something."

"Don't believe it," said the dapper little cynic beside him. "Unless it's make money. An honest daily is a contradiction in terms, an impossibility. Look at me. I'm the proof. I'm the enlightener of thousands; the guide, philosopher, and friend of all in authority in Ireland. I tell 'em all about

Germany's brutality towards the Church in places I never heard of at the dictation of Freemasons. They take my leaders as gospel because they're things in print. Who is or was Belinsky ? "

" Can't guess," said Shane.

" Nor could I. But I'm writing an article on him for to-morrow to prove that if his doctrines are adopted by the Irish working-classes (can't you see them doing it ?) the Church will go the same way here as in France. Last night the chief sub-editor came in to me and asked could I say which side the Epirotes were fighting on. I gave it up. ' That's awkward,' said he, ' because nobody in our room knows, and the flimsy doesn't say : so I don't know whether to put up the heading *Glorious Victory* or *Shameful Atrocity*.' "

" It looks pretty silly," said Shane. " But why can't you write some good non-political stuff about Irish industries and the language and things like that ? "

" Because those subjects don't command adverts. Every line in a daily is written to catch ads. When the Gaelic League advertises on the same scale as Pink Pills for Pale People, we'll tell the public that the language is *the* issue of the day. Newspapers now are advertisement and propaganda sheets. The news is only jam for the advertising pill and the Government dope. . . . But what's worrying you on *The Launawaula* ? "

" The same trouble as yours, apparently. Boag is not satisfied with me. ' Can't you cut out these historical stunts ? ' says he. ' Who wants serial stories about Hugh O'Neill to-day ? Give 'em a good spicy love-story. Something a bit *risky*. That's what the people want nowadays.' "

"There you are. That's the spirit of commercial journalism. Money has everything poisoned. Decent journalists are being frozen out. Since print got commercialised, capitalism corrupted it like everything else. Commercial journalism goes for the Highest Common Factor in the public—and that's badness the one thing people have in common even when it's not the governing factor in any particular individual. Money thrives on it. The only hope for us is that the war will wind up in revolution. . . ."

Shane looked with surprise at his dandified companion. It was natural for men like Fergus O'Cryan in industrialised London, or Faragal Faal in gombeen-ridden Portabeg to rail against capitalism, but Paddy did not look like a man who felt keenly. Yet he uttered his extreme words with the sound of intense conviction.

"That's queer language from you," Shane said.

"The war has rubbed it into me," said McPoland. "On the press you come up against facts—for it's your business to suppress them. And did you ever meet a man who handled facts and did not look to revolution? Things are moving to the impossible point under the demoralisation of the war. Look at the picture-houses. They were a decent, clean form of entertainment at first. Now you can't attend a single performance without seeing crude brutality, fit for degenerates only. Look at the theatres. Revues and smut all the time. And capitalism at the back of it all."

"But why blame it all on money? Aren't the people that patronise these things to blame?"

"They are to blame for it as the Chinese opium-slave is to blame for his degradation; but the root cause is the money-system that profits out of opium

and vice. The workers are wage-slaves to the owners, and the owners debauch them by capitalising corruption. The workers are got to the towns and held at the grindstone with this bribe of degenerate enjoyment that saps the manliness out of them. Give us means to attack property and you'll see the purification of public life quickly enough. I only hope that when we fight in Ireland we know what we are fighting for—don't pretend that it's to turn the English out but not their institutions. We'll have to fight some day, even if this Conscription thing passes off. Those guns have not been got by the boys to rust. They'll have to go off."

" You are a depressing sort of comforter," said Shane. " But I almost think you are right. Journalism is a great disillusionist. But then I'm not a success at journalism anyway."

" You haven't a sense of humour, that's all," Paddy put in.

" I wish I had gone in for engineering of some sort instead," Shane went on. " I have spent two evenings a week for the past five years at the Technical Schools studying mechanics. But it's too late for me to make any use of my knowledge. The Trade Unions wouldn't let me go into a position against men who have served their time. So I must waste my energies in work I'm not fitted for."

" Just so. Our Trade Unions know as much about human brotherhood and working-class solidarity as I do about Belinsky. And they want to take over industry."

" It seems very hard to do anything for Ireland," Shane said half meditatively.

" Ireland," said Paddy, " is to-day exactly like Germany or England on the verge of the Reformation

or France of the *ancien régime*. Economically she is in the same position—she is developing a rich and dominant bourgeoisie. We have no craftsmen, and the only class we have outside agriculture is the traders, and the war has put them on the pig's back. They rule everything. They even dictate to the Church. You never hear a sermon on the sins of the rich. The British Government has to take the blame for half of what the big dues-paying gombeen-men do. Religion is all prayers and piety; and no one dreams of applying it to public life. Why, look at the Irish Party, and the A.O.H. that shakes hands with Viviani and holds Triduumns at the Pro-Cathedral. Look at my paper: never a word against our printing lies about the Germans to stir boys up to go and shoot them. Look at the Hierarchy all through the war—on England's side, not Ireland's. Would that happen in a country where religion was well-rooted? Don't the clergy stand by the people in Poland? Do they use their Pastorals to preach loyalty to Russia? It's just the psychology of pre-Reformation Europe. The trading class ruling. Religion reduced to superstition and ismony. Education frowned upon and suppressed where possible; every effort made to keep the people illiterate. Ideals hunted down. Good men driven into revolt. I tell you, if the Revolution doesn't come in time to purge Ireland, we shall have a moral smash-up that will put an end to the work of Saint Patrick in this island."

"Well, I'm not a Catholic from birth like you," said Shane. "I am a convert. I don't know much about the state of the Church in the country. But it's good enough for me, and I'd rather have it depending on its sacramental services than on fine

sermons. I never heard a sermon against political corruption, I grant you, and I know that that's the most rampant vice in Ireland. But I don't go to Mass to hear sermons against other people's sins. I go to get the Sacraments.—I think that if the Church in Ireland is like the Church in pre-Reformation Europe, you are like the Luthers!"

"That's a bad knock for me," said Paddy. "But go on."

"I've seen enough of what sermons lead to," Shane continued. "I believe people get the clergy they deserve. But I'm with you that a shaking-up would do Ireland no end of good."

"'M—Maybe you're right about my mentality being Reformationist, too. But whoever is to blame, Ireland needs a sacrifice from somewhere to make her morally self-respecting again—to make her rebel against the commercialism that is damning us. I suppose I ought not to be talking to you, a convert, like this."

"Don't mind," said Shane. "If it was a Protestant sect you were talking of, you could not criticise its ministers without shaking faith in it. But since I became a Catholic, I am so certain I am on the right ground that I would believe in the Church if she were in the same state as before Hildebrand—in Ireland or all Europe. It's one of the proofs that she is supernatural that she survives all abuses. The Protestant sects depend on the character of their clergy, but it was an anti-Irish priest at Portabeg that made me sure the Church was right."

"That's interesting," said Paddy. "But tell me how you came into the Church. . . ."

Shane was about to answer, when he was touched on the elbow by a broad, heavy-figured man with

prematurely-greying hair. The strong-jawed face was faintly familiar.

"May I have a word with you?" the stranger asked, taking him to one side. "You may not remember me. I hardly remembered you: you have grown a lot older in your looks. . . . Six or seven years ago I spoke to you on the pier at Kingstown, and I have been looking out for you ever since. . . ."

Shane remembered. On his first evening in Ireland he had handed a bag from Fergus to this stranger, calling himself Sheridan.

"You look to be the right sort," Sheridan said, searching Shane's face with a determined-looking pair of grey eyes. "I can trust you, I think. Now you know, I suppose, what the bag you brought me contained?"

"No," said Shane, startled by the significant tone in which the last words were uttered, and half-suspecting what was coming.

"It contained 'stuff,'" Sheridan answered. "*Bombs*. At least it should have done. I got a letter telling me to meet you and take a consignment. When I opened the bag, I found it packed with railway clinkers wrapped in paper."

Shane looked blankly amazed.

"Someone," Sheridan went on, "someone must have been tampering with your bag *en route*—took out the stuff and loaded clinkers in, in its place. But this is the trouble. I wasn't told who was sending the stuff, and my directions to receive it came from an anonymous quarter. Consequently, try as I could, I haven't been able to send back word that the consignment had been tampered with. The enemy found out what sort of stuff we were getting by that single lot, and who knows how many more

have been stopped? So I want you to send word at once to the man who gave you the stuff."

Shane remembered Fergus O'Cryan's chemical operations in his little laboratory, and understood now what he had been engaged on.

"It was Fer . . . ."

"Never mind the name," Sheridan said, putting up his hand as Shane began to speak. "I don't want to know anything. I had no right even to speak to you like this. But just you send word. And" (he spoke intensely) "*for God's sake do it at once.* Wire. No, that would be dangerous. *Write.* But write to-night. You can't guess how urgent it is—unless you know. To-night, remember."

Mystified and a little alarmed, Shane wrote that night. But he was too late. For . . . .

Next evening, in the Egyptian Café, Paddy McPoland pulled a London paper out of his pocket. "I wonder," said he, "whether Our Special Correspondent got my story on the wires last night? I hear he made tracks for the North Wall himself this morning. Oh, yes, here we are." And he read :

#### IS VON KLUCK IN IRELAND?

#### PRO-GERMANS PLAN PROTESTANT POGROM

(By Our Special Correspondent in Dublin)

I have it on the best authority that the *Sinn Féin* malcontents are preparing to launch the greatest surprise of our generation on a startled world, in the event of Conscription being applied to Ireland. German officers are landing in the country daily from submarines on the west coast, and may actually be seen in the Dublin restaurants daring, because unsuspected. I myself saw an eminent German personality in a tea-room in Grafton Street. In appearance he remarkably resembled the notorious General Von Kluck, of whom nothing has been heard at the seat of war for some long time. I do not go so far as to assert that this was

actually Von Kluck. But stranger things have happened during the war.

I learn further that the discontents' schemes include nothing less than a pogrom of Englishmen and Protestants in the South of Ireland. These are to be pounced upon, and some killed as an example, others being hurried away to hiding places in the mountains or in the secret dens in the Dublin slums, where they will be held as hostages against the British Government, and even tortured for the exaction of ransom.

The only way in which these terrible *Sinn Féin-cum-Hun* plots can be frustrated is the announcement that there is no intention to conscript Irishmen at present, and the speedy putting into operation of the Home Rule Bill, followed by a round up of intransigents, in which course the Irish public would then be fully acquiescent.

Paddy roared with laughter.

"That's the stuff to give 'em," said he. " Didn't he swallow it beautifully? And the English public will believe it all!"

Shane could hardly credit that the correspondent had accepted the yarn so credulously, and took the paper to satisfy his eyes. He read the *communiqué* through, and sat back, smiling. Then the smile faded from his lips. For below the egregious correspondent's half-column, a paragraph stood out as if it were in letters of fire :

#### SINN FEIN ARSENAL RAIDED

#### SENSATIONAL DISCOVERY IN LONDON

In the early hours of this morning military and police raided a flat in the vicinity of Euston, the lodging of two Irishmen, an aged ex-Fenian named Joyce, and a young school-teacher named Fergus O'Cryan. In an inner room, fitted up as a laboratory, large quantities of explosives were found, and, it is stated, numbers of bombs of a new and ingenious design which, if they had been distributed, would have been ugly weapons in the hands of desperadoes. O'Cryan was taken into custody. The elder man was not to be found. The raid appears to have been only just in

time, as O'Cryan's bag was packed in readiness, seemingly, for his early departure.

It is understood that the raid was not unconnected with information regarding sensational developments in Ireland.

Shane stared at the paragraph blankly for a while, sickness at his heart. Fergus taken! And a day later he would have been safe. . . . "What do you make of *that*?" he asked McPoland.

Paddy drew a long face. "Things are moving quickly now," he said.

"But what are the 'sensational developments,' Shane asked.

"Who knows?" Paddy answered. "But both sides know we are nearing a breaking point."

At that moment a newsboy entered the Café. "Tel'graph, Her'ld! Evn Moile, Her'ld!" he shouted. "Sensation at Corp'ration meetin'. Stop Press edishun."

Shane bought a paper and scanned the big black letterpress beneath the scare heading. Alderman Kelly had read a document at that day's meeting of the Corporation alleged to be secret instructions by the British Government for the early disarmament of the Irish Volunteers. . . .

"If they try that," said Paddy cheerfully, "it means war, bloody war. And for my part," he added "I'll be out. I'm sick of things as they are."

## CHAPTER II

### POBLACHT NA H-EIREANN<sup>1</sup>

Shane went home to his lodgings on the North Side feeling downcast and anxious. A company of soldiers marching past with fixed bayonets and followed by a gun-carriage gave him a disquieting suggestion of war brought near. Those long, slender, sinister bayonets were ugly weapons. Soon they might be doing their work in Dublin streets if the forebodings obvious in so many faces came true. He wondered whether the stocky little men in khaki would possibly refuse to use their weapons on citizen opponents. The dull, heavy, and expressionless faces, apparently moulded in a heavier clay than ever spirit moved, gave little hope. These Saxons from Yorkshire, these Shropshire lads, were of the sort to obey orders and know no compunction, whatever be the task. But perhaps the whole thing would blow over. There had been other alarms. In Ireland, the worst, though always threatened, never happened.

He opened the front door with his latchkey, and made his way upstairs to his room. The door was open, and as he entered, a grey-beard figure rose from a seat by the window to greet him. It was Old Peter Joyce, almost feeble with age now, but still upright and more like John Ruskin in his mild sweetness than ever.

“ You are surprised to see me here,” he said.  
“ But I searched you out as soon as I landed.”

<sup>1</sup> The Republic of Ireland.

Shane remembered the newspaper paragraph chronicling Fergus O'Cryan's arrest and Old Peter's absence from the lodgings.

"There—there's bad news in this evening's paper," he said, "about Fergus."

Old Peter raised a hand. "I know, I know," he said, grief in his tones. "Poor Fergus was just a few hours too late. He was to have come across with me. I'm afraid he'll get hard law. *Tantae molis erat . . .*" He sighed.

"But—but what is the meaning of it all?" Shane asked. "Was Fergus really making explosives?"

"Did you never guess that?" Old Peter asked. "Well, he's only another casualty. But I know what will hurt him more than going to prison—the knowledge that his work has gone for nothing. How he longed for this day!"

The significance in Peter's last words made them sound like words of doom to Shane's anxious mind.

"Why do you talk like that?" Shane asked. "What day? What is it? What is going to happen?"

"We're going to rise."

Shane had half expected this answer. It confirmed the unexpressed suspicion that had been in every mind since Saint Patrick's Day last, when the Volunteer parade had been held in College Green. Yet because he had never formulated the answer definitely in his mind, it came now like a staggering surprise, or like dreadful news confirmed to one who had long dreaded it.

"To—rise?"

"To rise: at last. *Illic fas regna resurgare Trojae.* The time has come to strike, and I have come home to see the thing I have longed for this fifty years, and to take my part. *Ego certe meum officium reipublicae praestitiero*, as Caesar's standard-bearer said."

"But it's madness. What can you do? The Volunteers are not half armed—only guns for one in twenty men—and the English armed as they never were before."

"Every revolution was madness before it began. And anyway, if we don't fight, they will conscript our young men."

"But we could resist conscription passively," said Shane.

"Don't believe it," said Peter. "The country is not roused enough to do that. It would protest a little—to give way at Redmond's advice. The boys would go like sheep to the slaughter now. We want a blood-sacrifice to give the nation back its spirit. What if we're beaten in the field? They'll never conscript Ireland; they'll never make her loyal again once we have fought."

Shane did not know what answer to make to this argument. He was awed and sickened at the conception of the youth of Ireland going out to fight, not in the hope of winning, but in protest alone.

"Would you like to see the war ended and Ireland to have struck no blow?" Peter asked. "Could Irishmen ever respect themselves if they raised no weapon for freedom when all the nations in the world were fighting for it? How could we ever again claim to be a nation? . . . But listen: *we are going to win this time*. I am sure of it." Peter was speaking in his enthused, visionary manner. "It's the last great fight. There'll never be blood spilt for Ireland again. It's the last sacrifice that will save her. Sooner or later, what we do now will win her her freedom."

Through his fears, Shane felt a strange hope, a strange confidence, pierce. Peter was so assured.

Could it be? Was Ireland going to break free now from her evil fate? Was the world of tyranny dissolving in the fires of Europe? Would a brave stroke now drag her free from the cataclysm? He looked out from his window over the lights of Dublin. A tram, sparkling as with gala-lamps, rattled by with a twanging of bells. Hosts were pouring out of a picture theatre. In and out of a newspaper shop young men were pushing. Taxicabs shot to and fro. All was busy, heedless, routine and pleasure-seeking. How long would it be till shot and flame should change it all, and rouse those multitudinous minds to the splendour of a common dream? . . . But war was awful. He shuddered and turned his eyes back to the room. Old Peter was mildly delving in his books.

"When—when is it to begin?" Shane asked, his voice trembling a little.

"The Republic will be declared on Easter Sunday as the sun rises," the old Fenian answered.

“I wish your father had lived to see this day,” Old Peter said to Shane later. “It’s just over forty years ago that I met him first. The same sort of thing was afoot then, too!”

Shane’s interest was gripped. “Tell me about it,” he asked, drawing his low chair near to Peter’s feet.

“It was in the seventies,” Peter said. “Did you ever hear who your grandfather was in Newry?”

“No. My father never talked to me of Ireland or his people.”

“I thought not. Well, your grandfather had a handle to his name and lived in a big house out towards the Crown Mount, half a mile beyond the

town. Your father was a fine lad—something like yourself now, and about your age, thirty or thereabouts. He was courting a girl named Nora MacArdle down in the town—a Catholic girl, daughter of one of our best men. And then the Rising came along—a backwash of '67. The boys saw a chance of seizing a big quantity of arms coming in at Greenore, but the plans got out through Maurice MacHugh, a renegade, and arrests began. Then young Edmund O'Tierney lost his head and called the men out. Half-a-dozen went with him, and when they found it was abortive, they stood their ground and fought it out. But Edmund was taken in the end, and hanged. I and MacArdle were on the run. . . .”

“Were you out with O'Tierney then?” Shane asked.

“I was indeed,” Old Peter answered. His eyes had a faraway gaze. “*Pars parva fui.*” He paused and seemed to be lost in memories. Then he drew himself together and went on. “Macardle got away, but I had nowhere to go. It was Nora, his daughter, that saved me. She took me to a place where your father used to meet her in the evenings—in the green lanes beyond the town; and when he came she begged him to hide me. . . . So I was hidden in your father's room—in the magistrate's house right under the nose of the law—while the soldiers and the police searched the town.”

“Was—my father on your side?” Shane asked. He was wondering whether this Nora Macardle had been his father's guiding influence, and what sort of person he would have been himself if she had been his mother instead of Samuel Armstrong's daughter. What part did religion play in the moulding of his father's fortunes and of his own temperament?

“ He did not express himself,” Old Peter answered. “ He never asked my name, nor talked about our business. He was as silent as the grave the whole time. I thought he was doing it for Nora’s sake. But the Protestants of Ulster were different people forty years ago from what they are now. There were *men* amongst them then. Anyway, next night when arrangements were made for me to get away with my papers, he would come with me to see me clear across the Bessbrook side. There was a policeman ran against us. He walked past us, but stopped and looked back, as if he had recognised my face in the moonlight. Well, we had to fight for it, but we knocked the policeman on the head and tied him up, and I got away. And it was Bob that knocked the policeman over—just as if he were fighting on our side. His description was put out after that along with mine, but no one suspected a magistrate’s son of having been out that night helping a Fenian to get away.”

Shane’s imagination was absorbed in this story of his father’s youth. He tried to imagine the lonely chemist of North London walking the dark roads of Down and Armagh with the Fenian by his side—and then, as he remembered that he to-day was in the same position as his father had been forty years before, the dull, heavy anxiety about the impending crash came down upon his heart once more. He counted the days, the hours, till the appointed time should come round, the flag be raised, and the deadly issue joined. . . . The hours sped by.

Early on Holy Saturday, Old Peter called on Shane, looking broken and dejected. His soldierly bearing had gone, and the weight of years—he was nigh

eighty years of age now—seemed to have descended on him suddenly. He trod feebly, and his white beard quivered as he spoke.

“It’s all over,” he said. “*Finis Hiberniae.*”

He sank into a chair; Shane saw that he was all a-tremble.

“What has happened?” Shane asked. “Have the other side struck? Have they arrested the leaders? Are the military out?”

“Our men have shirked it,” said Peter. “They have sent out countermanding orders. The rising is off.—Oh, why did I live so long to see Irishmen shirk the ordeal when the time had come, if it ever did, to rise? And I thought the man had come who was to free Ireland; all these years I have been dreaming that he is here. We’ll never have the same chance again, never. And the shame of this will end the movement. Ireland’s shamed! She’s beaten, she’s surrendered at last!” His tone was almost a wail of utter grief, and his grey head sank upon his arms on the table.

Shane’s sympathy went out to that piteous figure of disappointment, but a leaden anxiety seemed to be moved from his heart. He could understand the fortitude of soldiers in war, where the armies pitted against each other are equally equipped and the man in the trench knows he is evenly opposed to his enemy. But a rising of scarce-armed men against the most powerful of military states called for preternatural courage—or else madness. Reared in England, and familiar with her power, he could visualise the utter hopelessness of the fight. The vision of the great merciless army with cannon and machine-guns, slowly crunching its victims: of citizen rebels holding out against the certain end while fire and starvation

preyed on the people : this appalled his imagination. He looked out over the city roofs and spires with a dumb relief.

Old Peter, fallen feeble, was not fit to leave him, and stayed on at his lodgings, eating nothing, brooding all the time.

Dublin went its usual way that Saturday. On Sunday, however, there was an air of excitement in the streets. Shane slipped out to get Mass—there was an extraordinary number of communicants—and when he came forth of the church, he bought the Sunday paper. There, signed by the President of the Irish Volunteers, was the Countermanding Order. Mysterious allusions in the news column to a tragedy narrowly averted, and an editorial warning against violence or disorder, had set groups of gossipers talking outside the church and at Doyle's Corner. Shane noticed more than one of those big men, apparently unused to civil dress, tweed-capped, carrying heavy sticks, and eyeing everybody acutely, whom he had learnt to recognise as the eyes of Dublin Castle. . . . The day passed uneventfully.

On Monday morning, Shane went again to hear Mass. He followed the day's Gospel in the pocket Missal that he had bought when he was received into the Church, and as he came to that utterance of the mourning and disheartened disciples on the way to Emmaus, "*But we hoped that it was he that should have redeemed Israel,*" the relief in his mind was pierced with grief for Old Peter, remembering the old man's words, "*And I thought the man was come that was to free Ireland.*" An image of the old man as he had left him came before him—stretched inert on the bed, heedless, exhausted, as if strength to live had left him, and life was running out. It

was strange that a gentle old man's last days should be unhappy because they were not to end in violence. Ah, stormy-hearted race !

He lingered in the church, resting his eyes on the glorious greenery of the decorated altar, the ivy-twined, orange-flamed Paschal Candle, and the snowy altar-cloth with its embroidered "*Resurrexit sicut dixit*," the Easter words of disappointment turning to joy.

Shane walked slowly home, wondering what he should say to Old Peter to cheer him ; wondering, too, how Fergus O'Cryan was spending this sunny Eastertide in prison. A group of armed Volunteers went swinging past, followed by many curious eyes, and a couple of soldiers in khaki at the street corner passed mocking comments once or twice. Cyclists in grey-green Volunteer uniform shot by. Doubtless a route-march was intended. These lads were daring, in view of the crisis that was just past !

Shane came to the house, let himself in, and went upstairs to his room.

It was empty. . . .

Old Peter was not there. His hat and overcoat were gone, too. The aged man, that he left lying enfeebled and exhausted, had risen in his absence, dressed, and departed. Shane went to the door to call his landlady, but she was on the landing coming to his room even as he opened the door. She was a talkative, dilatory, inefficient woman, with a keen sense of the proprieties.

"Mr. Lambert, Mr. Lambert, ah, what on e-earth will I do ?" she began. "I'm so much put through other that I couldn't get you your breakfast. It never haappened at me house before. It will bring disgrace on me and give me house a baad naame. Sure I never . . . ."

"What has happened?" Shane asked, heavy with foreboding. "Where is Mr. Joyce? How long is he gone?"

"Oh, the ould gentleman?" Mrs. Brophy said. "Sure, I was just goin' to tell you the whole story," and she figured about with her arms. "There was a strange man caalled at the house just after you had gone out, and he dressed and went away with him."

"What sort of man? Did Mr. Joyce leave no message? How did the stranger look?"

"He was a tall, thin man. Very quare lookin'. His face was young-looking, but his hair was white, and he seemed very old in spite of his face." [What associations had this description in Shane's mind?] "'I have come to call for you, Peter,' says he (I heard the talk). 'You are to come with me at once.' And your old gentleman got ready at once and went away without waiting for tea or anything at all, the more I had the kettle on the gas. He looked very brisk and energetic. He was as happy as you plaze. But it's what happened after that is annoyin' me."

"What happened then?" asked Shane of his landlady, for she showed every sign of agitation, putting her right hand nervously to her mouth as she spoke, while her left hand held her right elbow.

"There was two *detectives* called.—There now!"

"Detectives!"

"Yes. G-men. Said they wanted Mr. Peter Joyce or any of his associates. They said they had been looking for him since last Wednesday. You were aalways a nice lodger, Mr. Lambert, nice and respectable, but begging your paardon, if you're mixed up with men that the police want, I'd rather you moved to some other lodgings."

A loud knock thundered at the door. Mrs. Brophy

went down to open, while Shane returned to his room. A moment later, he heard voices, and a heavy tread on the stairs ; his door was opened from without, and two powerful men in brown coats entered his room. His heart for a moment stood still, and then throbbed so rapidly and violently that he could hardly endure without outcry : he knew these sinister figures.

“Shawn. . . or John Lambert, I think ?”

“Yes, that is my name.”

“I must ask you to take your hat and come with us. You are under arrest on suspicion of associating with persons of hostile intent towards the Crown.”  
[This in a piping Kerry accent.]

Arrested ! Shane was so bewildered that he was scarcely conscious of what followed. He vaguely knew that he put on his hat and overcoat, and stepped out to the street with burly figures who walked with him on either side down the garden path. They were hardly in the street when, in the far distance, over the hum of the city, two shots rang out.

Shots had sounded in Dublin before, and were a familiar sound. But when these two were followed by a volley and again a volley, people in the street stopped in their walk and looked questioningly at one another. And then a curious thing happened before their eyes. Some young men wearing bands around their arms, and acting under the command of a youth in uniform, appeared from nowhere, and with pistols in their hands stopped two motors on the road, ejected their occupants, and drove off in the cars. A car waiting for Shane’s captors was similarly seized, the raiders driving away.

Shots rang out again in the distance. People began to flock towards, guessing that sensation was afoot.

Shane's captors consulted. The place where they stood was near great prison-walls. For a moment, Shane contemplated a dash for liberty, the consciousness dawning on him that something had suddenly broken the reign of law and order. But a firm grip above his elbow showed that escape would cost a struggle, and he knew himself to be no match for these two Kerry giants with pistols in their pockets. He felt himself being dragged away. . . . Across the road a youth was pasting up a huge white placard on a dead wall. Big black letters at the top branded themselves into Shane's memory :

## POBLACHT NA E-HIREANN.

Firing again ! Shouting and a roar of voices in the distance. He felt himself drawn through a great archway, and heard huge iron gates clang to behind him. . . .

At that moment, Old Peter Joyce had just entered the General Post Office in O'Connell Street, the Headquarters of the Army of the Irish Republic. Before him, dark and plain and uniformed, he saw a man whose face he recognised as that which had haunted his dreams these long, long years.

So Shane found himself in prison : jailed in the great prison-house instead of being taken on to the cell in the police station. And there he spent Easter Week, alone, listening day and night to the cracking of rifles, the ugly *rap-p-p-p-p-p* of machine-guns and the sickening banging of artillery—seeing, at night, in the latter part of the week, the crimson glare in the sky above the city's burning heart. At first he was too numb to feel clearly, though a sort of joy

for Peter's sake glowed through his anxiety, while the Easter words of triumph re-formed themselves as on the altar-cloth before him: RESURREXIT SICUT DIXIT. RESURREXIT SICUT DIXIT. The Volunteers had risen after all: the Republic was proclaimed.

Then the terror of it all (as the ghastly noise of the machine-guns swelled) began to tell on him. Down there in the city, his friends were fighting against overwhelming force. It was on the Tuesday evening that a friendly warder, bringing him food, told him that a Proclamation by the Viceroy was out announcing that the situation was "well in hands," though the rebels held the Post Office, the Four Courts, and some minor positions.

Well in hands! The callous ring of it! Yes, they were in England's strong grasp, about to be crushed. He imagined the young men of the Volunteer movement, the boyish enthusiasts for the language, for Irish crafts, for art and song and literature, standing now in the big beleaguered buildings, ringed around by a contracting force of flame and steel. One by one they were falling, these the hope of Ireland. Pitilessly they were being shot down, blasted with shells, or bayoneted. . . .

He had often wondered how he would pass his time if he should ever find himself within a prison-wall. He had said to himself that he would recite poetry and sing songs, or concentrate his mind on the construction of a story—an historical novel—working out incidents and plots and *dénouements*. But now that he was actually imprisoned, he found that he could not think consecutively, even when there was a lull in the noise of battle. His brain restlessly turned from subject to subject, always returning to the thought, how long, how long, how

long, could the unequal struggle out yonder be maintained—and what after?

He wondered how it would all appear to his distant friends. He could imagine the folk at Beulah Lodge reading the news and expressing the hope that the rebels would be drastically dealt with. Of his Dublin acquaintances, how many were out? Had the struggle involved the civil populace as well as the Volunteers? Was the whole country up? Would the Germans land? He wondered whether war had broken the peace of Portabeg. Were the khaki forces trampling those beloved lanes?—That set him thinking of Maiwa, as he had so often thought these six years past. Her likeness, that he could not call up at will, now was clear in his memory: he saw her in the sunny orchard once more, the sea shining between the trees. She was smiling again, with a light, half-mocking, half-caressing, in her eyes. The wind that bent the grasses ran through her crisp, loose tresses; she lifted a hand to her smiling lips. . . . But the vision vanished on the blank grey prison-wall.

That night the sky as he saw it through the bars was red. The din of destruction was audible now, along with intermittent shooting. Next day the shooting was more violent than ever. The warder could tell him nothing new, and Shane fancied that perhaps Tuesday's *communiqué* had been false. Perhaps the fight was not so one-sided after all. . . . At night, the skies were redder and brighter again; the noise was tremendous, and the firing intense. Solitude, inaction, and the strain of it all were telling on him, and he tossed on the plank half-delirious. It was not a rising of Dublin men, but the great Revolution, the War of the Black Pig, he thought,

whose fires were ruddying the night. Exhilarated between waking and sleep, he dreamed the final battle between Good and Evil was joined, that it was the tumult of this last conflict that was raging in the firmament. Wealth, property, power—crowns, chancelleries, and empires, were assailed. The throne of violence was rocking. All sufferers at the hands of might, all little peoples, the toilers in mine and factory, the hungry and the poor, exploited women and all broken people—all were surging like a red sea of anger against the falling city of injustice. . . . Surely this was the Apocalyptic day that he had read of so often: words raced through his memory, curiously in the tones of Samuel Armstrong, who had often declaimed them :

. . . And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

. . . And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. . . . And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses . . . and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. . . .

. . . And I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together with the supper of the great God: that ye may eat of the flesh of kings and the flesh of captains and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. . . .

. . . For nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines and pestilences and plagues. All these are the beginning of sorrows. . . . For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, no, nor shall ever be. . . . And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

And then he came back to himself in the chill dawn. The firing had ceased, save for an occasional report,

but as day broadened it swelled once more. It seemed to Shane that the rifles were fewer now, and were more completely drowned by the machine-guns and cannon. He lost count of time, and ceased to observe accurately. But the artillery seemed to be pounding at something within him, as he dimly reflected that shot after shot was crushing out the youth of Ireland. The only link with sanity that held him from madness, was the handful of beads in his pocket, for his hand was on his Rosary of horn through all those dreadful hours, and he felt that here he had hold of one unchanging reality when all the universe was melting about his brain, a tangible material bond between earth and Heaven. . . .

One evening, the heavy guns ceased ; the machine-guns too, and slowly the sniping rifles grew fewer in their reports. It was Saturday, and the end had come. Shane raised himself, lifting his head to listen, wondering within him what had come to pass. What was this silence ? A truce ? A parley ? . . . VICTORY ?

Shane heard steps up and down the great stone corridors, and voices, but though he shouted, he got no reply. The suspense in this silence was worse to endure than the anxiety of the past days amid the noise of battle. Was it all over ? Had the past been a dream, a nightmare, an illusion ? Now and then a single rifle shot spat out in the distance, but later an awful stillness seemed to settle on the world. It was to Shane as if the stillness was beating on him in heavy muffled blows.

At long, long last steps echoed up the corridor, and the friendly warder looked into Shane's cell.

" What has happened ? " Shane asked. " What—why has the firing stopped ? "

"The rebels have surrendered," the warder answered.

Shane listened incredulously. Armageddon would not end in a surrender. . . . The warder repeated his news. Shane broke into hysterical laughter.

## CHAPTER III

### AFTER EASTER

Ireland was stunned. The Insurrection had raged for a week—a week of hopes and fears and rumours and disappointments. It had been crushed, and the heart of Dublin city had been pounded with shells and laid in ashes. The insurgents had laid down their arms, and the leaders, one or two each morning, were being shot.—Pearse, the gentle schoolmaster and tender poet, MacDonagh the critic and dramatist, Willie Pearse the sculptor, the boy Heuston, Eamonn Ceannt who had piped before the Pope, lovable, laughing Seán MacDermott, Connolly who had taught the wage-slave manliness. . . . All over the country men were being rounded up for deportation, teachers of Irish, students of industry and national crafts, all that was scholarly and patriotic and virile was being torn from the land. Soon Ireland would be left a land of bereavement and mourning, leaderless, guideless, helpless. . . . The great cast had been made, and had failed. Force reigned supreme, unchallenged now as it was undisguised. Surely Ireland was beaten now, beaten forever, forever, forever.

So many thought, and so thought Shane, still shut in the prison, waiting and wondering what his fate would be, while thousands of prisoners were being sorted out in the camps and jails. Would he be taken away with the rest, he wondered? Was it so he would go back to England? Was he to lose Ireland thus?

He was allowed to take exercise in the prison-yard now. In the great bleak square, with the giantesque walls all round, he was marched between a couple of criminals, while some distance away, a small group of figures in broad arrow attire was also exercised. "Them's the Conchy fellas," said Shane's nearest companion under his breath. Shane watched the C. O.'s with interest. They had the look of suffering men, and he wondered whether they were really here for conscience-sake, or for the safety of their skins. As the file in which he was marching went round the prison-yard, they passed the other group quite close. Shane saw one of the C. O.'s, a thin, wasted figure with a face grey with anguish and eyes deep-sunk with sorrow, apparently signalling recognition. He fancied the face was familiar. . . . The two files were marking time, and the man seemed to be trying to speak, but was broken with a panting cough that Shane recognised better than the faded features.—It was Dicky Bulpitt the Socialist, not burnt out yet.

Dicky got his voice. "Cheeri-aw," he cried with Cockney vowels. "There's a good time coming, boys. . . ."

"Silence there!" shouted the warder. "Quick MARCH."

The words of the Chartist song in Dicky's undaunted voice were the first note of cheer that had sounded on Shane's ear since the prison gates closed on him.

An hour later, he walked forth from the prison free. . . .

“I had great difficulty—*great* difficulty in getting you out of jail,” Alderman Boag was saying. “I

have a good mind to terminate your employment. Why you should get yourself under suspicion is more than I can conceive. Only that I could not afford to be suspected of employing a party implicated in these disastrous riots, I would have let you take your deserts.—No, no interruptions, please; I have no time to listen to long-winded excuses. Suffer me to get a word in, if you please. I repeat, but for the need to save *The Launawaula* from suspicion, I would have hesitated to use my influence at the Castle, which I am glad to say I retain to some extent even after her Ladyship's departure, which was so serious a blow to our country's prosperity, and but for which this insane affair might never have occurred. . . . See, where was I?—Don't interrupt. Oh, yes. Now that I have got you out, we must safeguard *The Launawaula* by publishing a denunciation of these criminal proceedings. Will you please take your notebook, and jot down the following points, working them up after into a leading article. . . .”

The Alderman leaned back in his chair, threw up his eyes in meditation, till Shane could see the whites of them, and clasped his hands upon his spacious waistcoat.

“Um, ah, yes. Take this down.”—And he proceeded to dictate a denunciation of the Insurrection in violent terms. Shane was too worn-out and bewildered to protest against this partisan usage of a non-political magazine, or the usurpation of his editorial authority. But when the Alderman began to describe the dead leaders as “cornerboys of unknown origin in the pay of Hun secret service agents,” Shane looked up from his notes.

“Did you ever meet Padraic Pearse, Mr. Boag?” he asked.

"No," snorted his employer. "Nor heard of him till he engineered this rebellion against the Empire and the Party. How often am I to tell you that my time is money, and that I can't stay here waiting to hear the histories of nobodies? When you come to my age and have responsibilities. . . ."

Shane took down the Alderman's points and copied out the leading article, dropping it into the printer's basket. He was too broken in spirit to do otherwise. He walked home through the khaki-spotted streets, under the canopy of dusty smoke. The great gaps in the frontage of O'Connell Street, with a single slender building still standing here and there, reminded him oddly of the gaps in an old man's teeth—or it might be in a death's head. . . .

He had to pass the prison on his way. The vast walls stood grimly impregnable, symbol of the power into whose hands Ireland was now handed. Poor Dicky Bulpitt was in there still: how brave a soul. It was not only Irishmen who were gallantly defiant of fate! . . . "And I saw a great multitude of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues. . . . These are they who have come out of great tribulation. . . ." The words sang in his head once more. He thought of Bulpitt, consumptive, frail, dying, crying out hopeful words to him there in the very grip of the powers that were. Bulpitt would die gamely, anyhow. Then what a coward was he himself, putting his hand to a renunciation of the dead. . . .

He turned abruptly on his heel. A car was passing, and he went back to the printing office forthwith. He found the foreman.

"Have you the make-up done?" he asked.

"Everything is ready for press bar the leader page,"

said the foreman. "As soon as the proofs are corrected of that front-page leader you left in to-day we close up for press."

"Well, you can 'dis' that leader," said Shane, drawing his pencil through a proof. He walked over to the imposing stone, picked out the lino-slugs himself, and threw them into the waste-box, to make sure that the article should not slip through.

"What am I to put in its place?" asked the foreman. "It's late to be setting another half column. I suppose you must have a leader of some sort or we could just drop in a dummy ad."

Shane paused a moment, reflecting. "See here," said he at last. "Set this up in big black letters and display it." He tore open an envelope and pencilled these words :

#### REQUIESCANT

THEN HERE'S THEIR MEMORY—MAY IT BE  
FOR US A GUIDING LIGHT,  
TO CHEER OUR STRIFE FOR LIBERTY  
AND TEACH US TO UNITE.

He went home with a feeling of satisfaction, as though he had relieved his conscience of a load. "That washes my hands anyway," said he to himself, and "I wonder how Boag will take it when he gets *The Launawaula* to-morrow!"

A few days later, Alderman Boag lost his J.P.-ship, and Shane Lambert lost his job.

It was one thing to act defiantly in a momentary combative mood, but another to keep up heart in the war-stricken city in the face of unemployment. Paddy McPoland, Shane learned, had fought in the

Rising and had fallen, so now he had no friend in Dublin to lend a hand in aid. From old experience he knew that, having no "influence," no cousins in the clergy, no uncles subscribing to the Irish Party's Funds, he likewise had no chance of getting journalistic work: the few free papers, poor at the best of times, were now suppressed or in difficulties. To be unemployed in Ireland, and friendless too, was a hard lot. A few pounds stood between him and—the need to go back to England. The one thing that cheered him, as it also surprised him, was Mrs. Brophy's attitude. He had expected her to give him notice to quit his lodgings since his spell in prison; instead, the Rising seemed to have worked a transformation in her. She declared that she would not accept a penny's rent from him while he was out of employment; there was not a woman in Dublin, she said, who would take money from "one of the boys." She wasn't going to give ould Maxwell a lift. "When I go out to-day," said she, "I've made up my mind I'll buy one o' them Sinn Féin rosettes with the black crêpe to them. I see Mrs. Mulally across the road polishing the brasses with a love-a-ly wan on her. It's only now we're findin' out that the Sinn Féiners were such nice respectable poor fellas."

So Shane began, somewhat listlessly, to look for work. He had just come home in the evening after his second day's unsuccessful search, and was about to close the front door behind him, when steps on the garden gravel drew his attention to a comical figure approaching the house. Such dowdy and awkward attire was surely never seen before in Dublin—so bedraggled an old red shawl over a dilapidated longish cape, mannish big boots under a flounced skirt of faded glory, and bonnet over all, with swishing purple feather drooping over the left ear.

" Beggin' y'r pardin, sir, but is the missus in ? " asked the old one in a hoarse voice and broad Dublin accents. " These is haard times for the likes o' me. Do you belong to the house now, or wud you spake to the mistress and see wud she gi' me some chaarin' to do or maybe odd jobs about the house ? I'm strong yet, you know, the more I don't *look* too smaart. . . ."

Shane tried to get a word in, but his interlocutor kept edging to the door, and at last through it on to the hall-mat.

" I'm afraid—er—that Mrs. Brophy makes other arrangements, my good woman," Shane began politely. " But I will call her if you wish—please stay where you are—and you can put your request direct. Allow me now . . . ."

To his amazement and alarm, the strange scarecrow of a woman stepped farther into the hall, closed the door with a slam behind her, and set her back to it. Was it daylight burglary by a woman ? Or was she drunk ? Good heavens !—she was laughing ! laughing in deep bass tones, her ridiculous feather shaking up and down like a poppy in the wind. She did worse : she put up a hefty right hand and pulled her bonnet off. She had black cropped hair. She was—

Faragal Faal !

" You must pardon my somewhat *démodé* finery," Faragal was saying. " The blouse or whatever you call this thing " (he indicated the attire upon his manly bosom) " and the flounces of my skirt don't synchronise, I fear. Lord !—amn't I glad to get rid of that damned bonnet with its feather, that has tickled my ear this whole blessed day."

" But what—how . . . ."

"Oh, I stole it all at a pawnbroker's shop : commandeered it, I should say. I wasn't quite sure how ladies of my rank dress nowadays—so I took a little of everything. Maybe I overdid it a bit. I suppose they don't carry these!"—He pulled out a lorgnette and levelled it at Shane.

"But what on earth have you turned up in that get-up for?" Shane asked.

"Give me a bite and a sup and I'll tell you all," Faragal answered, going up to Shane's room. Shane brought up bread and tea (of his own brewing), which Faragal devoured. Then the Organiser of Victory pulled his flounced skirt up to his knees, and put his feet on the mantelpiece.

"There's not much to it," said he. "I was out in the shindy—fought at the Four Courts. We had hot work part of the time, I can tell you. I didn't get a wink of sleep from Easter Monday till Friday evening, and then I was tumbling over myself. The section-commander told me to go and sleep it off. I found a cosy place in the middle of a mountain of law-books upstairs, and I didn't wake up till it was all over. It was Sunday mid-day, and the shooting had stopped. I peeped out and couldn't find any of the boys—they had surrendered without me, you see. So I waited for dark and then kicked out for myself. The military patrols held me up a couple of times down the back-streets, but I was looking a bit of a ghost after the week's strain, so I let on to be a starving resident—put my hand to my throat and gasped out, Bread!! Bread!! I am not too bad as an actor."

"So I notice," said Shane.

"Thanks. Well, I looted a pawnbroker's shop for this trousseau and went into a church and put it on

me in a confession-box. I lay low with some decent people in a tenement till to-day, but the military came nosing in that direction this morning, so I thought it was time to move along. I decided to call on you at once as I knew no one else at large in the city."

"How did you get my address?"

"I got it from a man named Peter Joyce. I met him in the Post Office when I was there with despatches. He asked me if I got clear to look you up. . . ."

"What happened to Peter?" Shane asked.

"I cannot tell you. If you did not see his name among the prisoners deported he must have fallen."

Shane called to mind Peter's misery when the Rising had been countermanded. "It was the end he would desire himself," he said, meditatively. "The surrender would have broken his heart."

So Shane never learnt how Peter had fought till the flaming headquarters were evacuated, and how, as the little party had retreated to make the dash to Moore Street, Peter had lingered behind in the thick smoke, hearing a thrilling voice above him—and had looked up to see that white-haired figure, with the odd mixture of age and youth, beckoning him.— "Come up hither," the familiar voice had said, "and I will show you the things that must be done hereafter." And Old Peter had raised a hand to take that which was reached down to him—and had known no more of fire and strife, defeat and earthly failure. . . .

"I have been wanting," Faragal said, "to find you these six years—ever since you disappeared from Portabeg. What made you scuttle away like that at all?"

Shane was confused. All these years he had wondered how he would speak to his friends of Portabeg if he should meet them; would they turn a very scornful gaze on the Informer?

"I—had nothing to stay for. I think an—an informer would not be very popular there."

Faragal turned sharply on Shane, and eyed him closely. "Do you mean to say," he asked in suddenly serious tones, "that you let that cursed conversation worry you?"

Shane's head sunk. There was bitterness in his heart.

"Are you going to insult us," Faragal asked slowly and emphatically, "by suggesting that we'd hold a decent man to blame for what he couldn't help? No, we're not that sort. There's not one of us but wants to meet the lad that got the Cope for us to thank him. *You* an informer. I'll show you how much we distrust you. I'll sleep under your roof this week, and you can sell me for sixpence if they'll give it to you!"

Shane ignored the laughing tone of the last sentence. Interiorly, he was relieved not a little, but. . . .

"There was one of you," said he, "Manus O'Freel, who wasn't of one voice with yourself." [He was remembering Manus's fierce explosion of hatred.]

Faragal was disconcerted. "Sure, you're not minding what old Manus said?" he asked. "He's only one, and every one knows he's too much of a Holy Roman. We're not all Torquemadas like him."

Shane heard Faragal's words with eagerness. Could it really be, as he said, that the people could forgive him that awful unconscious betrayal? But then Manus, who counted most, being Maiwa's father, was the unrelenting one. . . .

The two were so absorbed in their talk that they did not notice the tinkle of tea things on the stairs as Mrs. Brophy came up with a second pot of tea and a tin of sardines that she had slipped out to buy for Shane's visitor. She pushed open the door with her foot, saw Shane on one side of the small table and a fantastically-attired woman on the other—a woman whose big boots on the mantelpiece protruded from trouser-ends beneath her skirts. Mrs. Brophy screamed, and dropped the tray, pot, plates, and all. . . .

That put an end to the conversation. When Mrs. Brophy heard the situation explained, she offered Faragal "a hundred thousand welcomes," and invited the two to take tea with her in the kitchen since the pot she had just made was spilt, and that made by Shane must have been no sort of tea at all. The man wasn't born yet who knew how to make a decent drop o' tay. The young men rose to follow her downstairs. "This will need some generalship," said Faragal after tripping twice over his skirts. He twisted both hands in the flounces and heaved them high enough to facilitate the descent. "It's well Cardinal Logue can't see me this minute," he added, "or he'd have something more to say in his *Pastorals* about modern fashions. Or worse still, Father Bernard Vaughan, that prides himself in knowing the latest thing in fastness. This would provide him with a month of sermons. Smart set indeed!—why. . . ."

Crash! Here Faragal collided with the hallstand.

"I was aaskin' the young man of the house, ma'am," Faragal said in his Dublin style as he sat beside the gas-stove with a cup of tea in his hand, "whether you might be able to give me a little work about the house."

He turned to Shane. "You see," said he, "I'll

have to lie low till this military activity settles down. The G-men are swarming, and I'd be caught at once if I showed myself in my native trousers. So I may as well be useful while I'm here. I could wash up the steps and the windows and sweep the house" [it needed it badly], "and all the extra disguise I'd want is a handkerchief to tie round my head when I wasn't wearing that wretched feather."

And what is more, he carried out his own suggestion. He charred the house better than it had been charred for many a long day, and Shane, ashamed of idleness, made himself useful in gardening.

"I tell you what it is," said Faragal on Saturday evening, shredding tobacco in his hand when Shane and he were resting from their labours. "Mrs. B. is having the time of her life. It's all very well for her to say she gets better value by going down town to do the shopping in Mary Street, but it's my opinion she's going to the pictures every day while we are sweating and puffing here. I'll start a Social Revolutionary Domestic Servants' Union if this goes on. I'm beginning to notice the symptoms of housemaid's knee."

"The house looks a lot better under your management anyway," said Shane. "One can see through the windows now, and it's a comfort not to have spiders dangling over the table at meal-time."

"I don't even get time to make an odd poem," Faragal complained. "But while I've been scrubbing and polishing, an idea has been developing in my brain-box. Hang it!" [as he felt for a match-box] "what a nuisance it is not to be able to get to your trousers' pockets."

"Well?" said Shane.

"The idea's this. From what I can see, I won't

be able to go back to Portabeg for a good while. I'll have to lie low, for they probably have me ticketed for arrest if I go back. Besides, there's work to do here while the boys are locked up across the water. The war's not over yet, nor near it, and we don't know what will turn up . . . ."

"There'll be no more fighting in Ireland," said Shane, more in the tone of a query than a statement.

"Don't be too sure."

"But we're down and out."

"*Amaidighe!* We're only blooded. Look at the spirit of Dublin now—game for anything. Look at Mrs. Brophy. Look at Mrs. Mulally. It's true Mrs. M. has given up speaking to Mrs. B. since Mrs. B. swanked it by taking on a charlady, but you should have heard her shout 'Up the re-ebels' when the khaki patrol marched by yesterday. You don't know the the spirit of the Irish people. You were reared in England, and you're overawed by the might of Britain. Over here the people don't know when they're beaten."

"That's right," said Shane. "The surrender bowled me over, but the people here seem as cocky as if they'd beaten the Empire."

"So they have, *a mhic*. You'll live to see it. That little stand has smashed up the *morale* of Imperialism. You'll find the fires of Easter Week will spread. We're only at the beginning of the Revolution." Faragal spoke with a confidence that kindled hopefulness in Shane too.

"But what are you leading to?"

"Just this. I can't go back to Portabeg yet, but my work must go on there—the Cope and the Labour League, you know."

"How did the Cope succeed?"

“ Bravely. Thanks to Jimmy—not forgetting yourself. Our stores have £20,000 of a turnover now. We brought down the cost of living thirty *per cent.*” [This was Faragal’s favourite subject, and he spoke with a rapid outpouring of speech.] “ We have given the people pure fertilisers and good seed —what they never had before. We market their fish and eggs and kelp and homespun and knitting for them, and give the workers back all the profit. They vote the profit every six months back to reserve, and then we invest it in some new enterprise. Out of profits and loan deposit we have built up about £25,000 capital. All this in a poor congested district, mind you. It shows the workers don’t need to depend on capitalists : they can generate their own capital. Jimmy is going into the fish-curing in the autumn. Everything he touches is a success. We have two mills working, a soapstone industry, and a knitting factory. We have our own bakery, our own nurse, and our own doctor ; and we have technical education classes in the Hall—the West Wing is set aside to social and educational activities—you know the big hall in it. (The Gaelic college is still to come.) We’ve taken the wind out of McScollog’s sails, I’m telling you. He has only the hotel and the farm to fatten on now. But the moral effect was our chief triumph. We’ve changed the old ignorance and slavishness into energy and efficiency. Our workers are real *men* now, with a pride in their work. In fact, I made a poem about it :

Sing a song of docket books,  
Docket books abu !  
Heresewith I will liken them  
To stones in new Jerusalem ;

Let each one be neat and fine  
That the City's walls may shine,  
Build with Counter Docket Books  
Ireland anew !

Tidy cases for our eggs  
Likewise I will praise,  
Grade and stencil them and nail,  
Bear in triumph to the rail ;  
On these stepping stones instead  
Of our dead selves . . . .”

“ I prefer you in your more serious vein,” said Shane, interrupting. “ But tell me, did you have to fight much opposition ? ”

“ Opposition, is it ? Oh, lord-aye. That's what we throve on. McScollog paid some ruffians to try to burn us down, but we caught them in the act and it took McScollog's last customers away from him. Canon Quish fought hard against us—forbade Father Doalty to attend our meetings, and when we started our classes, spoke against them off the altar as likely to lead the boys and girls into sin. As a matter of fact, it saved them from going to Scotland and the Lagan, and so kept them from the occasions of sin, but it's no use arguing with a reactionary. Another thing he had against us was that the instructors we got from the I. A. O. S. were Unionists. He said at a meeting of the A. O. H. that the Cope was a dodge to smash the Irish Party and sidetrack Home Rule. I suppose when he hears I came up to Dublin and got into the Rising he'll say the Cope was got up by the Huns. It used to hurt me at first,” Faragal added, bitterly, “ but I've got used to it now.”

“ But why should he be so much against it ? ” Shane asked. “ Isn't it all for the good of his parish

to keep the people at home and make them more prosperous?"

"Don't you know it is. But he comes of the gombeen stock and blood is thicker than water. Isn't it an awful thing to see the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Rome bossed by ignorant hucksters behind the Parish Priests—the McScollogs behind the Quishes? And Oh, what a loss it all is to Ireland! What chances are going to waste! If only the Church would give a lead to our people instead of stumbling along behind the moneybags, we might make Ireland the grandest country on earth. If only the Church would breathe public spirit into the people—and it could, too, for the Irish people are the loyalest Catholics there are—we might make this Holy Ireland in reality. But the Church is making the Grand Refusal. It's too rich, too prosperous. We want a touch of persecution. Why, who knows?—even the Bishops might turn Irishmen if we had the Penal Laws back for a spell!"

"You talk like Paddy McPoland," Shane said. "Those were just his ideas a week before the Rising."

"They're the ideas of everybody who comes up against reality. There's a good deal of old-fashioned tin helmet, green flag, bourgeois Nationalism in Ireland—among young men who don't work for a living. But anyone who knows the inside of Irish life has those ideas. They're the ideas that made the Rising. It's the Rising that will save Ireland and the Church in Ireland. Pearse was our Savonarola."

Shane felt a conception, long struggling in his mind, stand clear before him.

"I think you are right," he said with sudden enthusiasm. "I've watched the Gaelic League for

seven or eight years, and got disheartened about constructive work. Everything one tries for Ireland is choked down with lethargy and corruption. The politicians don't want work to be going on ; they want to machine the life out of us. But physical force can't free us, so we are thrown back to them. Only, maybe Easter Week will just break the vicious circle. It will justify itself if it rouses the country and turns it to constructive work. And I think it will. Ireland is like a 'saturated solution' after the work of the League and Sinn Féin. Temple-Colm is one of the crystals of the Ireland that should be, and the Rising, perhaps, is the shock that will precipitate her crystallisation on that model."

"The scientific lingo is a bit above me," Faragal said. "But it sounds all right. Now to make a long story short, what I want to know is, as you are at a loose end, how would you like to take my place in Portabeg while I am on the run ? "

The Organiser of Victory put his pipe in his mouth and tidied his skirts. Shane stared at him.

"Well ? " said Faragal after a pause, puffing a cloud of smoke towards the ceiling. "I was thinking," he went on, "that what with our mills and our blasting operations at the quarries, and the breaking and carding plant for the homespuns that Jimmy is hoping to instal, we shall be wanting an engineer in the commune as well as a doctor and a nurse. You can work a gas-engine, can't you ? "

"I can," said Shane.

"And a saw-mill ? "

"Surely."

"And my aunt was telling me that you had ideas about water-power ? "

Shane, startled by the allusion to Maiwa, made no answer. He was a little red.

" Well, then," said Faragal. " It's my notion that when you get to know the place from doing my secretary work for a while, you'd be just our man for Engineer. Of course, it's shameful jobbery, not to put the post up to competition, but then we owe you a debt anyway."

Shane was dreaming with delight of the prospect thus opened before him. Here was an ideal way to serve Ireland—the very opening he had longed for. But then, grim and ominous, he saw before him the face of Manus O'Freel—angry and full of hate as on that day long ago when Shane had first known himself to be an informer and Manus's approval of him had suddenly turned to hostility and contempt. Could he go to Portabeg to face Manus? He shrank from a possible scene, Manus denouncing him as a sourface and traitor. . . . Maiwa, doubtless, shared her father's feelings; or even if she were less vehement, Manus would still be a barrier, an impassable barrier between them. His old emotions, he felt, would revive; and his passion would batter itself in agony upon that barrier. Perhaps he would even see Maiwa the delight of some happier man. . . . That he could not endure. No, Portabeg was not for him.

" I—I'd like the chance," he said to Faragal, who through the smoke was watching the changing emotions on his face with eyes narrowed to slits. " But —there are difficulties. It's good of you to offer . . . but I don't think I can accept." His voice fell sadly.

That was a Saturday night. Next morning, since he thought it prudent not to go to Mass in his motley, Faragal went to a little heap of devotional books that Shane kept near the head of his bed, intending to

read the “Prayers at Mass” from a prayer-book. There was a New Testament and a *Tóruidheacht ar Lorg Chriosta*, but one little blue-bound cloth volume seemed to have little devotional character. It was called *The New Life*, which was religious sounding enough, but at the fingered page where it fell open, Faragal read :

My lady carries love within her eyes ;  
 All that she looks on is made pleasanter ;  
 Upon her path men turn to gaze at her ;  
 He whom she greeteth feels his heart to rise,  
 And droops his troubled visage, full of sighs,  
 And of his evil heart is then aware. . . .

“ It’s good stuff,” said Faragal to himself. “ I wouldn’t be ashamed of it (me that’s the Charwoman Poet) myself. But it’s not very *à propos* of my prayers.” He turned curiously back to the title page, which bore the inscription : *The Vita Nuova of Dante Alighieri, translated by D. G. Rossetti.* And on the fly-leaf, he saw the autograph :

Meadbha Ni Fhuisil, 1909

It was Maiwa O’Freel’s Irish signature !

“ How the blazes did that get here ? ” Faragal asked himself. “ 1909 was the year Shane was in Portabeg.” Then he whistled lightly to himself. “ That explains a lot of things.” he said. For a few minutes he sat silent, considering. At last, as if struck by an idea, he went to Shane’s desk, found paper, and scribbled two letters. “ Mrs. Brophy must post these. Then we’ll see *what* we’ll see,” he remarked.

## CHAPTER IV

### MEETINGS WITHIN MEETINGS

The true inwardness of the Greens-for-the-Goats Movement, which convulsed Dublin for a week in June 1916 has not yet been made public. One Monday evening (the day after Faragal's discovery among Shane's books) a Dublin evening paper printed a brief letter from *Pro Bono Publico* suggesting that in view of the dearness of milk, etc., Stephen's Green and other Dublin parks should be given over to grazing milch goats for the populace. Next day, a shoal of letters from all quarters of the city poured in on the editor applauding the idea, and a selection —signed by A Father of Six, Ex-Policeman (who hoped the agitation would be kept on "broadly national lines"), Hector H. Henderson, An Old P.P., and Nellie O'Sullivan, B.A.—was printed, filling a column on the front page. On the third day, still more letters pouring in in support of the idea, the editor was convinced that this was a "live topic," and instructed the magazine editor to print a photograph of something connected with the parks, and, accordingly, the portrait appeared of old Mrs. Margaret Casey, "who has sold matches for forty years at the gate of Stephen's Green, which some citizens desire to be turned over to grazing for goats." On Thursday, letters appeared advocating an appeal to Lady Aberdeen to return and head a campaign by the W. N. H. A., while another correspondent

suggested that sympathisers should wear small flags with the motto : "The Greens for the Goats, or — ! " The editor, convinced now that this was a "popular stunt," dictated the heads of a sub-leader to his chief leader-writer, warning him, however, to be "cautious and non-committal." He also sent out a reporter to interview prominent doctors on the food-value of goats' milk for children. On Friday he received so many letters that he set the sub-editors to work on extracting a "point only" from each one. On Saturday Hector H. Henderson announced in a letter marked *Advt.* that No. 118 Rutland Square N. had been secured for a mass meeting of citizens next evening to bring the agitation to a head, and present the people's demand to the proper authorities.

That Saturday evening, Faragal declared that he would wear skirt and blouse no longer. "It was *cedant arma togae* when I put them on," he said, "but I'm tired of the *toggery*. I think I could go about town safely in plain, unadorned trousers now."

"I hope you'll be able to do the charring in trousers," said Shane, "for you've been shirking it this week, and I've had more than my share."

"It's good practice for you," said Faragal. "Who knows when domestic economy may be coming in useful to you? You'll bless me then, for if you were to wash out the teapot with a paraffiny rag the way you did yesterday, the Lord help you."

"But what has been keeping you from helping me?" Shane asked. "Writing poetry, I suppose, for you've spent two-thirds of every day at the writing desk beyond. Poetry's all very well, but . . . ."

"Don't be a Philistine!" Faragal interrupted. "And I didn't really spend more than an hour with my muse. She has a sore throat just now and isn't

singing much. All I did was to write one new thing and finish off a poem I was vamping out in the Four Courts on the second day of the Rising. Would you like to hear it ? ”—And he recited :

THE DONEGAL VOLUNTEER IN EASTER WEEK

Hail, Tirconaill, land of Donal,  
 Hail, dear land of happy days,  
 Fragrant turf-reek, heather braes ;  
 Life with thee is my soul's breath,  
 Exile from thee, daily death,  
 Land of Donal, Fair Tirconaill.

Temple-Colm, blessed by Colum,  
 Linger still along thy beach  
 Gaelic folk and Gaelic speech ;  
 Day and hour from thee awain  
 Are lost to life, are lived in vain,  
 Blessed by Colum, Temple-Colm.

Portabeg, far port of home,  
 On the sunset western sea  
 Britain's bonds still weigh on thee,  
 And I, to save thee, battle here  
 Where all to me is strange and drear,  
 In hope, the flames of Dublin town  
 Shall burn your strong-throned tyrant down,  
 And some day, back from exile, I  
 Shall to a free Tirconaill hie—  
 To Portabeg, my freeman's home.

“ That wasn't much to spend a week on,” said Shane.

“ No,” said Faragal, “ but I have also written no fewer than forty-five letters to the press, long and short, on the great national issue of The Greens for the Goats. . . .

“ Yes,” he went on, as Shane stared at him as though he doubted his sanity, “ yes, *I* am A Father of Six, An Ex-Policeman, An Old P.P., and Nellie O'Sullivan, B.A. It was *I* that started the whole

racket. It's always easy to get Dublin people to take up a correspondence on things like this (it's what they themselves call Civics to write to the papers about silly subjects, not that the goats movement was all that silly. I wish I could take it up in earnest); and I got help from a good many correspondents who rose to the bait. But I had to write a good lot myself under different styles to make sure the editor was kept going."

"But what is the game?" Shane asked. "It seems an expensive and laborious sort of joke. Thank goodness I haven't a sense of humour if that's what it involves you in."

"There's method in my madness," Faragal replied. "You see, *you* have to go to the Pro-Goat Demonstration to-morrow."

"I'm hanged if I do," said Shane.

"You'll be shot if you don't," said Faragal. "It's like this—the Goat Meeting is only to draw the masses. It's a non-political blind. The real object is to have a meeting of our own crowd. They'd be spotted if they met by themselves, but they can come along among the Pro-Goatites, and then meet in another room."

"I understand," said Shane. "The Organiser of Victory again!"

Faragal bowed. "You are to go as my deputy," he said. "I have some papers for you to deliver. The main subject will be, how to get the organisation on its feet again, and you can go into the argument if you like. I don't care, as long as you deliver my papers. Ask for the Terenure delegate, and hand over this foolscap envelope. Will you do it?"

Shane was reflecting on the curious repetition of history exemplified in this commission. Forty years

ago, his father had sheltered a fugitive Fenian, and had undertaken a mission on his behalf. There was a girl in the case then, though, and there was none in his. . . .

“I’ll go,” he said absently.

It was a big and varied crowd that swarmed along the north side of Parnell, *anglicè* Rutland, Square next evening.

“If you’re going to stand there, mohve on,” said the prodigious policeman at the corner as Shane looked speculatively at the mass of young and old, cheery and solemn, poor and more prosperous agitators. One man had brought two goats on a leash, apparently for demonstration purposes. They were scared by the crowd and were twisting the leash round and round his legs. Perhaps it was to him the policeman spoke.

Shane went through the stately Georgian portal into the hall, and filed with the crowd up the broad stairs. He noticed solitary figures slipping through a door on the landing, and presented his foolscap envelope, with Faragal’s initials, to a door steward at the door. He was at once admitted, through heavy-hanging curtains, to a large, dimly-lit, quiet room, where little groups of two and three were chatting in whispers at chairs about the walls. They had the look, the few that Shane could distinguish in the gloom, of Gaelic Leaguers and Volunteers. There were a few girls present, wearing the silver brooch—rifle, and initials—of the Cumann na mBan. Outside the noise of the crowd going to the Pro-Goat demonstration continued.

Shane asked a second steward by whom all who

arrived were being directed, whether the Terenure delegate had arrived yet.

"Not yet," said the big man in knee-breeches, speaking in Irish. "Sit you here where I can find you again and I'll bring the delegate when he arrives." He pointed Shane to a sequestered seat in a recess in the wall.

Shane watched the gathering with interest. A little, dark, spectacled man had taken the chair, and was tapping on the green table before him, where the two tall candles that lit the apartment stood, with nervous fingers. The noise of trampling feet died away in the room overhead, and a round of applause echoed: the Pro-Goat meeting had evidently begun.

A few late-comers moved up to their seats in the shadowy room. Suddenly the tall steward stood at the opening of the recess in which Shane sat.

"Are you Faragal Faal?" he asked.

"No," said Shane, "but I am from him. . . ."

"I suppose it's all right," said the steward. "The Terenure delegate is here and is asking for Faragal Faal—says he made an appointment."

"I have only to hand over this packet," said Shane, pulling out his envelope. "I don't want to stay for the meeting."

"Well, you'd best do it yourself," said the steward, and stood aside.

The Terenure delegate appeared: in the dim light Shane saw that the delegate was a lady wearing the emblem of the Cumann na mBan. . . . Something in the wave of the dusky hair about her face startled him . . . her back was to the light and he could not distinguish her features: his own face caught the candles' rays. . . . She did not speak, but put her hand up to her lips as in startled surprise. . . .

Shane rose. . . . His voice faltered, he knew not why :

“ Is it *you* ? ”

The intensity with which he spoke betrayed his passion : he could not quieten his trembling figure. She saw his agitation.

“ Yes,” she said, “ it is I. . . . I did not expect to find *you* here. . . . Faragal asked me to meet him. . . .”

In her confusion, she was like to retire, but her retreat was cut off by a press of delegates who had drawn up their seats to listen to the Chairman, now on his feet to address the gathering. Shane could find no words to utter. He was still trying to realise that this was Maiwa—Maiwa O’Freel—before him, not in a dream, but in reality. He had met her again at last—long longed-for meeting—and now he knew not what to say. She was the first to regain presence of mind after the surprise, and taking pity on his sore confusion, sat down. . . . Shane sat down too. The meeting was proceeding. The Chairman called on the Secretary at his side to speak, and the young man with the white foolscap before him on the green table, rose : it was Faragal Faal, who had come to the meeting after all.

“ I need not explain,” said Faragal, “ why I took this somewhat bizarre means of calling our present meeting.” With a jerk of his head he indicated the room above, where another round of stamping and clapping drowned for a moment his voice. “ But in apologising for being late, I may explain that I am Hector H. Henderson to the Pro-Goats above us, and I had to start the meeting and get them talking before I could slip away to look for papers in my overcoat pockets. And—*Me voici* !

“ Now you know ” (he went on more seriously) “ the object of our meeting. The Rising broke up the ligaments of our various organisations, and it is necessary to link up again as speedily as may be, for the continuance of our work. If we cannot come together openly, we must do so secretly, while the present *régime* continues. The people have swung round to us since they saw we were in earnest—and since the enemy showed his teeth. Accordingly we must plan, not to carry on on a smaller scale than before Easter Week when our comrades ” (his voice sank for a moment) “ fell—or were carried away, but on a bigger scale than ever before. A great task, then, devolves on those of us who are yet at liberty. . . . ”

Shane paid little heed to what Faragal was saying. His eyes were furtively on Maiwa’s pale profile and the red-brown tresses rippling back from her brow. She seemed no longer girlish, as at Portabeg : she was a woman now, but her beauty, more proud, more perfect, had lost none of its strange woodland air : only it seemed more remotely divided from him than ever, so aloof, so indifferent her manner was. Her seemingly resolute indifference to his presence (contrasting with his own agitation) made him feel unutterably mean. He wished himself away. Why had Faragal played this trick on him ? He handled Faragal’s envelope, and prepared to hand it over and be gone.

Faragal’s speech ended, and in the rustling interval before another speaker began, Maiwa could not but turn her eyes from the president’s table. Shane seized his opportunity. “ I have to give you these papers from Faragal Faal,” he said, handing over the sealed packet.

"Why did he not bring them himself?" Maiwa asked. She spoke unconsciously, voicing a question that puzzled her, but Shane took the wrong meaning from her words.

"Instead of sending *me*, I suppose you mean," he said bitterly. "Well, I won't intrude on you longer," and he felt for his soft hat. "No doubt the society of *informers* is very disagreeable to you."

The savage tone of the last sentence broke down Maiwa's reserve. She turned a flaming face upon him. "Why do you say that?" she asked. "What do you mean by it?"

"You said very emphatically that you did not expect to see *me* here," said Shane. He was standing up to go.

"Sit down," she said. "You must tell me what this means. Sit down." He obeyed, half reluctantly. She looked him straight in the eyes. Incredulously, yet with growing hope he saw a struggle of emotions in her own. "You—did not mean that—about informers?" she said slowly and almost in a whisper. He did not answer. She waited and still he did not answer. Then with an impatient rush of words, "Oh, how stupid, stupid you are. Do you want to make me say *everything*?" And she averted her head with the faintest suspicion of a sob.

A startling hope entered Shane's mind. He caught the neatly-gloved hand beside him and held it. "Do you mean—do you mean," he asked, "that you will give me a chance? Can you forgive me for being an informer? Your father thought badly of me. . . ."

She turned and leaned towards him a little then and smiled with a grace that seemed to him radiant. "You are not dealing with my father. . . ."

Shane could not believe his ears. Was she—was

Maiwa—really telling him that his hopes were coming true? Her manner was more eloquent than her words: the little pout on her lips seemed to be saying to him: "Have courage: open your heart."

"But an informer. . . ." he stammered.

"Are you still so young," she whispered, "that you think a woman is as shallow a judge of a man as that? My dear boy, your honesty is not dubious—it's almost oppressively obvious. . . ." And then with a pout of distress: "But why are you throwing all the burden of this on me? I could cry this minute."

The thought of this splendid being weeping on his account was too much for Shane. He looked at her, and she met his eyes with a faintly tremulous smile. An intoxicating conviction flooded his brain. "Oh Maiwa, Maiwa!" he breathed.

"Well, Shane?"

"Let us get out of this," he pleaded. "I have dreamed of this all these years—ever since that day when you made tea for me at Kiloonan."

Maiwa laughed a little, low laugh. "Faith, I knew the way to your heart" said she. "Soda-bread and creamy tea! But wait till these speeches are over, and then we'll slip out. . . ."

Shane thought those speeches would never end. Maiwa idly opened Faragal's envelope. Some sheets of foolscap, written on in verse, were the contents. She flattened them out. The title of the verses was:

#### EPITHALAMION.

Both Shane and she went red, but again it was she who recovered first. "I must teach that nephew of mine," said she "to be respectful towards his aunt."

"—And uncle," put in Shane.

Before they could get away from the Hall, Faragal encountered them. He noted Shane's elated manner, and said: "You will reconsider that Portabeg question?"

"I *have* done so," said Shane.

"I knew you would," said Faragal. He flashed a twinkling eye from one to the other. "Well, I've done something for my title of Organiser of Victory," said he, "but which is the victor, and which the vanquished?"

"Time will tell," said Maiwa.

## CHAPTER V

### HOME

The dark year passed, and when the summer was ripening again, word passed that the prisoners in exile were to be amnestied. Joy ran through Ireland. To Shane, working hard in Portabeg, the news of the Return of the Fianna brought double delight. For if the prisoners were released, Faragal could return from Dublin, and he himself could leave Faragal's secretarial work to take up the engineering which was his own *métier*. And this meant that Maiwa, still teaching outside Terenure, could come back to Portabeg too !

This he wrote to her, penning his three-hundredth letter. When he had dropped the missive in the post, he walked out along *Bealach-an-Adhraidh*, the hilly eminence with the sunset sea frothing at its edges, that overlooks the bay from the east. The path, the ancient Way of Adoration, rose higher and higher through the heather and the whins, until he could see Portabeg below him with Cruckanure rising beyond, and Arrigal beyond that. The whole countryside to the edge of the moorland was a chequer of small fields, beautiful with industry, and intersected by stone walls with thick-strewn lime-washed houses. *There* was Kiloonan, and *there* was the Co-operative Hall, with its outhouses and sheddings, busy centre of communal life. He could see, too, the two mills on the river, the new corrugated iron shed for fish-

curing on the quays (the erection of which he had just directed) and the sports field where the young men of the society were practising with their hurleys for next week's match.

He turned to the right, where in a little sheltered hollow, across a stone wall and up a little lane, a small white house took the orange glow of the sun's last rays. The door was open, and a joiner was at work in the interior.

"How is the work going, Micky?" Shane asked in the Irish tongue.

"It's nearly finished, *a mháistir Laimbeart*," the joiner replied. "When the walls are whitewashed it'll be as tasty as you could wish."

"I'm glad of that," Shane said, "for it will be wanted soon."

"*Maith thú!*" said Micky, wringing Shane's hand as he congratulated him. "The boys will give you the right house-warming."

Fergus O'Cryan was released with the rest of the Irish prisoners, but he did not come home with them to Ireland. He wandered alone round Euston, scarce knowing why he had decided to remain in London. His old lodgings, he found, were no longer open to him; he was doubtful where to go instead. He walked along the Euston Road half bewildered by the racing kaleidoscope of life about him. To eyes used for a year to prison sights, everything in the free world seemed riotously bright and gay. Some apples and tangarine oranges in a fruiterer's shop-window fascinated him with their brilliant colour. . . . The shoddy dresses of the passers-by shone like rich robes. The dull animation of their faces

delighted him. The food which he got in a cheap eating-house was like the food of fairyland, and he found himself, after drinking one bottle of stout with extraordinary relish, calling eagerly for a second. Later in the day, he drank again with eager thirst—and again.

“I must stop this,” he said to himself. He had heard of men released from prison, tempted by the reaction from forced abstinence, growing gluttonous and loose, their normal self-control collapsing. He was minded to go to a theatre, for the feast of light and colour and music (however tawdry) dragged him. . . . He found himself laughing immoderately at simple pleasantries by the people he spoke to, so that they looked closely at him; and again, he would be pettily quarrelsome. “Good heavens!” he said. “This is hysteria. I can’t get the upper hand of myself. I had better avoid excitement.” He resolved to avoid theatres and to seek to quieten his nerves in a common-place, dull, quiet environment. He would look for lodgings. Nothing could be duller than landladies—he! he! he!

When he did his toilet in the eating-house, he stared at his reflection in the glass as though it were that of a stranger that confronted him. Sunken eyes glared from the shadows of a face that was the face of a prematurely-aged man. Though he was now just into his forties, the face reflected was fringed with grey cropped hair and lined with folded wrinkles. Twenty years had passed over him in the space of one. Most of all, that first week, so long ago now, Easter Week in 1916, when he had raved in his cell of broken hopes and a foolish nation shattering itself on the immutable, had ploughed his features with ugliness and sapped the colour from his

hair. The days before Easter Week, when he had exalted in the undimmed vigour of youth, and had dreamed of taking his place in a triumphant revolution, that was to spread over the enslaved world and cast its joyous light even into the uninhabited stars, seemed now as distant as ages before history. He walked in a self-destroying world bereft of hope, hopeless himself. He tried to brace himself. This sickly mood would pass as the prison atmosphere worked off. He would be hopeful again—like some others of the prisoners. The war was not over yet : the old order was not yet free of the flames. Reason dictated fortitude. Putting restraint on his moods, he walked across to the Woburn Mansions, where Shane's old nurse, Nana, might still be living. Perhaps she could put him in the way of new lodgings.

Nana was there, very stout now, and unwilling to move from her basket-chair where she sat knitting by the fire.

“ Is it you, Mr. O’Crying ? ” she asked. “ Pleased I am to meet you again, sir. Sit down, sir. I ’ardly recernised you, you’ve changed that much. What’s the matter with your ’air ? I suppose you’ve bin in the war like poor Todkins, as ’ad ’is leg shot off, but ’e got a good job since, speakin’ on the recruitin’ about ’ow ’e killed twenty-nine Germans single-’anded afore ’e give in.”

“ No,” said Fergus. “ I haven’t been in the war—I missed my chance. I have been to prison. . . .”

“ Oh, lor’ love us,” said Nana, throwing up her hands. “ I ’opes and believes it wasn’t for anything very wicked, sir. But don’t tell me if you don’t like.”

“ It was for what better Irishmen than myself have been to prison for,” Fergus answered.

“ Was it politics ? ” Nana asked. “ I’m glad to ’ear

it, Mister O'Crying, sir, 'cos I never could approve of bigamy or the like, though I ain't what you'd call strait-laced."

"And I called on you wanting lodgings," Fergus went on, "thinking of Shane Lambert. . . ."

"Oh, 'ow's sonnybunny getting on?" Nana asked eagerly. "I 'ope 'e 'asn't gorn off to the war too—nor got into prison, beggin' your pardon, sir? Lor', 'ow often I 'ave bin thinkin' about 'im, especially after 'earin' what became of 'is pore cousin."

"What happened?" asked Fergus with startled earnestness. "Is it Mrs.—Miss Murnane that was?" [He could not bring himself to say "Mrs. Trott."]

"What, 'aven't you 'eard?" Nana asked in surprise. "'Aven't you bin readin' the papers? Why, it's quite the case of the day. Pore dear Miss Tessie, 'ow she must 'ave felt it."

"What — *what* happened?" Fergus asked impatiently.

Nana warmed to her subject. She put her knitting down into her lap and leant forward. "'E ran away with a *hactress*!" she said. "Yes. Nice goings-on for a clergyman, ain't it? But it ain't the fust, not by a long chalk. Not as 'ow I can see what a hactress could see in '*im*'. But she done it, and she 'ad to break 'er engagement at the 'Ilarity Theatre—that's 'ow it all come out. 'E published a statement too. Said 'e'd met is wat-you-may-call-it. Fancy a clergyman 'avin' a wat-you-may-call-it! Yes, 'is h-affinity, 'is soul-bride, and 'e couldn't be bound by ole-fashioned religions w're 'is dooty lay to move on to the grand free future of yumanity."

Fergus listening, his heart boiling with fury within him.

"What 'urts me most of all," said Nana, "'is pore

Miss Tessie. 'E left 'er with six little uns : 'e 'ad 'er fair dragged down and what she'll do after this I dunno. I suppose she'll 'ave to go back to 'er grandfather, pore dear. 'E's a 'ard ole gorgon to live under, and they say 'e's worse than ever in 'is old hage. It's 'im as is to blame for it all. I warrant, sir, Miss Tessie would 'ave 'ad you if it 'adn't bin for 'im—'im and 'is religion. You'd 'ave made a lovely pair, you would.—What's the matter, sir ? Don't be getting up to go away before you 'ave a cup o' tea wi' me. My ole man ud like to see yer."

Fergus was on his feet. He felt a mad impulse to dash from the building and lose himself somewhere in the wild open air where he could cry out his passion to the wind and sky. . . . He saw Tessie, aged o'er-early like himself, worn out with loveless life, deserted, broken, going back to the roof of Samuel Armstrong.

Armstrong !—he was to blame. His bigotry had filled the girl with suspicion and had blighted their two lives, as he had blighted others before them. He saw Armstrong's influence, like a malific shadow, chilling the happiness in one after another that it fell on. There were Armstrong's daughters, mentally stunted, socially isolated, their lives wasted. There were their husbands. Robert Lambert had ended his days in wretchedness—aye, and the Fenian refugee had died—through Armstrong's agency. Vincent Murnane, too, had lived a lonely and barren life from the same cause. Tessie, bright and talented, she whose music had sung of such fair hopes, was now a ruined woman. He himself was blighted too. Shane alone had escaped beyond the accursed shadow. But had even he escaped ? He had certainly been denied the chance in life that his pleasant, ardent

character and his engineering genius deserved. He had not looked too happy even when he was going to Ireland. And all the time Armstrong was thanking God that he was not as others were.

Fergus found himself walking northwards through long busy streets of shops, revolving in his mind this litany of grievances against Tessie's grandfather. He could not recall his departure from Nana's flat, nor analyse the motive that was driving him through Camden Town and Kentish Town, ever northward. A motive that would not form itself before his consciousness was directing him to—Beulah Lodge. He found Armstrong's house at last. The street for a distance of twenty yards on either side was covered six inches deep with straw—an expedient to deaden the sound of wheels passing a house of sickness. Had he come too late? Had disease forestalled him?

Fergus hastened down the avenue and knocked vehemently at the door of Beulah Lodge: it was opened by a woman who wore a nurse's apron. "I want Samuel Armstrong," he said roughly, and pushed past her when she sought to prevent his entry. He saw Armstrong's daughters emerging from a room on the first landing, and guessing that to be the apartment in which he would find his quarry, raced up the stairs. He burst past Matilda and Rebecca, and thrust himself into the sick room.

Armstrong lay on the bed, his face almost as white as the ghostly wisps of hair about it. A second nurse was to one side of him, and on the other a physician, who rose and protested against the intruder's violence, saying something about "Mr. Armstrong's nervous collapse following sad domestic news." Fergus beat down the physician's uplifted hand.

"I have come," he said hotly from the foot of the

bed, "I have come to charge you, Samuel Armstrong, with a life of evil-doing. Don't die yet, till you hear me out—you that ruined not one, but half a score of lives. . . ."

He went on, pouring out his angry words, watching with burning eyes the pale fallen figure before him. He saw Armstrong writhing faintly, and at last, growing conscious of the sentences hurled at him, lift his faded body upon an elbow and raise a listening head. Had Fergus been less impassioned himself, he would have been struck by the wild light in Armstrong's rolling eyes. Armstrong was speaking now—ejaculating gasping words. Fergus ceased speaking to listen. Armstrong's eyes, wandering round the room, fell on him, and the bedridden figure dragged itself suddenly to a sitting posture. A trembling finger was stretched towards Fergus.

"Who is this?" the figure on the bed gasped out. "Who is this heretic that upbraids me?—that blasphemes in my presence even as Satan blasphemed before God? Ho! guards!—Where are my Swiss Guards?—Fall on him and arrest him. Bind him and bring him to the dungeons! Heresy! Schism! The man Trott yesterday and this accursed spawn of Luther to-day! Arrest him, I say! What?—*Am I not Pope?* Am I not your infallible lord? To the rack with him! Swift, to the stake!—I, the Pope, command, and who shall disobey?"

He sank back exhausted. . . .

Fergus went forth from the house laughing grimly to himself. A haggard woman pushing a perambulator and followed by several peevishly-crying, thin-limbed infants, was approaching the gate. It was Tessie. She looked at Fergus and started. He bowed, and went on. . . .

Night had fallen, and he was still walking—on beneath the stars. Vega shone bright overhead. Arcturus was sinking to the west, and Virgo was fading in the city light that ringed the horizon. Fergus saw himself as he was years before, looking joyfully at the lights of the universe as though they were gala-lamps—and eager to scale the altitudes and plant the flag of thought in the recesses of desolate space. All that wheeling splendour was barren to him now. “The great adventure must go on without me,” he said wryly. The tinkle of dancing music floated on the warm night air from an hotel gay with lights. He could get wine there, he remembered. The reaction from prison frugality added to his spiritual bitterness: a craving for wine seized him with frightening force. He hesitated a moment, and then walked through the glittering glass doors, and called for drink. . . .

The sun was setting again on *Bealach-an-Àdhraidh*, and through the summer air, the evening lowing of cattle was sweet. Peace was on the waters of the bay and calm on the green and golden grasses of the hill. The moorhen fluttered to her nest among the heather, and seagulls winged through the coloured mist to the grasses of the sandy bar. The turf-reek rose in blue and wavy columns from the houses sprinkled like snowflakes among the stone-walled fields. Mount Arrigal stood up serene and kingly over all.

Shane and Maiwa had just come home to their house in the little hollow. Shane sat on a grassy knoll that overlooked the bay, his heart full of unutterable thanksgiving. “Come out,” he cried. “Come out and see the sun set and the great day’s end.”

Maiwa came out. Shane felt the old pang of strange wonder as she came to him through the twilight.

"Are you happy now?" she asked, running her hand through his hair. He answered with a look.

After a little while, he began to speak. "Do you know what my life seems like to me as I look back? My story is the same as Hamlet's. You remember how everybody was brought down in the destruction, till Fortinbras came in to start a new reign on the ruins of the old? I was reading some critic who said that Shakespeare was showing how an unnatural order cannot be reformed—all efforts to save Denmark were frustrated—till general destruction came to purge the State and let life make a new, clean start. It's the same with me. Here am I cut off from my old life and all my old friends—and it's my only chance. Everybody who came under my grandfather's influence suffered for it. It was ruin for me if I did not break away altogether. Oh, if you only knew how wretched it was—how I was humiliated and cramped and stifled. It left its mark on me. I think I'll never be exuberant like Irish Catholics—like Faragal, for instance. 'But Oh, it's grand to be here: in Ireland, with the Church, and—you!'"

Maiwa was stroking his hand soothingly as she listened. He always found her the best of listeners, and would pour out confidences to her without fear of unkind laughter.

"Another thing I am thinking," he went on, "that the house where I was reared was a symbol of all Europe. It's only one home of millions in the world to-day where the Faith is gone, and the people are selfish and cruel to one another, and narrow, with nothing supernatural in their lives. That's

what leaving the Church has brought the world to, and it has set the world at war. If my father had been a Catholic, he would have been safe from my grandfather's influence : he would have something in his life to save him from loneliness. If Tessie had not let herself be made a bigot of, she might have lived with Murnane, both of them happy. But Beulah Lodge went smash in the end, and Europe is doing the same. It's only a new start with the Church that can save the little peoples as it saved me. We have the Church in Ireland, thank God, and look" [he pointed down the hill to where the works of the Temple-Colm commune stood] "*there* is the new start being made. The world's not out of the war, and we don't know what will happen in Ireland yet : but whatever happens, these two things will stand fast and save us. Oh, how thankful I am that I have a chance to take part!"

Maiwa pressed his hand in hers. "I am thankful too," she whispered.

The birds were twittering in their nests. "Look!" Maiwa cried. "The sun has set, and I haven't done more than get the fire kindled. I have still to make the porridge for supper." She leapt to her feet. "Run now," said she, "and bring me two buckets of water from the well, and after that a creelful of turf. . . . Remember, you are to love, honour, and obey."

Shane obeyed. He went whistling to the well and filled his pails. As he walked back along the moss-fringed road, a sweet boyish voice on the evening air made him pause to listen. It was a neighbour's small boy driving the cows home from pasture through the gathering dusk—Paddy Og, who was on

the altar on Sundays—and he was singing the Benediction hymn. Mellow and beautiful the words sounded in Shane's ears :

*Uni Trinoque Domino  
Sit sempiterna gloria,  
Qui vitam sine termino  
Nobis donet in patria. . . .*

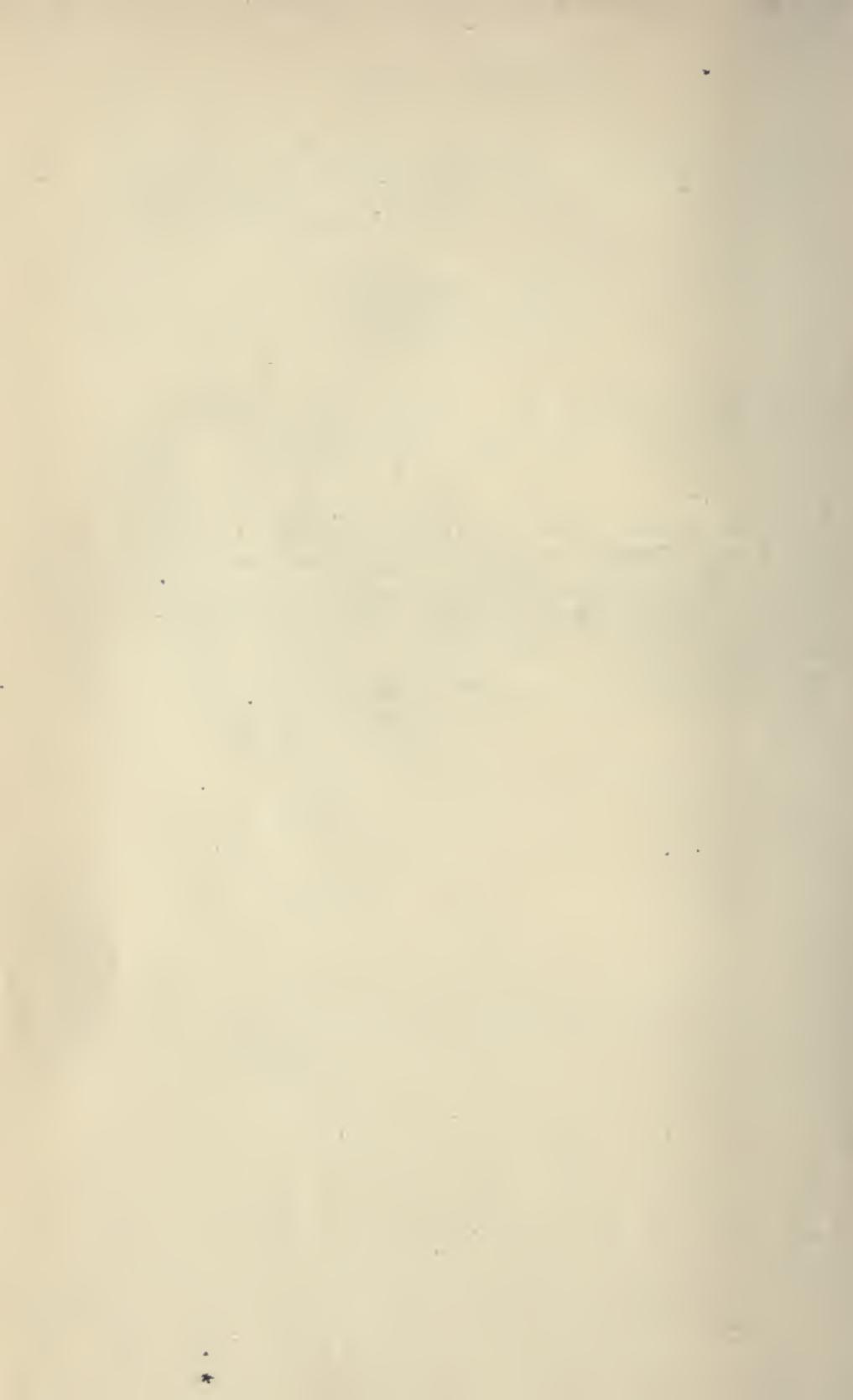
“Amen!” said Shane. He turned to the little house. Through the open door, he saw Maiwa kindling the golden lamp, its light making her face radiant.

*Laudate Dominum, omnes gentes; laudate eum, omnes populi.*

*Quoniam confirmata est super nos misericordia ejus; et veritas Domini manet in æternum . . .*

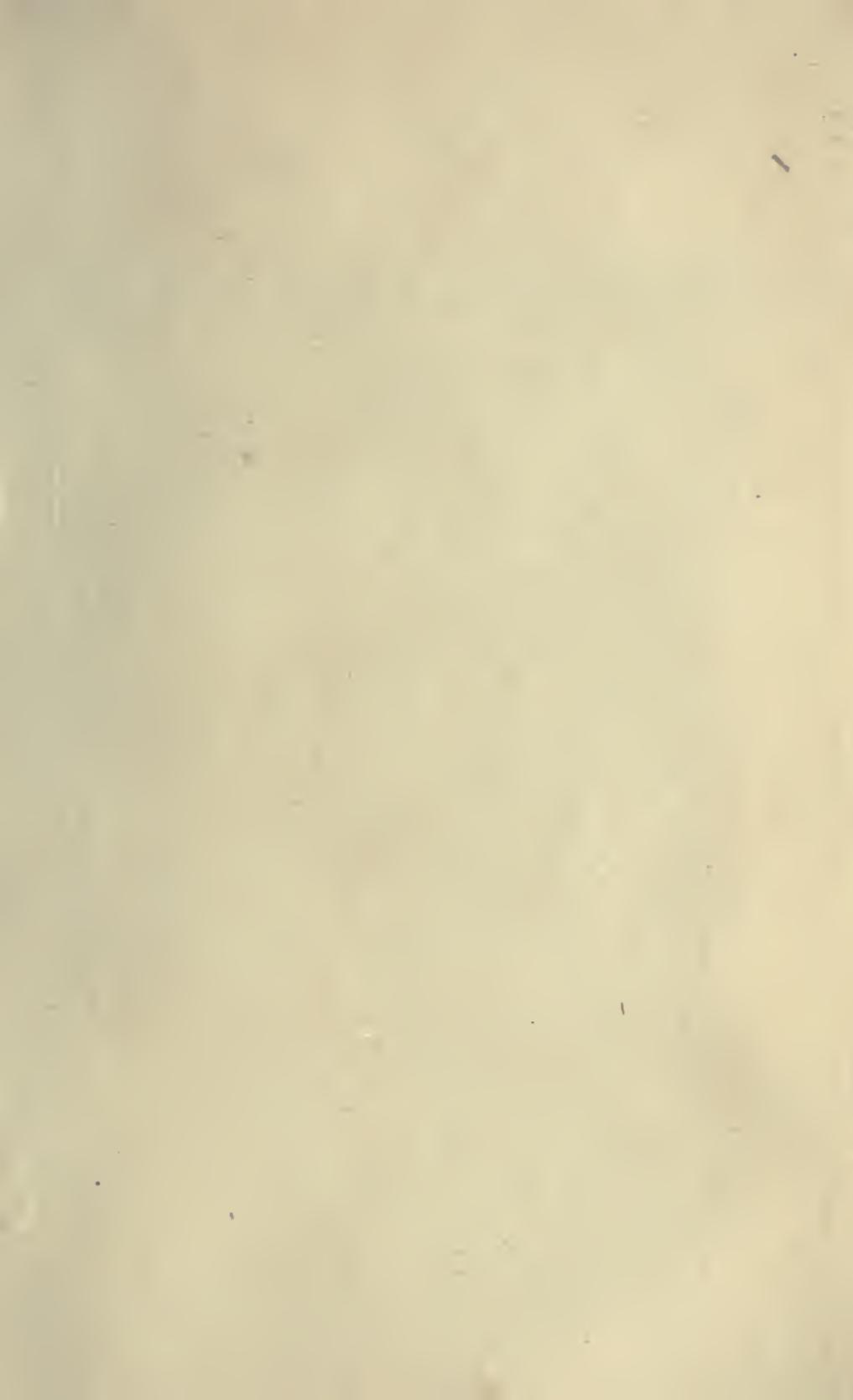
“Amen!” said Shane again, and went into the lamplit house to Maiwa.

Δη η-α Ḳρίστην θαμ̄ .1. Δού Σαντριάς τε Βλάσιον,  
μας Λιανί Σεοιηρε τε Βλάσιον αρ Βατε ον Ιυδαιη  
Cinn Τράξα, Ια Φέιλε Ράντρινις, ι η-αοιρ Κρίστη μήλε  
αρ ηαοι γκευτ ιρ φίσε, αρ ιμειτ θά ήασταρην θαμ̄ αρ  
φελό θειέ μιορα. Όεο γρατιαρ. Αν τ-έ λειγεαρ,  
θέανασ ήε υμναισε αρ θοι. Amen.









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