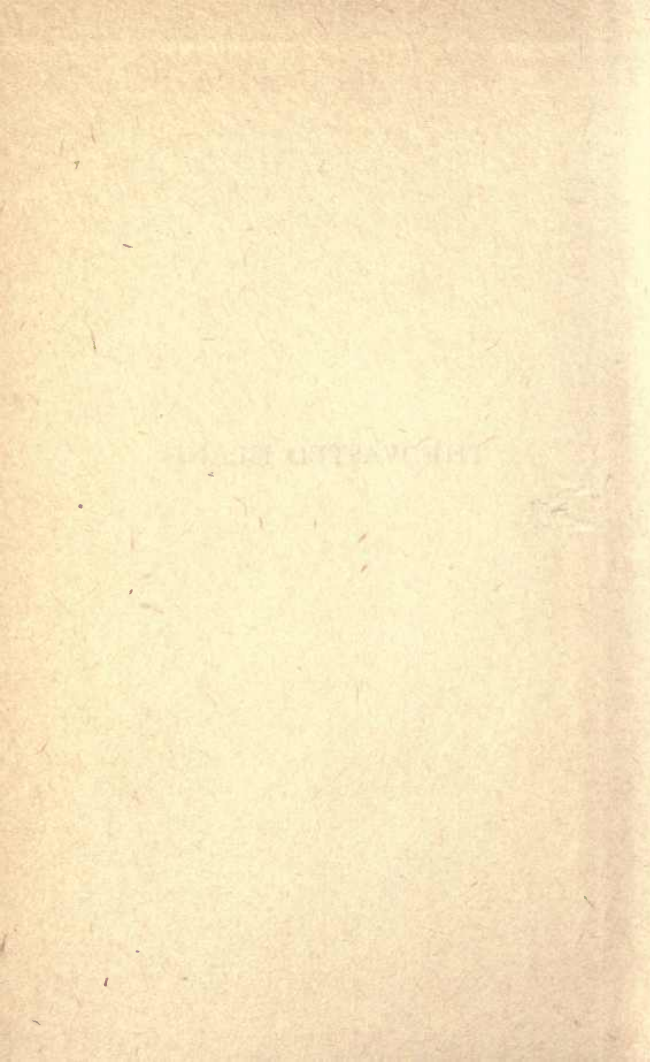


Irene Owen Andrews

October 1922

THE WASTED ISLAND



THE WASTED ISLAND

BY
EIMAR O'DUFFY



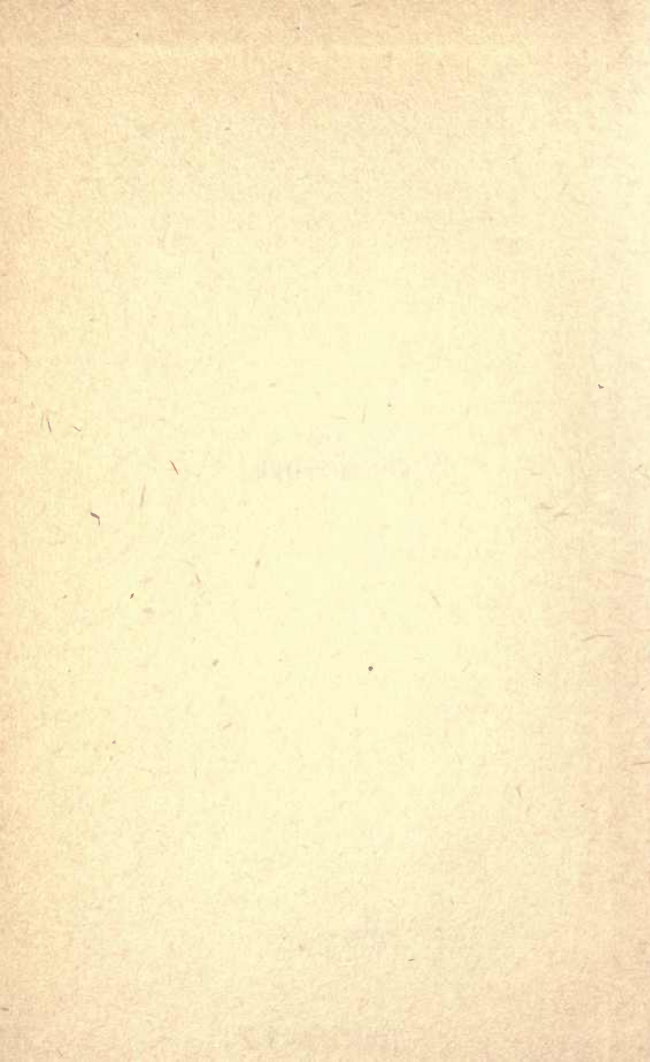
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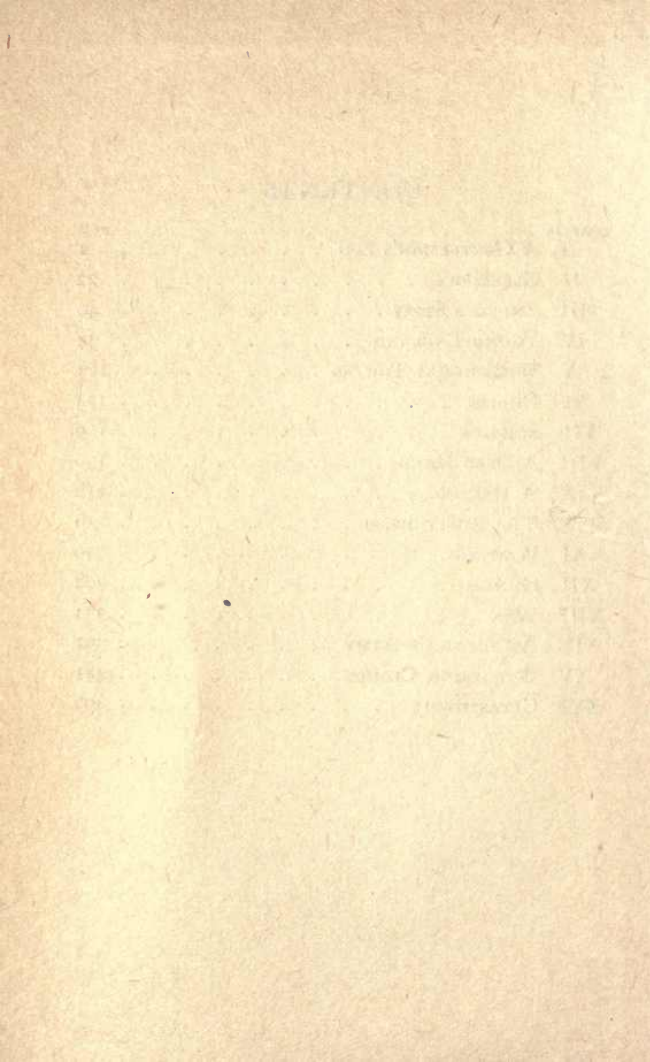
TO
MY MOTHER

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THE WASTED ISLAND

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CHAPTER I

A GENTLEMAN'S SON

I

LOVE'S main function is to make the world go round and he cares nothing for the subsequent fate of the instruments he uses to that end. "From fairest creatures we desire increase" and many a clever young man who has been caught in Nature's lure has spent a life of vain regrets unconsolated by the physical perfection of the offspring for whom he has sacrificed his happiness.

One such was that handsome and plausible young physician Eugene Lascelles who, one night of wonder in a garden by the sea, told pretty, foolish, affectionate Alice Reilly that he loved her, and in due course led her to the altar. So far as their personal happiness was concerned their wedding was a disaster. The honeymoon itself revealed insurmountable barriers between their souls: six months of married life accentuated them. He was too selfish and she was too stupid to make the best of things and in another year all pretence of agreement between them was gone: hatred even was beginning to creep into the soul of the man and despair into that of the woman. It remained to be seen whether Nature would justify her trickery by making the union fertile. Alice longed for a son in the hope of thereby regaining her husband's affections; and to him a son was a necessity to console him for his disappointment in his wife. So in patient longing the third year of their marriage went by; in desperate longing the fourth. And then, in the spring-time of the first year of the closing decade of the century, Bernard was born.

Dr. Lascelles stood by his wife's bedside and looked down on his three day old son.

"He'll be like his father, won't he?" said Alice.

"He's a Lascelles all right," assented her husband . . .

"But he has your eyes," he added, thinking she deserved some commendation.

"Really? Do you think so?" she said happily.

He hated her habit of answering everything with a further question, but on this occasion made no comment. His wife smiled to see him take the tiny fist of his son in his fine, white, capable hands.

"My son," he said.

To himself he was saying:

"Mustn't let *her* have too much to say in his up-bringing. I'll make a man of him . . . make him a success in life . . . *she* shan't teach him any damned nonsense."

He lingered a moment contemplating his son, then kissed his wife and went out.

He went through his work that day in a state of preoccupation, son and wife alternately sharing his thoughts.

"Why did I marry her? Better not ask myself that again. . . . Doesn't bear examination. . . . I once thought her witty. How often has she told me the story of her Aunt Jane and the pot of mustard?

"Mustn't exasperate myself. The Boy is some compensation after all. I'll make a man of him . . . keep him out of *her* clutches . . . her rotten little ideas and superstitions. Good lord!

"I promised her he'd be a Catholic, but she shan't make a Jesuit of him. . . . *My* son a Jesuit! Not likely . . . nor any sort of a priest.

"I'll make him a good staunch Britisher for all that he's a Catholic. . . . Must keep that Fenian brother of Alice's away from the house . . . sarcastic, disloyal young hound!"

His thoughts here became incoherent. Clarifying again they reverted to his son.

"Will Alice try to make him a Nationalist as well as a Catholic? Bah! She's no politician. She hasn't the brains. . . . Wish she had, in a way.

"Why did I marry a woman without any brains? . . . Says she's a heart anyway. So she has. She's so unselfish that she makes my life a burden to me. . . . Damn these religious people."

He meditated bitterly on the folly of his marriage.

"What a hot-headed sentimental young fool I was. She was beautiful and sweet, and I thought her witty. . . . That story of her Aunt Jane . . . good *lord!*

"Well, she might have been worse. . . . She keeps the house well,—and there's the boy. . . . Jove, I don't half realize that I've got a son. . . . Must be nicer to her for his sake. After all, she's his mother . . .

"But how many more times must I listen to the story of her Aunt Jane and the pot of mustard?"

With a deliberate effort he put his wife's shortcomings out of his head and made plans for the boy. Now if Eugene Lascelles was dissatisfied with the course of his life he was eminently satisfied with himself. Indeed his main objection to his wife was her difference from himself, and when he resolved to make a man of his son he meant to make him as like himself as possible.

"I'll make a success of him. He'll be a credit to his father. . . . Public School and Varsity man of course. . . . Shall it be Eton or Harrow? . . . And after that, Oxford probably. . . . Shall I put him in the Army?"

This consideration made him pause. The Army had much to recommend it socially; but then,—a chance bullet in a skirmish on the outposts of the Empire, and twenty years of work and hope thrown away.

"No. We can do better than that. A Public School and Varsity man has the Empire at his feet."

He visioned wonderful things.

"But, damn it, I'd forgotten his religion. He'll have to go to one of those Jesuit holes, I suppose. . . . Good lord!

What would my poor father have said to that? Break with the family tradition, isn't it?

"Still, Ashbury ranks as a Public School . . . and he'll go to Oxford anyway."

He began to feel satisfied that after all the divergence of the boy's career from the family tradition would be but small. The Lascelles, be it noted, were descended from a Huguenot who had settled in Queen's County early in the seventeenth century, and, owing to the laws then in force, acquired at a very low price an estate which had been confiscated from the native owners in the name of civilization and religion. This gentleman had married a lady of his own faith and nationality, and reared his family along with the neighbouring Protestant settlers in such a manner as to preserve them from all contact with and contamination from the surrounding Papist multitude. Fortune, industry, and the turn of history favoured the Lascelles. From being persecuted they became persecutors, and in defence of their rights in this prerogative they fought for William at the Boyne and helped to rivet the chains on their beaten countrymen after Limerick. During the century-long swoon in which Ireland then lay, they gained prosperity in peace, and eventually, finding their prosperity threatened by their erstwhile protector, flew to arms, inscribed "Free Trade or Else ——" on their banners, and along with their kind almost succeeded in disrupting the British Empire. They helped to dragoon the rebels in '98; petitioned violently against the Union in '99; protested as violently against its repeal in 1845; and then, save for passive and financial support of the Unionist Cause, dropped out of public life.

Such was the ancestry of which young Bernard was to be made worthy, a task requiring on the father's part much toil and vigilance. There was much the boy must learn; there was more of which he must be kept ignorant. There were fixed ideas to be implanted in him; and fancies — of course the boy would have fancies — to be eradicated. There were certain courses which his mind must take, and he, the father,

would trace them out and guide him accordingly. Yes. He would make a man of his son.

3

"So this is my nephew!"

Mrs. Lascelles enjoyed complacently her brother's homage to her son. She asked the usual question.

"There's far too much of his Majesty in him," Christopher replied. "I wish he was more like you."

A long rambling talk followed. She was much more at home with her brother than with her husband, and she became quite animated with tales and praises of young Bernard. Christopher listened sympathetically. He was a tall, self-possessed young man, who never seemed completely serious, a perpetual puzzle to his brother-in-law. He closely resembled his sister in features, but the play of thought and intelligence across them caused a world of difference in expression.

"How's his Majesty been behaving himself lately?" he asked. "Oh, you needn't answer. I can read it in your eyes."

"I wish you wouldn't call him that name, Chris."

"It suits him better than his own, anyway. You'd think he was the hero of a novel with that mouthful."

"You'll be his godfather, won't you, Chris?"

"What does he want with a godfather at his age?"

"Chris, you silly! I didn't mean Eugene's. I meant the baby's."

"It's a big responsibility. Don't I have to guarantee that he'll renounce the devil and all that sort of thing?"

"No. If you hold him without dropping him at the christening it's all we'll expect from you."

Dr. Lascelles returning from work seemed little pleased at meeting his brother-in-law.

"Still clinging to effete old Yurrop?" he said, speaking jocularly to conceal his displeasure. "I thought Wall Street would have recalled you to her yearning bosom before this."

Christopher answered seriously. The Doctor's pleasantries never moved him to laughter.

"I meant to go tomorrow," he said, "but now I must wait for the christening. Alice has asked me to be the godfather, you know."

The Doctor said "Oh?" colourlessly, and changed the conversation. A few minutes later the two men left the room together and descended to the hall. Here Lascelles drew Christopher into his consulting room and confronted him nervously.

"Look here," he said, "you're going to be my boy's godfather. I trust you won't abuse that position."

"He shall have a christening mug as good as can be got," replied the other impassively, "and on every birthday an increasingly valuable present."

The Doctor seemed nonplussed.

"Look here," he said irritably, "you don't seem to catch my meaning. . . . I don't want you to make a Nationalist of him."

"You seem to think very highly of my powers as a proselytiser," replied the younger man. "Or is it the cause itself you're flattering?"

"Nothing of the sort," said the Doctor stiffly. "I'm merely informing you of my wishes."

"Well, the boy's young yet, and he may never be any use. They're born, not made, you know. Good-bye, old man. I'm off to see about that mug."

4

Young Bernard broke no traditions in the early years of his growth. He grew normally; he laughed and cried normally; he ate normally; he got sick normally; his teeth erupted normally; his fontanelles closed normally; he walked and talked at a normal age. His mother adored him and his father gave him first place among all his possessions. He had a normal number of brothers and sisters: two of each to particularize.

He passed his childhood in a bright airy nursery surrounded with toys and comforts. Pleasant pictures adorned the walls. There were illustrated nursery rimes; photographs of Queen Victoria and her consort and the Prince of Wales; coloured representations of victorious British soldiers charging Zulus; and a supplement from a Christmas annual depicting a little boy wearing his father's red tunic, labelled "*A Chip of the Old Block.*"

With his brothers and sisters he grew up as a gentleman's child should. He was washed and combed regularly, and neatly and prettily dressed. He was trained to be "good," which meant not being a nuisance to nurse; and to be polite to visitors, which meant answering their inane questions nicely without sheepishness or giggling. He learnt his A. B. C. and how to count and how to recite simple verses about lambs and spiders. He was taken to the seaside in the summer and to the Pantomime at Christmas. In short, he had a very pleasant time, and he was a very nice little boy.

His first great crime against tradition was committed at the age of six, when one terrible day he played with Hektor O'Flaherty. For a full realization of the enormity of this deed the circumstances under which he came to be forbidden to do so must first be told. Hektor O'Flaherty was a domineering youth of eight, the leader of a gang of youngsters whose martial games Bernard had long wished to join. Stephen's Green, the scene of their warlike operations, was also the place to which nurse each morning led the decorous cavalcade of Dr. Lascelles' children, consisting at the time of Alice in the perambulator, Eugene, aged four, holding on to nurse's skirts, and Bernard ranging free in all the independence of trousers and six winters. Here nurse would choose a shady seat, bury her nose in a novelette, and with her toe against the wheel of the perambulator, impart to the sleeping Alice the sensation of reposing on the topmost bough of a wind-shaken tree. Bernard was thus left to his own resources and the insipid company of Eugene. On one of

these mornings Hektor's operations had brought him into the vicinity and Bernard had conquered his shyness sufficiently to go up to the young general and say:

"Can I play with you?"

And while a ruddy glow spread over his countenance, the hero had looked him over slowly and said:

"All right. Fall in."

That evening the Doctor had come up to the nursery to see his children, and Bernard had poured out a rapturous tale of his doings. His father listened impatiently and then asked:

"Who is this Hektor?"

Bernard had no more definite information, but nurse had said he was one of them O'Flaherties of Baggot Street; and the Doctor's brows had contracted, and he had said that Bernard must on no account play with Hektor again.

"Why, daddy?"

"Because he's not a nice boy."

"Sure he's awfully nice."

"Don't say 'sure.' You're not to play with him because I tell you so, and that's all about it."

Then, with a parting injunction to nurse to see that his wishes were carried out, he kissed his son hurriedly and left the room.

For a few days Bernard had obeyed his parent's behest, but this was mainly due to his nurse's vigilance. In those youthful days he did not appreciate the difference between Stephen's Green and Upper Baggot Street, and his whole soul revolted against the tyranny which robbed him of the only thing in life which at the moment seemed worth having. At last, realizing one day that Eugene and the perambulator would be a severe encumbrance to nurse's pursuit, he seized a favourable moment to slip from her side, and dodging through a shrubbery, rushed off to find the gang.

Hektor received him coldly, asking why he had stayed away so long. Bernard explained that his nurse had kept him.

"Well, if you're afraid of your nurse you needn't come here," said Hektor, whereat the Army laughed loudly.

"Silence!" bellowed the general. "Remember you're on parade."

The warriors smothered their laughter and wiped out their smiles, while Bernard explained that he had just run away from nurse in defiance of all orders. He could see that he rose considerably in Hektor's estimation at this and finally the latter bade him fall in with the rest.

"Number!" said Hektor.

The Army proceeded to do so. Number one was a rather coarse boy called Har'ld, who lived in Cuffe Street. He was the second in command, and would have been a bully if Hektor had not kept him well in hand. Number two was Hektor's younger brother Michael. He ought really to have been in Har'ld's place, but Hektor, rather than suspect himself of nepotism, relegated him to the ranks. Number three was another Baggot Street boy called Hugh. Number four was Har'ld's brother Willy, a dirty little youngster with a perpetually dripping nose. The rest of the Army, acting as the enemy for the time being, was waiting in an adjacent shelter intending to hold it to the death against Hektor's attack, which was to be delivered as soon as the departure of a keeper in the vicinity rendered it possible. Meanwhile Hektor divided his forces into three parties. Hugh and Willy were to attack the right flank; Har'ld and Bernard were to deliver a frontal attack; while Hektor and Michael were in reserve, ready to fling themselves into action when needed to push home a victory or stave off defeat.

The uniformed figure of law and order having taken its departure, the battle began. Bernard, rushing blindly into action, was at grips with a wiry little newsboy, when he felt himself drawn out of the fight from the rear. Nurse had come up, taken him by the slack of the pants, and hauled him ingloriously home.

Words cannot describe the pain and anger of Dr. Lascelles on learning of the plebeian tastes of his son. "Your con-

duct," he explained, "has been unworthy of a gentleman's son," and hastened to apply with a strap the recognized cure for such behaviour.

After this incident the children were taken to the Leinster Lawn for their recreation, so the young mutineer saw nothing of his hero for some months. Then nurse was taken ill and had to return to her home in the country, and her place was taken by a much less conscientious person who openly ignored the Doctor's instructions and brought the children once again to Stephen's Green, where henceforward Bernard played to his heart's content with Hektor and his followers; a happy state of things which lasted until the flowing tide of social and pecuniary prosperity carried his father to Merrion Square, where the children were more desirable if less original.

5

A tendency to play the politician which early manifested itself in Bernard, was a symptom of abnormality that would have alarmed his father had he not been too busy diagnosing other people's complaints to notice it.

After an abortive attempt to organize the inhabitants of the nursery into a monarchical state (abortive because it required too continuous a use of make-believe, which Bernard always detested) he applied his statecraft to the construction of toy commonwealths. The nursery was well stocked with toys of the usual kind: dolls, tea-sets, soldiers, animals, railways, bricks, and odds and ends. Each child had its share of these, and Bernard with a piece of chalk divided the nursery table into three territories for their occupation. This done he tried to institute wars between the different states, but Alice was too young and Eugene too unenterprising to make the game a success, and eventually it was abandoned for another scheme by which all toys and owners were united under his own energetic rule into one vast city state.

First the railway line was laid, and each child received

ground on which to build a station. Then battered bricks eked out with cardboard boxes formed the framework of a wonderful metropolis. Stables, cottages, shops and temples lined its thoroughfares, which were paraded by soldiers, cows, lions and chessmen. The railway ran under tunnels made out of drapers' boxes, on the roof of one of which a shepherd tended his sheep, while on another Noah and his family, a brass band, and a cat with her kittens formed harmonious groups. Proportion was flouted. A fox terrier filled a whole carriage of the train, while a family of china elephants reposed comfortably in the tender. And as for the train it visited strange places in its journey, travelling frequently from Dublin, via New York or Timbuctoo, to Howth.

The principal occupations of the citizens were travelling, wolf hunting, and courts martial. One day the train would buzz round and round transferring the population of New York to Howth; the next all commercial activity would come to a standstill while the wolves from the neighbouring woods were repulsed in a marauding raid on the suburbs with horse, foot and artillery. A third day would see a reign of terror in full swing, Noah, chessmen and visitors from Japan being tried in batches and blown from the cannon's mouth. (All offences were thus treated, from treason to overcrowding on the railway.)

There were wars too, based on no quarrel and fought with no strategy, in which the soldiery on each side stood up to each other like Frederick's Prussians while marbles mowed them down, the prize of victory being a triumphal march through the streets of the capital.

Time and again the whole mighty Babylon was swept away by the barbarian hand of nurse, only to rise again on its ruins as glorious as ever. Thus hour after hour through the seemingly endless days of childhood they played, each suiting the game to his own tastes. For Alice liked best to gather her citizens round a table and entertain them to a banquet, and Eugene loved to parade his soldiers and arrange

aesthetic groups on the station platform and then sit and gaze at them, while Bernard was for ever and ever dissatisfied, and built and destroyed, and reconstructed, and destroyed again, and in the intervals dreamed great projects which he never found himself able to accomplish.

Dissatisfaction often caused him to give up play altogether, much to the disappointment of the others, whose amusements became chaotic without him, and plunge into the world of books. There were beautiful illustrated editions of *Cinderella* and *Bluebeard* in the nursery, but his favourites were a big *History of England, British Battles*, and a bound volume of the *Navy and Army Illustrated*. From these he drew much of the inspiration of his games, and back to them he went after his recurring failures. There was also a big *Shakespeare*, plenteously illustrated, which he found very hard to understand, though he managed to appreciate the story of many of the pictures by referring to the text beside. Passages and characters here and there had a strange fascination for him. MacDuff was his favourite character, and next to him came Sampson and Gregory. Indeed their scene was the only part of *Romeo and Juliet* that held any interest for him. He loved the line "No sir. I do not bite my thumb at you, sir. But I bite my thumb, sir," and (but this was a little later) the sonorous ring of some of the speeches in the tragedies pleased him long before they conveyed any meaning.

In those days the artist in him was concerned mainly with form. The solid shapes of things gave him pleasure. He liked the firm stand of a toy regiment of Life Guards, and the small broad wheels of railway trucks, and the straight symmetry of the tracks; and he would stand for hours watching a steam-roller at work. The smell of furniture vans and of certain stone bricks that formed a temple in Babylon were his only exotics.

Mr. Christopher Reilly kept his promise to Doctor Lascelles. The christening mug was orthodox and very expen-

sive, and each of Bernard's birthdays brought a present over from America. First it was a rattle, a wonderful silver rattle, with melodious little bells attached. Next year came a cow, a most life-like animal, with horns of cow-horn, and a realistic "moo." The third year brought a huge wooden railway train with doors and windows that opened and shut. After that came soldiers and cannons, and clockwork trains, and a magic lantern which he was not allowed to use, for fear of accidents, and which eventually rusted away from neglect. For his eighth birthday . . . but let us turn to his mother's letter of thanks.

My Dear Chris,

I'm so glad to hear that you are quite well and getting on so splendidly. Why don't you hurry up and get married? Are the American girls not so charming as we are told?

Why on earth did you send Bernard that Child's History of Ireland? You might have known what would happen. Eugene was perfectly furious, he flung it straight into the fire and Bernard was crying for hours after. The whole birthday was spoilt. Now please don't think that I mind myself, because I don't. I should like Bernard to be a patriotic Irishman but his father simply won't have it and it's impossible as you know for me to have any say. Besides I'm not going to have politics spoiling the happiness of my home.

I haven't much news. Old Dr. Wilton is dead. The children had chicken pox but are well over it. Eugene gave me a Christmas present of a new drawing-room suite, but like most of his presents it's for himself as much as for me, and it's not as if I hadn't hinted enough for a necklace.

When are you coming over to Dublin again? I'm longing to see you, and you'll be delighted with your godson, he's such a pretty child.

Try and come soon.

With much love from

Your loving sister,

ALICE.

Her brother's reply was brief.

I shall be in Dublin on business, he wrote, next month, and I'll take a short holiday there as well. I am sending Bernard another present to replace that which his father did in beastly rage destroy.

I see old England's on the warpath again for Justice and Mammon, so I suppose His Majesty is in fine imperial fettle. Don't heed him. The Boers are a small people standing up for their rights against a bully, and that's all there's to it.

Thine,

CHRIS.

Mrs. Lascelles ran upstairs to the nursery with this letter and its accompanying parcel. The children deserted Babylon and rushed to her arms in a body.

"A present from Uncle Christopher," she said, giving the parcel to Bernard. "He's coming to see us soon. Won't that be nice?"

"Oh, mummy, what's he like?"

"Like his photograph, of course."

"Yes, but I mean how big is he, and how does he talk."

"Such a boy! He's tall, and you'll hear him talk when he comes."

"Mummy, come and see my new invention."

"I haven't time, darling. Some other day."

Bernard looked dismayed.

"Just for a minute, mummy," he pleaded.

He drew her over to the city and tried rapidly to impress her with some wonderful piece of railway engineering. She listened absently with an occasional insincere "Yes," or "Really," her glazed eyes showing that her thoughts were elsewhere — in Chatham Street with the butcher and grocer most likely. Bernard, disappointed, let her go without completing his lecture.

"Mummy never seems to listen to us," he complained when she had gone.

"Why don't you open your parcel?" asked Eugene, impatiently.

7

"I see that we are about to fight the Boers," said Dr. Lascelles one day, unfolding a large map of South Africa at the dinner table.

"How terrible!" said his wife.

"Serve them right," answered the Doctor. "They've been asking for trouble this long time, and by God they'll have it."

Mrs. Lascelles remembered her brother's letter.

"It's a shame for a big country to be attacking a little one," she said.

"Do you think England's going to let herself be bullied by a pack of Dutch farmers?"

"I don't think anything. I only know the Boers are standing up for their rights."

"Rights!" scoffed the Doctor. "Precious lot *you* know about rights. These Boers are a truculent narrow-minded lot of money-grubbing psalm-singing bigots."

Mrs. Lascelles would sacrifice anything for peace.

"Perhaps you're right, dear," she admitted.

"There's no 'perhaps' about it," rejoined her husband irritably. "Of *course* I'm right." Doctor Lascelles had nothing but scorn for his wife's belief in the infallibility of the Pope, but he had not the slightest doubt of his own.

"Very well, dear," said his pusillanimous wife with a sigh, mentally comparing her husband's hectoring behaviour with Chris's considerate statement of a case. The Doctor went on studying his map.

War means the slaughter of myriads of men, the destruction of homes, the impoverishment of masses; in its train come crime, misery and disease; it is the root of hatred and revenge, it is the plague and despair of the world. What manner of man then is this who can look forward with complacency — nay, with eagerness — to the loosing of all these

horrors with his connivance and at his expense upon a distant people,—a small people of whose existence he but recently became aware and whose destruction can in no wise improve his happiness? Let his friends speak for him: they would praise him highly; call him generous, kind-hearted, hospitable; a good husband and father; a man of culture and taste; an excellent companion and a sayer of good things; a judge of wine and cigars too; a gentleman. They are not far wrong either. He is beyond doubt a hard-working capable physician, popular wherever he goes, and a social success. He has indeed all the attractive virtues; and if he is selfish, overbearing and tyrannical it is known only to his family; if he is a snob it is noticeable only to his social inferiors; and if he is narrow-minded and hypocritical it is known only to God.

8

Bernard impatiently waited for his nurse to finish brushing his hair. It was an annoying process at the best of times, for at the end of every stroke of the brush she brought the bristles down on to his ears or some other sensitive part; but now it was intolerable, for Uncle Christopher had come from America and was waiting below in the drawing-room to see him. The operation being at last concluded to nurse's satisfaction he rushed downstairs to the drawing-room, but shyness overcoming him at the door, he entered with commendable decorum.

A tall gentleman was talking to Mrs. Lascelles beside the fireplace. He looked over at Bernard's entrance and said: "Hello! Is this Bernard?"

"This is your godson," said Mrs. Lascelles, beaming on them both. Bernard came nearer.

"Do you remember me at all?" said Uncle Christopher, to which Bernard solemnly answered "No."

"That's strange," said Uncle Christopher, "because it's barely eight years since we parted."

"How absurd you are, Chris," giggled Mrs. Lascelles,

and Bernard, forgetting his shyness, laughed outright.

"I was only a baby then," he said.

"May I take Bernard out to tea?" inquired Uncle Christopher, and, on his sister's assenting, "Will you come along to Mitchells with me?" he asked Bernard.

Bernard had no objection to offer and inside a quarter of an hour they were seated at a table laden with good things.

"Have an éclair?" said Uncle Christopher, holding a plate towards his nephew. Bernard, remembering previous teas when his father had been the host, asked:

"Aren't they unwholesome?"

"Very," said his uncle with his eyes twinkling. "Take two."

For a time there was silence while Bernard made devastating raids on the gorgeous contents of several plates. Afterwards by sympathetic questioning the man set the child sufficiently at his ease to let him talk spontaneously, and Christopher was delighted with the intelligence of his nephew and the clear voice and accent in which he spoke. Enthusiastically Bernard told him of his wars and cities, and Christopher casting aside all the difference of age between them joined with him in an eager conversation. The dreams and limitations of his own childhood came back to his memory, and he became a child again comparing notes with another child. Bernard on his side was gloriously astonished to find in his uncle a kindred spirit. Nobody had ever listened to him in this way before. When he tried to interest his father in something that was all the world to him it was "Yes, yes" impatiently, and "I must be off, laddie. I'm busy." How he hated that word "busy," the spoiler of a thousand joys. Why were grown ups always busy? Why wasn't his uncle busy?

"What does being busy mean?" he asked suddenly.

"It means having something unpleasant to do. And that reminds me, I'm busy this evening, so I'll leave you home at once."

"But you'll come and see my toys tomorrow, won't you?"

Bernard inquired anxiously. His uncle promised to do so, and the pair parted company at Dr. Lascelles' hall door, each mightily pleased with the other.

Home again, Bernard felt a kind of chill come over him. This was the land of absent-minded "Yes, yes," and "I'm busy, laddie." His thoughts went back down the street after his uncle, and he resolved to confide in him many dreams and fancies such as he had never wanted to divulge before. Slowly he ascended to the nursery, and blinking after the darkness of the stairway entered the gas-lit room. Its familiarity struck oppressively to his heart. Eugene and Alice — dull homely figures in their overalls — called him joyfully in their everyday voices to come and join in their game, but he shook his head and retired moodily to a chair apart.

"Sometimes," Eugene remarked to Alice, "Barnie goes on like a grown up."

Bye and bye Bernard fetched the *Army and Navy Illustrated* from a shelf and immersed himself in it. Eugene and Alice weary of play began to make remarks.

"Granny!" said Eugene, and Alice tittered. Bernard pretended not to hear.

"Granny!" repeated Eugene, giving the book a shove by way of emphasis.

"Shut up!" snapped Bernard.

"Temper cat," said little Alice.

Something snapped inside Bernard's head. He was seized with a violent desire to wring Alice's neck, but knew better than to touch her, for punishment of the direst kind always visited any assault on his sister. "The boy who would strike a girl is a coward," was his father's dogma, the natural result being that since Alice was an irritating little tyrant both boys heartily detested her. So it was on Eugene's head that the blow fell. The corner of the chronicle of Britain's glories drew blood from his pudgy nose and he fled to nurse howling. Instantly the culprit was arrested and brought to justice before the bar of the dinner table.

Sullenly determined that his brother, chief witness standing by in all the glory of injured innocence, should not have the pleasure of seeing him punished, he began by stubbornly denying his crime: a disastrous course. Such an attitude could not long be maintained in the face of systematic brow-beating and eventually he was forced to admit the truth.

"To think that my son could be a liar!" said Dr. Lascelles solemnly. "A liar!" he repeated. "Don't you know that the most despicable of all faults is dishonesty, and honesty the first of all virtues. Think how splendid it would be to look back on a long life and say 'I never told a lie.' You can never say that now."

Bernard hung his head and traced the outlines of the pattern of the carpet with his toe.

"And to think that you should deliberately strike your little brother so as to make him bleed. Your behaviour today has been that of a liar, a bully and a coward. Go away. I'm ashamed of you."

But in spite of his crimes his mother came up to his bedside and put her arms round him and kissed him.

So ended an eventful day, eventful enough even as here related with perhaps the most important event left out. For as his father delivered his homologue upon truth Bernard had looked once into his eyes, and in that look doubt for the first time entered his soul. The age of acceptance was over.

9

Uncle Christopher came several times to the nursery during the remainder of his stay in Dublin. Mrs. Lascelles smiled indulgently on him, calling him "a great child," and pitying this weakness in an otherwise sensible nature. Bernard liked to see him standing watching their play (he was one of those men who never sit down), his hands in his trousers' pockets, an amber-stemmed pipe between his fine white teeth, making now and then in his pleasant voice some illuminating suggestion on engineering or politics. Alice

too confided to Bernard that she loved Uncle Chris "because he had such twinkly eyes."

Babylon improved marvellously between his suggestions and his gifts. The children, it should be mentioned, were well brought up, having a code one of whose clauses forbade asking for presents. Toys, of course, always came to them in a flood at Christmas time or on their birthdays, but they were always of father's or mother's choice, and consequently not always satisfying. Uncle Chris appreciated their needs better and commenced by remedying the shortage of building materials. Babylon immediately solved her housing problem and shook off a great slumland of cardboard.

"What do you think you need most now?" he asked another day.

"It's a pity we haven't more *straight* tracks," said Bernard. "It's not very real to have the train always on a curve. Oh, I'm not hinting, you know," he added with a sudden blush as he remembered the code.

"I'd noticed that myself, old man," and Christopher produced a parcel.

One day he arrived to find a battle in progress between the armies of Eugene and Bernard.

"Go it, Ireland!" said Bernard triumphantly as a cannon ball ploughed a lane through Eugene's cavalry.

"Why do you call yourselves Irish and English?" asked Christopher, surprised to hear the elements of treason coming from his father's son.

"I know it's funny," replied Bernard, "because they're both the same, aren't they? But, you see, when we used to be French and English neither of us wanted to be the enemy. So now Eugene is the English because they have the biggest city in the world, but I'd rather be Ireland because we live there you know."

"An excellent reason too," said Uncle Christopher.

"Do you notice," said Bernard afterwards to Eugene, "Uncle Christ sometimes says things in a queer way as if he meant something else?"

"You're always thinking queer things," was all Eugene's reply.

Soon after that Uncle Christopher went away, and he left behind him as a last present for Bernard a book in a grey blue cover called *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*. "Kewkelayn of Murthem," Bernard pronounced it, and he read it fascinated, and as soon as he had finished it re-read it, and re-read it again, till he came to know it almost by heart. The great stand up fights between champions and the clash of armies in battle delighted him immensely, but the wonderful descriptions of costumes appealed to him almost more keenly. He used to try and imagine himself clad in a shining white shirt striped with purple down the sides, a gold shield on his back with a border of silver and edge of white bronze as sharp as a knife, a great spear in his hand, and a mighty two edged sword with silver hilt at his jewelled belt.

But most of all, as in after days he loved the catalogue of the ships in Homer, he loved the catalogue of the troops on the eve of a battle. And one passage always thrilled him tremendously when he read it. This was where MacRoth describing to Fergus the arrival of the Ulstermen on the field of Ilgaireth, tells at last of a downhearted troop of leaderless men, to which Fergus replies: "I know them well, and it is well for those on whose side they are, and it is a pity for those they are against, for they are Cuchulain's men from Muirthemne."

Up till then his favourite heroes had been Sir Walter Raleigh, Nelson, Wellington and Lord Roberts, but now Cuchulain and Conal and Fergus and the rest displaced them entirely. They were more heroic, more lovable, and infinitely more real. He longed now to talk to Uncle Chris about his treasure and to ask his explanation of the strange discrepancy with accepted history which it involved. But Uncle Christopher was gone away.

CHAPTER II

GLENCOOLE

I

A SOLITARY cyclist was wheeling his machine up a narrow and uneven road winding through the Dublin mountains. It was a hot summer day and the cyclist's clothes were covered with dust and his brow with sweat. For a mile he plodded on in grim determination, till at length he reached the highest point of the track — it was little more — and looked down into the valley beyond. It was a beautiful scene that met his gaze; a verdant glen well wooded with beech and pine and mountain ash, and watered by a little stream that splashed and sparkled down the centre. A wisp of lazy smoke and a splash of white proclaimed the presence of an occasional cottage, and far below the road could be seen to cross the tiny rivulet by a totally disproportionate bridge. The cyclist stood admiring the view for some minutes, then sat down by the roadside and lit a cigarette. When it was finished, he mounted his bicycle and free-wheeled down the slope into the glen. Reaching the bottom he again dismounted to climb the further slope, and just before reaching the gap that led out of the glen stopped at the garden gate of a two storied cottage. This he opened, and advancing up a short walk, rapped with his fingers on the sun-blistered green-painted door. He heard a heavy step on the flags within and the door was opened by a majestic looking man, well-dressed, with longish but well-groomed white hair, and neatly trimmed beard. He stood for a moment in the doorway, looking inquiringly at the cyclist.

"Don't you recognize me, Ward?" said the latter.

"Well, if it's not Chris Reilly!" cried the white haired man in a hearty voice. The voice was strangely inconsistent with the hair, which, one suspected, was prematurely white.

Christopher looking at him could see that this was a young man made old; that it was suffering that had furrowed his brow and sorrow that had sunk his eyes so deep in their sockets.

"I'm glad you haven't forgotten me," he said. "It must be twenty years since I saw you last."

"You were only a lad then," replied the other, "but those twenty years haven't changed you as much as they've changed me. . . . Come inside. You can leave your bicycle against the wall there."

Christopher followed him into a small red-flagged hall from which a flight of plain deal stairs led to the upper storey. Ward put his head through a doorway on the left and told some one to prepare tea, and then motioned his guest to enter the room opposite. Christopher did so, and almost gave vent to an exclamation of surprise so different was the furnishing of the room from what the exterior of the cottage would lead one to expect. As for the room itself it was similar to all of its kind: with two small windows looking out into the shrubbery in front of the house, and a big open hearth, filled now with golden-flowered furze branches. But the furniture was of mahogany; there were two comfortable arm-chairs; and a cottage-piano stood in a corner. Moreover the walls on three sides of the room were lined with book-cases, and even a hurried glance would show that their contents were the collection of a true book-lover. There were no pictures in the room save for a coloured reproduction of the Sistine Madonna over the mantelpiece and a few photographs here and there.

"Yes. Twenty years. Twenty mortal years," said Ward pensively as they sat down. He remained silent a few moments meditating.

Christopher, watching him, allowed his mind to travel back to the last occasion on which he had seen him. Be-

fore his mind's eye passed a vision of an attic in London, in which five men, including himself, a boy of seventeen, and Ward, a young man of twenty-three, were preparing to sit down to a meal. In imagination he felt again the tense anticipatory excitement of the moment, for these men were going from that meal to certain death. All of those present seemed to be in a greater or less degree affected by the imminence of the crisis except the leader, a quiet determined-looking man with iron-grey hair and beard, who appeared to have no care in the world except the proper preparation of the supper. As the party was about to sit down this man suddenly exclaimed: "By Jove, we haven't enough butter. That won't do at all. A death-feast without butter would be unthinkable. . . . Chris, like a good fellow run down the street for some butter." And he saw himself leave the room.

He was roused from his reverie by the voice of his host.

"You went out to fetch something, didn't you?" queried Ward.

"Butter," said Christopher with a smile, and added, "I had some trouble in getting it, and when I got back I found the police-van and a great crowd at the door, and over their heads I saw the helmets of the policemen who were arresting you."

"You had a lucky escape. What did you do afterwards?"

"I lay in hiding in east-end attics for the best part of a year, and then got away to America. I've lived there ever since."

"And what brings you over here now?"

Christopher looked round the room hastily as if to assure himself that nobody could overhear him, and sinking his voice replied:

"You know that the English are going to fight the Boers?"

Ward nodded.

"Well," Christopher went on, "there are a few people

who'd like to give a helping hand where it's needed."

Ward suddenly became convulsed with energy.

"For God's sake, Reilly," he exclaimed, "think what you're about. You're going to waste yourself . . . waste yourself."

Christopher was amazed at this outburst, and was about to speak when he heard a tap at the door.

"Come in," said Ward, and a girl entered with a tea-tray, which she deposited upon the table. As Ward went to pour out the tea a dark shy boy of about ten years of age came into the room.

"Well, laddie, where have you been?" asked Ward.

"Over in Glendhu, father," said the boy.

"This is my son, Stephen, Chris," said Ward.

Christopher held out his hand which Stephen touched hurriedly, immediately afterwards retiring to a distant chair.

"How did you find me out?" asked Ward in the course of the meal.

"I met Magrath in Brunswick Street the other day, and he told me."

"Is he with you in that business?"

"Not he. He was always a quitter."

They talked on indifferent subjects for a while. All the time Stephen sat silent, and Christopher's attempts to draw him into conversation extracted only monosyllables or a somewhat sheepish smile. Christopher was beginning to think the boy stupid and to compare him unfavourably with his bright little nephew in Dublin, when in the middle of something he was saying he happened to glance in Stephen's direction and saw that the boy's eyes were fixed intently upon himself as if he were analysing what he was saying. Stephen at once looked away, but as long as he remained in the room Christopher felt uncomfortably conscious of being under constant inspection.

Tea over the men produced their pipes and adjourned to a seat in the garden where they basked in the mellow warmth of the afternoon sun. Stephen whistled up a dog

and went off with him for a walk. After a short silence Christopher spoke.

"I was very surprised by what you said before tea. I thought you were unchangeable."

"So did I — once," said Ward grimly.

"But how much have you changed?" asked the younger man anxiously.

"Just to this extent: that I see no good in letting a man waste his life pursuing the unattainable or serving those who don't want to be served."

"I'd like to know," said Christopher thoughtfully, "what brought a man like you to that frame of mind?"

"It's a long story," said Ward. "Have you patience to listen to all that has happened to me since — since you went out for the butter?"

"That's what I came for," said Christopher.

2

"You know, of course," said Ward, "that Doyle turned Queen's evidence. As a matter of fact he had betrayed us from the beginning. If ever a man looked honest and trustworthy that man was Doyle. I would have trusted him more completely than myself; and I was to have married his sister. She trusted him too, the dear girl. The best and bravest girl ever born in Ireland, Chris. Well as she knew that her brother and her sweetheart were going to certain death she made no complaint and never tried to stop us. Well, Doyle proved false, and when a man like him is found wanting, Chris, it shakes your faith in mankind and makes you ask whom can one be sure of? But Doyle wasn't our only disappointment. You'd think that the imagination even of a race of slaves would be fired by what we proposed to do. England's ministers, the authors of all Ireland's miseries, slain in their own stronghold, and the heart of the Empire held against her by a handful of determined Irishmen. What oppressed people would fail to take new cour-

age and new inspiration from such an exploit? Ireland failed. The weaklings joined with their masters in thanksgiving for the unmasking of the conspiracy; the strong man and his parliamentary following politely deprecated our folly; and the best that any one said for us was that we were honest but misguided. . . . Misguided! We were called misguided by men who mouthed the name of Robert Emmet on the election platforms for a foreign Parliament.

"Meanwhile we languished in gaol. You've heard that Rafter went mad. Superior people remarked that it was no wonder as revolutionaries were half mad already. You know what nonsense that is. You know what a solid man Rafter was: not much of the high-strung fanatic about him. Yet their treatment drove him mad. The wonder is that any of us remained sane.

"No better leader ever fought for Ireland than James Milligan. They gave him a life sentence, but in twelve years they had killed him. He lies in a nameless grave in Portland Prison and Ireland has forgotten him. . . . As for me, I was young and they let me off with seven years. Seven years of hell they were. They didn't think it enough to take my freedom from me and rob me of the sight of the sky and the trees and the grass, but they made the ten square feet of ground they gave me as uncomfortable as the inventions of petty spiteful minds could make it. I had only one window and it was so small and so far from the floor that the sun never reached me. Just one little bar of sunlight used to shine high up on the opposite wall for half an hour of the day. I used to wait for it and watch it all the time it was there, and if that hour was cloudy then my whole day was black. . . . I had only a stool to sit on and it was clamped in the centre of the cell, so that if I wanted to rest my back I had to sit on the floor leaning against the wall. And my little table was also clamped down at such a distance from the stool that I had no comfort in eating my food.

"They talk of the rack and the scavenger's daughter of Elizabethan days. Well, modern England is civilized and her tortures are more refined.

"They wouldn't even let me sleep. On the pretext of making sure that I hadn't escaped (as if I could escape through a window ten feet up and fifteen inches square with two thick bars to it, and the door locked and bolted) they flashed a light through the spy hole every hour. They flashed it on my face deliberately to wake me, and soon I came by force of habit to wake beforehand in expectation of it.

"Do you wonder Patsy Rafter went mad?

"They took seven years out of my life that way. Took my youth clean away from me so that it was worse than if it had never been. I went into that cell a young man of twenty-three and I left it at thirty, tottering and half crazed.

"How I love the sunshine! It's the greatest gift of God to man, and well do they know it who send their fellow creatures to gaol. When I got my release I wanted to leave cities behind and begin a new life out in the open where the sun could shine on me and the breezes blow through and through me and bring me new strength.

"And I wanted sympathy. When for seven years you've heard nothing but sharp commands shouted at you, you want kindness, you want to be praised and made much of. And then it was for Ireland I had suffered, and I had lived for the day when Ireland should tell me I had deserved well of her. But Ireland had forgotten me. The old spirit had passed away and save for a few faithful souls men looked upon me as an ordinary criminal.

"But Mary remembered. She had waited for me all those years, and at the end of them, knowing what I would like, she got me this cottage and filled it with my books and brought me here from the gaol gate.

"And now I could have been happy but for the spiteful minds of men. Minds that are too small to take in any-

thing else, take in suspicion with a wonderful facility. When I married the sister of Doyle the traitor, men looked at one another knowingly. Insinuating talk was in the air. Some people suggested that my short sentence was a sign that I had given information; others that my imprisonment was not genuine.

"Strange that the one name remembered out of all who took part in our enterprise should be the traitor's.

"But the suspicions of men mattered little to me. Why should I mind the glances of village gossips when the sun shone upon me? No. I care nothing for what men think; but serve them again? Never.

"And then, as if I had not suffered enough, my Mary was taken from me when Stephen was born. No man could have had a better wife, and no cross word ever passed between us. She was too good for this world altogether but there was no one to follow her coffin but myself."

Michael Ward paused, gazing vacantly in front of him. The accumulated misery of twenty years was working upon his soul. As for Christopher, he remained silent. There was no comment to make upon this record of a broken life.

After a time Ward by an almost visible effort of the will, cast his brooding memories aside and turned to his companion.

"Can't you understand me now?" he said. "Can you free a slave who uses his very chains as a weapon against his liberator?"

Christopher hesitated before replying, and when he spoke his words came haltingly. It was as if he weighed each before he let it fall.

"After such a story as yours," he said, "one like me, who has suffered nothing, must feel that any opinion he offers must to a certain extent contain some element of — impertinence. But what I think is this. Your sufferings might be ten times worse than you have said, and men ten times more unjust, ungrateful and small-minded than you have found them to be, and yet there still remains — Ireland."

He reddened slightly as he said this, for he was not given to voicing primal things. The words seemed to touch some responsive chord in the older man's soul, for he looked up suddenly with a strange light in his eye. But this was only momentary. His head drooped again and he said:

"You're young and vigorous. I'm old and broken: old and broken at forty-three." Then, almost beseechingly, "Leave me to my trees and sunshine. I'm tired."

Christopher was reminded of Mangan's lines:

And lives he still then? Yes, old and hoary,
At thirty-nine from despair and woe.

and felt that this wreck of a man, clinging so desperately to what was left of the youth within him was too pathetic a creature to argue with.

Suddenly Ward sprang to his feet.

"But this is a melancholy reception to give you," he said, "after twenty years' separation. Let's take a stroll down the glen."

Christopher looked at his watch and said:

"I'm afraid it's nearly time for me to be off. I've a long ride before me."

"Nonsense. You'll stay the night surely?"

After some persuasion Christopher agreed, and they set out for the gap at the far end of the glen. Here they left the road and ascended the tree-clad hillside, treading a carpet of pine-needles.

"One of our few surviving woods," said Ward. "Ireland is being steadily stripped of her trees by the short sighted greed of her land owners. I come here every day to enjoy the sight of them so long as they are left to me. Already a little wood beyond the hill there has been cut down and I can't bear to look at the spot."

There was sorrow and anger in his voice. They had paused in their climb to take breath.

"All over the country this wholesale destruction of irreplaceable beauty goes on," continued Ward. "And be-

cause some damned young fool of a land owner is drinking and whoring in London these trees here that I've known and loved for years will soon be taken to pay for his pleasures. . . . Well, let us enjoy them while they last. Aren't they magnificent?"

"In America," said Christopher, "they call them sunshine-stoppers and regard them merely as potential telegraph poles."

They resumed the ascent and emerging from the belt of trees reached the top of the hill. A magnificent panorama spread itself before them. Across the valley were the gently curved Three Rock and Two Rock Mountains, bare and barren, with little woods in the valleys beneath. To the south the Sugar Loaf, threatening and volcanic-looking, domineered over his little brother. Away to the left Bray Head sloped to the sea.

"Such a compact little country!" said Christopher, mentally comparing it with the great sprawling bulk of America.

"I find it sufficient," said Ward. "I haven't travelled more than a couple of miles beyond the glen since Mary died."

Skirting the edge of the wood they descended to the valley. As they neared the house they overtook Stephen and the dog. Ward slapped the boy heartily on the back, asking had he had a good walk, to which Stephen merely answered "Yes," and taking his father's arm, accompanied the men home in silence.

3

During supper Christopher, under Ward's questioning, talked of America and of his life there, and when Christopher endeavoured to shift the conversation to Ireland, Ward skilfully fenced him off and reverted to the original topic. All the time young Stephen sat silent, listening intently, and, so Christopher fancied, taking in as much of what was unsaid as of what was said. After supper Ward

put a match to a pile of wood which had been substituted for the furze boughs on the hearth.

"Curious primeval instinct, isn't it?" he remarked. "It's a fine warm night, but without a fire we always feel something lacking."

"Another of the things they deprive you of in gaol," he was reflecting.

The men lit their pipes and drew their chairs up to the cheerful blaze.

"Go and get your Horace, Stephen," said Ward, and the boy left the room.

"He's young to have got to Horace," remarked Christopher.

"Eleven. Well, yes. I was only doing Caesar myself at that age, but then that was at school. I teach Stephen myself."

Stephen returned, carrying a slim copy of the Third Book of Odes, and stood beside his father's chair.

"Where are we now?" asked Ward.

"First half of Ode Two."

"Read it out then. You won't mind?" he added, looking apologetically at Christopher, who shook his head.

Stephen began to read the ode beginning: "*Angustam amice pauperiem pati.*" He then translated the first three stanzas into very fair English, and began on the fourth.

"*'Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori,'*" he read. "'It is sweet and proper to die for one's country.' Is it?" he asked, looking up.

"That's only one of Horace's attempts at nobility," said Ward.

"Then he must have thought other people would think it noble," said Stephen.

"Not necessarily," said Ward.

Stephen looked hard at his father for a moment, seemed to realize that he shirked being questioned, and picked up the translation where he had left off.

Stephen went early to bed, and after his departure Christopher said:

"That boy has brains."

"So I think," replied Ward. "But he's a queer lad altogether. You've noticed how seldom he speaks. That's not shyness. He's always like that. And yet he's not mopy. He spends most of his time out ratting or rabbiting with his dog, and he's as healthy as can be."

"Does he read much?"

"Next to nothing. To my knowledge he's only read one book in his life, and he hasn't finished that one yet. It's a big history of France, and he's been working his way slowly through it for the best part of a year. It seems to me that though he has plenty of brains they work very slowly and methodically but when they once get hold of a thing they never let it go again. When I give him new information on any subject he doesn't make any remark: just looks hard at me and then goes away to let it sink in. Yes. He's a queer lad."

"Yesterday," said Christopher, "I was entertaining a little boy who is his opposite in every way. He's a nephew of mine and my godson, and he's all chatter and questions,—questions that take some answering too. And though he's only eight he's a tremendous reader. Your boy is luckier than Bernard, though. He has room for full development up here, but my nephew will have to shake his active little mind free from shackles and hammer it against walls if it is to grow at all. His father's a narrowminded irreligious bigot and a violent Unionist, and my sister is completely under his thumb, so I know the kind of up-bringing he'll get. They'll train his mind to run in a groove, and a damned twisty groove it will be, dodging obstacles and downhill all the way. They'll try to prevent him thinking too much and fix his attention on the accepted. They'll teach him that things as they are are all for the best; that it is unwise to probe too deep into ideas which it would be dan-

gerous to follow to their logical conclusion; and that the connection with England is part of the established order of the universe. 'Eat, shirk, and be respectable, for tomorrow you may be knighted,' is the motto they'll set him, and if he's the boy I take him for he'll be struggling most of his youth with the fog they'll raise round him, like Peer Gynt with the Boig. If I could only be near I'd be some help to him but God knows what this war may bring."

"So you fully intend to throw your life away for a people who are only a name to you?"

"No. I fight against England. Those I fight with don't matter a damn, though for that matter they've as good a cause as England ever fought against."

"Well, it's no business of mine. But I hate to see life wasted."

"So does any man. It all turns on what you mean by waste."

"Any life given for this island of 'bellowing slaves and genteel dastards' is wasted. And I tell you this, I'm not going to let Stephen waste himself for such a people. You're afraid that your little nephew may drift into one kind of slavery and you'd like to hurry him into another. My Stephen shall be slave to nothing. Written or spoken word about this island of fools and traitors he has never seen or heard, and never shall so long as I can prevent it."

"Then he becomes a slave to you and to ignorance."

Ward was momentarily taken aback. He fumbled for words for a minute and then stammered out:

"I don't want him to suffer as I did."

"Not even of his free choice?"

"There's no free choice," Ward almost shouted in his excitement. "This damnable old island gets her spell on you and you're no longer your own master. Well I know it, and so do you."

"Metaphysical rubbish," said Christopher coolly. "Eye-wash, my friend. The will to do what one considers one's duty comes from oneself. There's no Granuailing about it.

And as for you, if you jail your boy's mind you'll go one worse than those who jailed your body . . .

"My God!" he exclaimed suddenly, "are children's minds always to be at the mercy of the fools who beget them?"

"You have no son, Reilly," said Ward.

"Which remark, though tragic, is quite off the point," replied the other.

He put his pipe in his pocket and lit a cigarette. Ward refilled his pipe, and for quarter of an hour they smoked in silence. Ward was thinking hard, and the younger man, watching him intently, seemed to follow his meditations.

"Besides," he said at length, "you can't keep him ignorant for ever. And when knowledge comes he'll be hard on those who tried to keep it from him."

"There's something in that," Ward admitted. He yawned heavily.

"Let's go to bed," he suggested.

4

Next morning after breakfast Ward went off on some farm business, leaving Christopher in the garden to enjoy the cool freshness of the air. Bye and bye Stephen approached and without any preliminary asked:

"Is it a sweet and proper thing to die for your country?"

"Yes,— and more."

"Why?"

"Well, to answer that I'd have to be sure that you know what your country is."

"I don't."

"Your country, or your fatherland (which is a better translation for '*patria*') is the land where you and your fathers were born."

"Yes. But why is it proper to die for it? Does it do the land any good? And why *should* you do the land any good?"

"All the children of the same fatherland are in a sense brothers, and for the good of all they must stick together. And if any one attacks them they must unite and help each other, and if necessary be ready to die in the fight. So that dying for fatherland really means dying for the sake of your friends and brothers. You see, the safety of each one depends on the safety of them all, and the safety of all depends on the readiness of each man to sacrifice his own safety for the rest."

"Then Horace was telling the truth?"

"For once. But you needn't mind Horace. He was a nasty little beast who only told the truth when it sounded clever. And now, to turn to more interesting subjects, how's your rabbiting?"

"I was just going to see to some snares I set. Would you like to come?"

"Sure thing. Lead on and I'll follow."

They went up the slope behind the cottage, crossing some of Ward's fields, and emerged on some waste land which was a veritable rabbit warren. They went to each snare in turn, Stephen pocketing the prey. Some of the rabbits were still living, and these Stephen killed in spite of Christopher's appeal to let them go free.

"I couldn't bear to kill a thing like that," said Christopher.

"They rob us and they're good to eat," replied Stephen in matter-of-fact tones.

"I know. I might reason that way myself, but their screams and the look in their eyes would be too much for me."

"You wouldn't bother much about the look in their eyes if you saw them eating your cabbage patch."

"*Dulce et decorum est pro patchia mori*," said Christopher, and Stephen grinned.

"Young barbarian," thought Christopher. "Puts his head before his heart every time. He'll be a great man some day. Wonder will he and Bernard ever meet."

Stephen having dispatched the last of his victims, they turned homewards.

In the early afternoon Christopher got ready to return to town.

"Good-bye, old man," said Ward, standing at the gate. "Good-bye, and the best of luck."

"Good-bye," said Christopher, and they shook hands warmly.

"I'll see you to the top of the glen," said Stephen.

They set off together, Christopher wheeling his bicycle and Stephen by his side. They said very little. Christopher joked about the size of the bridge and Stephen told him disjointed stories about the other people in the valley. At length they reached the top of the rise and looked down on the city in the distance.

"I've never been in Dublin," said Stephen.

"You'll go there soon enough," replied Christopher.

"Why do you say that? Won't I like it?"

"Glencoole's a better place."

"It's a lonely place then."

"There are worse things than loneliness."

"You know better than me. Are you ever coming back here again?"

"If I have luck," said Christopher. "Good-bye, Stephen."

"Good-bye."

They shook hands. Christopher mounted his bicycle and slid down the road towards the city.

5

Michael Ward was profoundly moved by his last talk with Christopher. He had been leading a self centred and monotonous life for years, a perpetual Achillean sulk which he had considered rather fine and which was really an emotional luxury. The preservation of his son's ignorance also it had pleased him to regard as a heaven-appointed task. Now he began to see things in a new light. He saw how

much of personal pride and selfishness had been in his whole attitude, and though he could not bring himself to change his own mode of life and thought he began to be ashamed of the restrictions he had imposed on Stephen. Pride yields slowly, and this self revelation occupied some time. Meanwhile life at Glencoele went on much the same as ever save that Ward became gradually more communicative on subjects he had formerly shirked.

Ward was very much mistaken when he told Christopher that his son's mind worked slowly. The boy's intelligence was if anything quicker than the average, but it was a singularly cool one. He was gifted with a detachment beyond his years, and he never received any information without asking himself whether the speaker was telling the truth and, if he was, whether his opinion would be of value. This was the cause of the long hard look which his father had imagined to be a sign of slowness.

This attitude of perpetual doubt and detachment was only a part of the general hardness of Stephen's character. No extraneous emotion ever seemed to deter him from anything he wanted to do. Christopher had noticed this in connection with the rabbit-trapping incident and hastily concluded that the boy was callous. But Stephen would as soon have thought of killing a song-bird as of sparing a rat. He was pre-eminently logical and purposeful.

His father too found him lacking in affection: undemonstrative he preferred to call it. Stephen's affections as a matter of fact were not really shallow, but when the dependent filial feeling of youth had begun to wear off he had begun to question his father and later on to see through him. Blood has strong ties, but as adolescence approached he began to wonder why he should love this proud, selfish, irritable old man. The mere fact that he had begotten him did not seem sufficient explanation.

About nine months after Christopher's departure Michael Ward quietly unlocked a cupboard underneath one of the bookshelves. Some time before Stephen had at last come to

the end of his History of France and was now well started on a History of Ancient Greece, so his father felt that the risk of the contents of the cupboard being soon discovered was but small. However, one day not long after Stephen suddenly said at breakfast:

"Father, you never told me we'd been conquered by the English."

"It happened a long time ago, Stephen."

"Well, oughtn't we do something to drive them out?"

Stephen was a disconcertingly logical child.

CHAPTER III

END OF A STORY

I

THE Empire was at war . . .

When England goes to war she is not content like other countries to claim that her quarrel is right. It is always for Righteousness itself that she fights, so of course her foes must naturally be for Evil. The Boers therefore, being enemies to the Empire, were found to be dirty uncivilized and unchristian and to have no respect for treaties, while their leader was revealed as a criminal of the lowest type. To conquer such a people and annex the gold and diamond mines they were unfit to possess thus became for England a Christian duty.

"That fellow Kruger," said Dr. Lascelles, full of virtuous indignation brought on by a character sketch in the *Morning Post*, "ought to be shot."

England's little colony in Dublin was not to be out-done in fervour or fever by its mighty mother. Red-white-and-blue bunting flaunted a gaudy farewell to the dust-coloured troops when they marched away; Kipling's songs were on every loyal lip; badges were sported in every loyal button-hole. Fond mothers dressed their little boys in khaki, much to the envy of Bernard, who, forgetful of purple-striped shirts and silver-rimmed shields, tormented his mother into getting the like for him. But by the time he had got it the craze had died out, and finding himself alone and conspicuous he soon returned to his sailor suit. Later on his father gave him a badge with a photograph of Queen Victoria on one side and one of Lord Roberts on the other. This he wore in his button-hole for a few days until he met

Hektor O'Flaherty in Stephen's Green, who, with contemptuous words which greatly puzzled our hero, tore it from its place and ground it under his heel. The children also inserted a new invocation into their prayers: "God bless the Queen and give her victory over her enemies," and Bernard used to add under his breath: "And don't let the Boers come and kill us." It was a thrilling and exciting time.

"Why don't we always do these things?" he asked his mother.

And the war went on.

Bernard used to steal the illustrated papers from his father's waiting-room and make tableaux with his lead soldiers after the manner of the battle pictures. He feasted full of glory and great deeds and longed to be a man and out in the fighting. He used to picture himself holding the pass alone like Cuchulain against tremendous odds, or slaying Kruger in single combat while two armies looked on. He wanted to talk to Uncle Christopher about it all, but his godfather had mysteriously vanished, and when he asked his mother was he gone to the war she only shook her head.

A year went by and still the war went on.

Doctor Lascelles was knighted and Bernard wondered what dragon he had slain and was very disappointed when he donned no shining armour to go out and fight the Boers. But the war was forgotten in the excitement of moving to the new house on Merrion Square, and exploring the new nursery, and making new friends, and playing new games in the secluded walks of the Square itself. And Bernard was somewhat compensated for the loss of Hektor O'Flaherty by his own attainment of an analogous position among his new associates.

2

When Bernard was ten years of age he made his First Communion.

His early religious training had been the work of his

mother. She was what is generally called a good pious Catholic: that is to say she went to Mass frequently, fasted on Fridays, had numerous "devotions" and superstitions, had no code of ethics, and was totally ignorant of the philosophy of the Catholic religion. Destitute as she was of reason and knowledge she nevertheless considered it her maternal duty to instruct her son in the fundamentals of both. If her watch had gone out of order she would not have dreamt of meddling with its mechanism herself, yet she felt in no way incapable of revealing infinity to the subtle and complicated mind of a child. So when Bernard was very young she took him on her knee and told him pretty stories about angels, and good little children who went to heaven, and bad big children who went to hell. She told him that if he was good he would sit on a jewelled throne in heaven wearing a crown and a pair of O such lovely wings (which last was what most appealed to Bernard in the prospect), and that if he was bad he would be burnt to ashes with the devils in hell. Later on she taught him his catechism and was annoyed to find that Bernard was more interested in finding out the meanings of the long words than in the doctrines they expressed.

Then he was sent to a preparatory school where the good nuns (as they love to be called) prepared him for his first confession in much the same ignorant way as his mother had employed. He was eight years of age when he first presented his soul to be cleansed of its iniquities and after that he was compelled to repeat the process monthly. Frequently he was so ashamed of his cleanliness as to invent sins, and once he even went so far as to accuse himself of Lust, not knowing in the least what it meant, but because it was a new sin, and a deadly one.

And now came the first Communion Day. "The greatest day of your life," he was told,— "and the happiest." He bent his head and joined his hands as reverently as any, and his mother thought he looked a little cherub in his white sailor suit. Afterwards there was a magnificent

breakfast, and the good nuns went about saying pious things to the First Communicants and presenting them with what are called Holy Pictures. And towards the end of the day Bernard dismayed his mother by saying in a disappointed tone:

"Mother, when is the happiness going to begin?"

"Aren't you happy now, darling?" she remonstrated.

"Oh, I'm all right, but nothing extra."

"Oh, Bernard! what a thing to say!"

"Well, it's true."

His mother sighed. He was no longer the innocent thoughtless boy she would have liked him to remain. She had noticed his growing roughness and impatience of caresses, and as his golden curls darkened into brown and his chubby cheeks lengthened she felt that he was becoming more and more independent of her. She almost resented his growth to boyhood, and indeed wished him still an infant. She remembered the days when he came with all his questions to her as to the fount of wisdom and knowledge; when her answers were taken for granted without hesitation or demur. Now it was always to his father that he went, or to a book, and she began to regret the "Don't bother me; I'm busy" with which she had too frequently fended off his inquiries.

3

The war still went on.

And one day Bernard came upon his mother in tears with an open letter in her lap. He asked her what was wrong, and she put her arms round him and told him that Uncle Chris had been killed in the war, and the two of them wept together for a little while. Then Bernard went away to think of Uncle Chris by himself, and he fancied him fighting his last fight like Cuchulain, driving his chariot through the hosts of the enemy till they overwhelmed him.

That night he slept with *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*

against his cheek, and his father going up to the nursery saw it and took it downstairs to read. Perceiving it to be a dangerous book he put it away on a shelf in the dark.

4

It was through Mrs. Harvey, wife of Dr. Harvey the fashionable oculist, and an old school friend of Lady Lascelles, that the news leaked out that Sir Eugene's brother-in-law had been killed fighting for the Boers. The young man was unknown in Dublin and the plausible physician might have glossed things over but for this woman's meddling tongue. Where she learned the truth is not known, but once it was in her possession she was as anxious as Midas' barber to spread it abroad, and her weekly-at-home gave her the opportunity.

"Isn't it sad about poor Lady Lascelles' brother?" said her first visitor, Mrs. Moffat.

"Doubly sad, isn't it?" replied the hostess, significantly enigmatic.

"Why doubly?" inquired Mrs. Moffat.

"Oh, don't you know? . . . Well, perhaps, I'd better say nothing about it." This was Mrs. Harvey's usual preliminary to telling everything.

"But I wouldn't let it go any further," said Mrs. Harvey after the revelation. "Don't you think I'm right?"

"Perfectly right," said Mrs. Moffat.

But to make quite sure that she was right to keep the matter secret each guest in turn had to be told the story and her advice on the point requested, and one and all were agreed that it should go no further.

When the truth came out in Merrion Square it caused quite a flutter in that tranquil dovecot. Mrs. Gunby Rourke openly proclaimed her intention of cutting Lady Lascelles on the first opportunity and actually did so, but the general feeling was one of sympathy for the sorrow and disgrace that had befallen an unquestionably loyal family, and condolences in very guarded phraseology began to trickle

in. Mrs. Harvey's were among the first: eight pages of conventional consolations and religious tags.

"I know, dear Alice," she wrote, "that your grief is greater than that of others who have lost their dear ones, for your sorrow for his death is increased by the knowledge that he fought for the enemy. I pray that God may give you grace to bear this doubly bitter trial," and a great deal more in the same strain.

"Damned hard lines on Lascelles, this news about his brother-in-law," said old Colonel Delamere in the Kildare Street Club.

"Damned hard to know what to do in a case like this. One can't feel sorry when a traitor meets his deserts, but one can hardly be unfriendly to people one knows. I suppose I'd better leave my card."

And he did.

Mrs. Heuston Harrington, who was intellectual and very superior to the little island in which she deigned to live, remarked:

"Fancy an intelligent man bothering like that over ancient grievances! I can't understand how a man with big interests in a great country like America should worry his head over a silly little place like this."

Mrs. Heuston Harrington did not leave her card, but that was because she was too intellectual to possess such conventional things.

Among all the denizens of the Square not one was to be found who would say that a brave man had died for the cause he believed to be right. For among them it is not considered the thing to die for a cause that is not "respectable."

5

The death of his god-father wrought a great change in Bernard. Deprived of his one confidant he turned in on himself more and more, reading and dreaming instead of playing with his brothers and sisters. Wearied of the limitations of toy states and toy wars he sought solidier things

in the wars and politics of English History, which he read right through from the Roman Invasion to the accession of George the First, where it became too complicated for his understanding. Historical stories like those of G. A. Henty also attracted him and a little book called "Stories from Roman History" set him hunting among his father's books for a full history which when found he read from *Anno Urbis Conditæ* to the Battle of Actium. The Empire somehow failed to attract him.

Then he got dissatisfied with the ways of real history, where the countries and people he favoured nearly always came off worst, and must needs construct an imaginary history free from those blemishes in his own head. He invented an island and divided it up into a number of states each with its own laws and customs. One of these — it was a small state on the north-east coast — was his favourite and he made it the hero of his political drama. It was inhabited by a brave and enlightened people who made up in quality what they lacked in numbers. In the south-west was the largest and most powerful state inhabited by a bullying and treacherous population. This was the villain state and between it and the hero state was a deadly feud. As they were separated by neutrals the wars which perpetually broke out between them were of necessity preceded by diplomacy and the making of alliances. Interests and principles pulled the different states in varying directions and were responsible for ever-changing enmities and friendships. If Bernard could possibly manage to keep control over events the weaker and better cause always won, but a train of events once started he frequently found it impossible in the interests of verisimilitude to thwart the unfavourable course of fate, and then the triumph of might over right made of his island another Europe.

Into this imaginary continent Bernard would frequently retire, building up a history of war and intrigue sometimes for hours at a time, while those who observed him thought he was merely absent minded. This occupation lasted well

on into his school days, but as he grew older the character of his imagination changed. His mind became less political and more constructive. He thought less of warfare and more of building and law-making. He envisaged beautiful cities, pleasant villages, roads, bridges, harbours and fortifications. Formerly he had drawn for himself maps, physical and political, of his island, colouring the different states as in a map of Europe. Now he took to making plans of cities and harbours, and even elaborated an imaginary census. These documents he drew up in moments of privacy; he would have died sooner than let anybody see them.

But before he had reached this stage a notable event occurred. A History of France came into his hands, and the tale of the French Revolution made him at eleven years of age a red republican. Hitherto his affections had been generally given to peoples rather than to causes. He backed the Yorkists against the Lancastrians, the Carthaginians against the Romans, because for no discoverable reason he liked them better. Patriotism itself meant nothing to him, for love of Ireland, that fruitful mother of rebels, could find no place in his father's teaching, and a way has not yet been found to inculcate love of the United Kingdom. An indefinable pride in Britain's glory was all Bernard possessed as a substitute for the basis of citizenship. . . . But now he had obtained a creed, and by degrees it became a passion. The very name of king soon came to affect him as it had affected the ancient Romans. Back to English history he went with his new view point: no more partisanship for this apostle of an idea. Gone his championship of York against Lancaster: it was but a petty dynastic squabble in the eyes of this young republican. Gone his enthusiasm for the Cavaliers: all his favour was transferred to their opponents, and the star of Prince Rupert paled before the sun of Hampden. His imaginary island shared in the general revolution, and his hero state became a republic of extraordinary virtue in desperate contention with the villain state, now a bigoted upholder of the *ancien régime*.

His father knew nothing of all this mental activity, and it was just as well that he did not, for the truth would have frightened and annoyed him. He would indeed have been rather ashamed of his son's precocity, of his imagination, of his pre-occupation with ideas; all of which conflicted with his own conception of what a boy should be, and was associated in his mind with queer-mannered undesirable people with strange collars and long hair.

(And as for you, madam, you are quite right in saying that you would not have liked Bernard at all at this age. So different from other little boys, isn't he? He thinks far too much, which isn't right in one so young, and he's apt to go into the moon when you are amiably questioning him about school and other things that ought to interest a little boy. How much nicer Eugene is: so quaint and thoughtless. He lets you pat him on the head too, and when you kissed him he did not shrink from your lips as Bernard did. And Eugene is quite ready to chatter with you and flatter your age and wisdom by his own childishness, whereas Bernard is obviously impatient to return to that book he was reading when you interrupted him. . . . Yes, of course, it's this reading that does it. He reads far more than is good for so young a child. Gives them ideas, doesn't it? . . . Yes, madam, you are quite right. You would not have liked Bernard at all.)

6

It remains to be recorded how the news of Christopher Reilly's death was received at Glencooles. It came in a letter from a comrade in arms who had been beside him when he died and heard his last words. Michael Ward read it in the porch of his cottage on a grey morning in April.

"My God!" he groaned. "What waste!"

Entering the sitting-room he found Stephen lying on the floor engrossed in a huge volume. The mysterious cupboard was open, and the book was the History of the Four Masters.

CHAPTER IV

YOUNG ENGLAND

I

SIR EUGENE LASCELLES gave some fatherly advice to his son on the eve of his departure for school.

"Don't push yourself forward too much at first," he said. "And don't try to be too clever. If the boys question you, answer them straight, unless it's about your sisters, in which case I leave it to your own wit to find a way out. Don't be too friendly with masters or you'll get a bad name among the boys. Try and make friends with decent gentlemanly fellows. Never funk anybody, but don't do any more fighting than you can help; I believe it's out of date at Public Schools nowadays. I needn't tell you never to do anything dishonourable, because you're my son. Good-bye, my boy, and God bless you."

"A good, sound, manly talk," thought Sir Eugene, "and no nonsense about it."

A cab was at the door bearing Bernard's luggage. He said good-bye to Eugene, who was still at a preparatory school, and to Sandy, who was too young to go to school at all. Then he kissed Alice and the baby and entered the cab with his mother.

"I've asked Mrs. MacBride to ask her boy to look after you," said Lady Lascelles as they drew near to Kingstown. "So you'll have one friend to start with."

Bernard mumbled something. He dared not speak, being on the verge of tears. He nearly broke down as she kissed him good-bye on the deck of the steamer.

"Good-bye, darling."

A bell clanged and there was a cry of "All for the shore." After a last kiss Lady Lascelles went down the gangway.

With tear-dimmed eyes Bernard watched her as they cast the vessel off. The pier seemed to glide away. He waved his handkerchief in reply to hers until it had become a fluttering white speck indistinguishable among a multitude of others.

Then he looked around for MacBride, but that youth was too much occupied with his own friends to trouble himself about "a kid my mater asked me to look after." So he made the journey alone, miserable, and sea-sick.

2

He stood in the vast play ground of Ashbury College, a forlorn little figure, very shy, very unhappy, and very cold. His hands were thrust deep into his breeches' pockets, partly to keep them warm and partly because he did not know what else to do with them. Also, jingling his money gave him some employment.

Interminable hour! He was too shy to stand still: too shy to walk about. He shifted his weight from one foot to another. He took out his watch and replaced it without observing the time. He studied the pattern of the railings. Looking out through them he felt like a caged animal in a zoo. There were cows outside who looked at him stolidly like spectators.

He turned back to view the scene in the play-ground. Some of the boys were playing football; others were strolling about conversing. No one noticed the new boy.

Just then a chattering group passed by and suddenly turned upon him. He seemed to be surrounded by gigantic figures.

"Hello, new fellow. What's your name?"

"How old are you?"

"Where do you come from?"

"What's your father?"

"What class are you in?"

Bernard answered as politely as he knew how.

"God! You must be an awful stewpot to be put into

Rudiments at twelve," said one boy after Bernard's reply to the last question.

"Awful cheek of a new kid to be put above you, Sexton," said another: whereat all burst out laughing at Sexton and took themselves off, much to Bernard's relief.

Soon afterwards a whistle sounded and the boys streamed indoors. Amid the prevailing chatter Bernard changed his boots in silence and made his way to the washroom. In the lobby outside a big Higher Line boy beckoned to him.

"Here, kid!" he said.

Bernard approached bashfully. His summoner was a greasy looking person with a nasty mouth whose isolated teeth resembled lichenous tombstones in a neglected graveyard. He put a flabby hand on Bernard's shoulder, looking at him in a queer way that puzzled and rather frightened him.

"Be my tart," he said in an eager, rasping voice.

Bernard had no idea of his meaning, but the fellow's touch sent a virginal shudder through his frame and wrenching himself free he fled into the washroom. Like a hunted animal he crept along the galleries to his class, glancing around in every direction in a fearful search for the boy with the nasty mouth. All through class he sat wondering at his fear, puzzling after the big fellow's meaning and thinking what a horrible mouth he had.

This, Bernard's third day at the school, was a half-holiday, but the ground was too bad for football owing to the heavy rain of the previous day. Accordingly the school went for walks in its customary way, class by class, each accompanied by its master. Bernard was the only new boy in his class and was glumly anticipating the prospect of being left to himself among the crowd when he was hailed by a cheery voice.

"Hullo, new fellow! Have you no one to walk with?"

The speaker's pleasant smile broke sun-like through Bernard's cloudy cogitations. Bernard had heard his name — Jack Willoughby.

"You can come with me if you like," said Willoughby, without waiting for an answer to his question.

"It's awfully decent of you," stammered Bernard.

"Don't mention it," said Willoughby lightly. "Murray, who I usually go with, has a cold. Let's come on."

The class, numbering some two dozen boys, passed out of the gates and took the road to the hills. It was a soft autumn afternoon and the air was fresh and sweet from the recent rain. Through ragged gaps in the clouds the sun glittered down on puddles in the road. The elms were already stripped of their leaves but the beeches were still resplendent in golden brown. The atmosphere was faintly perfumed with the scent of fallen leaves.

"I like the feel of the air after rain," said Bernard conversationally.

"By Jove, yes, it *is* decent," replied Willoughby in the tone of one to whom a revelation had been imparted. "I'd never noticed that before. . . . Are you any use at footer?"

"Well, I've *played*," said Bernard deprecatingly, and added, "at a preparatory school, you know."

"I must keep an eye on you. You look like a good runner, but you need weight."

"I generally won the hundred at my last school," said Bernard, "but I'm not much at the half mile."

They were now ascending a stiff incline and were silent for a moment. Bernard was the first to speak.

"I say," he blurted out. "What's a tart?"

Willoughby looked at him blankly.

"Why do you ask that?" he said.

Bernard related the morning's episode.

"That must have been Musgrave," said Willoughby after Bernard had described his questioner. "He's an awful sloppy idiot."

"Yes. But what did he want?"

Willoughby's explanation came as a horrible and disconcerting surprise. Musgrave's nasty mouth recurred to Bernard's memory.

"Good lord!" he said. "There are things in life I'd never dreamt of."

"Nothing to wonder at in that, Methuselah," said Willoughby, whereat Bernard laughed.

"Yes. That was a queer thing for me to say," he admitted.

"Don't let this turn you against Ashbury, now," said Willoughby. "You'll run into a lot of this kind of slop, but it's not the fault of the school, only the crowd that's in it. My pater says this is a degenerate age. He was here, you know, and so were my uncles, and so was my grandfather. It's one of the oldest schools in England, and I hope you'll come to be proud of it and not call it a hole like some of the rotters here."

Bernard looked at Willoughby. His face, usually impassive, was lighted up now by enthusiasm. His general air of cleanliness and health was very pleasing. Bernard already had friendly feelings for him.

The class came to a halt in a little valley among the hills. Some one suggested a game of Prisoner's Base, and sides having been rapidly picked, play began. The game went smoothly for a time. Then a question arising on some knotty point in the rules the absence of an umpire resulted in the break up of the game into a medley of arguing groups. Bernard, forgetting discretion in his enthusiasm, found himself engaged in a heated altercation with the opposing captain. Suddenly he was conscious of a hush about him. His was the only voice to be heard. He faltered in the middle of a sentence and then came to a stop, his cheeks burning, his skin pricking. It was probably one of the most terrible moments of his life, but it was mercifully ended by the sudden resumption of the argument round about, and he thankfully sought oblivion.

"Are you Irish?" asked Willoughby on the way home.

"I suppose I am."

"Why do you say 'I suppose'?"

"Because it's not a thing that matters much, is it?"

"Don't let Mallow hear you say that."

"Who's Mallow?"

"That big, heavy-looking chap in front there."

"Why shouldn't I let him hear me?"

"He might cut up rough about it. He's the hell of a rebel, you know."

This was all very obscure to Bernard, but he was not sufficiently interested to push his inquiries any further.

When they reached home they found Murray in the recreation room. He was a jovial person whose slight Irish accent Bernard found very restful to the ear.

"Another Irishman," said Willoughby. "There's a good crowd of your countrymen here, you know. Let's go thirds in a cake for tea."

"I've already asked that ass Molloy to join us," said Murray.

"Good lord!" groaned Willoughby, "what did you do that for?"

"Couldn't get any one else who wasn't booked."

"Any one worse, I suppose you mean."

"What's wrong with Molloy?" asked Bernard.

"He's the biggest ass in the school," replied Willoughby. "He's got a notion that it's a great thing to be pally with lords and he's always jabbering about the dukes he meets in the holidays. He's too much of an ass to know it doesn't go down here, considering half the chaps in the school are related to lords."

"The other day," put in Murray, "he handed over a letter to his brother under my nose. 'Interesting that about Lord Galway,' says he. He's a blithering ass."

"Then why on earth did you annex him? Well, never mind. Has he paid up yet?"

"No."

"Then let him go to hell."

Molloy thus disposed of they went up to the refectory together.

"There's Molloy looking at us," said Murray, as they

sat at tea. "But don't worry. He'll be too proud to butt in on us now."

"Most likely he'll apologize to us later for having forgotten us," said Willoughby.

Tea over, they adjourned to the recreation room, where Willoughby and Murray played billiards while Bernard marked.

Molloy approached, smiling apologetically.

"I say, you chaps," he began, "I'm frightfully sorry ——"

"All right, old chap. I forgive you," interrupted Murray.

"Sure you don't mind?"

"Delighted," said Murray. "Anything to oblige."

And Molloy retired.

The day wore on; evening studies; supper; recreation; night prayers. It was restful at the end to kneel in the half-lit chapel knowing that the long day was done, and looking at the Tabernacle to say the little homely prayers he had learnt at his mother's knee. Then the official prayers began.

"Blessed be the holy and undivided Trinity now and for ever more," said the mechanical voice of the prefect.

"Amen," faintly and sleepily from some of the congregation.

"Come O holy Spirit fill the hearts of thy faithful and kindle in them the fire of thy love," ran out the meaningless unpunctuated monotone.

For Bernard custom had not yet taken the significance from the words. "Do people really mean prayers like this?" he wondered.

"Enlighten me I beseech thee and give me an humble and contrite heart."

"I don't feel very beseeching," thought Bernard. "Does any one else, I wonder." He looked round at his fellows, Their desire for humble and contrite hearts did not seem to occasion them much uneasiness. The prayers went on and came to an end, and bench by bench beginning with the big boys at the top the chapel began to empty. In single file

they streamed out. Pad — pad — pad went their feet on the parquet flooring, with an occasional squeak of new boots.

Pad, pad, pad, squeak. Pad, squeak. Pad.

First the tall Higher Line fellows, young men almost, many of them, whom Bernard found it hard to picture sitting at school desks. Here and there a small precocious youth appeared among them, high-collared and self-conscious. Bernard watched their faces as they passed along: ordinary faces most of them under every shade of hair. Sunny faces and sniggering faces. Heavy brutal faces. Broad good-natured faces. Strong mature faces and weak chinless faces. One went by with the careless fine-featured kind of face that Bernard liked to look at. He had heard some one call to another: "I say, Clarence!" A good name, Clarence. This must be Clarence. (He turned out to be Smithers.) A sinister and beastly face. More ordinary faces. Then Musgrave's face loomed into sight, and gave a sidelong leer at Bernard as it passed. He walked with quick short steps, hunching his shoulders. What different walks there were. Long paces, short paces, quick paces, slow paces. Heavy steps, light steps, springy steps. Somebody went by who bobbed up and down at each pace. Higher Line tailed out into Lower Line, ranging from hulking adolescence to graceful boyhood, long-legged, slim-hipped, and large-headed like himself. Big anachronisms whose bodies had outgrown their brains. Shapeless stunted creatures. Very young monkey-like children. His own turn came at last.

"That's for staring at me, brat," said some one, kicking him from behind. It was Clarence (or rather Smithers.)

Up the stairs and to bed, where he lay awake for an hour or more thinking of things: Sexton, Musgrave, Willoughby, Clarence. He remembered the game of Prisoner's Base and suddenly blushed all over his body.

"What an ass I must have looked," he thought. "And, father *told* me not to shove myself forward."

"Why *shouldn't* I shove myself forward?" he asked himself a little later, and soon after fell asleep.

3

A boy's first few weeks at a public school are all mystery and confusion. He is like a swimmer tossed helplessly about on a stormy sea, thrown hither and thither with no volition of his own, and never knowing what is going to happen next. After a time, however, the mystery is dissipated; what appeared to be chaos is recognized as insuperable order; the bewildering herd of boys analyses itself into individuals with names of their own; and life settles down to the monotony of a familiar and invariable time table.

The boys of Bernard's own class were the first to assume their individuality. The studious head boy was found to be White, and the gay and idle second boy (who would have been first if he took the trouble to work) was Neville, while in the back bench were the heavyweights, Sherringham, Lashworthy, Roden, and others, who were never expected to work, and indeed could not by any known means have been made to work, since Nature had so constructed their frames that punishment was to them a thing of no account. Between these extremes came the centre, ranging from idle competence through solid mediocrity down to studious incompetence. Here were to be found Mallow the saturnine Irishman; Rumpworth the self-satisfied who worked because his hands were soft; Beaton who was so ashamed of the brains he possessed that he was put to endless shifts to avoid learning things; Ledbury the plausible deviser of cribs and excuses; Sedgwick the athlete who worked like a Trojan in the ambition to be an all-rounder; and half a score others, among whom may be mentioned Molloy the snob, the friend of Lord Galway, and de Valona and Tolmeda the Dagoes. Willoughby was generally to be found within the first eight places, whilst his friend Murray might be first or fifth, according as his mood was studious or the reverse.

With Willoughby, Bernard's acquaintance soon developed into friendship. They had not very much in common, but for some reason or other they liked each other. These things

are not easily explainable. Willoughby's friend Murray, the mercurial Liverpool Irishman, would have seemed a more suitable companion to Bernard, since he too was interested in politics; but Murray was almost entirely pre-occupied with Home Rule for Ireland, a subject in which Bernard was profoundly ignorant, and in which Murray's enthusiastic half-knowledge bored him intensely.

Games were compulsory at Ashbury, and on the Sunday after the walk with Willoughby the whole school turned out for football. Bernard being a new boy found himself picked in Third Match, an institution which owed its existence to the compulsory system. Here congregated all those who out of distaste or slackness took no interest in football. The physically unfit, the corporally clumsy, the intellectual, the cricketer, the naturalist, the cyclist, the slacker,—all were collected together and compelled to spend the afternoon making a farce of football. The main object of the players was, of course, to play as little football as possible. Accordingly within ten minutes of the start some one succeeded in kicking the ball into the topmost branches of one of the elms that bordered the field, where it stuck fast. Quarter of an hour was consumed in pretending to try to dislodge it, by which time the arrival of a prefect changed the pretence to earnest and the game recommenced under the prefect's watchful eye. Bernard was very disappointed with these proceedings. He rather fancied himself as a forward, having somewhat distinguished himself in that capacity at his preparatory school, and he had looked forward to a similar career on the larger stage of Ashbury. He now did his best to show off some of his skill under the eye of the prefect with the result that the latter came up to him afterwards and asked him why he was in Third Match. Bernard explained, and the prefect went away, saying that he would see what he could do about getting him promoted. The following Tuesday and for the rest of the term Bernard was picked in second match, where the game was played properly, and where Bernard so distinguished himself that

Club Captains began to take notice of him with an eye to the club matches played in the following term.

And while Bernard showed promise of becoming a very fair athlete he made an immediate and unmistakable mark in the school room. Lacking the patience and methodical mind that makes the scholar he yet had the quickest wits in the class, and being also gifted with a comprehensive memory, he assimilated knowledge rapidly and retained from a cursory reading more than even the more intelligent of his mates could master by conscientious memorizing. He topped the lists at the first half-term examinations, displacing both the studious White, who was much the better scholar, and the careless Neville, who was the cleverest linguist. To a certain extent he felt the hollowness of his triumph, but youth, vanity, and gratified ambition will blind any eye to what it has no wish to see.

And Ashbury began to charm him with her beauty and stretched out the tentacles of her traditions to enfold him. Beautiful she certainly is, and beautiful are her surroundings from the wild majesty of her fells to the soft luxuriance of her valleys and the trim neatness of her fields. The tawny Avon gliding at her feet receives its laughing tributary the Dawe under the shadow of her towers, and the sprawling waste of the Pennine Range thrusts a finger-like process down to her very gates. And as you approach her by the rolling avenue lined by noble elms she reveals herself as a grey stone mansion old and stately, battlemented and turret-crowned, and you cannot help but love her. Then you hear her story and her ancient legends; and old as the school is its home is older. You hear how she gave hospitality to Queen Elizabeth and Charles I; how Cromwell battered her gates down; how Constable painted her; and how Tennyson wrote some beautiful lines under her inspiration. You will also hear of the clandestine school kept in the harsh old times by the good fathers in a neighbouring farm house and attended by the sons of sturdy Catholic squires, and how when better times came Sir James Osterley presented them

with Ashbury Manor for their habitation. Then come tales of the school life of last century, when all was hard Spartan simplicity; when on winter mornings the boys had to break the ice in the washing trough and did an hour's work before breakfast; when food was scarce and tough; when discipline was strict and punishments terrible; when Ashbury played her own games, and rough games too, a tax on lungs and limbs; when, in short, the world was a finer place and men a finer race than in these degenerate days.

Old Ashbury! Bernard learned to love her with all the sudden devotion of youth. Grey walls, bold mountains, mingling rivers; well-sounding names, old customs, oft-heard legends; he loved them all, and when, after the half-term results had been read out and the medals distributed, the great Hall rang with the melody of the Ashbury song, his heart swelled with pride and joy in being part of it all. In the emotion of the moments the unpleasant events of earlier days were forgotten. He was an Ashburian, he told himself, and to be an Ashburian seemed then to be all-sufficient. The very name of Ashbury was robust and breezy, bluff and honest; typical of all that was best in old England . . . Ashbury. . . . The word was satisfying to pronounce. Could meanness, beastliness, nastiness be associated with such a name? No, he told himself. Such things were only accidental blots, with no deeper roots than the lichen on her old grey walls.

The song came to an end, and abruptly Bernard realized that he had not been singing it.

"Absent minded idiot," said some one, jostling him as he made for the door.

4

To Ashbury College a boy was a mass of crude metal to be fused in the flame of her tradition, cast in the mould of her curriculum, and finally exported to Oxford for the finishing touches.

Her duty as she conceived it was to prepare her children's

souls for heaven and the rest of them for governing the British Empire; to which end she aimed at producing a type of character which was a skilful blend of that of St. Aloysius with that of Nelson and Squire Brown, and which could be recognized at any time and in any corner of the world as Old Ashburian.

The young Briton was preparing for his task of bearing the White Man's Burden by stuffing his head full of Latin and Greek Syntax and Prosody, and duly impressing upon him the importance of *Variae Lectiones*. If he asked what was the use of these dead languages to him he was told that they formed the bases of other languages. (But as he never learnt any other languages but French, which was taught by a "Froggie" and treated with a truly British contempt which would not condescend even to learn the pronunciation correctly, the function of the basis is not very clear.) He was also told that Latin and Greek gave him culture, but his teachers were so busy impressing on him the correct use of the Ablative Absolute and the Iota Subscript that if there was anything of beauty in Euripides or wisdom in Plato he had to find it out for himself. (Which he never did.)

In his own language he learned by heart large quantities of selected lyrics and passages of predigested Shakespeare, and carried away a general impression that Tennyson is the greatest of all poets. History was a dull tale with England as hero, the rest of Europe her vassals, and France the villain of the piece. As for geography, he acquired a vague idea that there were three or four powerful countries in Europe, but Bulgaria, Servia, and Croatia were not even names to him; while he had an intimate knowledge of what parts of the British Empire exported indigo or imported jute, even though his idea of what jute is was somewhat vague. A little elementary science was thrown in at one stage of his training, but it was a half-hearted business, which was but natural in a school where the names of the great scientists were constantly being held up as examples of unbelief and infamy.

It was unfortunate for the victims of this process that so few of them had occasion to earn their own livings in after life, for it fitted them for nothing better than the running of third rate second-hand bookshops on inefficient lines. And as for the Empire of which they were to be the props the result was the Battle of Mons. (For the point of which observation the reader is invited to consult some private soldier who fought there.)

Religious training at Ashbury consisted in holding up St. Aloysius as a model and Darwin as a devil to a lot of brats who had no more intention of following the one than of reading the other. And while the virtue of purity was preached with almost indecent frequency, truth, charity, humility and forgiveness received but cursory mention. But truth to tell, Ashbury herself played but a small part in framing the characters of her alumni. Far more important was the unwritten law, the code built up by generations of boys — similar in every English Public School — to break which was ruination.

The code is difficult to summarize, but when thoroughly dissected it is seen to consist mainly in this; that to differ from the herd is the greatest evil, and the best man is he who conforms best to type. And what is the type? The ideal public schoolboy of Tom Brown's Schooldays does not exist. The typical public school boy may be physically courageous; morally he is the reverse, as his very type-worship shows. He may be honourable in his dealings with his friends; he is nothing of the kind in dealing with those who are not his friends. And for the rest he is ignorant, narrow-minded, arrogant, foul-mouthed and blasphemous. He has no code of ethics, but he is by nature a conservative ever distrustful of what is new, firmly believing that what is is best. He is not religious, yet he would not dream of professing Atheism (which is not "the thing"), but he may bully the weak, cheat in exams, blaspheme, or talk filth, and think none the worse of himself.

Ideas he looks upon with suspicion, as sand in the smooth-

running machinery of the Type. He hears vaguely of such things as labour unrest and though he may look up a few "points" on the subject for his speech in the Debating Society, he puts it all down to "discontent" and "disloyalty," and worries no more about such unpleasant subjects. Should any exceptional boy hold views running counter to those generally accepted he comes under the imputation of not being a gentleman, the penalty for which is ostentatious ignoring or even ragging. At a public school it is better to be immoral than a Socialist.

Another serious crime from the Ashburian view-point is poverty. M. Moulin, the assistant French master, was poor. It was whispered that he had but one suit of clothes: certainly he was never seen in any other. It was accordingly decided that the miscreant must be punished, and six valiant Rhetoricians penetrated to his room in his absence, where they burnt his books and collars, smashed his pictures, cut up the tyres of his bicycle, and poured ink into his chest of drawers. If a boy was suspected of falling short of the general standard of wealth, some one would question him publicly about his pocket money; or a visit would be paid to his wardrobe, when the screamingly funny information would run through the school that so-and-so had but two suits of clothes, or was deficient in underclothing.

Physical deformity was not so much a crime as a source of amusement. Poor Stickelback, who had a cleft palate, heard his attempts at speech mimicked at every turn, and Wilson, who squinted, was invariably addressed as "Swivel Eye." It was also a standing joke to say: "Wilson, look here.—Oh, I forgot. You can't."

Lowness of origin was yet another failing in Ashburian opinion. Business people were considered outsiders, and professional men were merely tolerated, the ideal being the man who did nothing. Bolton, whose father kept a shop in Warrington, was made to feel this. He led a lonely existence outside the pale of good society, and none would speak to him except the good-natured, like Willoughby,

or the democratic, like Bernard. To hear a group of Ashburians discussing the origins of some of their questionable school mates reminded one of a crowd of old maids talking scandal over afternoon tea, and wonder whether the manly healthy British boy existed outside the imagination of storytellers and Imperialistic journalists.

The English public school boy is a conservative from the cradle to the grave. He is a conservative even at fifteen. From the generous political emotions which rise in every breast all the world over at the period of adolescence he appears to be entirely exempt. He is quite satisfied with himself and the world which is his setting, and he does not wish to be disturbed. Perhaps it is part of this conservatism that he objects to enthusiasm of any kind. The enthusiast on any subject he considers rather a fool, and bored indifference is the fashionable pose. Like all boys he despises the brainworker, but he alone prefers blasé brilliancy to keenness and hard training in football and athletics. There is more than a suspicion of fear in this contempt, for it is born of a hazy notion that enthusiasm is somewhat akin to Restlessness, and as every one knows Restlessness is what the public schoolman in after life has most to dread.

Imperialism is inborn in the public school boy. He will verbally deny that Might is Right, but he always acts on the assumption that it is. The big boy does what he likes; he gets precedence everywhere; the weak must get out of his way; and no one questions his right to these prerogatives. Nay, if he does not take full advantage of his strength the weak despise him and do not hesitate to show it. This belief in the right of the strong he shows in such crude politics as he may give expression to in youth and act upon in later life. "Of course it's right to conquer other countries," he will tell you. "Nations must expand. It would be a queer world if countries couldn't grow and get richer." The idea that conquest might be wrong never even enters into his head. Well, the child is father to the man, and any Englishman

will tell you that the public schools have made England what she is.

This much of Ashbury—and of all English Public Schools, for Ashbury is but one of many and an improvement on most of them—is definite and tangible. It is living; harshly, narrowly, viciously living; but still understandably and palpably living. But underneath the turbulent ever-changing surface of that life flowed a perpetual poisonous sluggish current of nasty sneering thought to which nothing was sacred. It was offensive yet indefinable; all-pervading and yet elusive; and its noxious miasma tainted and vitiated the whole atmosphere. Herein is the germ of death which is slowly and surely killing the whole system.

Such was the life sheltered within the fine old walls of Ashbury, cloaked by her beauty and bolstered up by self-deception, self-contradiction, fine phrases and the glory of tradition: a life of great possibility and mean achievement; of plausible aspiration and damnable purpose; of noble pretension and hideous reality.

5

Into this topsy-turvy world Bernard stepped full of zest and hope. He had high standards of manliness, acquired mainly from *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, which he fondly believed must hold sway in a great school like Ashbury. Bullying and lying were, he felt sure, offences which would be treated with the contempt they deserved and though he felt a little disconcerted by Willoughby's casual attitude towards the Musgrave episode, yet he told himself that Musgrave must after all be an exceptional person. It was not long before Bernard discovered that his high hopes were vain.

At Ashbury, if a boy is popular he can do nothing wrong, if he is unpopular he can do nothing right. If Sugden, the dull and boring, were to be found bullying a smaller boy, some noble minded hero, or heroes, full of righteous indigna-

tion would come to the victim's rescue and knock his persecutor down; but Smithers, the popular sport and humourist, could kick a small boy out of his way and be told: "Quite right. He's a cheeky kid." Hence it was that Tomkins and Tracy-Sidbotham, who took an instant dislike to Bernard, could bully him with impunity. The cause of this dislike Bernard never found out, and probably they were unaware of it themselves; but so far as it was not causeless it must have sprung from a feeling that this boy in his very being violated the code. Tomkins and Tracy-Sidbotham would not have been accused of this crime by their worst enemies. They were, as a matter of fact, typical Ashburians. Tomkins was gross and truculent; Tracy-Sidbotham slender and sneering. They were in the class above Bernard's and two years his senior in age. Tracy-Sidbotham's persecution was occasional and mainly verbal, except when a retort from Bernard called for suppression by violence. Tomkins' attacks on the other hand were perpetual, and consisted in smacking him on the head with a book or tripping him up at every possible opportunity — a procedure which infuriated Bernard not so much by the pain or annoyance caused him as by its utter uselessness. He soon came to hate Tomkins with a murderous hate, the one personal hatred of his life.

One day as Bernard was going along a gallery Tomkins came up behind him and for the fiftieth time banged him on the head.

"You bloody fool!" said Bernard, turning on him. Somehow his individualism had not saved him from adopting the prevailing dialect.

"You dare give cheek to me?" demanded Tomkins, striking him again.

"You were asking for it, you cursed ass."

This was too much for Tomkins. He seized Bernard's arm and twisted it. Thereupon the pent up fury of months instantaneously exploded, and Bernard's free fist shot out and caught his tormentor under the eye.

"Fight!" shouted some one, and an eager crowd gathered round.

There was no story-book hero to interpose and point to the inequality of the combatants. Tomkins advanced confidently on his victim, who put up his hands weakly in a futile effort at defence. His rage was of the fierce short-lived type, and without it he had little fighting spirit. Tomkins would have pulverized him in a minute but for the timely arrival of a prefect.

"Nix!" said a voice, and the crowd dispersed, the principals mingling therein as inconspicuously as possible.

Bernard dreaded the vengeance of Tomkins, who, he noticed with a certain amount of satisfaction, bore a black bruise under his left eye. In this predicament he looked about for Willoughby, but failed to find him before afternoon class.

"I say," whispered Willoughby, "your ear's bleeding."

Bernard mopped it with his handkerchief and gave Willoughby a whispered account of what had happened.

"Tomkins is a bleeding rotter," said Willoughby. "He used to be the same to me once. Look here, you stick with me and Murray next rec. and we'll see what'll happen."

"Right oh."

"Willoughby and Lascelles stop talking and get twelve ferulas each."

Willoughby grinned, but Bernard's heart almost stopped beating. It was his first punishment.

At tea Willoughby told Murray Bernard's story, and Murray said:

"Look here, let's smash him up, the three of us."

This was agreed, and they descended to the recreation room. Bernard had no fear here, for the enemy was in the second line, and during the rest of that day by careful scouting Bernard kept clear of him. But another ordeal awaited him in the evening when he and Willoughby took their places in the queue outside the prefect's room waiting for

punishment. Three big boys and a small boy were there already. The prefect came along, fumbling for his keys. He opened the door, and the first boy followed him inside. Twelve resounding cracks rang out, and the victim emerged, looking deliberately careless. The second boy was less stoical, blowing upon his swollen fingers as he walked away. The third boy imitated the first. It was the small boy's turn next, but he hesitated, looking at Willoughby. Imperialism, as we have said, is inborn in English boys. The right of might is never disputed, and this little fellow assumed that his right of priority would count for nothing since he was not big enough to defend it.

"Go on, kid," said Willoughby. "Get it over," and the youngster hurried in gratefully. . . .

"Your turn now," said Willoughby, and Bernard entered the lion's den.

"Stiff?" inquired Willoughby when all was over.

"Easy as hell," replied Bernard, clenching his teeth with pain.

Next day Tomkins had to be faced. At first recreation he strolled up to the three arm in arm with Tracy-Sidbotham.

"Lascelles," commanded Tomkins, "come here and be kicked for your bloody cheek."

"Go to hell," said Bernard.

"My God, wait till I get you."

"Go to blazes out of this, the pair of you," said Murray fiercely.

"God, these blasted kids are too bloody cheeky for anything," drawled Tracy-Sidbotham. "Come on, Tomkins, and toe their fundaments."

At this point Willoughby took the offensive and kicked Tomkins with all his might, and Bernard followed up with a punch in the solar plexus. The languid Sidbotham began a scuffle for form's sake with Murray, and then the two big boys beat a retreat, Tomkins vowing vengeance and Sidbotham covering his cowardice with a sneer.

After this episode Tomkins discreetly ignored Bernard.

"I don't care what you say, Willoughby," remarked Bernard, "what with Musgrave and Tomkins and Tracy-Sidbotham, this place is the hell of a hole."

None the less school life still held many pleasures. At the half-term examinations Bernard retained his medal, and the club-matches which commenced during this term opened up new interests. The club-matches are Ashbury's substitute for the House matches of other public schools. In each of the three Lines into which the whole school of four hundred boys is divided a shield is offered for competition between clubs picked by six prominent players. The clubs average about twenty-five members each, including every type from members of the Line Eleven to Third Match men and medical dispensationers, from among whom the captain selects his team. Bernard was picked by Sedgwick, whose club was admittedly a favourite for the shield, including as it did two Third Line Eleven men, Willoughby and Lumsden, several First Match men, and some of the cream of Second Match. Before selecting his team Sedgwick instituted a Possible *v.* Probables match between the members of the club. Bernard played right half-back for the Possibles, but failed to distinguish himself, his light weight making him no obstacle to the opposing left outside. After the match, however, Sedgwick came up to him and said:

"I'm going to put you on the team."

"Afraid I wasn't much use today," said Bernard.

"You hadn't much chance. You can play all right. I'll put you on the wing and then you can use your legs."

But Bernard's legs were destined to be of less service to his team than his head. With the eye of a strategist he watched the course of the game and thought out dispositions and tactics whereby the players might be welded into a coherent whole. These he laid before Sedgwick, who after the preliminary hesitation that might be expected from a veteran footballer, eventually put them into tentative prac-

tice. Thereafter he had a brilliant run of successes and ended by carrying off the shield. His own magnificent play and the strength of his team were universally credited with the achievement and all his attempts to secure recognition of Bernard's services were put down to heroic modesty and laughed to scorn. Football lost much of its interest for Bernard after this.

6

They never made an Ashburian of Bernard. He despised St. Aloysius; he never forgave Nelson for "Kiss me, Hardy"; and he regarded Squire Brown as an old fool. He never conformed to the code, and it was even whispered that he approved of the French Revolution (which of course all true Ashburians look upon with horror, as Catholics and English gentlemen should). Moreover he refused to accept the dogma that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton. His heterodox essay on this subject is still remembered with dismay at Ashbury.

It was in his second year at the school and he was approaching his fourteenth birthday. His class-master, Mr. Bumbleigh, was a dull, conscientious, overworked man who feared Bernard more than all the rowdies of the class on account of his cruelly obvious contempt for his intellect. (Bernard's one intolerance was for stupidity, and from thirteen years of age to sixteen, Boy is at his cruellest.) It was Mr. Bumbleigh's habit to set a weekly English essay, and to read out and comment upon the themes sent in, hoping thereby to impart instruction and guidance for the future, but in reality giving the boys light amusement and a much-appreciated respite from work.

"Osgood, your essay may be excellent for all I know, but your handwriting is like the track of a beetle, wandering over the page, so I couldn't read it. I'll have to get you a headline copy book. Rumpworth, your ideas are good, but your grammar would bear improvement, and you've spoilt the effect of what would otherwise have been an excellent

final sentence by using slang. 'When all is taken into consideration one thing stands out clear, that Waterloo was a soldier's victory won by the men of England made tough by games over the softies of France.' 'Degenerate sons' would sound better there; don't you think so, Rumpworth?"

"Yessir," said Rumpworth.

"Ledbury's essay is so good," went on Mr. Bumbleigh, "that I shall read it to you in full."

There was suppressed excitement in the class at this, for Ledbury had copied his essay word for word from a book on essay-writing which he had picked up at home, containing sample essays on stock subjects such as Hobbies, A Country Walk, Friendship, and the like, and every one knew of the trick. Suppressed laughter punctuated Mr. Bumbleigh's reading of the platitudinous disquisition, which was about as much in Ledbury's style as *Paradise Lost*. Mr. Bumbleigh, in a tone he fondly imagined to be scathing, told them that their minds must be deficient if a piece of beautiful writing roused them to ridicule, but almost simultaneously Ledbury's self-control gave way and he exploded with laughter.

"What's the meaning of this?" thundered Mr. Bumbleigh.

Ledbury, slow of wit, decided on the spur of the moment to tell the truth. It frequently paid.

"Please, sir, I copied it out of a book."

"Dear me! I might have known. Why did you do that, Ledbury?"

"I couldn't think of anything to say myself, sir," said Ledbury.

"Try and use the brains God gave you, Ledbury. Well, you owned up, so I'll say no more about it," and Mr. Bumbleigh turned to another essay.

"'Three quarters of the British Army at Waterloo was Irish and the other quarter Scotch.' Well, Mallow, I think even you will agree that that's a little exaggerated."

There was a grim look on Mr. Bumbleigh's face as he picked up the next essay.

"Lascelles," he said gravely, "you may think this kind of thing funny, but it isn't gentlemanly. An Ashbury boy should be ashamed to write such stuff."

The gist of Bernard's essay was that the title was an implication that the Battle of Waterloo had been won by the skill of the British officers, whereas the victory was really due to the stubbornness of the British rank and file and the good marching of the Prussians. This paved the way for a strongly Republican thesis which wound up the essay.

"I didn't mean it to be funny," said Bernard. "I meant every word of it."

"So much the worse," said Mr. Bumbleigh, handing back the theme book. Underneath the essay was a large blue Nought.

After class Bernard was surrounded by the curious and overwhelmed with questions.

"Why was Bumface so shirty?"

"What did you write?"

"I said the battle was really won on the fields of Yorkshire and in the slums of London."

"What bloody rubbish!" exclaimed Rumpworth. "I suppose you thought that clever?"

"Damn sight truer than the subject anyway," said Bernard.

"Rot," said Ledbury with tremendous scorn.

There was a general feeling that Bernard was not very good form.

"If you think things like that you've no business coming to Ashbury," some one remarked.

The last word had been said on the discussion. Every one felt that his own opinion had been spoken.

Shortly after this altercation Bernard happened to come across Mallow.

"I say, Mallow," he cried, "what was that awful rubbish you stuck into your essay?"

"What awful rubbish?" inquired Mallow surlily.

"That about the Irish at Waterloo."

"What of it?"

"Well, in the first place it wasn't true."

"I only exaggerated a bit. Nearly half the British Army was Irish as a matter of fact."

"Well, I won't quarrel over that, since I don't know enough about it. What I'm after is the reason why you make such a fuss about it. What on earth does it matter even if it is true?"

"Why wouldn't it matter?"

"What difference does it make whether they were Irish or English? Aren't they all the same?"

Mallow seemed to collapse at this question.

"Great Scott!" he gasped. "Do you mean that?"

"Keep your hair on," said Bernard. "What's up?"

"Well," said Mallow, as if giving Bernard up entirely, "I knew you were a West Briton, but I didn't think you were as ignorant as that. You're no better than an Englishman, God help you."

He went away, leaving Bernard amused and puzzled.

7

"I tell you what, Willoughby, I can't stand St. Aloysius."

Willoughby looked rather shocked. He liked Bernard, but found him a trifle disconcerting at times, and when Bernard came out with abrupt heresies like this he was at a loss how to receive them. At the present announcement he merely stared and said nothing.

"Yes," went on Bernard, "I'm fed up with having him dinned into us morning, noon and night, and now that I've read his life I'm more fed up than ever."

"You shouldn't talk like that about a Saint," said Willoughby.

"Saint! What's a Saint? Is it saintly to go about the world with your eyes stuck on the ground? Is it saintly

to half-starve yourself so that you die young? I call that slow-suicide. Is it saintly to be afraid to remain alone with your own mother? I call that having a dirty mind."

"That's a rotten thing to say about a Saint, Bernard. I don't like it."

"You've read his life yourself. Didn't you see every word I've said there in black and white?"

"Well, yes."

"And you think these things are signs of goodness?"

"I suppose they must be."

"Do you mean to say you think a chap would be right to think like that about his mother?"

"I don't know. I don't worry about these things."

"Do you mean to say you can go on praying to a Saint with a mind like that?"

"I don't do such a lot of praying, you know."

"That's not the point. Do you admire a chap who thinks that way about his mother?"

"I tell you I don't bother about such things."

"But you should bother."

"Look here, Bernard, if you want to argue about theology try it on a J. Come on to the playground."

Bernard saw that further discussion with his friend was useless, but he seized an early opportunity of tackling Father Bowman the Chaplain. He would have liked to continue with the question of St. Aloysius' relations with his mother but abstained from doing so from a feeling that this aspect would not make much appeal to a celibate; moreover he had a fear lest Father Bowman might decline discussion on such a delicate matter altogether. Accordingly he commenced in a non-committal way.

"Tell me, father, why is St. Aloysius the patron of youth?"

Father Bowman was a saintly-looking man, white-haired, and of serene manner and appearance. Doubt, one felt, had never disturbed those placid features. He always professed

himself ready to answer questions; indeed, he invited them. But never had any question been submitted to him that a few words and an encouraging smile had failed to dispose of. This he felt sure was one of them, and the kindly tolerant smile and lambent voice were ready to be poured like oil upon the seething waves of puerile doubt.

"Because he was young himself, my child, and was a model of those virtues which youth should aim at."

"Then are we supposed to imitate him in our lives?"

"Certainly; at least so far as it is possible for us to do so."

"Then should we keep our eyes always on the ground, and scourge ourselves, and — and never look at women?"

"Oh, no. That is not expected of everybody."

"Who is it expected of, then?"

"It is only expected of those who feel called to a life of perfection."

Father Bowman felt that the argument was finished and made as if to move away, but Bernard was persistent.

"But shouldn't we all try for perfection?" he said.

"We all cannot," replied Father Bowman, a little impatiently.

Bernard felt the thread of the argument slipping from his grasp, so he plunged headlong for facts.

"Well," he said, "if the prefect found me scourging myself in the dormitory, I know jolly well I'd get into a row."

"Yes. It's a college rule that when you go to the dormitory you must undress at once and get into bed. Obedience to rules comes before voluntary austerities."

"But even if I wasn't breaking a rule I'd be told I was an ass and made chuck it."

Father Bowman sighed impatiently.

"It all depends on your motive," he said.

"I don't feel that you've answered my question, Father," Bernard reproached him.

"Don't worry your head about speculations like that," said Father Bowman with his complacent smile. "Run off to the playground and kick a ball about."

Bernard moved off pensively. Doubt was hammering at the gates of his soul.

"What sort of a church is it," he pondered, "that puts St. Aloysius above Newton and George Washington?"

"Clever little chap that pupil of yours, Lascelles," said Father Bowman to Mr. Bumbleigh. "But he thinks too much about religious questions. Not good at his age. I'm afraid for his faith."

"He has very revolutionary ideas," said Mr. Bumbleigh, which, though he knew it not, meant that Bernard had the faith that moves mountains.

8

There was a boy called Reppington in the class below Bernard's who violated the code even more thoroughly than our hero though less flagrantly. He was a quiet retiring youth who spoke little and moved through life in a perpetual dream. He had mousy hair, large ears, and ungainly feet, and the natural ugliness of his face was enhanced by a pair of huge glasses, over which he peered timidly at the tumultuous world. His was a hard lot, masters and boys equally despising him, for he took no interest either in play or, outside mathematics, in work. Mechanics was the one thing he cared for, a taste little catered for at Public Schools. However, Ashbury had a well-equipped carpenter's shop, and here Reppington spent most of his time, dreaming, experimenting, and constructing.

Reppington even at fourteen showed signs of being a mechanical genius, and the fruit of months of toil and patience was a working model of a steam engine. The presence of this wonder in the carpenter's shop was soon known to the school, and the little engine at first attracted a good deal of honest admiration. Reppington became quite a celebrity, and was often seen surrounded by admirers whose praise of

his handiwork made his eyes beam behind his spectacles with happiness, like a young mother being congratulated on her offspring.

But the Code had zealous defenders at Ashbury, and none more zealous than in Bernard's class. When the news of Reppington's achievement reached them Rumpworth and Ledbury and Lashworthy and Sherringham and other defenders of tradition held a council of war.

"This business can't go on," said Ledbury.

"It's a disgrace to the school," said Lashworthy.

"Playing trains!" snorted Sherringham. "We'll have kids coming here soon with dolls or teddy-bears."

"It's got to be stopped," said Rumpworth.

"How is it to be stopped?" said Ledbury.

"Kick his bum and tell him to chuck being a kid," some one suggested.

"Take the bloody engine from him," proposed Rumpworth.

"Come on, boys, he's probably playing with it now," cried Sherringham, and the half dozen of them made a rush for the carpenter's shop.

In the carpenter's shop Reppington was eagerly and proudly explaining the workings of his engine to Bernard, who listened with great interest.

"He loves this thing," Bernard observed to himself.

He was about to go away when Sherringham entered at the head of his retainers. Sherringham approached Reppington with that smile half assertive half sheepish which Bernard detested. The Ashbury smile he called it, for it symbolized a great portion of the Ashbury mind.

"Let's see the engine, Repp," said Sherringham.

Reppington indicated his treasure. Instantly with a sweep of his hand Sherringham knocked it to the floor and hacked at it with his heel.

"Sherringham!" cried Reppington, making a vain attempt to rescue his toy.

"Shut your mouth," said Rumpworth, shoving him away.

The suddenness of Sherringham's action had taken Bernard by surprise, and this vision of callous cruelty left him for a moment paralysed with anger. Reppington was gazing helplessly with tear-blinded eyes at the wreckage of his engine, which Sherringham kicked over to Lashworthy, who kicked it into the fireplace. Suddenly Bernard stepped up to Sherringham, breathing hard.

"You beastly swine," he said.

"Shut up and mind your own business," growled Sherringham.

"Will you fight?" demanded Bernard.

"Not with a bloody outsider like you," sneered Sherringham.

Bernard struck him across the face with his open palm. Sherringham stepped back apace and clenched his fists, whilst the blood flooded the injured cheek.

"Smash him, Sherry!" cried Lashworthy.

"Make a ring," shouted Rumpworth.

Immediately every one sprang into action. The furniture was cleared away from one end of the shop, and a ring was made, which, owing to the narrowness of the room, was bounded on three sides by walls, whilst the fourth consisted of the spectators sitting on tables and benches. In the centre were the combatants: Sherringham, gross and ungainly; Bernard slim and graceful. Sherringham was by a few months the elder; slightly taller; and a good deal heavier; but Bernard as a compensation had science, being a member of the boxing club. Well-grown healthy boys of fifteen both of them they seemed fairly matched and the spectators waited keenly for what must prove a hard battle. Bernard glanced round at them once. He was fighting the cause of the weak against the strong but save for the boy he was defending all present were backing his opponent.

"Time," said Rumpworth, who had appointed himself referee.

Bernard came rapidly into action and got in two blows at Sherringham's jaw before the latter had time to decide on

his guard. Sherringham, however, could take punishment and owing to Bernard's own impetuosity and carelessness countered heavily on his cheek. Bernard forthwith cooled down and became more wary.

"I say, Lascelles,—thanks awfully, you know," stammered Reppington in the interval as he flapped his defender with a handkerchief.

"Don't mensh," said Bernard.

He went into the second round determined to finish Sherringham as quickly as possible. His anger was of the quickly raised quickly cooled kind, and without it he had little stomach for fighting. But confidence in his own skill made him underrate his opponent's staying power. After some brisk sparring he delivered a hasty and ill-conceived attack, and before he could recover his guard Sherringham got in a terrific blow behind the ear, and then followed up, driving Bernard into a corner, who, dazed and shaken, was only saved from a cruel battering by the call of Time.

"Good man! One more round will finish him," said Sherringham's backers, crowding round him.

"For God's sake be more careful," whispered Reppington. "He's no match for you if you keep your head."

In the third round it was Sherringham who was overconfident, whilst Bernard remained on the defensive, content to rest his lungs and legs.

"Go in, Sherry!" shouted his friends.

Sherry went in and came out rather mauled, and the round ended uneventfully. In the next round Sherringham, goaded on by the cries of his supporters, made a second determined attempt to pulverize Bernard, who, having warded it off successfully, began to drive his panting opponent up against the wall. Crack! Bernard's left catching him on the chin drove his head back against the wainscoting, and his right following up beneath the jaw repeated the performance.

"Time!" called the referee.

Sherringham was no Spartan. He completely collapsed,

and his supporters clamorously assailed the referee.

"It wasn't fair to hit him against the wall," was the general complaint.

Rumpworth smiled judicially. He did not care for Bernard, but he realized that Sherringham was beaten, and he enjoyed the feeling of being absolute dictator which refereeing gave him.

"Sherringham should have had more sense than to go near the wall," he said.

"He was driven there," protested Ledbury.

"Then he was beaten," replied Rumpworth imperturbably.

"Well, it's not fair," grumbled Ledbury.

"That's my decision anyway," snapped Rumpworth. "Time!"

"Stay where you are, Sherringham," counselled Lashworthy, his second. Sherringham nodded, but as a matter of fact he had no intention of rising from his seat.

"I give you ten seconds," said Rumpworth, looking at his watch. "Then it's Lascelles' fight," he added after a pause, and walked off in a huff.

Bernard approached Sherringham.

"Look here, you swine," he said, "you've just destroyed something you can't replace, like the clumsy ass that you are. Don't think you'll get off without making some sort of amends."

"That's a rotten thing to say to a chap after you've beaten him," said Lashworthy.

"You've had your fight and that ought to be enough for you. Can't you shake hands like a gentleman?" Ledbury was the speaker.

"Look here," said Bernard, "I didn't fight this rotter for fun, and a fight is no excuse for dodging out of doing the right thing."

"Sherringham was right to smash the engine," said Ledbury. "We don't want Ashbury turned into a nursery."

"I don't care a damn what you want," retorted Bernard, "but Sherringham's got to pay up."

"Look here, Lascelles," broke in a new speaker, "are you going to shake hands or not?"

"I won't touch his dirty hand until he makes amends to Reppington."

"Well, come on, Sherry. Leave him alone. He's hopeless."

The crowd, full of virtuous scorn, moved off with the battered Sherringham in their midst, leaving Bernard speechless with indignation. He had fought for Right against Might and triumphed, but against the stone wall of the Ashbury mind he might beat for ever in vain.

"What's to be done with people like that?" he demanded, turning to Reppington.

"God only knows," said Reppington, and added, "I say, you *can* box."

But the worst was yet to come. The story of the fight spread round the school, and there was great speculation as to the cause. The true cause, however, could not possibly occur to the Ashbury intelligence, and before long it was hinted abroad that Bernard took a sensual interest in Reppington.

"Have you heard the latest?" said Robinson to Fortescue. "Lascelles is gone on Reppington."

"My God," said Fortescue. "Well, he's not hard to please."

People took to coughing if ever Bernard and Reppington were observed in the same vicinity, and occasionally a wag would inquire of Bernard after Reppington's health.

"Great Scott!" thought Bernard. "If those idiots who write school stories only knew ——"

Meanwhile Bernard was being educated. He learned how to write Latin and Greek prose and verse by the help of

Gradus and Dictionary; how to translate sonorous Latin and facile Greek into clumsy ponderous English; and how to cram three centuries of ancient history into a page of outline. One year his class had as master one who had a real appreciation of the inner beauty of classical literature which he tried to convey to the boys, instead of using the classics as other masters did merely as examples of grammatical rules. From Bernard he drew a ready response. Indeed our hero had already developed a certain critical faculty. He had a qualified admiration for Homer and an ardent one for Euripides (cultivated deliberately perhaps for this apostle of new ideas). He was a little doubtful over Aeschylus; was not much of this oft-praised "grandeur" touched with banality, he queried. Vergil's Eclogues roused him to enthusiasm which even the discovery that they were a plagiarism never could kill. (He never read Theocritus.) And yet after seven years of constant study during which he acquired the reputation of being a brilliant classical scholar, he never gained sufficient facility in these languages to make him wish to read them for pleasure.

In the chaos and pandemonium of M. Moulin's classes he picked up a smattering of odiously pronounced French and in the almost equally unacademic atmosphere of the science laboratory he learned that if a candle is burned inside a lamp chimney with a waist to it it increases in weight.

He learned the accepted version of English History and it was here that Ashbury came nearest to success with him, for his tendency to revolutionary ideas extended only to politics. Economics were a closed book to him and in mere ignorance he accepted all the economic doctrines laid down by the mildewed minds of those curious creatures who write history text books for schools. None the less he was a staunch upholder of all rebellions from Wat Tyler's to William III's. "Rebels are always in the right," he used to say, "or what would they rebel for?"

But to this generalization he made one exception, and that was in the case of Ireland. In the first place the accounts of

rebellions in that country were always of the most meagre description, glossed over and distorted, and the masters never cared to dwell upon them; and in the second the rebels were always upon what he considered the reactionary side,—for the King against the Parliament, for James against William. His complete lack of any kind of national feeling was the obvious reason for such an attitude.

Right through the Ashbury curriculum he and Willoughby went, fast friends all the time. Willoughby took the whole thing as an Ashbury boy should, and promised to emerge as a fairly typical example of the public school product, albeit that Bernard was responsible for flaws that would have been looked at askance by Alma Mater. Also he conformed to the better parts of the code and was on the whole a very popular boy. The mould, however, had no effect on Bernard. He was not fusible enough.

But while Ashbury was trying every device to cramp and distort his growing mind, he was gradually half-unconsciously, unsystematically educating himself. He was an omnivorous reader and the school library was an excellent one. By the time he was sixteen he had read extensively Scott, Dickens, Thackeray and Stevenson; he had read *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Mr. Midshipman Easy*, *Westward Ho!*, Max Pemberton's *Iron Pirate* and *Impregnable City*, most of Mr. Wells' early scientific romances, and Conan Doyle's mediaeval tales. With foreign literature, however, he was poorly acquainted: *Don Quixote* and a few of Victor Hugo's novels, with Jules Verne's romances, made the total sum. In spite of his teachers' attempts to make him hate Shakespeare by using him as a class text he read and reread *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar* and the Historical Plays. Beyond this his acquaintance with poetry was slight: *The Ancient Mariner*, *The Masque of Anarchy*, *L'Allegro*, *The Rubaiyat*, the *Ballad of Reading Gaol*, and, a little later, the *Hymn to Proserpine*, were his favourites. But history and geography were still his main delight. He read the articles on many

strange lands in Chamber's Encyclopaedia, and he would spend hours poring over maps. He read books of history in every size and form. The ancient eastern empires; Greece, Rome and Carthage; the Byzantine empire; France and Mediaeval Italy:—these he knew best, while he had a fair knowledge of general European History from the middle ages to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

And of course it was but natural that he should have read the *Social Contract*. He had some difficulty in procuring a copy, for it was not in his father's library or, needless to say, in that of Ashbury. Finally he ran it to earth in the National Library during the holidays, and read it with tremendous eagerness. The finely balanced opening sentence gave promise of great things to come but he found the treatise on the whole rather dull, though he would not have admitted this even to himself. After the opening chapters had worn down his enthusiasm he read on to the end most conscientiously, accepting the doctrines of revolt without any of that impatient questioning with which he would have greeted a work of any other character. Willoughby was somewhat shocked to hear that Bernard had read a book on the Index. Although he had imbibed a certain democratic outlook from his two Irish friends his whole mental tone was conservative, reverence for anything established being the keynote of his character.

"I've something to tell you that'll shock you more than that, my friend," said Bernard.

"Spit it out," said Willoughby grimly.

"I've become a Socialist."

"Impossible, my dear man," said Willoughby very decisively. "Unless, of course, you've given up your religion."

"And why not?" said Bernard.

It is necessary here to retrace our steps a little.

We left Bernard, at the time a mere child of fourteen,

struggling with the doubts born of an interview with Father Bowman on the subject of Saint Aloysius. Now as a conviction of ignorance is the first step to knowledge, so doubt is the first step to faith, provided that the doubt is answered with wisdom. But wisdom Father Bowman had not. In fact, beyond Piety and the Fear of the Lord he was inadequately provided with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and he had felt quite conscience free in dismissing Bernard's doubts with a command to play football. So Bernard from doubting one thing began to doubt many. His disgust at St. Aloysius' prudity made him question celibacy altogether and ask himself whether voluntary abstention from procreation could really be pleasing to the God who said "Increase and Multiply." This was the starting point of a bitter feeling of anti-clericalism, which was intensified by the antagonistic attitude of the Church to his innate republicanism. By the time he was fifteen he was definitely anti-cleric, and before he was sixteen he was completely anti-religious. All this time he sought advice or argument from nobody. Father Bowman had finally repelled him from that.

And then, before he was quite aware of it, he began to doubt the existence of God. A certain strange harsh materialism that had found its way into his soul through the wounds made by injustice and unpopularity, coming upon him while he was drifting in the course we have described, was responsible for this.

"*Could* there really be intangible spiritual things?" he asked himself.

"Impossible!"

"And yet ——"

One of his cousins, a youth somewhat older than himself, a Protestant in name but of no definite faith, said to him in the holidays:

"You religious people say that God is infinitely just, infinitely merciful, and infinitely loving, and yet say that he condemns people to eternal torture for offending him. Now

I don't claim to be anything wonderful in the way of justice, kindness or mercy, but I wouldn't dream of doing that to every one no matter how badly he offended me."

Bernard had no answer to this and his doubts increased in intensity.

"God tells me I'm to believe the Church, and the Church tells me that God treats sinners as even an ordinary decent man wouldn't treat his enemies. Is there a God at all?"

So he reflected, and at last decided to test the matter by going to confession.

"I'm always being tempted to sins against faith, Father," he said.

"Against what articles of faith, my child?"

"Against all religion altogether, Father."

"But, my child, when these temptations come to you you must pray against them. Pray to our Blessed Lady and our holy patron St. Aloysius to intercede for you. Pray to the Holy Ghost to give you this precious gift of faith."

"But how can I pray to the Holy Ghost if I don't believe he exists?" asked Bernard desperately.

"Have you been reading irreligious books, my child?"

"No, Father," he said. He would have liked to say that it was religious books that were mainly responsible for his downfall but dared not.

"I've only been thinking," he put in weakly.

"My child, you must put these thoughts away from you. The mysteries of faith are beyond our mortal comprehension, but I would ask you to look around at the wonderful world about you; at the stars, those gigantic bodies that seem mere pin points lost in the immensity of space; at the intricate workmanship of a simple daisy; and ask yourself was there no designer of all this. Also, my child, read good books, and above all things pray. Any other sins, my child?"

Bernard went away but half satisfied. The wonderful world was all very well, but how material it was. *Could* there be immaterial things? Was his mind limited because

he could not conceive the immaterial? Could other fellows conceive it? Could Willoughby? Yes. Could Lashworthy or Rumpworth? Well, they didn't care enough about these things to bother about doubting them. . . . Then there was this question of Hell.

His mind remained in a ferment for a time, but soon settled down to a cold indifferent atheism. Such an attitude, however, was incompatible with his whole temperament, and gradually his atheism became positive and missionary. He began to feel that it might be his duty to save others from the slough of superstition from which he had dragged himself, and commenced operations by breathing doubts about the scientific accuracy of the book of Genesis into the ears of Eugene. The latter was a good Ashburian but also a good boy and he staved off the tempter by showers of dogmata. He also told his mother about Bernard's delinquencies, to the terrible dismay of the good lady, who had an immediate vision of devouring flames searching the soul of her darling boy. It was in the Christmas holidays of his last year at school that Eugene made his revelation, and she seized the first opportunity when she was alone with Bernard to approach him about it.

She was amazed to find that he did not deny the charge. Nay, to her grief and dismay, he appeared to take pride in it. She tried tearful remonstrance, but in vain. She tried argument but proved to be no theologian. Bernard himself knew more about the religion she was defending than she did herself. Then she said to him:

"I see you are quite hardened, and I've done all that *my* conscience requires in trying to reclaim you. Well, go your own way if you like, but one thing I insist on. Let Eugene and Sandy alone. I won't have *their* faith undermined."

"But look here, mother," replied Bernard. "If I sincerely believe Atheism right and Christianity a demoralizing superstition haven't I as much right to preach my views as you have?"

"No. I'm your mother."

"That has nothing to do with it."

"Now, Bernard, I don't want any argument. I can't prevent you going wrong yourself, but I forbid you to lead others astray."

"I'm not leading any one astray."

"I say you are."

"But, hang it all, mother, can't you understand that —?"

"No. And I don't want to. Now that's enough."

And so the conversation closed.

From his father he gained a more sympathetic hearing. For the sake of his practice he was an orthodox Protestant, but he was in reality an agnostic. He prided himself on his broad-minded and tolerant attitude towards religious things: "Priests and nuns ought to be shot," he used to say, and Bernard quite agreed with him.

He was very pleased to find that Bernard was on this point shaping according to his wishes. More than once he had regretted his matrimonial promise in respect to his children, but with all his faults he was on the whole an honourable man and he had never broken it.

"You're quite right, my boy," he said. "There's too much of this damned superstition. I wish I'd never allowed your mind to be soiled by it, but a promise is a promise, you know."

II

And while this spiritual development was in progress he heard for the first time of Socialism. He heard it spoken of invariably in accents of condemnation, which alone was enough to make Bernard think favourably of it, and the fact that its strongest enemies were the Church and the boys of Ashbury made him ready to acquit it unheard. "This leads to Socialism" was one of the accepted final arguments in the debating society against any democratic principle under discussion. "Atheists, anarchists, and Socialists," generalized the preacher in the pulpit.

So Bernard became a Socialist and bought books on the

subject. He read Shaw and Snowden and Wells' *Modern Utopia*. He read Chesterton and wondered where was the difference between that brilliant controversialist and the principles he was attacking.

His economics of course were of the vaguest description, but philosophically Socialism gripped him. It became his creed, a creed as fixed and based on as much ignorance as his mother's Catholicism, but ten times more ardent. He set out to make converts but failed miserably. Willoughby agreed with everything he said about the evils of the existing order but considered remedial measures sufficient. Murray said that competition was the soul of effort and that Socialism would simply kill initiative. Rumpworth asked where would England be without her aristocracy and Ledbury said:

"You wouldn't be a Socialist, Lascelles, if you owned a jolly good bit of land for shooting."

Finally Mallow said that he was only a revolutionary where Ireland was concerned. Otherwise he was a conservative like all decent Irishmen. The meaning of which was obscure to Bernard.

Then the motion "that this house disapproves of the principles of Socialism" was discussed in the Debating Society and Bernard undertook to lead the opposition. He had much difficulty in collecting speakers. Willoughby agreed to speak in favour of a "moderate" kind of Socialism and Murray gave his adherence because he hated to be on the re-actionary side even when he disapproved of the other. To his surprise Reppington, who was not a member of the society, promised to join and make his maiden speech. One other member volunteered his services as there was no room for him on the ministerial list. He would speak, he said, but not vote.

Rumpworth opened with the usual speech demanded on such occasions. Political platitudes, economic fallacies, and religious insincerities made up the bulk of an oration which was warmly applauded. Then amid ironic cheers and encouraging remarks Bernard rose. He had decided to reserve

his most crushing arguments for the closing speech which was his privilege as leader, when he could pulverize the arguments of his opponents who had concluded, and so he now contented himself with a dispassionate definition of what Socialism really was, and then sat down. The debate then ran its course, differing in nowise from its predecessors and contemporaries. Competition, initiative, and encouragement of idleness were the main planks in the ministerial program, with occasional appeals to religion and "our glorious aristocracy." The opposition was half-hearted, but Reppington astonished every one by his extraordinary knowledge on the subject. He was the only person in the room who understood a word of economics. Finally Bernard returned to the charge. He attacked each of the main ministerial arguments in turn. Socialism, said his opponents, would abolish competition. All the better. Competition, he held, was an evil. (Oh! oh!) Yes. He would substitute for it a better thing, Co-operation. Capitalism made the world a waste of selfish striving, every man for himself and the weakest to the wall. Why not look upon mankind as a community in which every one strove to improve the world in which all had to live? Let their motto be each for all and all for each. Poverty must be abolished because it was as injurious to the rich as to the poor. (This from Shaw.) Then as to the killing of initiative, had they so low an opinion of themselves and of the rest of mankind as to imagine that human initiative could be measured in terms of shillings and pence? Did they not know that there was such a thing as love of a work for its own sake? The ministry also claimed that Socialism would encourage people to be idle at the expense of the rest. Did not Capitalism do the same? Were not the unemployed a perpetual burden? And what about our pampered idle aristocracy? (Voices: "Not idle!") Yes. Idle aristocracy. Any one who lived on the work of others, be he rich or poor, was an idler. Well, they knew what bees did to

drones. He would do the same to the aristocracy. (Booh!) Some honourable members had said that Socialism was an attack on property. That was not strictly true. Socialism attacked the superfluous and often illgotten wealth of the rich. Capitalism, as Chesterton, an opponent of Socialism, pointed out, attacked the necessities of the poor.

"One word more," he said. "The religious argument has been frequently brought up this evening. Too frequently in my opinion. But I see no force in it. I see no reason why all genuine Christians shouldn't become Socialists. The universal argument against Socialism, which I have already refuted on other grounds, seems to be that it rewards the undeserving as much as the deserving. Well, I say, why not? Christianity preaches 'Do as you would be done by.' Which of you would object to being rewarded undeserved? Therefore I say: 'Practise your religion and pay all equally regardless of their deserts — of which, by the way, you are not the judge.'" (Boohs and slight applause.)

The motion was carried by twenty-six votes to four.

"You're a great rebel except where your own country is concerned," said Mallow after the meeting.

"Oh, go to *Hell!*" replied Bernard.

After this Bernard found himself frequently drawn into argument about Socialism, and the utter inability of his opponents to oppose to him anything but dogma and their own stupidity confirmed his belief in the infallibility of his principles. He was convinced that because arguments could not be found against him they simply did not exist.

One of these conversations is worth recording because it throws a further light on the Ashbury mind. It was Rumpworth who set the question going between himself and Bernard and Willoughby. Beaten in controversy he took refuge behind Mother Church. Thereupon Bernard burst out:

"I'm fed up with the Church and all her ways. She's been a re-actionary force from the beginning of her history

till now. And I tell you this, what first made me think Socialism right was the fact that the Church was against it."

"Well, that's a bloody rotten thing to say," said Rumpworth. "You go a damn sight too far."

And he walked off. Bernard, turning to Willoughby, said:

"Fine moral indignation, eh? And he reads a novel in church and goes to Communion every day because thanksgiving gets him off a few minutes of study."

"Rot!"

"It's true. He bragged of it to me the other day. And he spends his spare time footling around with little boys, what's more. Yet he can't stand plain speaking about the Church."

"Still, that was a bit strong," remonstrated Willoughby. "I mean, even if you think things like that about the Church you shouldn't say them."

"To hell with suppression!" said Bernard. "We shouldn't be afraid of the truth."

"I don't mean you should hide the truth, but you ought to think twice before you trot out a big statement like that. It saves the trouble of taking it back afterwards, you know."

"I don't think I'll ever want to take that back," said Bernard.

"You never know," replied Willoughby.

12

A discussion arose in the recreation room one evening during Bernard's second last term at Ashbury. The participants were Sedgwick, Mallow, Lashworthy, Bernard and one or two others. A boy called Osgood had been reading the Exploits of Brigadier Gerrard and, apropos of some remark made by Sedgwick, related the incident where Gerrard commented upon the delusion common to all nations that their soldiers are braver than those of any other nation.

"And then," Osgood said, "the Brigadier says that isn't

true. 'All nations are equally brave,' he says, 'except that the French are slightly more courageous than the others.'"

Every one laughed, and then Mallow interjected in his deep voice:

"I bet you English think you're the bravest nation in the world."

"Yes. But it's true in our case," said Sedgwick.

"What price Gerrard now?" said Bernard.

"You needn't laugh," said Sedgwick. "Doesn't our history prove it?"

Bernard shrugged his shoulders and remained silent. He had grown tired of arguing with fools. But Mallow was not so constituted.

"That's all my eye," he said. "The French or the Spanish or anybody else could say the same. Give me a decent proof."

"We all know it's true," said Sedgwick, calmly entrenched in self-complacency.

"It's well known," put in Lashworthy.

"Rot!" said Mallow.

"Your opinion doesn't matter a damn," drawled Lashworthy. "You're only a dirty Irishman."

The light of battle leaped in Mallow's ordinarily dull eye at this insult. He went for Lashworthy in a trice and they had a tussle. It was no regular fight. They just bashed each other for a while and then left off as if by mutual consent.

But the incident left an impression on Bernard.

"There must be *something* in this Irish business," he reflected. "Mallow's an awful ass, but he'd hardly fight for nothing. And if Lashworthy did mean something insulting, then . . ." endless vistas of speculation opened before him.

In his perplexity he thought of questioning Murray, but the prospect of a lecture on Home Rule deterred him, so he went to Mallow instead.

"Look here," he said, "don't waste time abusing me for

being no better than an Englishman. Tell me straight out what's at the bottom of this English-Irish business."

"God help you," said Mallow. "Don't you know that the English conquered Ireland?"

"No. When was it?"

"A good while ago. In the reign of Henry the Second."

"Of course. I remember reading something about it."

"Half a line in an English History, I suppose," said Mallow scornfully.

"Yes.— Well, is that all?"

"Isn't it enough?"

"It doesn't affect me very much, I must say."

"Ah, get away," said Mallow. "I'm fed up with you." And he strolled away.

Bernard's knowledge of his native land remained in this state of development until the evening of Felim O'Dwyer's speech on Home Rule in the Debating Society.

Felim O'Dwyer was another of Ashbury's failures. He was a small, slight, fair haired boy two classes below Bernard, and therefore a neophyte to the Debating Society. Owing to that strange clannishness that keeps boys in cliques and sets of their own, and also to the disparity in their ages and position in the school he was known to Bernard only by name and repute. From the viewpoint of the average school boy he was a person of no account, being weak in body, timid in character, and indifferent to athletics. But he was at the top of his class without appearing to exert himself unduly, and he was known to have a sharp and witty tongue. Besides being a classical scholar he was the best essayist in the school, and had beaten Bernard in the contest for the Senior Essay Prize. In addition to this literary distinction he acquired notoriety from a note book he always carried in his pocket in which he scribbled satirical verses and lampoons about his fellows. These he used to recite to his companions and in consequence received many kicks from big boys infuriated by hearing their rimed failings chanted in public. Ledbury nearly wrenched his arm

from its socket for a cutting Limerick, while Mallow on the other hand was rather flattered by a little quatrain which ran:

Brian Mallow
Will die on a gallow
By hook or by crook,
It's his favourite nook.

And Bernard himself was made to wince by a similar one:

Bernard Lascelles
In Spain has castles.
That's why
You never can catch his eye.

There was also a comic opera which introduced most of Ashbury's celebrities. Bernard figured in a stage direction which read:

Enter Lascelles on a high horse, very much in earnest.

It can be easily understood that O'Dwyer was unpopular. His only friend was Bernard's brother Eugene, and he seemed to take pleasure in his isolation.

A Home Rule debate at Ashbury always ran on certain traditional lines. The Unionist side simply abused Ireland and asserted that if England had not conquered her some other country would. Occasionally some original genius would proclaim that to be governed by England was freedom enough for anybody, England being herself the "land of the free." As for the Home Rulers, they were mainly amiable people who advocated Home Rule on the ground that it would make the Irish more "loyal." The Irish boys, whatever their politics at home, always came out with rebellious speeches as a reaction. To this rule Bernard and Molloy were exceptions. Molloy always spoke for England because that was the respectable side, and Bernard did not speak at all because he was uninstructed and uninterested.

When it came to O'Dwyer's turn to speak he leaped to his

feet flushed with anger and trembling with impatience. Some one had said that the best Irish people did not want Home Rule, and O'Dwyer seized upon this as the text for his attack.

"The honourable member is quite right," he said. "The best Irish people — and I am quite aware that the honourable member and I hold different views as to who *they* are — don't want Home Rule. But what do they want? They want — and I want — separation. We want a republic. (Hisses.) Yes. A Republic. But I don't intend to argue the point here. It would be quite useless, and I don't consider that it's any concern of this house. I only got up to set your doubts at rest as to what Ireland really wants, and having done so I'll sit down." (Groans.)

Bernard observed Lashworthy approach O'Dwyer after the debate and say:

"You ought to keep that kind of thing for your pigstye in Connemara. Remember you're in England now."

"I thought I *was* in a pigstye," replied O'Dwyer. "Silly mistake, wasn't it?"

Lashworthy, nonplussed, turned away.

Bernard determined to make O'Dwyer's acquaintance. The supreme contempt with which he had treated the society rather appealed to him, and the fact that O'Dwyer was like himself an outsider and a revolutionary was a further recommendation. But their meeting, brought about by Eugene, was a failure. Bernard sought eagerly for information about Ireland, but O'Dwyer was one of those quick impetuous people who are too impatient to give full explanations, and too patently contemptuous of views they disagree with to be successful propagandists. Moreover he failed to realize that Bernard, owing to his origin and training, was without both the intellectual and emotional fundamentals of Nationalism essential to making the subject vital or even important. To Bernard it was only a small problem of local government that was under discussion and O'Dwyer's excitability over the question irritated and annoyed him. At

the same time the force of his facts and logic went home and made of him a dispassionate esoteric devolutionist.

"I don't see why Home Rule shouldn't satisfy you," he said, and against this breakwater the torrent of O'Dwyer's eloquence dashed in vain. "This republic business seems to me a mere piece of narrow minded selfishness. It just means cutting yourself off from your fellow men in England and the world. It isn't progress at all. It's reaction."

They got more and more on each other's nerves. O'Dwyer thought Bernard self-satisfied, and Bernard thought O'Dwyer needlessly offensive, for the latter made difference in argument a personal matter and always broke out sooner or later into heated language. And with the egotism and confidence of clever youth each felt that any one who disagreed with him must be a knave or a fool.

One day Bernard wound up the controversy by saying:

"Anyway, the question isn't of tremendous importance. The world is a big place and Ireland a very small part of it. I think it's sheer waste of time to bother about such a piffling little corner."

"I suppose you think that a bloody fine broadminded sort of thing to say," sneered O'Dwyer.

"I think it's common sense."

"Common high falutin excuse for dodging what you don't understand."

"Don't excite yourself over nothing."

"Is your intelligence nothing then?"

They descended to vulgar abuse after that and their acquaintanceship terminated.

13

Bernard's school-days were drawing to a close, but he was destined to have one more experience before the end. On arriving at Dillingworth station for his last term he found that he had mislaid his ticket. It took some time to unearth it from a forgotten pocket and when he arrived at the gates he found that all the brakes sent from the school

were packed and ready to move off. One little boy was in a similar predicament, and was also uncertain of the road, so they walked up together in the summer evening. Next day they passed each other in the corridor and Bernard nodded to the youngster, who returned the salute with a smile: he had a very pleasant smile. This happened once or twice afterwards, and suddenly Bernard became aware that he was taking too much interest in the boy.

No. He was not a degenerate. He was a victim of the system that herds young children and craving adolescents together in a harsh comfortless atmosphere. An unnatural system, and "unnatural deeds do breed unnatural trouble." . . . Love, in one form or another, is essential to all human beings. It is the source of life, the nutriment of infancy, the prop of youth, the end and the purpose of maturity, and the gratification of parenthood. The very existence of the universe is due to the love of the Creator for creating and the created thing, and the creative origin and purpose of love is its most vital claimant and impelling fact. Hence the evil of this harsh unwholesome herding of youth. You take boyhood, passively loving, leaning on love for nourishment, instruction, and protection, away from the love of its natural fosterers and protectors; and you place it in a cold, rough, loveless atmosphere along with adolescence, actively loving, seeking in love self-expression and self-fulfilment, exuberant as the spring, hungry for beauty, unschooled to restraint, with the seeds of self-reproduction vividly ripening and clamouring to be sown, and the naturally unnatural result follows inevitably. Pedagogues may blind themselves to facts and feel that they have done their duty in expelling a flagrant case, but rare individual depravity spreads but small contagion. Any mind free from self-interest in the matter can see that it is the system that is at fault.

Bernard, being healthy and clean minded, fought the temptation. He fought it with his own weapons: with his manliness, with his self-respect, with his hatred of softness and uncleanness, with his love of order and restraint. For a

time he was successful, but soon he found his defences insufficient, and began to realize that alone he was but a weak child. He discovered that he needed help.

And then all of a sudden he began to pray. Warm springs in his soul that he had imagined to be dried up broke the dams he had built for them and gushed forth in a comforting stream. Faith and hope and love came back to him without any intellectual effort. He felt like a child whose mother, flouted formerly, had come to its rescue in distress and danger. God had come to him, it seemed, in sheer pity to save his tottering manhood.

So he returned temporarily, at any rate, to the shelter of the rock.

14

The last day arrived.

Willoughby had invited Bernard and Murray to spend a week at his home in Warwickshire after the Public Schools Camp, to which they were now going, was over.

"We'll have some sport," he said. "My brother will be down from Oxford and he'll probably have a friend with him."

The three were going up to Oxford next year, and had decided on Magdalen College.

And now the O.T.C. was drawn up in the quadrangle for the final inspection. Bernard in khaki with three stripes on his arm cursed his section in truly military style. Then came the inspection, followed by the command:

"Fall out. Into the brakes with you."

To the scream of bugles and the thud of drums the brakes filled up.

"Mind you all join the Union," said the Prefect, as he bid good-bye to those who were leaving for good.

Then the band ceased playing and packed itself into the last brake. Some one in front struck up the Ashbury song. Out dashed the horses through the gate way and the old grey mansion receded in the distance.

All the way to the station and afterwards in the train Bernard sat in silent meditation.

"Old Ashbury!" he said to himself. "What has she done for me? Given me a smattering of culture and a lot of other stuff that I'd have had to unlearn if I hadn't rejected it at the start. You're a failure, old Ashbury. You tried to make me religious and you nearly made me an atheist; you tried to make me a celibate and you nearly made me a rake; you tried to make me an English gentleman and you've made me a cosmopolitan Socialist. . . . I wonder what you're making of Eugene."

Quite suddenly he realized that he and Eugene had been strangers to one another all these years.

"Old Alma Mater, you're a fraud," he said to himself as the train slid out of Dillingworth station.

Through a gap in the hills he caught a last glimpse of the towers of Ashbury dim in the distance.

CHAPTER V

WILLOUGHBY TOWERS

I

A GREAT, silent, smooth-running motor car carried three sunburnt, khaki-clad young men from Deeping Station to Willoughby Towers. Along the broad highway it sped, then wound through trim green-hedged byways to emerge on a long straight road of a different complexion, narrow and unfenced.

"The Roman road," said Willoughby.

"Queer how countries show their character in their roads," said Murray. "Roman roads are hard and straight like bands of steel: conqueror's roads to hold a land in subjection. English roads show England's love for personal property-rights; they dodge and twist about, skirting this man's meadow and avoiding that man's mill, and insinuating themselves between the baron's demesne and the cottager's kitchen garden. French roads combine efficiency with beauty, running from place to place by the shortest and most picturesque route; and if the way isn't naturally beautiful they make it so artificially by means of shade trees. I'm sure Russian roads are dreary and melancholy, and German roads smooth and efficient; and I'd like to know if Scottish roads are dour and Turkish roads sinuous. As for Irish roads, they're chucked down anyhow, all over the place. . . . Hello! We're coming out on to the high road again."

"Half a mile more," said Willoughby.

They reached a lodge gate which was opened by an obsequious gate keeper exactly like a thousand other gate keepers. They drove up a serpentine avenue between rows

of cedars, crunching the thickly laid gravel. The chauffeur tootled his horn and as they emerged on a great circular sweep of gravel before the house an old gentleman came down the steps. Willoughby waved his service cap and the old gentleman cried out: "Here we are again." The car stopped, panting, and the three young men jumped out.

Willoughby introduced his friends to his father, who welcomed them in a bluff, breezy manner. After a moment he said:

"You'll find your mother in the drawing-room, Jack," whereat Willoughby sped off into the house. Then, to a servitor standing impassively and unobtrusively in the background:

"Show these gentlemen to their rooms, Hawkins."

Murray and Bernard were conducted through the hall, cumbrously adorned with suits of armour, stags' heads, skins of wild beasts, and portraits of departed Willoughbys; up a grand oak-balustraded stairway; and then by bewildering corridors to two bedrooms side by side. Hawkins wanted Bernard's keys to unpack for him, but Bernard detested the flunkeyism with which the well-to-do English surround themselves and refused this service. After washing, shaving and changing into civilian attire he went into Murray's room, and a moment later Willoughby arrived and led them down to the drawing-room to introduce them to his mother. She was a tall, pale, delicate woman, who received them with a cordiality that was transparently superficial. Her husband, however, a fine type of the robust English country gentleman, did much to set them at their ease. They were engaged in the delicate process of eating thin bread and butter and drinking china tea out of eggshell balanced on their knees when three other young men entered the room, who were introduced as:

"Mr. Hastings, Mr. Moore, and my eldest son Frank."

Frank Willoughby was just an older version of Jack, somewhat more polished and somewhat less ingenuous. Hastings was a rather pompous young man, fair haired, not

over tidy in his dress, and obviously not in the best physical training. Moore was tall, of dark complexion, with a slightly bitter smile perpetually hovering over his lips. High cheek bones, a long upper lip, and a shade of accent showing through the Oxford varnish of his speech proclaimed the Irishman. These three had just been served with tea when every one rose at the entry of two girls. One, Maud Willoughby, instantly attracted the gaze of every male stranger in the room, for she was the typical English beauty of magazine story writers and illustrators. She knew it, and she carried herself accordingly. As for her friend, Janet Morecambe, the minx must have chosen her for a foil. She was small and shapeless, and save for a pair of piercing eyes, totally undistinguished in appearance.

A light conversation began and rambled along pleasantly, and Bernard, looking at Maud's profile, decided that destiny had been kind to him. He almost hated Willoughby for tearing him along with Murray away from the company, in order, as he said, to show them round the place. Throughout the process he was so absent minded and distraught that Murray at any rate found little difficulty in diagnosing the cause.

They met again at dinner, when Bernard to his delight found himself placed next to her. At first the ceremonial nature of the meal rather oppressed him. The great size of the dining-room, hung with the usual manorial relics of the chase and the glories of departed days; of the table itself, and of the other appointments of the room; the formality of everything, of the well-dressed company, of the statuesque and attentive menials, of the whole ritual designed to complicate rather than to comfort this everyday process of assimilating nourishment; all this weighed upon him and made him nervous and anxious. Also he was reflecting upon the little parody of all this time honoured observation nightly performed in Merrion Square. A glass of sherry restored his confidence and he perceived that Maud was deliberately trying to entertain and interest him.

"I've heard a great deal about you from Jack," she said. "He's always talking about you."

"He must have exhausted all the good he had to say very early," said Bernard. "I hope he was discreet about the rest."

"He tells me you're a terrible Socialist," said Maud.

"Nothing terrible about me, I assure you," said Bernard. "But the rest is true enough."

They were drawn into the general conversation for a time. Old Mr. Willoughby was quite the most talkative person in the room and it was easy to set his hearty laugh going. Bernard did it frequently. Hastings also talked a good deal, very seriously and very egotistically. The projected insurance act was the topic of the day and he was an ardent supporter of the measure. It was on this subject that Mrs. Willoughby made her sole contribution to the conversation by remarking that for her part she would never lick stamps for a vulgar little Welsh demagogue.

"Let him lick them himself if he likes," she added.

The two Willoughbys told their mother that this wasn't practical politics and diverted the conversation to pleasanter channels such as the prospects for the Twelfth.

Moore, the dark Irishman, took little part in the conversation, answering briefly when directly addressed and otherwise remaining silent. The queer little bitter smile seldom left his lips.

Bernard and Maud returned to their own conversation. It was trifling enough, but with her eyes and with her smile she enmeshed him in a tangle of enchantment. After the ladies had withdrawn he moodily gnawed his cigar while the other men chatted, and that night before going to bed he walked among the cedars, dreaming about her under the moon.

Life at Willoughby Towers passed very pleasantly. They rode and fished and played tennis, and on one occasion they

watched a cricket match on the village green. They motored to Warwick and to Coventry and to Stratford-on-Avon, where they were shown over Shakespeare's house by a guide who recited by heart a guide-book description of the place, ending up with: "And now, ladies and gentlemen, here is the ingle nook in which no doubt the bard often sat. Perhaps you would like to sit there and see if any of the noble thoughts which inspired him might come to yourselves."

Conversation flowed pleasantly in the evenings. Mr. Willoughby was a man who treated youth with respect, differing thus from Bernard's father, who seemed to consider age and wisdom synonymous, and treated the opinions of his juniors either with contempt if he disagreed with them or with exasperating patronage if they coincided with his own. Mr. Willoughby, however, was inclined to the humorous view of life. Progressive opinions in young men he received with a tolerant smile and the prophecy that they would wear off in time. His contribution to a social argument that sprang up one evening was to the effect that industrialism itself was the cause of poverty, and that England would not be herself again till she returned to the good old days when the squire paternally ruled his tenants and the tenants were respectful to the squire and all was agricultural bliss and harmony.

"But your very socks and shirts are the products of industrialism," said Bernard.

"I'd cheerfully go back to homespuns," said the squire.

"And give up your motor?" queried Bernard.

"There are flaws in my theory, I know," said Mr. Willoughby. "Well, there are more in Socialism. But I can't help thinking the world was a happier place before the invention of machinery.

"Happy, but inconvenient," said Hastings.

"The world could be both happy and convenient," put in Mrs. Willoughby, "if politicians wouldn't stir up the lower classes and make them discontented."

This put an end to the discussion, for nobody cared for the futile task of arguing with Mrs. Willoughby.

But conversations among the younger members of the party uninterfered with by their elders frequently took place when, the weather being too hot for tennis, they lay basking in the sun on the lawn. All aspired to be politicians, and two of them, at any rate, were in close touch with existing politics; for Hastings was the son of a Radical M.P., and Murray's father was prominent in the United Irish League in Liverpool. Willoughby compromised between Ashbury and Bernard by developing into a kind of Tory Democrat, his brother Frank being a Tory pure and simple. Murray was a democratic Imperialist and Hastings followed his father's principles. Moore appeared to have no politics. He sat apart from the discussions smoking endless cigarettes and showing no sign of interest beyond an extra twitch occasionally of that queer smile of his. As for Bernard he intervened occasionally when some peculiarly irritating argument dragged him from dreams of Maud. Maud herself was never present to stimulate him to eloquence, but her friend Janet frequently joined the conclave and was always decidedly on the progressive side.

The Liberal program of land legislation, reform of the House of Lords, payment of members, national insurance, and Home Rule furnished good ground for controversy. Frank was against it in toto. The world was a fairly comfortable place, he said, for those who were even moderately well off, and as for the poor they were an inevitable evil. There had always been poverty and there always would be, so it was no use trying to abolish it. Let them alleviate it by organized Charity if they wished. As for the proposed legislation it was an attempt to filch government from the only class fitted to govern. Privileged classes were inevitable, and it was their privileges that fitted them for government. Payment of members abolished the excellent principle of gratuitous public service and opened parliament to needy professional politicians. Home Rule, of course, was an

absurdity. They might as well restore the Heptarchy.

This line of argument produced violent opposition from Hastings, who, typically English himself, made no attack on the false premises and axioms and illogical deductions of his opponent but simply put axiom against axiom and substituted rhetorical flourishes for reason. He was for government of the people by the people, the greatest good of the greater number and democratic measures generally. He talked of the anachronism of the House of Lords and the anomaly of Dublin Castle Rule and proclaimed equality of opportunity as his motto.

But Bernard had recently been reading Shaw.

"What's the use of equality of opportunity," he asked, "if you don't go on with it? It's no use leaving things half done. Equality of opportunity is no use when there isn't equality of ability. I'm for pushing the thing to its logical conclusion and establishing complete equality of income."

"Now, Bernard," said Willoughby, "you're not going to get in a lecture on Socialism. We all know that it's an infallible remedy in theory and would work admirably if the whole world was populated by perfectly reasonable beings like you and Bernard Shaw. But it isn't."

Bernard, his argumentative energy sapped by love-lorn dreams, subsided into contemptuous silence.

"I take it," resumed Hastings, "that the British Empire has a mission of freedom to preach to the world. How can it fulfil that mission when it is governed by a worn out feudal system, when a large percentage of its population lives in poverty, ignorance and subjection, and when the Irish question remains as a running sore at its very vitals?"

"Free Ireland," said Murray, "and she'll be the loyalest spot where the British flag flies."

"I agree," said Willoughby. "But I think Hastings is too sweeping in his notions. I grant that things are pretty bad but I don't think our system itself is entirely responsible. It has its virtue as well as its vices, and if you discard the system you discard its virtues along with it, and

merely let yourself in for a new system with all sorts of new virtues but with a lot of new vices as well. A radical change would simply put the Empire out of the running as a civilizing force. It would turn all its energy in on itself."

"I'm all for reforming what you've got instead of taking up new things," said Murray. "I take it, Willoughby, that you and I are for putting a reformed British Empire in the van of the world's progress."

Willoughby agreed.

"Set a streptococcus to cure sepsis," interjected Moore. It was his first remark that afternoon, and it was unintelligible to his hearers.

"What's that?" some one asked.

"Good lord!" said Moore, "it makes me laugh to hear you fellows gassing away like a lot of unsophisticated school-girls about a world you know nothing about. Reform the British Empire by a lot of priggish legislation! My hat! You might as well preach vegetarianism to a pack of wolves. Make the British Empire a civilizing force! You might as well make burglars into policemen. You might as well set out to evangelize Hell by converting the devil."

"I don't think that's a fair way to describe the British Empire," objected Willoughby.

"Well, go into politics and you soon will."

"Great Scott, Fergus," said Frank, "you're the deuce of a Rad. I never knew you thought that sort of thing before. Why did you never come out like that at the Union?"

"Because I'm not interested in politics."

"So I thought once. But, good lord, you know, this speech just now ——" He paused, wordless.

"Forget it," said Moore. "It was only an ebullition of feeling."

"Don't tell me," said Bernard, "that you aren't interested in politics."

"It's quite true."

"But why?"

"Politics are only one of the torments of this Hell we call the world."

"This Hell?" asked several.

"Yes. I agree with Father Keegan in John Bull's Other Island that this earth is Hell and that we are here being punished for sins committed in a former existence. Why? What's the worst of the torments of Hell? The perpetual presence of devils, of course, and being governed and played with by them. Well, isn't that the way the world is run? The rottenest blackguards are the successful politicians and it's they who rule us. It makes me fairly sick to think that I can't take up a newspaper without seeing a eulogy of some dirty grafter or an illustrated weekly without his photograph. And these demons make our laws, take charge of our money, educate us and deal out justice to us, and when they quarrel with another set of equally infamous scoundrels in another country they make us fight their quarrel and pay for it, and when it's over they reap the reward in collusion with the other scoundrels. These are the rulers. And if a truly great and noble man appears and shows up this tyranny and corruption the rulers persecute him as a traitor and criminal, and the people scorn him as a crank. Where else are we but in Hell, where the wrong always triumphs over the right; where the great men are the successful robbers and the great nations the oppressors of the small? And to crown everything, where there isn't a dirty deed done by man or nation that won't find some sanctimonious humbug of a journalist to justify or extenuate it. Ruled by devils body and mind, where are we but in Hell?"

"Moore's a pessimist," said Hastings.

"Pessimist!" snorted Moore. "I wish you wouldn't use clichés you don't know the meaning of. You English radicals *think* in clichés."

"Your cynicism is appalling, Moore," said Willoughby. "The world isn't one fraction as bad as you make out."

"More cliché. What's cynicism?"

Willoughby seemed at a loss to explain. Moore went on:

"Cynicism, as I understand it, means scoffing at sacred things, or taking a flippant view of serious things. British politics is neither, and you've no more right to call me cynic for my poor opinion of them than I have to call you sentimentalist for your exalted one. Labels and phrases are ruinous to reasoning."

"Party politics," said Bernard, "have always seemed to me to be a huge game. They can't be called government. The successful politician is the man who gets his wishes put into force by inducing the majority of the people to vote for him on some other issue."

"Not a bad definition at all," said Moore approvingly.

"It only applies to the Tories," said Hastings stoutly.

"Rot!" cried Frank Willoughby. "And anyway, if England's to boss the world I'm all for a strong navy and cutting out politics at the Admiralty."

Moore resumed his discourse as if heedless of this dialogue.

"Two mutually contradictory statements cannot both be true," he said. "Yet it is upon the denial of this self-evident axiom that the system of party politics is based. Under the circumstances government is carried on by making a case for what may well be the worse cause."

"Take the case of Ireland. You English have no more right there than you have in the moon. That's not an opinion. That's truth based on abstract right and the facts of the case. The only thing to consider then is whether your presence is by Ireland's consent and whether it benefits her. The former condition you know to be untrue, but you don't even try to get at the truth of the latter. One party supports one view, the other supports the opposite, and either party might support either view as it suited them. Then the Unionist crowd finding the argument going against them fall back on the line that whether it's good for Ireland or not England must keep her; and the Liberals, beaten in barefacedness, make a compromise and bring in a bill to give

her partial freedom. Meanwhile the two parties wrangle over the case without using a single argument that is applicable or vital and without the smallest consideration of truth or justice. That's British politics."

"But the Irish are such a disloyal crowd," said Frank, whereat Moore burst out laughing and said:

"Look here. We've had enough politics. The sun's a bit lower. Let's have a sett."

Janet drew Bernard aside as the others went over to the tennis courts. He yielded to her, and they walked through an arch of roses into the flower garden.

"That was an interesting talk," said Janet. "You Irish are certainly our intellectual superiors. You and Mr. Moore were the only people who got anywhere near to the depths of the question today."

Bernard began to stammer some modest disclaimer, but Janet impatiently resumed:

"Mr. Hastings and myself, and perhaps Jack Willoughby are all democrats in a kind of way. But it's artificial in us. Bring us in touch with working people and we show at once that we feel we are a race apart. But democracy seems to come naturally to you Irish. I can't imagine you or Mr. Moore doing anything snobbish."

"To tell you the truth," said Bernard, "I've only just begun to realize that there's any difference between Irish and English. My father's a fierce old Tory and Unionist, you know."

"I've a tremendous admiration for Ireland," said Janet. "I think she's the finest nation in the world."

"That's strange," said Bernard. "I don't know anything at all about her."

"You ought to read," said Janet.

Bernard watched her as she bent her graceless figure to gather some sweet pea for her belt. He was thinking of Maud. Lately she had seemed to take pleasure in his company, and that morning their hands had met momentarily and he fancied that hers had been in no hurry to resign

contact. But her talk was a little vapid, he could not help feeling in spite of his rapture that Janet was more interesting and her voice was softer and pleasanter. If he could only hear her without seeing. . . . There was something about her eyes too, especially when she looked at him. . . . Perhaps . . .

Life was a complex thing.

And then came Maud along the path, making the roses fairer.

3

Moore's diatribe on politics roused intense interest and curiosity in Bernard, and on the first occasion on which he succeeded in finding him alone he began questioning him on the subject.

"You don't really believe all that tosh about this being hell, do you?" he demanded.

"Well," said Moore, throwing away his cigarette and lighting another, "I do and I don't."

It was a fine summer evening and they were standing in the gravelled space before the house. Bernard drew his companion towards the avenue as he spoke.

"Politics," said Moore, "mean different things to different people. To some they're just a newspaper topic not to be taken too seriously. To you they're among the important things of life, and so they were to me once, though in a different sense. I find it hard to explain things to you, because for all your ability and honesty your upbringing has left a gap in your mind and soul which I see no way of filling. You see, you belong to one of the strangest communities of men that ever existed. . . . The Cleruchs of the Athenian Empire seem to be your only parallel in history, for, like them, you live in a country for the purpose of holding it for another country, but, unlike them, you are natives of the subject country. In that country you have no part. You know little and care less for her traditions; you don't observe her customs; you don't think as she does; your heroes

are not her heroes, and your flag is not her flag; and instead of that patriotism which is a natural feeling innate in every normal man you have a bastard thing you call 'loyalty,' which there is no defining and which is nothing more in reality than the fealty which a garrison owes to its paymasters. To the bulk of your kind politics is merely the method of keeping the natives in subjection. To you, who are a thinker, and, I fancy, one of those people who are born to be revolutionaries, they are the vital goal of your reforming aspirations, but since your origin has made you a man without a country you're developing into a sort of cosmopolitan doctrinaire, and the whole basis and foundation of my politics must seem to you small and feeble."

"Let's have it, anyway," said Bernard.

"Well, I'm one of the natives whom your crowd keeps in subjection, and to us the question of ending that subjection is the most important thing in our politics. To you England and Ireland are more or less one and the same. You have never read the history which would have told you that the one is the implacable enemy of the other, has ruined her and is continuing to ruin her. Irish politics to you, supposing you to adopt Home Rule as part of your progressive creed, is merely a question of methods of government. To us it is a question of our existence. Now the passage of time and the confusion of thought natural to ordinary men have left this whole business very complicated and two-sided to the superficial observer, but I found out very early in life that the truth at the bottom of every question is simple and easy to find if you disregard the side issues raised by those interested in obscuring it. It was enough for me to read, and when I was twelve I was an emotional separatist and by seventeen a logical one.

"You know nothing about ninety-eight and the United Irishmen. These words bring no thrill to your spine, so you'll find it hard to appreciate my feelings when I went down to the local branch of the United Irish League expecting to be presented with a pike and a revolver, and

was offered instead a resolution of confidence to vote for.

"Well, I found in that league of professed patriots nothing but cant and self deception. I won't go into that. One example of the kind of thing is enough. They were going to accept that emasculated measure called Home Rule as a final settlement. Of course I objected to that, so they consoled me by saying that this was a piece of deception necessary to success. Well, I don't mind deceiving the enemy, but that piece of deception deceived themselves and deceived the Irish people, and it'll be the destruction of the whole movement eventually.

"Of course I learnt sense in the League. An appreciation of relative values was enough to show me the futility of force and the necessity of diplomacy, but soon I began to realize the futility of diplomacy also. If you've followed Irish politics at all you'd see how our party is beaten and bamboozled at every turn. I've a symbol in my mind for our present state of affairs: a dwarf with a sword fighting a giant finds he can't win, so throws away his sword and appeals to the giant's reason. Somewhat futile, eh? Well, when I realized that force was useless and reasoning absurd I began to despair, and it was then that this predestined and perpetual triumph of might over right first made me inclined to agree with Father Keegan, not literally, you know, but as a sort of gratification of a feeling of poetical futility. So you see me at twenty-three quite convinced that Ireland is a hopeless case, and while I refuse homage to England I've no intention of wasting my time in a futile struggle against her."

"There's a fellow I know at Ashbury," said Bernard, "who holds all the principles that you do, but he hasn't given up hope."

"He's young," said Moore.

"I think," said Bernard, "if I once had the truth and the facts of the case and really felt that the cause was mine, I'd go on until I found a way out."

"It would be sheer waste of time. I've come to the con-

clusion that the affairs of this world aren't really worth bothering about at all. Look at that star. It's billions of miles away. It's perhaps ten times the size of our sun, yet how small it appears. Look at this whole universe of stars, all immense, all infinitely far away. Now imagine yourself withdrawn into space of billions of billions of miles until all these stars that we see coalesce into a point of light such as one star seems to us now. What insignificant specks are men now, and how contemptible their affairs!"

"I don't agree," said Bernard. "Size is an accident and not frightfully impressive when you see enough of it. Besides, everything has an intrinsic value which isn't altered by its relative value to other things."

"Humph!" said Moore. "You're a better philosopher than I am."

They had passed the gate and gone some distance down the road. They now turned and retraced their steps.

"I'm an unfortunate man," Moore suddenly exclaimed. "Everything I touch seems to go wrong. . . . I fell in love with Maud last year and she seemed to encourage me. I came here this summer with the full intention of proposing to her, and what must she do but fall in love with the first sight of your handsome face."

Bernard's heart leaped. In his exultation the misery of his companion was nothing to him.

"Do you — do you really mean that?" he asked timidly.

"I'm afraid I do."

Up the avenue they went, the light hearted and the heavy hearted side by side.

"She loves me, she loves me," Bernard kept saying to himself, and could hardly sleep for joy.

4

But the lyrical exaltation of the night gave place to doubt and hesitation in the cold light of day.

"Love me? What does Moore know about it? He's not infallible. She encouraged *him* once."

He was abnormally sensitive, and feared a rebuff should he presume too far on insufficient evidence.

Then in the morning he encountered Janet, and they had an extremely interesting talk, political and philosophical. The attraction exercised by her mind for his was undeniable, but Bernard did not want to fall in love with this ungraceful being. Why the devil did she obtrude upon his idyll?

And later on.

"She'd laugh at me," he said to himself. "She's lived all her life in luxury. It'll be five years before I've a profession and five more before I could marry. What a romantic ass I am!"

Abruptly he began to think of Moore.

"Bet he makes half his melancholy for himself," he muttered. "*I'm* not going to get like that."

The Irish question thrust itself on his attention.

"Queer business," he said. "Doesn't seem to appeal to me somehow. Haven't any grip of the essentials. Don't *know* enough about it."

He resolved to seek information.

Wandering through the gardens in the fresh morning air he came upon Moore and Murray arguing in a pseudo-rustic bower.

"Rubbish!" Moore was saying. "This partnership stunt simply won't work. Even if all the material points you make were granted (and I don't grant them) there's the spiritual objection. The two countries are incompatible, and that's the long and the short of it. The tradition, spirit, and purpose of the one are absolutely hostile to those of the other. You couldn't find common ground for Tone and Castlereagh, could you?"

"I suppose not."

"Neither could you for the countries they served. Where one man's patriot is another man's traitor what is their common interest?"

"Those days are past."

"Yes. But not done with."

"The modern Liberal spirit has changed everything."

"Only the phrases. Not the realities."

"I don't agree with you."

"I don't care whether you do or not. Ten years hence, when Home Rule is no nearer than it is today, you will."

Moore observed Bernard at the entrance to the bower. Pointing to Murray he said:

"Here's a man who believes in the English."

"What's wrong with the English?" asked Bernard.

"Oh, nothing at all. Nothing at all, except that they're the most selfish, self-satisfied, hypocritical, vulgar, materialistic people on the face of the earth."

He went on in a kind of litany:

"The English have grabbed half the world, and yet they're never done talking of freedom. They pretend to believe that their empire was come by honestly and humanely.

"The English can never see any point of view but their own.

"The English expect gratitude for injuries given. The Russians have conquered Poland but they don't expect them to be 'loyal.' The English are always preaching 'loyalty' to Ireland.

"The Englishman thinks that lapse of time can wipe out any crime. They forgive and forget all their own offences.

"The English are more self opinionated than all the rest of mankind put together. If some scandal in the government of their Empire is revealed they talk of 'un-English' methods. We Irish, from our experience of them, know better. We drop the 'un.'

"The English are so self-satisfied that satire doesn't hurt them.

"Prove a case to an Englishman with the simplest, straightest logic; prove it up to the hilt, and he'll only say: 'Yes. I quite see your point. There's something in what you say.'

"Oh, but they're damned fools. They think in phrases and mixed metaphors and they never follow an idea as far as

it'll go. Their philosophy is summed up in priggish proverbs and their morality in tuppenny maxims.

"Complete summary of the English mind. Captain of sinking ship: 'Now, men, be British.'"

"Oh, damn the English!" he concluded, and lit another cigarette.

"You're an irreconcilable," said Murray.

"You've lived too long in England," retorted Moore.

"That's just what I expected you to say."

"Chuck it, both of you," interrupted Bernard. "Come out and enjoy the sunshine."

They found Willoughby and walked to Deeping and back before lunch. The pleasant agricultural country-side seemed to bask as much in its own prosperity as in the sun. Bernard mentally compared the neat pretty village with those he had seen in Ireland, but said nothing for fear of eliciting another diatribe from Moore. They drank lemonade in the clean cool parlour of a picturesque inn which suggested fresh comparisons.

On the way home Bernard found an opportunity to say to Moore:

"You remember that symbol of yours about the dwarf and the giant? How would it do if the dwarf took to persuasion *without* giving up his sword? Sort of drive home his points, wouldn't it?"

"Especially when the giant is at heart a coward," added Moore.

5

Mrs. Willoughby gave a small dance the night before her guests' departure, and Maud, for reasons best known to herself, put on her most ravishing frock for the occasion. As a matter of fact she was slightly in love with Bernard, and she felt that during the last couple of days he had not been doing his duty. She had observed a certain slackening in his attentions, and her preparations were made with the object of revivifying them.

And Bernard failed to respond. Nay, he gave at least four dances to her friend Janet. Could it be possible that ——? No. Absurd.

The truth was that the hard facts of life were too much for Bernard. He dared not make the plunge, weighted as he was with the prospect of those ten years. He asked for three dances only, and she punished him by refusing to grant the third, and by giving half a dozen to young Slitherly, a neighbour. Bernard saw here an age-long romance and sadly took it as his congé.

To all else the dance was a most enjoyable affair. To Maud it was an exasperation; to Bernard a torture. Their second dance together was towards the end of the evening. Maud pleaded fatigue so they retired to a conservatory to sit it out. All the story-book accessories to romance were present; drooping palms, the scent of flowers; the half-light; the music in the distance. Maud gazed with her wonderful eyes into his; her elbow, on the arm of her chair, came in contact with his; her hair fluttered in the faint breeze. She gave him many conversational openings, but he was in a mood of such blank pessimism that he gave no heed to the most obvious, and at the beginning of the next dance they parted in silence.

So ended his first romance.

Next day the house party broke up. Bernard got a stiff farewell from Mrs. Willoughby and a genial one from her husband.

"Come again soon," he said.

"Good-bye, old man. See you at Magdalen," said Willoughby at the station.

6

But a disappointment awaited Bernard when he reached home.

A fashionable physician's life is a vicious circle: he must live expensively in order to have a big practice, and he must have a big practice in order to live expensively. When in addition he is lavishly hospitable, has extravagant tastes in

wine and cigars, and has a reputation as an art connoisseur to maintain, life ceases to be an economic proposition. In order to keep the glitter and the luxury, necessities must go by the board, and in many a Merriam Square mansion more money is spent on cigars than on butter, on entertaining one's friends than on educating one's children. Then a knight has to pay heavier for everything than the simple and unadorned, so one day Sir Eugene realized that he must pull in somewhere. Humming and hawing he approached his son.

"I'm afraid, old chap," he said, "that money matters are going a bit hard with me at present. I've been having a lot of expenses lately and some investments I've made haven't turned out too well. So you see——Oxford's a damned expensive place——" (This he jerked out suddenly. Bernard's eyes made humming and hawing impossible.) "Damned expensive," he re-iterated. "I wouldn't like to send my son there unless I could give him enough money so as he could shine as well as any one else. No poor hard-working scholars for me. How will Trinity suit you?"

Bernard, bitterly disappointed, said it would have to do. It was a hard blow to him. It meant losing all his hopes and projects, all the grand talks and theorizings he had promised himself, all his plans for galvanizing the academic heart of the Empire with revolutionary ideas. Also it meant losing Willoughby.

"There are worse Universities than Trinity," said his father, observing his troubled face.

A few days afterwards Bernard met Geoffrey Manders on the beach at Bundoran. Manders was a Clongownian but they had been at the same preparatory school and had frequently met afterwards when on holiday. They had many tastes in common, both literary and artistic, and they both held cosmopolitan and socialistic views. Bernard told him of the change in his prospects and Manders said:

"Yes. Trinity's pretty small beer compared with Oxford.

Look here, why not strike out a new line entirely and come to the National? I've just got my Matric there."

The National University, only just founded, was but a name to Bernard.

"I'll think about it," he said.

"It's something new in Universities," said Manders. "No traditions about it at all. Trinity's just a second rate Oxford. Quite as musty and not half so magnificent. You'd only stifle there. It's a mere Rathmines university, if you know what I mean. The National's new. It may be a bit shoddy, but we might make something of it."

"The notion rather appeals to me," said Bernard.

"You wouldn't half shine there, Mr. Public Schoolman," said Manders.

"After all," said Bernard, "there's a good deal to be said for a University that isn't a Varsity."

When he returned to town in September he announced his intention of taking the National University Matriculation.

"Good lord!" exclaimed Sir Eugene. "What on earth for?"

"I don't much care for a tuppenny tin imitation of Oxford. Besides, I'd like to be with chaps of my own religion." (This with his tongue very much in his cheek.)

"I suppose that settles it," said Sir Eugene. "Got religious again?"

"Partially," said Bernard.

"And now," said Sir Eugene, "what have you decided to do in life?"

"Well, I want to go into politics, so I suppose the best opening is to go for the bar."

"Politics!" exclaimed Sir Eugene. "What do you want to go in for politics for?"

"I have ideas . . . and plans."

"Oh! Out to reform the world, eh? The usual disease at your age. . . . Well, why not try the Indian Civil Service, eh?"

"Well . . . no, thanks. That's not quite the sort of politics I meant. Besides I'm not keen on living in the tropics."

"But politics in this benighted country are no good. You'd be a struggling, briefless barrister until you were middle aged, and I couldn't afford to keep you all that time. . . . As for England, it's out of the question. You'd find the Irish bar difficult enough, but over there you'd be quite unknown . . . might starve eventually. When my financial affairs were better I'd planned some such career for you, but I'm afraid it's impossible now. You'd better put politics out of your head, because, in addition to the other difficulties, our party hasn't any seats outside Ulster and Trinity, in neither of which you'd have a ghost of a chance."

"You quite misunderstand me," said Bernard. "If you say the bar is out of the question, I suppose it is. Let me take out a course of economics in the University and then let me try and make a living by journalism in London until I can make my way into politics. . . . I don't mean the kind of politics you imagine, of course. The fact is, I'm a sort of . . . Socialist."

"A Socialist!"

There was as much scorn as anger in Sir Eugene's tone. This was for him a totally unexpected development.

"Since when, may I ask?" he demanded.

"A long time," said Bernard.

"No politics for you, my boy," said Sir Eugene, in his most determined manner. "It would be a nice thing for me to have a Socialist M.P. for a son, wouldn't it? Where would my practice go to then, do you think? And what would become of your mother and sisters? You must think of other people occasionally, you know. . . . I never imagined you could be so selfish."

The argument dragged on for twenty minutes or more, and finally Bernard was bullied into acquiescing to his father's point of view. As the least of numerous evils he

chose the medical profession. Sir Eugene having got his way at once assumed a more conciliatory tone.

"It's a noble profession, my boy. You'll spend your life in the service of suffering humanity, which I think is the highest aim a man could have."

"That's to appease my wounded Socialism," thought Bernard.

His hopes and ambitions had received a shattering blow. He lay awake that night, tossing about and fretting under his disappointments.

"A Merrion Square doctor . . . mel . . . After all my dreams. . . I, who have ideas to give to the world, to spend my life sitting by the bedside of hypochondriacal old ladies! . . . Good lord! . . ."

There are those who will be inclined to smile at the idea of this boy of eighteen confidently planning to reform the world, but if it were not for the bold-thinking, arrogant, broad-scheming young men who have dreamed through the ages where would the world be now? Bernard's mind as a matter of fact was of singularly fine quality. There were no shams about him. He had no taboos. He never sought to make thinking easier by the common method of fixing labels. If he was hasty and intolerant in his ideas, at any rate his ideas were on the generous side, and personal interest counted with him not at all. He felt injustice in any quarter of the world or at any period of time more acutely than any personal grievance: Thucydides' narrative of the massacre of Melos roused as hot emotion in him as Bernard Shaw's account of the Denshawai atrocity. His thoughts and sympathies and ambitions were world-wide, the sorrows of mankind were his sorrows, and the removal of those sorrows was his ambition. He wanted to see the world clean and orderly and busy: the city of his childish games grown large. And, here entered his boyish vanity, he burned to be the principal figure in making it so.

"A respectable G.P.," he muttered in his sleepless tumbling. "Lord save me from respectability anyhow."

CHAPTER VI

DUBLIN

I

AT five o'clock on an afternoon in October Bernard and Geoffrey Manders sat sipping coffee in the smoking-room of a Grafton Street tea-shop, amid a crowd consisting of University students, business men, clerks and loiterers, with here and there a girl under male escort. Attendants bustled about. The air was full of the clatter of china, the hum of conversation, and the fumes of cigarette smoke.

"Well, it's a great college," Bernard was saying. "I found it a bit hard to get my bearings at first though. An English public school is full of people you can't speak to, either because they're infinitely far above you or abysmally far beneath you. . . . In U.C.D. a freshman can talk to a final man without feeling he's condescended to. Then there's such a general air of friendliness: no cliques that snub you if you butt in on their conversation. Every one's free to move and talk as he likes, and there are no damned taboos and questions of Form. Good lord, it's such a change! When I was at Ashbury I was a sort of herald of revolt; almost the only fellow in the place that had an idea in his skull. . . . Here it's all ideas. If I talk Socialism I'm argued with. One man will attack me for an economic fallacy, another for a lapse in logic, and another has an economic theory of his own. At Ashbury they simply said, 'If you're a Socialist you can't be a gentleman,' and that closed the argument as far as they were concerned."

"I'm sure Ashbury had its points," said Manders. "And I'll bet opposition like that did you good."

"No. It was merely exasperating."

A tall, lanky man with black hair and loose-lipped mouth came over to their table and addressed Bernard.

"I say, what the blazes did you cut dissecting for this morning? I had to do those deep pectorals by myself."

"Sorry, old chap," replied Bernard. "I simply couldn't help it. I was dancing till three last night, at Lady Bartley's."

"God bless our aristocracy!" said the other, raising his hat reverently.

"That," said Bernard, lowering his voice, "was spoken for the benefit of a young gentleman in the middle distance. I want to attract him over here."

"Well, I'm off. Be down tomorrow, won't you?"

"Who's that?" asked Manders, when the stranger had gone.

"Chap called Crowley. My dissecting partner. . . . Ah! How are you, Molloy? How's the world treating you? Let me introduce my friend Mr. Manders. Mr. Manders, Mr. Molloy." This to a smug young man who had been hovering near-by during the conversation with Crowley.

"Rottenly," said Molloy. "I say, did you ever hear such luck as this? My pater made me go up for the entrance exam to both Trinity and the National, and I got plucked by Trinity, so I'm doing law in this damned awful cheap low down hole on Stephen's Green."

"That's rotten luck," Bernard agreed. "Awful types one does meet there, I'm sure."

"Awful," said Molloy.

"Types like Manders and me, for instance."

"I say," gasped Molloy, taken aback, "I'm awfully sorry, you know. I didn't really mean anything."

"We'll pardon you," said Manders.

"I say, I hope I haven't hurt your feelings."

"Oh, they're used to it. Tol lol, old son."

Molloy took himself off, looking very foolish.

"Fine type of manly Britisher," said Bernard to Manders. "Made at Ashbury."

"Pooh! He might have been made anywhere. Geography doesn't account for types."

At this moment Bernard saw Brian Mallow enter the room along with a burly, jovial and untidy companion. As they approached our friends' table the latter hailed Manders in jocular fashion and Mallow came over to shake hands with Bernard.

"Sit down with us," said Manders, and ordered more coffee.

Mallow introduced the burly young man to Bernard as McGurk, and Bernard introduced Manders to Mallow.

"Another Ashburian," said Manders. "Lord, but the college swarms with them."

"None of your old Ashburian for me," growled Mallow. "I'm done with the rotten hole."

"Mallow might just as well have been at Clongowes for all the difference Ashbury's made in him," said McGurk.

"You're talking through your hat, McGurk, as usual," said Manders. "Since I came to college I've been studying the products of the different schools and I've got them all pretty well ticked off. Clongownians are consciously cocks of the walk here. They're the Etonians of Ireland. Would you like to hear the rest?"

There was a murmur of assent.

"Belviderians are genteel. They feel that they ought to be the premier school but they know that's hopeless for a day school, so what they lose in prestige they make up for in gentility. Castleknock men are conscientiously rowdy whether they feel like it or not because they've a reputation for toughness to keep up. McGurk's a Castleknock man. Mungretians are dark and mysterious, which is only natural, for nobody knows where Mungret is. I wouldn't be surprised, Lascelles, if your friend Crowley's from Mungret."

"Wrong. He's from Blackrock."

"I haven't analysed Blackrock yet. But, by the way, be-

tween clerics and national school men, this College is going to the dogs."

"You're right about the Clerics," said McGurk.

"The National Schoolmen call the Professors 'Teacher' and always seem to be expecting a walloping."

"They need it," said McGurk.

"You're a bally snob, Manders," said Mallow.

"I'm not. I'm only stating facts. The problem for us is to make this place a real University, and the sooner we recognize the obstacles the better. One of the obstacles is the type of mind produced by our beautiful National Schools."

"We were at the Abbey last night," said McGurk.

"What was on?"

"The Playboy. Lord! You should have seen Mallow writhing in his seat."

"The play's a bloody insult to the country," said Mallow.

"It ought to be stopped."

"Who by?" asked Manders.

"The people," said Mallow.

"They tried to stop it once," said Manders. "They kicked up unholy ructions the first time it was produced. . . . Blasted idiots! The Irish people make me sick. What right have people to interfere with a play? If they don't like it they needn't go to it."

"It was an insult to the country," repeated Mallow.

"And is any one who feels insulted by a play entitled to kick up a row and prevent others enjoying it? What would you say if the Unionists kicked up a row over the Rising of the Moon?"

"That's different," said Mallow.

"And we call ourselves an intelligent people," said Manders. "Look here, Lascelles. Here's a situation for you. The Nationalist crowd considers a play insulting to Ireland. So they go down to the Theatre to break up the performance. The Trinity men hear of it and go down to make a counter-demonstration in favour of the play, also

because they consider it insulting to Ireland. There's a night of cheers, hisses and pandemonium. And all the time the play is no more insulting to Ireland than Hamlet is to Denmark."

"I think," said Bernard, "that the Nationalists were only just a shade less contemptible than the Trinity asses."

"Lascelles," said Mallow, "I'd just like to know what side you're on. I think you're a bally trimmer."

"You can think what you like. There's one thing I'm sure of anyway. I wouldn't feel entitled to stop a play just because I didn't agree with it."

"Ah, you're a bally West Briton," said Mallow.

"People like that fellow Mallow," said Manders afterwards to Bernard, "are the curse of this country. We have them on every side, and they've an invariable trade mark whatever side they're on: if you argue from analogy they always answer 'That's different.' Mallow and his kind are always ranting about Irish freedom and yet they won't allow people to produce a play they don't like. They can't stand anything that conflicts with their rotten little notions and prejudices. As for their politics . . . It makes me ill to listen to them. Thank heaven, Lascelles, that you and I are neutral in *that* quarrel."

2

Normality has its claim on us all. Bernard had been precocious as a child and had gripped on to ideas and abstract things earlier and more intensely than his contemporaries. But three months after leaving school his interest in these things had begun to wane. He began to read less and then to think less, and at the same time his interest in games, which had slackened during his last years at Ashbury, began to revive. He found pleasure in ordinary students' society and became a little bored by Manders and the intellectuals; he came to enjoy the coarse pleasantries of the dissecting-room; even the vapid chatter of Merrion Square drawing-rooms ceased to arouse his contempt. He went to dances

and music halls; he "knocked about" with his fellow medicals round town; and he took girls he cared nothing about to teas and picture houses. . . . The re-action to Ashburian restraint and supervision may have been partly responsible for this, but as a matter of fact his brain needed rest. It had been worked and over-developed from his earliest childhood and now it clamoured for relaxation. So he gave himself up for the first time in his life to ease and enjoyment.

And there was nothing to interrupt his repose. In those days Ireland as far as politics were concerned was a stagnant pool. The national struggle was not at an end, but it had ceased to be a struggle. The blight of Parliamentary success had settled on the land. Everything was in the hands of the party politicians and the people could attend to their private affairs with a clear conscience, for when everything was being done for them all they had to do was to keep peaceful and grow prosperous. So the very right to think on politics was surrendered. The Party was presumed to be both infallible and impeccable and a word of criticism was the brand of a traitor; it had ceased to be the servant of the people and had taken to itself the airs of a master and Dictator.

Frequently one hears the remark made with that air of profundity which characterizes all fatuous pronouncements that there is too much politics in Irish life; an absurd statement. Politics means the affairs of men, and men cannot be too careful of their affairs. It is the neglect of their own affairs by the men of other countries and the consequent uprise of professional politicians that makes politics what they are: the battle to the dirty and the devil take the cleanest. The reason for the comparative cleanliness of Irish politics is that the people take, as our superior thinkers say, "too much interest" in them.

But at this time the people slumbered or grubbed on their farms and the Party played at politics in the Westminster style. They assisted the Liberal Government to foist an absurd Insurance Bill and a ruinous budget on their unsuspecting country, and were now engaged in supporting a

measure to limit the power of the House of Lords in opposing some future Home Rule Bill. With the national affairs on so sound a footing what had the layman to do with politics?

Only in forgotten places and by unknown people were Irish politics still taken seriously. In halls in the city and deserted quarries in the country the physical force men — a few hundred in Dublin, a few thousand scattered over the country — drilled quietly and armed themselves and waited patiently but none too hopefully for the day when their countrymen should cease talking and do something. And, struggling against abuse contempt and misrepresentation, Arthur Griffith and his handful of Sinn Feiners strove to teach Ireland to turn her back on the useless and dishonest game of English politics and cultivate herself. But the politicians and the vast compact majority of the people ignored these disturbers of the peace, or when they noticed them at all called them, in their superior way, cranks and dreamers.

And Bernard and his fellows danced and played billiards.

3

The gas flared yellow in the dissecting room. The air was hot and heavy with mingled odours; formalin, tobacco, and the faint but recognizable halitus of cadavera.

Bernard, perched on a high stool, was working at the superficial fascia of Scarpa's triangle under the direction of Crowley who read out the instructions from a big anatomy resting against the subject's knee.

"Let's chuck it," said Crowley suddenly, "we've done enough for today."

Bernard ceased working and began to clean his instruments, turning round on his stool at the same time to view the crowded room. Only about half the population was working. The rest stood about, chatting and smoking or reading the evening paper. The atmosphere of this chamber of death was distinctly hilarious.

The red-haired man at the left upper limb told his dark-haired partner a dirty story. The dark-haired man capped it with another.

"Those are as old as sin," said Crowley. "Did you ever hear this one?"

Crowley's effort was greeted with acclamation.

"You first-years do talk unadulterated filth," said the man at the head-and-neck. "You'll be tired of it by the time you get your second."

A man from a neighbouring table strolled over.

"Crowley got some new ones?" he inquired.

Crowley obliged with another. His hearers roared with laughter, thereby attracting others. The man at the head-and-neck threw down his scalpel in disgust and went away for a smoke. Bernard felt a little ashamed of himself for not following, but then Crowley was his friend.

The dark-haired man at the upper limb recited a Limerick. Bernard felt impelled to recite another, and then Crowley dispersed the company with a perfectly outrageous one.

"Come and have a game of billiards," he said to Bernard after that.

They washed their hands in a good lather of Carbolie soap and went out from the school into the darkling streets.

"I feel like a drink after that atmosphere," said Crowley as they passed a public house.

Bernard was no tee-totaller, but he had never yet entered a public house. It felt like taking a new step in life to do so now.

"Nothing like experience," he told himself as they sat at the counter drinking whiskey and soda.

"Telegraph, Herddled or Mayull" shrieked a newsboy through the spring door.

"Mail," said Crowley, producing a penny. He plunged straight into the racing column. "Hurray," he cried, "Salted Almond wins."

"Got something on him?"

"Drew him in a sweep at the Arcade last night. . . .

Four quid at least. . . . Come along and collect the dibs. We'll make a night of it."

They went out into the street, Bernard feeling distinctly exhilarated by his drink. There was a crowd of students and others, McGurk amongst them, in the billiard saloon. Crowley was greeted with a howl of "lucky dog!" and the stake holder, a sporting-looking man smoking a cheroot, handed him over his winnings.

"Come on, boys, drinks all around," said Crowley, and half a score of them tumbled out to the nearest public house.

"What about a good dinner?" said Crowley, drawing Bernard and McGurk aside from the throng.

"I'm on," said Bernard, draining his glass.

"Where'll we go?"

"Jammet's," suggested Bernard.

"None o' your bloody swank," said McGurk. "Becky's for me."

"It's a *dinner* I'm inviting you to," said Crowley. "I suggest the Green Bank."

"Right you are, old man," said McGurk whiskily genial.

The drinkers returned in a noisy crowd to the billiard saloon; and Bernard, Crowley and McGurk, after a stroll up and down Grafton Street "to get an appetite," went to the Green Bank and ordered dinner. They had lentil soup, turbot, roast mutton, and sweet omelette, with a bottle of sparkling moselle, and they wound up with coffee, Benedictine, and cigars. Crowley and McGurk were fairly seasoned drinkers, but Bernard in a couple of hours had taken three times as much alcohol as he had ever taken in a day before, so his head was swimming and his speech loud and incoherent. Crowley now suggesting a Picture House they made their way back to Grafton Street. Bernard by this time was in that state of detachment from the world, that condition of feeling almost as if one were looking out at life from a concrete chamber through a thick glass window, so muffled and confused were the sounds and so blurred the sights to senses blunted by the beginnings of alcoholic intoxi-

cation. He seemed to walk by no volition of his own and Crowley almost supported him to the crimson plush seat in the picture house into which he sank with a sight of relief. They had come in in the middle of a society drama which dragged on a seemingly interminable course while Bernard endeavoured by sheer mental concentration to recall his sobriety. . . . The drama flickered to its close, and as the lights went up McGurk drew Crowley's attention to Bernard's flushed face.

"Damned hot in here," said Bernard to dispel their suspicions.

An uproarious "comedy" followed, the principal situation of which was the loss by the heroine of the principal part of her attire in a public street. McGurk howled with laughter, Crowley grinned appreciatively, but Bernard was still modest enough to be rather disgusted. This was the end of the program, for they had entered rather late, and Bernard's still throbbing head was relieved by the cool air of the street.

"Bloody funny, that last film," said McGurk.

Crowley chuckled.

"Human dignity," he said, "is dependent on the nether garments. Stripped of everything else you can still hold up your head, but what a helpless and ridiculous figure is a man without his trousers or a woman without her skirts."

McGurk exploded with laughter, and even Bernard smiled reminiscently.

"I say, boys," said Crowley. "The night's still young. Let's go down town."

"Right you are," said McGurk, and Bernard, not guessing his meaning, and thinking that a walk would sober him, also agreed.

They went down D'Olier Street and crossing the river by Butt Bridge passed by Amiens Street into the disreputable labyrinth of ways beyond. Bernard wondered at his friends' choice, but said nothing. A brazen slatternly female hailed them from a doorway but they took no notice and passed on. Gaunt dark houses with grimy broken windows towered

cliff-like over the narrow street. Here and there were occasional rifts in the line where a house had collapsed into a heap of rubbish. Through the upper windows of a crumbling roofless framework the inscrutable face of the moon could be seen. This street was silent and deserted, but in an upper storey a child was wailing, and from the distance drunken shouts could be heard. Their feet stumbling against broken bricks and tin cans the three young men strode on. Turning a corner they came upon a small crowd gathered round a brightly lit window and door.

"Here we are again!" said McGurk cheerfully.

"You're not going in there?" remonstrated Bernard nervously.

"What do you think?" said McGurk.

"Non cuivis est adire Corinthum," said Crowley.

"So this . . . ?" said Bernard, and paused inquiringly.

" . . . Is, if not a temple, at least a shrine of the Cyprian goddess," said Crowley with perfect suavity.

A boldly handsome but untidy young woman approached the young men.

"Well, duckies," she said.

"The pass word," said Crowley. "The mystic symbol of the Corybantic priestesses of the Western World. . . . It's a warm night," he added, turning to the girl.

"Good night, boys, I'm off," said Bernard to his friends.

"Hold on, ye bloody fool," said McGurk, starting after him. He was restrained by Crowley.

"Let him alone," said the latter. "He's still *virgo intactus*."

Bernard sped away on the wings of disgust.

"Hould that fellal!" shrieked a voice from the doorway.

Hot with shame he broke into a trot, heedless of his direction. After a few minutes he suddenly realized that he was losing his way. Tired and angry he prowled about the ghostly monotonous ways searching for a landmark. All inadvertently in the end he struck upon Earl Street, and

within half an hour he was resting his throbbing head on the cool softness of his pillow at home.

4

"Are you anyway friendly with Jack Harvey?" Lady Lascelles asked of her son one day.

"No. I just know him to nod to."

"That's a pity. His mother and I are very old friends, and he's such a nice boy."

"That's exactly why he doesn't appeal to me."

"Such a thing to say."

"I mean it. Nice people always bore me."

"Now, Bernard, if you're going with boys who are *not* nice it's my duty as your mother to warn you that bad companions are the ruin of many a young man."

"I didn't mean what you think at all. 'Nice' is a confusing word. It might mean anything. I'll make friends with him if you like."

"Do. I'm sure you'll like him."

"I'm quite sure I won't," thought Bernard.

Jack Harvey was a mother's son. His father had died when he was quite a child and his whole upbringing had been in the hands of his mother. Mrs. Harvey was a very positive and aggressive personality who left her mark upon all with whom she associated. Consequently Jack grew up as a very ladylike young man. Though manly at bottom all his actions were feminine. His walk was mincing; his smile was a simper; his voice was gentle. He could not smoke a pipe and he smoked cigarettes in a ladylike manner. All his ideas and methods of thought bore the impress of the female hand that had implanted them.

He received Bernard's friendly advances with a lambent smile and said he hoped they would soon be great chums (a word Bernard never heard without a shudder running down his spine).

"Our mothers have always been great old cronies, you know," he added.

"Drop in to see us some Tuesday evening," he said at a later stage of their acquaintance. "We're always at home then and we generally have a few friends in. Music and that sort of thing, you know. Hymn books supplied." (This last was his idea of a joke.)

The following Tuesday, having nothing else to do, Bernard decided to "drop in" as invited, but he brought his mother with him for protection.

Mrs. Harvey had fallen on evil days since we last saw her disseminating scandal in Merrion Square. Her husband, the fashionable oculist, had died within a year of that incident, leaving her, with her son and three daughters, almost penniless. Many women would have succumbed to such a strain, but Mrs. Harvey was cast in heroic mould. She moved as much of her furniture and silver as she was not compelled to sell into a little house on the North Circular Road and kept hens and lodgers the while she gave her children as good an education as possible and kept up as much of her pristine state as her straitened fortunes would allow. She kept her Tuesday at home just as in former days and with jest and scandal entertained those of her old friends who remained true to her. She had but one servant, but her she trained to the duties of cook, parlourmaid, poultry keeper and lady's maid, and though she mercilessly overworked and underpaid her yet managed to convey to the girl the conviction that she was her benefactress and to win and keep her respect and affection. Through trouble and poverty she smiled and flounced her way. There was something almost of nobility in this tenacious narrowminded old snob.

Bernard and his mother were admitted by the maid of all work, starched and self-conscious for the occasion. Bernard hung up his hat and coat in the miniature hall, and then the maid opened the drawing-room door, ceremoniously announcing:

"Lady Lascelles. Mr. Bernard Lascelles."

Mrs. Harvey was deliciously surprised to see her old

friend. (It would not do to admit that she had seen her through the window mounting the steps.) She kissed Lady Lascelles rapturously for the benefit of a couple of humble North Circular Road acquaintances who were present, and shook hands heartily with Bernard. Jack then came forward and introduced Bernard to his sisters while their mothers sat down to chat over old times. The eldest girl, Susan, was tall, plain and pimply, and having said "how do you do" remained silent. Molly, the second girl, was of medium height, almost pretty, and plunged into conversation at once, so that Bernard's introduction to the youngest sister Mabel, a shy fair haired girl of sixteen, was of a perfunctory nature. Molly was a jolly girl whose conversation consisted almost entirely of a string of funny stories. Bernard found them amusing at first but was beginning to feel boredom approaching when Mrs. Harvey commanded Molly to sing. Molly, nothing loath, obeyed at once and sang in the conventional humorous way *Are you right there, Michael?* and on being encored, an English music hall comic ditty. While the songs were in progress Mabel slipped into the chair beside Bernard vacated by her sister, and as the applause died away turned to talk to him. She was a pretty child, with deep brown eyes and golden hair tied back by a big blue bow at her neck. At the first word she uttered she suddenly became shy and faltered while her cheeks became flooded with pink blushes. Bernard tactfully took up a commonplace topic.

"Your sister sings very well," he said.

"Do you think so?" said Mabel, still a little timid. Then abruptly her shyness seemed to slip away from her. "But you don't think so," she went on. "You only said that to be polite."

"Well, perhaps I did," Bernard admitted.

"We've none of us got any talents really," said Mabel, "but mother makes us perform whether we like it or not. She'll probably call on me in a minute, and I daren't refuse. Susan's the bravest of us. She used to have to play the

piano but last year she struck and that's finished, thank goodness."

"Mabel, won't you sing something now," came Mrs. Harvey's voice across the room.

Mabel made a little face at Bernard and went to the piano. She sang *Robin Adair* with deep expression and a thin voice, and gave *Beautiful Garden of Roses* as an encore. After that a visitor played Dvorak's *Humoreske* jerkily on the violin, and then Jack Harvey, in a fine bass voice that contrasted strangely with his general manner, sang *My Old Shako*, and *Just before the Battle, Mother*, which last brought tears to Mrs. Harvey's eyes and necessitated the calling in of Mary Ann and her dispatch to the upper regions for a fresh pocket-handkerchief.

Then tea was served and Lady Lascelles came over to Molly and said:

"Many happy returns. I've just heard it's your birthday," and a golden present found its way into Molly's hand.

Meanwhile Bernard was buttonholed by Mrs. Harvey and compelled to sit beside her and listen to a genteel account of herself and her family. He learned that his mother and Mrs. Harvey had been O such friends at school and that both ladies hoped their sons would be the same. Jack was such a good boy. So kind to his mother and sisters.

"Be kind to your mother always, Bernard," Mrs. Harvey admonished him. "If you knew what your mother had to suffer to bring you into the world you'd think no sacrifice too great to please her."

Bernard, as a medical student, thought he knew as much on this subject as Mrs. Harvey, but made no comment.

"The girls are so good to me too," said Mrs. Harvey. "They're all in good positions — except Mabel of course — and they give me every penny they earn." (She omitted to mention that they did so by duress.) "Susan has just obtained a new position as lady companion to Lady Donegal." (Susan was governess to that Lady's children.) "And Molly has a Government appointment." (She was a typist

in the Custom House.) "Do you know Lady Donegal, Bernard? I suppose not. She's a relative of ours."

So Mrs. Harvey rambled on serenely and graciously, cloaking her shabbiness and striving to impress, while Bernard listened with the ill-concealed contempt of youth.

Bernard breathed a sigh of relief as he and his mother stepped into the open air, very refreshing after the close little sitting-room of the Harveys.

"It's awfully funny," said Lady Lascelles as they drove home. "But whenever I call on Mrs. Harvey it's the birthday of one or another of the family. It's a curious coincidence, isn't it?"

"Very curious," said Bernard.

5

It was not long before Bernard took to falling in love with that fervour and inconstancy characteristic of adolescence. For a month or more he was faithful to the memory of Maud, thinking of her frequently and dreaming of her sometimes, but finally she glided into the gallery of things half forgotten. And then he met Muriel.

He saw her first at a meeting of a college society and was enraptured by her profile. He lay awake half that night thinking of her, ate no breakfast, and haunted the college all next morning to get a glimpse of her. By some artifice or other he managed to secure an introduction a few days after, and the clasp of the neat-gloved hand she gave him completed his surrender. He wooed her timidly for a time, and she encouraged him to be bolder. At last, greatly daring, he invited her to tea and pictures, and she accepted graciously, almost eagerly he fancied. At a dance a week later he met her again, and she gave him ten dances, of which they sat out six. Of course Bernard went through all the emotions of first love. His feeling for Maud, he told himself, had been a mere piece of boyish sentimentality. This was different. Muriel troubled the very depths of his soul. His love for her was compounded of almost equal parts of pas-

sion and worship. Her image disturbed his sleep and truncated his meals. If he met her suddenly he trembled, his heart seemed to stop beating, and all the blood in his body rushed to the surface. When he talked to her his knees shook and his veins pulsated at his temples. She was the only girl in the world, he told himself, and marriage with her would be an eternity of bliss. So for many weeks he led a highly emotional existence. Yet it was only calf-love after all, short and fluttering. A tea or two, a walk or two, a dance or two, a kiss or two, and it was over.

Now Bernard felt tremendously experienced. He knew woman. He had sounded her depths. He had tasted passion. He thought he had got to the end of these things and found them insipid, and he posed (to himself) as a slightly melancholy cynic. Tired of True Love he tried a flirtation. The girl he chose was an accomplished flirt; they enjoyed each other's company for a while; and all ended happily when they grew tired of each other and parted.

Not long after this he was at a dance. He was standing rather glumly in a corner fiddling with his program which was full of names of newly introduced partners—quite uninteresting people, when he became conscious that some one was looking at him. He glanced round and saw a tall dark girl with red flowers in her hair gazing at him intently. He was not surprised, for he was quite aware of his own good looks, but he blushed, and, the music of the first dance striking up at that moment, he went to find his partner. He was conscious of the dark girl's observation all through the dance, and then, as if under a spell she had cast, began to take notice of her. Then he perceived with a surprising pang of disappointment that she had ceased to look round for him. For a time he was miserable. Then, later on, he caught her glancing in his direction once more. It was during an interval and her partner had left her. She stood beneath a palm, leaning alluringly against the wall. Stammering some excuse to his partner he plucked up all his courage and accosted her. They left their respective part-

ners in the lurch and danced the next dance together, and when it was over they sought a retired spot to converse in. They talked freely and naturally together as if they had known each other for a long time, and the interval, usually a long-drawn-out tedium of ball room commonplaces, flashed by. Both made involuntary exclamations of disappointment when the music recommenced.

"Need we?" said Bernard.

Her eyes answered him. They tore up their programs and the rest of the evening was undiluted joy.

Bernard had cooled off considerably by the morning, and, when in the afternoon he met her in Stephen's Green stripped of the ball room's glamour, his ardour almost vanished. But there was no backwardness about Rose. She made no pretence to hide the attraction she felt towards him, and this acted upon Bernard in two opposite ways. Partly the flattery of it attracted him: partly the fear of it repelled him. Altogether he was in a mixed state of mind. He wanted to be loved, but this love seemed too easily won. In this unstable condition of mind a sudden appreciation of the beauty of her hair turned the scale. So began a curious affair in which Bernard perpetually vacillated between love and hate until the day when a particularly affectionate demonstration frightened him away for ever. . . .

For a fleeting instant, perplexing memories of Janet Morecambe recurred to him, only to pass rapidly away . . .

Facial beauty had been the main attraction for Bernard up to this, but now he was to discover new symptoms in himself. In August he went with the family on its annual trip to the seaside. At the bathing-place one day he casually noticed a girl making her way down the strand to the water. He recognized her at once. She was a Miss Heuston Harrington who was staying with her mother at the same hotel as the Lascelles family. Their respective mothers were distantly acquainted, but Bernard had never met the daughter, the plainness of whose features had deterred him from going out of his way to seek an introduction. But now something

in the way she balanced herself as her bare feet trod the shingle, something of sinuous grace in her figure, clad only in a simple bathing costume, caught his attention and he had his first appreciation of the beauty of the female form. Rose had been rather angular, Muriel slightly dumpy, yet he had not noticed it. Now Dora was a revelation. He found himself thinking of her graceful shape on the way home to lunch, and that afternoon as she sat on a bench in the hotel garden (they wore tight skirts in those days with a slit from hem to knee) he discovered new beauty in a well formed calf and ankle. He determined to get to know her by means of Alice.

Alice was much amused when Bernard ingenuously requested her to make friends with Miss Heuston Harrington.

"Why, you silly boy," she exclaimed, "she's not even pretty."

"Love doesn't depend on beauty," said Bernard sententiously. (And all the time the hypocrite was dreaming of the afternoon's vision.)

"Love!" laughed Alice. "This is quick work. Never mind. I'll get her for you."

And she did.

The introduction produced a recrudescence of the symptoms Muriel had evoked in former days. Next day they met by appointment on the golf links. A foursome was arranged with Alice and Eugene; and Bernard noticed with joy that she showed signs of satisfaction when it was decided that she should be his partner. His manœuvres to secure her in subsequent matches were pathetically ingenious and transparently fraudulent, for Bernard was so much better a player than Eugene, and Dora was so much better than Alice, that the partnership between Bernard and his heart's desire was manifestly unfair. When his diplomacy failed poor Alice had to put up with a silent furious partner jealously glaring across the links to where Eugene seemed to be having extraordinarily intimate talks with the fair one. His golf too seemed to go to pieces on these occasions, so that Alice

and he were usually beaten ten up and eight to play, when he went through feverish manœuvres to prevent the playing of the bye.

He never succeeded in making love to Dora. She seldom permitted him to be alone with her, but sometimes they conversed together in the garden in full view of the residents of the hotel. They talked about art and books and theatres and intellectual things generally, coldly and impersonally, and all the time Bernard was wishing he was rambling the country with her and helping her over streams and stiles.

And August came to an end.

6

During his second and third years in University College Bernard entered upon a new phase in his development. His appetite for light pleasures was already less keen and intellectual interests revived. The transition was slow however; the enthusiasm which had filled him in earlier days did not return, and a cold detached interest for a long time took its place. The college was a vast incoherence of half-expressed but stimulating thought; mental energy was in the atmosphere; and if the professors and lecturers were pedagogic and uninspiring the students were themselves a university. In the draughty and uncomfortable common-rooms, round the fireplace in the porter's lodge, on the front steps of the College and of the National Library they talked in groups. Everything in heaven and earth came up for discussion: religion, politics, economics, philosophy, love, art, interspersed with horse-racing, cards, tobacco, athletics and dirty stories. And the debating societies were so different from that of Ashbury. Here there was no class creed to drop its fatuous yet incontrovertible dogmata like heavy weights upon the fine points of argument. There was no foreordained verdict upon any subject of discussion however revolutionary. Even theology was not secure from the investigations of these sons of the Church. Yet on the subject of Ireland Bernard still found accurate information unob-

tainable. The fiery optimism of Murray, the impatient logic of O'Dwyer, the gloomy pessimism of Moore had rent but small gaps in the veils of his ignorance, and now in University College the very fact that Nationalism was taken for granted and all Irish questions approached on that basis was a further bar to his advancement. His fellows put him down as a West Briton and left him at that.

One day at the beginning of the October term Bernard encountered Felim O'Dwyer in the hall of the medical school.

"Hello!" he said. "You taking up medicine?"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said O'Dwyer. "Coming up Grafton Street?"

Bernard said he was and they set out together by Crow Street, Dame Street, and Trinity Street.

"Yes. I'm starting medicine," said O'Dwyer, "and I wish to the devil I wasn't."

"Then why do it?"

"I've a Roman father," said O'Dwyer, "with whom there's no disputing."

"Fathers are a curse," exclaimed Bernard. "They seem to think their sons are their property."

"Yes. When they're young. And sort of old age pensions later on. I hate my father."

"That's natural instinct in the young male," said Bernard. "I don't care much for mine."

"This stunt of making every available man a doctor is going to be the ruin of this unfortunate country," went on O'Dwyer. "It's rotten economics. We can't live by curing one another's diseases. In Ireland every farmer and business man puts one son into the Church, another into medicine and hands the farm or the business over to the third—usually the fool of the family. Then the people who are already doctors won't let their sons sink any lower and make doctors or lawyers of them all. Result—an Irish doctor on every ship that sails the sea and in every

town in England, while Ireland goes steadily downhill for lack of brains and business ability."

"I thought," said Bernard with a smile, "that it was British government was Ireland's ruin."

"So it is. It's British government that creates the conditions that lead to this."

"You're a monomaniac, O'Dwyer," said Bernard.

"Maybe so. But even a monomaniac may speak the truth."

In Grafton Street Bernard was surprised to see Fergus Moore, whom he had not met since their visit to Willoughby Towers, coming towards them. He stopped Moore and introduced him to O'Dwyer. The three immediately adjourned to the nearest tea-shop, where Bernard asked Moore what he intended doing in Dublin.

"I've finished with Oxford," said Moore, and I'm going to take a post graduate course in Philosophy in the National."

"Good. We're Nationals too . . . Medicals . . . And by the way, what's your present philosophy of life?"

"Much the same as ever. In theory I'm a revolutionary but in practice I'm a hedonist."

"And what form does your hedonism take?"

"Free Love," said Moore.

"Good Lord!" said Bernard and O'Dwyer in one breath.

"Don't be startled. I don't mean promiscuity. I said Free Love."

"Where's the difference?"

"All the difference in the world, my dear boy. Free Love is based on the doctrine that cohabitation without love is immoral. In other words that most marriages automatically become immoral after a few years. Free Lovers cohabit as long as love lasts and not a minute longer."

"If I wasn't an orthodox Catholic," said Bernard, "I might be disposed to favour that doctrine. It's most attractive. But what of the children?"

"I hadn't considered that aspect yet," said Moore. "It's certainly a difficulty. That is," he added, "under present economic conditions."

"Present economic conditions," said Bernard, "are responsible for the whole of the modern sex problem. Physiologically we ought to marry at twenty. Economically we can't manage it till thirty. Is ten years of voluntary suppression of a physiological function that's as natural as eating and sleeping good for a man? Is it even possible? Half the fellows I've met I know to be unchaste (promiscuously too) and the other half I don't know about. Well, suppression is an evil; prostitution an abomination. Early marriage is impossible owing to the present economic system. Therefore the present economic system must be abolished."

"Very well," said Moore, "and what happens then? Hasty marriages of young people who fancy they're in love ending in lives of unhappiness or conjugal infidelity. Those conditions would be as bad as the present, if not worse."

"The majority of healthy minded people will always be content with monogamy. You can't legislate for exceptions. Besides, even an increase in conjugal infidelity is better than prostitution. I've really only one fixed belief in this matter, and that is that the purpose of sex is to produce children, therefore man's personal comfort must come secondary to the welfare of the children. Children require family life. Therefore, to hell with Free Love."

"Family life," said Moore, "is all very well for creature comforts, but it's ruinous to the mind."

"Ruin the mind in youth and it'll recover. Ruin the body and it won't. Look at me. I was brought up to be a Tory Imperialist and Capitalist, and you see before you a Cosmopolitan Socialist."

"Here's to family life!" said O'Dwyer, finishing his tea.

"There was a young fellow called Lancel
Deserted the fold of the Castle,
While Fergus O'Moore

Succumbed to the lure
Of Omar, wine, women, and wassail.

"Why don't you clap?" he asked. "That was extempore."

"I hate the way you twist my name to suit your beastly verses," said Bernard.

"Poetic licence," said O'Dwyer.

"Licence verging on obsession," retorted Bernard.

A cadaverous individual in the distance at this moment waved a salutation to Moore who beckoned him over to their table. Moore introduced him to his friends as Austin Mallow.

"Had you a brother, called Brian, at Ashbury?" asked Bernard.

"Yes. Did you know him?"

"Slightly."

Austin Mallow was a contrast to his burly brother. He was very lean and his shoulders stooped. There was a strange unnatural brightness in his sunken brown eyes.

"Mr. Mallow and Mr. O'Dwyer," said Moore, "you are each meeting a fellow-poet."

The poets bowed to each other.

"If you can call O'Dwyer a poet at all," interjected Bernard.

O'Dwyer cast a look of scorn at Bernard.

"Pooh! You've no sense of humour," he said, "or criticism either. You always resent the impertinence of my verses, while you ought to be admiring the mind of the person who made them."

"How old are you, O'Dwyer?" said Bernard.

"Eighteen."

"If you're not careful you'll develop the artistic temperament."

"Artistic temperament me neck! I can express all I think."

"A grave deficiency," said Austin.

"Not if you think the things I think."

"Personally," said Austin, "I think a lot more than I can express."

"That doesn't prove that your thoughts are anything wonderful. It merely means that your powers of expression are deficient."

"Nothing of the sort," said Austin dogmatically. "There are thoughts that cannot possibly be put into words. Words are finite and thoughts infinite."

"If I ever thought anything I couldn't express I'd be afraid," said O'Dwyer.

"Of what?"

"Lunacy."

"To the common mind inspiration is often mistaken for lunacy."

"Yes. And I've heard of lunacy being mistaken for inspiration."

"I don't see the point of that remark," said Austin, calm but furious.

"Well, have some tea," said Moore, and so diverted the conversation to safer courses.

When Austin after a hurried tea excused himself and went away, O'Dwyer asked:

"Has that fellow a slate loose?"

"I often think so," said Moore. "He's one of these mystics. And in politics he's a martyromaniac."

"What's that?"

"Thinks that the only way to redeem Ireland from her present slough of respectability is to get a half dozen heroes to attack the Castle with their naked fists and get hanged. Robert Emmet stunt, you know. 'One man must die for the people.'"

"What infernal rubbish," said Bernard.

"Not so hasty!" said O'Dwyer. "It's not my line, but there's something to be said for it all the same."

"Well," said Moore, "I must say I see very little sense in dying for this tuppenny hapenny country. Her case is

hopeless. She's never made an effort that didn't fail, mainly owing to her own stupidity. Her finest men have wasted themselves in useless endeavour, and today after seven centuries of bondage, she's as far from freedom as ever. The fact is, the country's in a vicious circle of hopelessness. She can't be free till she's educated, and she can't be educated till she's free."

"I've eliminated the word 'can't' from my vocabulary," said O'Dwyer. "All things are possible."

"Ah, well," said Moore resignedly, "I waver perpetually between two verses of Omar: the one about:

But leave the wise to wrangle, and with me
The quarrel of the universe let be;

etcetera, and the one that ends:

Would we not shatter it to bits and then
Remould it nearer to the heart's desire.

Have a cigarette?"

A few days after this Bernard came upon Crowley holding forth in his half-serious, half-flippant way to O'Dwyer, Manders and another man called Lynch on the steps of the college.

"The Union," said Crowley, "made Ireland John Bull's unwilling and downtrodden wife. Home Rule will merely make her his fractious concubine. Sanity and decency require that Cathleen should seek a divorce."

"Metaphors don't mean anything," said Lynch. "Home Rule, whatever you say, is common sense and practical politics."

"Not this footling clumsy makeshift of a Home Rule bill anyway," said O'Dwyer. "What on earth made the Party accept such thrash?"

"I think it's a damn good bill," said Lynch.

"Have you read it?"

"Well — in a summary."

"Well go and read the damn thing through before you have the assurance to support it. I'll bet ninety-nine people out of a hundred who've accepted the bill with shrieks of joy haven't taken the trouble to read it."

"Would you have the whole country read the bill right through?"

"Of course. What the hell else would they do? Isn't it to decide their whole future?"

"What John Redmond takes is good enough for me. You separatists are such unpractical dreamers."

"What cliché! What self-satisfied humbug! Unpractical indeed! Surely it's more practical to trust to your own right arm, however weak it may be, than to the pledges of English politicians? The kind of dreamer who does that gets let down every time."

Here Crowley grinned.

"Like the man who trusts to the buttons on ready-made trousers," he suggested.

"But look here," interposed Manders, "this theorizing's all very well, but how does it work out in practice? An odd fizzle of rebellion, and then an era of strong government. Constitutionalism has got us some very tangible advantages."

"Perhaps. But Nationally it leaves us at a standstill," said O'Dwyer.

"Oh, Nationality! Nationality!" said Manders impatiently. "I hate the very sound of the word. What does it mean anyway?"

"Now, look here," said Crowley suddenly, "I know you're relying on our making some sort of sentimental reply to that. But we'll disappoint you. Independence means that we won't have to spill our blood or spend our money in England's wars. Isn't that a practical enough argument for any one . . . especially for a pacifist like you?"

"My dear Crowley," said Manders suavely, "small nations are things of the past. European history is a history of consolidation. Little states were found to be a nuisance and got swallowed up, and the time is approaching when

the whole world will be federated and this nonsensical idea of patriotism which has created all the wars that have devastated the world will disappear. Well, in the British Empire we have a great world federation already in being, which will be the model for the federation of the rest of the world. We're given the opportunity to be a free part of it, and yet you'd separate us from it and add one more to the muddle of flags and frontiers that makes the world so confused and quarrelsome."

"Yes," interjected O'Dwyer hastily. "If we're ever to join that confederation we must leave it first and then, if we like, join it by negotiation as with an equal. We've always denied England's right to legislate for us, so what right can she have to settle our place and rights in the confederation? You're a logical man, Manders. Can't you see that if we once grant England's right to give us self-government we also grant her right to take it away? Our whole case logically rests on our *natural* right to independence."

"Yes. But politics aren't logical."

"When your case is logical it's dangerous to use illogical methods. They recoil on you in the end."

"There's a nice bit of goods," said Crowley suddenly as a girl undergraduate passed by, leaning forward against the wind, hat flapping and skirts fluttering.

"Queer how the eternal feminine will distract us from any topic however interesting," said O'Dwyer, looking after the girl's receding figure.

"Not in Crowley's case," put in Bernard. "I know what you were hoping for," he said to Crowley. "You must be one of Max Nordau's degenerates."

"Perhaps I am," said Crowley, not at all disturbed. "But what harm? We're a mixed lot, all of us. Bribery couldn't lure me to serve England, and yet I can't resist the lure of a petticoat. The kindest hearted man I ever knew was a drunkard and a thief, and the most honourable was a tyrannical bigot. We're all streaked and crossed. Look at McGurk. He spends his days serving Cathleen ni Houlihan

at 6, Harcourt Street, and his nights with Kitty Hoolahan of Tyrone Street."

"Here, less o' that!" said McGurk indignantly. "I sometimes give Kitty a night off."

"I wonder, McGurk," said Bernard, "if in the exuberance of your spirits on these occasions you ever consider the other side of that question. Does it never occur to you that you're merely taking advantage of conditions imposed by the existing social system?"

"Ah, along with yer preaching?" said McGurk.

Here O'Dwyer, whose eyes had assumed the introspective look of composition, began to recite:

"There was a young fellow called Crowley
Whose desires were not wholly unholly . . ."

Thereat politics were by general consent dropped and they set themselves to the serious task of completing the Limerick.

Those two years seemed to be punctuated by talks such as these: crude wrangling arguments about generalities, degenerating as often as not into ribaldry. Then came the passage of the Home Rule Bill through the British House of Commons and its rejection a little later by the Lords. Lynch and Manders and Home Rulers generally were in no wise perturbed by this. Under the Parliament Act, they pointed out, the Lords could no longer reject but only delay a measure to which they objected. Then came that shock of reality in politics, the foundation of the Ulster Volunteers. Lynch foamed with rage at the event and groaned over this "violation of constitutional principles." Less orthodox Home Rulers felt afraid that this complication might give the Liberals an excuse to violate their pledges, but O'Dwyer, Crowley, and McGurk looked upon the movement with unmixed joy.

"Who said Ulster was loyal?" asked O'Dwyer. "That's the way to treat a British Government. . . . Bully it."

"What price physical force now?" said Crowley. "Let the U.I.L. chaunt a quanta patimur."

"All I can say," said McGurk, "is that Carson must be the hell of a bloody fine leader. Wish to God he was on our side."

7

Bernard's coming of age was celebrated with venison and pops of Sillery. Sir Eugene shone his brightest in the character of host, and Lady Lascelles chatted amiably at the foot of the table. All the Harveys were present and the Heuston Harringtons, and Bernard to his joy had Dora by his side. Of his College friends he had invited only Crowley and O'Dwyer, and their conversation was really the life of the party. Crowley's urbane wit, with its quaint spicing of classical quotations and long-winded periphrasis, was no less delightful for being expurgated; and O'Dwyer talked alternate nonsense and philosophy until his hearers found distinction difficult. Fergus Moore, who was also present, made little contribution to the conversation beyond an occasional bitter interjection into O'Dwyer's philosophizing. Teddy Conroy, a Trinity man and a friend of Eugene's, was another guest. Near to him sat Eugene himself, jealously eyeing Bernard's obvious happiness, and comparing his innumerable successful light love affairs with his own hopeless devotion, now nearly two years old, to Conroy's sister. Eugene's younger brother Sandy, just home from school, seemed completely monopolized by Mabel, the youngest of the Harveys. It was a brilliant and successful party.

Two days later Sir Eugene came to Bernard's room with an opened letter in his hand.

"I'm sorry, Bernard," he said. "I opened this without noticing the envelope."

"Don't mention it," said Bernard. His father's correspondence was so large that the mistake was of common occurrence.

In the envelope Bernard found a letter and an enclosure. The letter was from a well-known Dublin solicitor asking for an interview in connection with the contents of the

enclosure, to which Bernard now turned his attention. It was an envelope addressed simply:

Bernard Lascelles, Esq.

and in one corner was written: *to be opened on his twenty-first birthday.* The writing was strange to Bernard and it had evidently been written a long time ago, for the ink was bleached and the envelope itself showed unmistakable signs of age. Bernard opened it and took out the following letter:

3rd January, 1899.

My dear Bernard:

If ever you read this letter you will be reading the words of a dead man, for I am starting out on an enterprise which may cost me my life. What little money I have I am leaving by will to you, my godson. It will not be enough to live on, for which I am glad, as I should not like to encourage you to live an idle life (not that I think you would ever want to), but you will find it a help in the early struggling years in whatever profession you take up. Mr. Murchison, my friend and solicitor, will give you full particulars.

Pray for me.

Your affectionate Uncle,

CHRISTOPHER REILLY.

Bernard sat pondering over the letter for a long time. Memories of his kind, clever, handsome uncle passed before his mind's eye. A question suddenly sprang up within him:

"I wonder what became of *Cuchulain*?"

He returned to the letter again. It was written in a very small hand, sloping backwards — an unusual hand.

"Not the sort of writing I'd have expected from Uncle Chris," he commented to himself. "Well, now for Mr. Murchison."

Bernard's favourite sport was yachting. He was a member of a small club at Kingstown and was one of the crew

of three who sailed Fergus Moore's yacht in the frequent races and regattas of the summer. To possess a craft of his own was his highest ambition, as it is of all true seamen, and his uncle's beneficence gave him the opportunity to gratify it. He expended the whole of his first quarter's income on a little half-decked yacht, and in it he explored by himself the whole of Dublin Bay, and sometimes sailed down the coast to Wicklow and up to Malahide. Sailing is a pastime that satisfies every mood. He rejoiced in the exhilaration of a battle with stiff breezes that lashed him with spray while the hard green water crunched under his lee timbers: and again when the breeze was light and the sun shining he would heave to and lie for hours in tranquil enjoyment.

Meanwhile College life pursued its accustomed way. Those of Bernard's friends who were taking courses shorter than medicine qualified and passed out. The first to go was Jack Harvey, who, having obtained his B.A., was given a post as tutor to the son of the Russian consul. (His mother never tired thereafter of talking of "my son in the Russian Diplomatic Service.") Next year Manders was called to the Bar, and Molloy set up as a solicitor. Mallow still remained as a "chronic" engineer, and Moore never seemed tired of taking out new courses.

If Bernard's politics still remained in a state of flux Moore was to a large extent responsible. His pessimistic outlook on life exercised a strange fascination over his younger friend. A conversation in College would turn Bernard's opinions definitely Nationalist, and then Moore would come out with a torrent of obloquy and abuse for the Irish character — scarcely less vehement than his philippics against England — against which Bernard, destitute of O'Dwyer's knowledge of facts and ultimate causes, could make no defence, and came almost to consider that his country was not worth saving. And if he expressed a desire to read Irish History and so form an opinion of his own, Moore always said:

"Don't. It's too horrible. It'll only embitter your life as it did mine."

Many and varied were the conversations they held at this time on the steps of the College on Stephen's Green. One day Brian Mallow in his truculent way was inveighing against a recent production of the *Shadow of the Glen* at the Abbey and was supported by a man called Mullery, an enthusiastic member of the then discredited Sinn Fein following. Moore had been listening in patience for a while and then burst out with characteristic scorn and heat:

"What idiot ever called the Irish an intelligent people? The Greek's didn't think *Oedipus Tyrannus* accused them all of incest. The Scots didn't think *Macbeth* accused them all of murder. The English didn't think Lear accused them of lack of family feeling. Yet we Irish fly into a rage over a play that contains an unchaste Irishwoman just as if it was a reflection on the whole race. It's simply absurd!"

"The play's a libel on Irishwomen," said Mullery.

"A hellish libel," reiterated Mallow. "Only a cynical West Briton like Moore could put up with it."

"Have sense," said O'Dwyer. "I'm no West Briton, as you ought to know, and I agree with Moore. It's quite true that we Irish are an exceptionally chaste people, but we've no business to jump to the conclusion that an unchaste Irishwoman is an impossibility. . . . Statistics alone should prevent that."

"What statistics?" said Mullery.

"The illegitimacy statistics."

"They're lower than in any other country."

"Yes. Because the priests make the people marry when consequences become inevitable."

"Rot," said Mallow. "It's our chastity."

"That talk about the chastity of Irishwomen," said Moore, "is the damndest nonsense ever heard. Look at the streets of Dublin."

"Cities are exceptional," said Mullery.

"And most of the women are foreigners," said Mallow.

"Prove it," said Moore.

"Irishwomen are chaste," repeated Mallow dogmatically.

Here McGurk, who had not yet spoken, burst into ribald mirth.

"Chaste me neck!" he said. "I never had any difficulty with them."

At this Mullery and Mallow walked off in disgust.

"The worst fault of us Irish," said Moore, "is our vanity and objection to criticism or satire. The English on the other hand are so self-satisfied that satire doesn't affect them at all. I wonder which is the worse way to be."

"In our case," said O'Dwyer, "it isn't our own fault. It's the re-action to England's calumny."

"But for sheer national truculence," said Moore, "Mallow and the *Morning Post* are at one."

The Labour troubles just then beginning were a frequent subject of discussion among the students, and here Bernard had definite views and was a prominent disputant. He was amazed to find that the revolutionaries on the National issue, Mallow, Mullery and others, were reactionaries on this point. But there were differences amongst them. Mallow held strongly ultramontane views and based his attacks on labour on clerical arguments, whereas Mullery was rather annoyed to find the priests, those determined enemies of his adored Fenians, on his side, and confined his opposition to the international doctrines of the leaders. Of the actual economic conditions which were responsible for the trouble all the young doctrinaires were comparatively ignorant, and their arguments were generally on principles and generalities and as often as not went in a circle. "People don't undergo the losses and hardships of a strike for nothing," was Bernard's usual argument. "Strikers are not always in the right, but you will generally be on the safe side in assuming that they are." He was glad to find that O'Dwyer was on the revolutionary side in this matter, and their former friendship, so rudely broken at Ashbury, began to revive.

It was through Eugene, who was now in Trinity College, that Bernard became acquainted with Fred Heuston Harrington and through him with his mother. Bernard had dropped in to Eugene's rooms in Trinity and found Harrington there. He was a nice young man, good-looking and polished, but not particularly intelligent, and Bernard cultivated his acquaintance at once in the hope of meeting again his sister Dora whom he had not seen for several months.

About this period Bernard began for the first time in his life to know his brother. Since they had first gone to school they had always been separated, and moreover Eugene's mental development was not only actually but relatively slower than Bernard's, which rendered companionship between them impossible. Now it was different. At twenty years of age Eugene had a definite philosophy and definite politics and was a capable, if not a brilliant, controversialist. Friendship with O'Dwyer had, in his last years at Ashbury, made him a Nationalist, but with inborn sentiments for the British connexion which O'Dwyer's sarcasms failed to eradicate. The brothers bore little resemblance one to the other. Eugene was pious, gentle and unobtrusive; Bernard quite the reverse. Eugene's manner was courteous and dignified; Bernard's good breeding barely concealed his natural rudeness and impatience. Eugene's polished conversation contrasted strongly with Bernard's jerky argumentative manner, and his voice, calm and well-modulated, was more pleasing to the ear than Bernard's, which in moments of excitement became high-pitched and raucous. Eugene's dress was inexpensive yet neat; Bernard's extravagant yet untidy. Bernard was lean and sinewy with narrow loins, and broad shoulders; his head was large, with brown hair straggling over his fine broad brow; he had deep-set blue eyes and strong cream coloured teeth irregularly set in his square hard jaw. Eugene's limbs were almost feminine in their round-

ness; his face was almost chubby, his teeth white and even, and his hair black, sleek, and carefully brushed.

When they had discovered each other's politics Eugene said:

"What'll the governor say when he finds out? He hates Socialists, but Nationalists are anathema."

"He'll never find out," replied Bernard. "It would never occur to him that we could be such fools as to differ from him."

"Still hankering after Dora?" inquired Eugene.

"More or less," Bernard admitted.

"I must wring an invitation out of Fred," said Eugene.

"Decent chap," said Bernard.

"Don't mention it. You'd do the same for me I'm sure."

It was not long before Bernard and Eugene were invited by Fred to one of his mother's at-homes. Mrs. Heuston Harrington was the widow of a well known literary and art critic, and though her natural taste for these things was small it had been highly cultivated by intercourse with her husband. Her intellectual reputation was great and to her at-homes foregathered hosts of unknown and rising people in the artistic world. Here they chattered and sipped tea and smoked cigarettes and posed and strutted and flattered each other, and Mrs. Heuston Harrington moved about among them feeling like a modern Aspasia or Madame de Staël.

On Bernard's first visit the room was crowded with guests and he had no opportunity of speaking to his hostess. However he made the acquaintance of one young man who interested and amused him. He was a poet named Edwin D'Arcy who had published one very slender volume and neglected his hair and cultivated his tie on the strength of it. He talked feelingly of art and his own temperament most of the evening and presented Bernard with a copy of his book *Earth Songs* which he happened to have in his pocket. Bernard glanced through it at home that evening

and found it full of Mist, Purple, Dreams, and Visions, and of invocations to Love and My Soul.

Dora vouchsafed him only a word or two on this occasion and made him very jealous by ostentatiously cultivating D'Arcy. However on a subsequent visit she gave him her undivided attention, and confided to him that she simply hated D'Arcy, he was such a conceited young ass. Bernard fondly imagined that she was trying to allay his jealousy and made up for her former treatment, but Dora was really speaking the literal truth and was seeking Bernard's society simply because she found him interesting. While the other guests walked about and chattered Bernard and Dora sat in a corner deep in conversation. From the usual preliminaries about books and plays they came at length to solider subjects. Bernard confessed to unorthodox religious views and Dora announced that she was an agnostic.

"I've never been baptized," she said. "You see, father was always an agnostic and mother soon became one. Religion has its good points, I'm sure, but I'm glad I haven't any. It leaves your mind so much freer."

"I'm not sure that it does," said Bernard. "Any more than lawlessness would make your body freer."

"But all these religious dogmas are so narrowing. They stop all freedom of thought."

"Freedom of thought isn't necessarily and intrinsically a good thing. Suppose for a minute that some particular thing *is* true. Take anything as an example: transubstantiation, say. I know you don't believe in it, but grant it true for the sake of argument."

"Very well."

"Then, if it's true, and your claim for freedom of thought allows you to disbelieve it, and my bondage to religion makes me believe it, surely I'm better off than you in possessing the truth."

"But how are we to believe that religion itself is true?"

"Ah, there we come to the fundamentals, and it's in fundamentals that my own doubts exist. But on the whole, my

love of order, justice, and good government makes me accept an omnipotent God — expressing his will through an infallible church."

"Well, I'm for freedom of thought. How can you hope to attain to any comprehension of the universe if there are things you must accept whether you like it or not? I don't see myself being dictated to by clergymen as to what I'm to think or not to think. I can't understand how a person like you could submit to being forbidden to read anything you like by these Index people."

"Well, I'm afraid I don't bother very much about the Index."

A little later the topic of Home Rule cropped up.

"I think it's awful nonsense," said Dora. "This country simply couldn't govern itself. It would be on the rocks in a month."

"How do you make that out?"

"Why, it's obvious."

"In what way?"

"I can't tell you much about it, because I'm no politician. I just know it. Every one with any sense knows it."

"I thought you didn't like dogmas," said Bernard. "And here you take for granted the opinions of politicians and journalists who have far less claim to knowledge and disinterestedness than priests have in religion. I can see it didn't take any index to prevent you reading the opposite side in the controversy."

"I don't take any interest in politics anyway," said Dora huffily.

"Then why dogmatize about them?"

"Let's talk of something else," said Dora, and brought back the conversation to literature again.

"Poor narrow little mind," thought Bernard, "that thinks itself so big. Instead of stuffing your head with ideas it was too small to hold you'd have been better employed in using that graceful figure of yours to secure a mate

and populate the world. Comprehend the universe, indeed! Why, you're too small even to wonder at it."

How hollow her intellectuality now appeared. To the note of revolt that sounds through the major part of all great literature she was absolutely deaf. She professed to admire Shakespeare, but heard not his cry of universal charity and brotherhood. She professed to admire Dickens, but responded not to his pleading for the poor and down trodden. She professed to admire Dostoeffsky but was not moved to any indignation against autocratic tyranny. She professed an overwhelming admiration for Shaw but his plea for clarity of thinking and ruthless reasoning, and the social philosophy which was the very essence of the man meant nothing to her. In Shakespeare she saw only a supreme dramatist and master of poetic diction; in Dickens only a great creator of characters; in Dostoeffsky only a grimly tragic story teller; in Shaw only a clever comedian. It was all she had been told to see.

She mentioned Keats' *Isabella* as a favourite poem, and Bernard quoted the fierce attack on Capitalism in the stanza beginning:

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
And went all naked to the hungry shark.

Her only comment was to the effect that "noisy factories" was not a very poetic phrase.

They wound up with small-talk, and Bernard found that this was what suited her best. She abused this person's hat and that person's dress, some one else's manners and yet another person's pedigree. In fine, she exposed in its entirety the native conventionalism of her mind. To Bernard it was a revelation. He obtained an insight into her soul, for the smallness of which not even her body's grace could compensate.

(I am afraid, ladies, that you are getting a little impatient of the facility with which our hero falls in and out of love. "Surely," you say, "that is not usual in a young man. Our

own sweethearts have told us they never loved before." Mesdemoiselles, in loving-kindness they deceive you. They would spare you the pangs of jealousy retrospective, which is the worst kind of jealousy. We men are all alike, and Bernard is one of us.)

On yet another visit he had a short colloquy with Dora's mother. At first she talked, in her facile clever way, of books and music, and Bernard could see whence came Dora's opinions. He succeeded eventually in drawing her to politics, and the admirer of Shelley and Shaw spoke thus:

"These labour troubles are a frightful nuisance, don't you think? Why on earth can't the workers be reasonable? These people, like that awful man Larkin, coming along and stirring up discontent, they ought to be shot. . . . But don't let's talk politics — In my opinion they're the real curse of this country. How I wish we could get away from them, but people drag them in everywhere. . . . Now, what do you think of this? I'm trying to run some concerts in the winter and we've got a mixed committee together to manage them. . . . Well, the whole business is held up at present because some of the Nationalists on it object to having God Save the King played at the end."

"Well, isn't it a political act on *your* side to insist on having it?"

"Oh, nonsense. 'The King is above politics.'"

"But the Nationalist point of view is that they won't recognize the King until what they consider their rights are restored to them."

"But that's disloyalty."

"Not from their point of view."

"They've no right to have such a point of view," said the apostle of freedom of thought.

Then she passed on to other subjects. She gave her opinions on various Dublin personalities, and her opinions were almost invariably uncomplimentary. One person was a fool, another a knave, another not a gentleman. Then she moved on to another guest.

Bernard found himself next to Edwin D'Arcy again and tried to sound him on the subject of the strike.

"Oh!" said the poet mellifluously, "I think these affairs are beneath the artist's attention."

"I say, Eugene," said Bernard, as the brothers left the house, "Mrs. Heuston Harrington is a treat. I'd like to put her in a novel, only people would say she's too contradictory to be true to life. Do you know that she believes in palmistry, and yet she considers our religion superstition? I think she's the clearest vindication of Pope's rather questionable line about a little learning being a dangerous thing. She fancies herself to be tremendously broadminded, so she professes agnosticism as a revolt against the narrowness of dogma, and at the same time her whole system of politics is a collection of the silliest little old-fashioned dogmas you ever heard. It's all 'Agitators ought to be hanged,' and 'Socialism is nonsense,' and 'the present Social system is inevitable and quite good enough,' and 'the Irish are so disloyal,' and, God help her, 'England is a free country.' Why, her very agnosticism is dogmatic. Christianity preaches, on excellent grounds, the dogma of the Virgin Birth of Christ, and Mrs. Agnostic, on no grounds at all, simply trots out the dogma that it's impossible."

Eugene was never quick on the uptake.

"Your own faith isn't so good that you can complain of other people," he said.

Bernard gasped with that helpless feeling that always came over him when he failed to make himself clear to slower witted people. It was the principal barrier between him and his mother and Eugene. Time was when he had made attempts to cross it, but he never succeeded in doing anything but exasperate himself and earn a reputation for rudeness and ill temper. Now he had learnt by experience and always took refuge, as here, in silence.

At Fred's solicitation they visited the house, frequently again.

"I say, Eugene," said Bernard, after one such occasion,

"at one time I couldn't see much in Christianity's praise of the virtue of humility, but I do now. Ten minutes of conversation with Mrs. Heuston Harrington have done more than a life time of Christian teaching to show me the real beauty of Christ's words: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit,' and 'Blessed are the meek.' Henceforth I'm a Christian."

"It's taken you a long time to get back to the faith you were born in," said Eugene.

"I think it's better to have doubted and returned than never to have doubted at all," was Bernard's reply, and Eugene prayed for his faith in the night.

10

For all his re-awakening revolutionary ardour Bernard consented to go to the Castle. Partly it was because his father and mother desired it, partly it was because he enjoyed any kind of festivity, and partly it was because he was always glad to get new experiences. Moreover Alice was to make her *début* that season and she prettily implored him to be a spectator of her glory. At any rate he went.

The Drawing-Room was a brilliant affair. The Lascelles motor took its place in the queue of vehicles leading to the Upper Castle Yard. It was a strange, motley queue. The more prosperous courtiers came in private motors, from gorgeous landaulettes to battered two-seaters, while the less fortunate ones came in hired cabs, looking as they sat in their finery in these dingy equipages for all the world like diamonds set in tarnished pewter. The queue moved at a snail's pace and for the best part of an hour these seekers after place and pleasure had to endure cramp and tedium. To many, however, the wondering gaze of the poor women and urchins of Cork Hill and the neighbourhood, and the salutes of the white-gloved constables on duty were ample recompense.

Dublin Castle is at once the most sinister and the most ridiculous feature in Irish life. It is the centre and stronghold of foreign domination and the playhouse of native

snobbery. In its dungeons Ireland's noblest children have languished; in its drawing-rooms her meanest and pettiest have simpered. And today it holds within its walls a sham, meaningless, tawdry court attended by the silliest, narrowest and most servile people on the face of the earth.

There were knights in scores and would-be knights in hundreds, with here and there an odd baronet or a stray viscount. Among the throng you could distinguish Sir Perry Tifflytis who had preserved a Viceroy's useless cousin to cumber the earth, and Mr. Bonegraft who hoped for an opportunity to do the same. Not far off was Sir Timkins Tidbit who got knighted by mistake owing to a relative having charge of the honours list. He was engaged in conversation with Sir Everard Backwood, better known as the Lord Mayor of Ballygutter, who had had the good fortune to be chairman of the council of that municipality during a royal visit. Looking rather bashful and out of place was the uncouth form of Sir Cornelius O'Tractor skulking behind a pillar. He had been knighted as a reward for bringing a "loyalist" motion before the Corporation and he found present company just a little oppressive. In another corner was Mr. Whitelead who hoped to get the contract for repainting St. Patrick's Hall and was taking even now a mental estimate of the cost. And then there were the knights who had got their titles no one knew how, and those whose gallant deeds were lost in the mist of legend. And among this bevy of Sirs strolled the baronets and the viscounts serenely aloof and contemptuous of the servility of their inferiors.

But we are forgetting the ladies. In plumes and lappets and seven-foot trains, blazing with real and sham jewellery, they were a glorious sight. There were Countesses and Baronesses of course, but they are beyond our purview. We shall content ourselves by recognizing the wives of the knights and squires. There was Lady Mallaby Morchoe who would not deign to notice Lady Lascelles whose husband had been knighted a year later than her own. There

was aggressive Lady Liverlung, but three months titled and still angry over her long wait for the distinction. There was Lady Backwood, stately and silent, who was of aristocratic blood and whose recently obtained title was but an accessory. She looked around the gathering with an expression that plainly said: "*Every one* seems to come to the Drawing-Room now." There was Lady This and Lady That and Lady the Rest of It, and Lady Lascelles pointed them all out to her son.

Then there were the commoners. There was Mrs. Gunby Rourke plainly enjoying herself, and Mrs. Heuston Harrington doing the bored intellectual pose, and Mrs. O'Driscoll pushing forward her bashful husband, and Mrs. MacNiff the iron monger's wife. They were all there, metaphorically pushing and scrambling, their petty little minds clashing, their vicious little tongues stabbing one another.

Quite definitely the gathering was split into two factions. On the one hand were the Unionists, the regular Castle-goers, very angry and disdainful of the crowd of Nationalists whom the Aberdeens had introduced into the stronghold. On the other were the Nationalists, some aggressive, some rather overwhelmed, many quite obviously trying hard to reconcile their attendance with their principles.

A hush fell upon the assembly and the ceremony of presenting the debutantes to their Excellencies began. For them this was the threshold of life and much the finest part of it. One by one, glittering with jewels and swamped in silks and satins, they swept up the room and sank to the floor before the vice-regal throne. In her turn came Alice, proudly shy.

One by one they passed from the presence and mingled in the crowd. In a short space they would be married and would commence to urge their children along the road their fathers had trod before them.

"How did I look, Bernard?" inquired Alice.

"Splendid," said Bernard.

When the ceremony was over the bejewelled throng packed itself into its motors and its cabs and drove homeward through the murky streets.

II

And while the garrison and its hangers-on played courtier, and the Irish Party at Westminster played politics, out of the slums of the city came a cry of agony: of agony long endured and no longer tolerable. The great Transport Strike had begun and before the eyes of men stalked Reality, crude and grim and menacing.

CHAPTER VII

STEPHEN

I

WHILST all the resources of parental and scholastic education were being employed to twist and distort the mental growth of young Bernard Lascelles, away in Glencoe Stephen Ward's mind was developing as freely and naturally as the trees that surrounded him. His father did little more than supervise the education which the boy was giving himself. A suggestion here, an explanation there, and now and then a helping hand in difficulties — these were all that was required of him.

Michael Ward was not pious, but he was fundamentally religious, and he was firmly determined that his son should learn his religion without the aid of the pietistic stories and pretty religiosity by which clerics and nuns try to make the divine revelation interesting and acceptable to the young. Thus at the age at which Bernard had arrived by way of Catechism, miraculous medals, "holy" pictures, lives of saints, and ignorance of the Gospel to an indefinite kind of atheism, Stephen was possessed of a synthetic and definite religious philosophy. Quite early in life the conception of a supreme spirit came to him without any very great difficulty and unconfused by the usual preliminary notion of a grey-bearded magician sitting on a cloud. He learned the theory of creation without any Garden of Eden symbolism first taught as fact to be afterwards unlearned when the first appreciation of science renders continued deception impossible and to be the starting point of general doubt. Straight from this he was taken to the study of Christianity at its source in the New Testament. He was taught to understand the

divine wisdom and beauty of the Sermon on the Mount, and only when he had fully grasped and appreciated this, the foundation of the Christian religion, did he come to the dogmata which the Church has erected upon that foundation.

Then, when he was in his fifteenth year, he began the study of Plato. With his father's help he construed the *Crito*, the *Apology*, and the *Phaedo*, and (herein he was more fortunate than Bernard) his teacher was more concerned with the wisdom of the books than with their illustration of grammatical rules. The analogy between the *Apology* and the Passion of Christ struck Stephen at once and he came to have an almost passionate love and admiration for Socrates, so that, when his Greek became fluent enough, the *Apology* ranked next in his estimation to the Gospel of Saint Matthew. Other stray philosophical works — Aristotle, the *Summum Theologicum*, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, *A Modern Utopia* — he found in his father's library and read, but they had none of the influence of these two.

On his own account Stephen took to the study of History. He read the histories of half the countries of the globe and all the books of travel he could find, so that he became acquainted with nearly every system of government, good and bad, known to mankind. Works of this kind he read with the same avidity with which most young men read novels. For fiction made no appeal to him. Once he had picked up *David Copperfield* but tired of it before the end of the first chapter. The *Talisman*, being historical, pleased him better, but the mixture of truths and fiction eventually annoyed him so that he abandoned the tale unfinished. *Pendennis* bored him before he reached page three, and a glance at the first paragraph of *Diana of the Crossways* was more than enough for him. After that he deserted fiction for good and returned to his histories and philosophies.

As a result of the course of his education the universe of wisdom and knowledge was to Stephen a great coherence:

Politics, Philosophy and Religion were interdependent; and Truth and Justice (or, to use the Platonic word which expresses both, *to dikaion*) absolute and universal. To one trained in the usual way such a conception could only come late if at all. He learns his religion first by means of dogmata in the shape of an almost un-understandable Catechism; then he comes to the New Testament in the form of the fragment of gospel read at Sunday's Mass, which is usually a parable or a narrative of a miracle (and as for the Sermon on the Mount, his knowledge of it is confined to the opening sentences known as the Eight Beatitudes); and he often attains to no conception of God as an all-permeating spirit until almost adult. To him, therefore, Philosophy and Religion are distinct: the one being "deep," a matter of long words and no concern of his; the other a matter of prayers and observance. Politics are on a lower plane altogether, a matter of votes and speeches and newspapers, which may or may not have an interest for him. Thus he is capable of imagining that what is philosophically right may be religiously wrong, and vice versa, and of acquiescing in a social or political expediency that he knows to be philosophically unreasonable without considering that it is thereby morally wrong. In other words the existing system of mental education produces the muddled head, the basis of nineteenth-century of the injustice of the world; where religion is mainly a conflict between prejudice and prejudice, philosophy a conflict between speculation and speculation, and politics, where it is not mere bullying and thieving, a conflict between opinion and opinion,—instead of all these things being a humble search by the collective mind of man after truth and justice.

Two thousand years ago Socrates preached that the one important thing for man was to find out what Justice is, and today ninety-nine hundredths of civilized mankind do not know that he preached it, and but few of the hundredth part have engaged in the search. To Stephen, however, the search was a necessity towards which his whole nature impelled him. Absolute truth was so essential to his mind

that when he first came into contact with the actual thoughts and affairs of men through the medium of newspapers (a literature which he left severely alone until he was over eighteen years of age), he was astounded to find what small importance was attached to it. The actual controversy which was agitating the Press at the time was the impending assault by the Liberal Government of England on the House of Lords. The battle of brains, viewed even in the Irish Press where the skirmishes were only subsidiary, was so interesting to Stephen that he sent for a number of English papers to study the central conflict. As a spectacle it was exciting, but as political philosophy it was a lamentable exhibition. False premise pitted against false premise; wrong deductions founded on true premises pitted against logical deductions from false premises; meaningless side issues thrashed to death; *petitio principii* passing as unanswerable argument: — all these made Stephen, unused to the facts of the game, imagine that the participants were battling in a mist of stupidity.

“Hang it all!” he exclaimed one day sitting in the midst of a heap of crumpled paper, “two mutually contradictory theories cannot both be true. Why can’t the two sides realize this and instead of each trying to force its view on the other co-operate in an effort to extract the truth? Modern politics seems to consist entirely in bolstering up a point of view, so that the worse system of government may be in force because it happens to have the cleverer exponents. We need another Socrates to walk amongst men and say to them: ‘Let us seek together for what is justice and when we have found it let us rule ourselves accordingly.’”

The suggestion set him pondering a long while in silence.

2

Stephen is not to be pictured as a pale, thought-worn student. The free mountain air he breathed would be sufficient guarantee against that, and moreover he worked hard on their little farm and he was a tireless walker and swim-

mer. He grew up strong and active and of fine physique, devoted to the open air life, and save for his preference for philosophic reading and lack of desire for companionship his boyhood was not abnormal.

When we last saw him he was just commencing to read the History of the Four Masters, being then twelve years of age. It took him four months in his methodical way to digest that treatise, but though it increased his knowledge of facts immensely it did not alter the simple political philosophy he had acquired by his reading of one very small book when first the mysterious cupboard was opened. "The English have conquered us," he had said. "Therefore they must be driven out." It was a simple, logical sequence and there was no one to interpose subtle side issues. Not that these would have had much effect. If any one had told him, for instance, that British Rule was for Ireland's good he would simply have answered that he didn't want to have good things forced on him, thank you. And *was* it for Ireland's good, anyway? It would have been hard to prove this thesis to him, for Stephen could not be impressed by long words that he did not understand, and he would probably fall back on his instinctive feeling that servitude, even if it were beneficial, was degrading. But as a matter of fact such argument never came his way.

When he had finished the Four Masters he read more of the books from the one-time mysterious cupboard. He discovered early that his father was disinclined to talk with him about these books as he did about others, but he failed to elicit any explanation of the fact. Undeterred by this, however, Stephen read all the books in the cupboard, and thereby learned the whole history of his native land, with the natural and logical result which his father dreaded but did not seek to prevent. Had these books been kept permanently out of his hands Stephen might have remained all his life a student of abstract philosophy. His first view of modern politics, as we have seen, made him pity mankind for its stupidity and contemplate the possibility of himself

becoming an exponent of knowledge. Further exploration, however, showed him that what he had taken for stupidity was in reality dishonesty, and he had shrunk from participation in a conflict where truth was not merely unrecognized but unsought. But here in Ireland he now saw a war of reality: right struggling heroically against might; justice fighting the eternal fight with injustice; thought wrestling with the strangling grip of the material; the light of truth stabbing eternally with its beams the overwhelming darkness of deceit. His gaze, searching infinity for abstract justice, suddenly focussed upon the moment of the eternal drama being enacted in one insignificant corner of the universe. Here was the birth in him of the desire to do. He ascended the hill behind the house and looked down on the city slumbering, as it seemed, at the edge of the bay. Often in his boyhood he had asked to be taken to the city, but his father, on one excuse or another, had always refused. Gradually the requests became less and less frequent, and finally ceased. Now the desire was strong upon him to set forth at once and walk among men. But in the end he retraced his steps homeward.

"It can wait," he muttered. "There's still a lot to learn."

And one day he and his father had reason to visit a village down in the plain. When they arrived there they found it crowded with people and very noisy. There were drums beating and bugles and pipes playing and green flags flying, and there were some men bustling around in dirty, flashy uniforms and others reeling about in various stages of intoxication. They came to a platform from which a man,—a fat, prosperous, dishonest looking creature—was addressing the crowd.

"The day of victory is approaching," he was saying. "The dark clouds are being dispersed by the will of the people constitutionally spoken." (Cheers.) "Let cranks and faction mongers croak as they will, the dawn was never more surely at hand. Let us stick by the old flag. The

flag of Hugh O'Neill, and Owen Roe, and Tone and Mitchell; of Parnell and John Redmond." (Cheers.) "Only let us remain firm and united and loyal to our heaven-sent leader" (cheers), "and freedom will be ours before three years are out." (Tremendous applause and more music.)

"What's all this, father?" asked Stephen.

"Politics," said Michael Ward.

Which confirmed Stephen's intention of biding his time.

So you envisage Stephen's growth from boyhood to manhood in the lonely glen in the Dublin mountains, jealously and fearfully watched by his broken father, yet developing in his own way for all that. A quiet, regular life he led, working and reading, one day much the same as another, for twenty-four years. And you may picture him in the full flower of his manhood thus: a form physically perfect, of medium height, broad in the shoulders, narrow in the loins, long in the limbs; the whole surmounted by a fine square-shaped head, with a crop of thick black hair; the face not handsome, but clear-skinned, with high cheek-bones, good-sized nose, bright steel-blue eyes, and a long upper lip covering a set of powerful white teeth. An aboriginal Celt, ethnologists would call him, but ethnology is a discredited pseudo-science.

3

The clatter of galloping hoofs rang out on the hard sun-baked road. A cry of fear made Stephen halt. In the next instant a pony and trap enveloped in a cloud of dust hurtled into sight round the bend of the road. A girl, a picture of frantic despair, clung with all the relics of her strength to the reins. As the runaway dashed past him Stephen sprang instantly into action. With a nimble leap he caught the rein by the bit and ran alongside the pony, gradually checking him. When he had brought him to a halt and soothed him down he turned to assist the girl out of the trap. She was breathing hard and trembling. He led her to the grassy bank by the roadside, where she sat down, gave a

sigh of relief, and then incontinently broke out into hysterical sobs. Stephen was at a loss what to do. He was the incompetent male at a crisis like this. The decision and promptitude of action that had controlled the runaway horse were useless factors now, and he stood by, puzzled and helpless, while the fit worked itself off.

"I'm a fool," she said, suddenly recovering herself. "Thanks for your help."

He felt awkward, reddened, and stammered vaguely for a reply. She looked up at him for a moment and then quickly looked down again. Stephen returned to the pony and stroked its damp neck.

"What made him run away?" he asked.

"He took fright at a motor char-a-banc full of tourists, all shouting and waving flags."

A little later she said:

"Would you mind very much if I asked you to drive me home. I'm still rather shaken. . . . It's only about a mile away."

Stephen complied at once. He turned the trap round, while she watched the manly strength and grace of his figure with admiring eyes. They drove along the dusty road under the July sun in silence, until at last they reached an open gateway, on the pillars of which were the words: "The Beeches."

"Here we are," said the girl.

Stephen drove up a short gravelled avenue that led to a moderate sized country house. A boy of about sixteen years of age who had been lounging in the shade of the verandah, jumped up at sight of the trap, exclaiming:

"Hello! Madge, you're back early . . ." He stopped as he caught sight of Stephen.

"My brother Teddy," said Madge to Stephen. "Teddy, this is Mr. . . .," she paused inquiringly, and Stephen filled in the blank.

"Tony took fright at a char-a-banc and ran away with

me," explained Madge. "Only for Mr. Ward I'd have had a spill."

"Come inside and have a drink," said Teddy.

"No, thanks. I won't trouble you. I was on my way to Rathfarnham and this has really been a lift for me."

"Oh, come on!" said Teddy.

"Please come in," said Madge.

Stephen yielded, and they went in to a handsome dining-room.

"Whiskey or lemon-squash?" asked Teddy.

Stephen chose the latter.

"Father and mother are out today," said Madge to Stephen. "Won't you call in another time and meet them?"

Stephen said he would be delighted, and a few minutes later announced that he must be off. Madge saw him to the gate.

"Good-bye," she said, giving him her hand. "For the present," she added.

He resumed his way to Rathfarnham and, as he did not look back, he was unaware that Madge stood at the gate looking after him until he was out of sight. He walked pensively, with his head down, absorbed in meditation.

"What did that strange look in her eyes mean?" he was asking himself. But he could obtain no answer, being unschooled in romantic fiction.

One afternoon a week later he set out again for Rathfarnham. He passed the scene of the previous week's adventure and came at last to the low wall that separated the Conroy grounds (Conroy was Madge's surname) from the road.

"Hello, Mr. Ward!" cried a voice.

Stephen looked up and saw Madge swinging in a hammock slung between two cherry trees. He was hot and dusty, and she was a picture of cool freshness in a frock of summery white. There was a pink flush on her cheeks but

Stephen was not aware that he was the cause of it. He came over to the wall and looked up at her, leaning his elbows on it.

"How are you today?" he said.

"*Quite* recovered, thanks," she replied.

Stephen, having no more to say, fidgetted nervously with the moss on the top of the wall.

"Won't you come inside and talk to me?" suggested Madge. "There's another hammock over there," indicating one hanging loose by one end from the bough near at hand.

"I'm afraid I haven't time," said Stephen.

"Oh!" she said, looking very disappointed.

"I live up in Glencoole, you know," he explained, "and I'm going down to Rathfarnham to buy some things."

"That's a long way to walk."

"Eight miles. . . . Nothing at all."

"And eight back."

"I'm accustomed to it."

"But wouldn't you like a rest?"

"I haven't time for that."

She swallowed her disappointment and asked:

"When are you coming to see us? Mother and Father are longing to thank you for saving me."

"It was nothing. But I'll come any time you like."

"Let's see. . . . Oh, yes. We're having a little garden party on Thursday afternoon. Could you come?"

"Yes. Thanks very much."

"Don't forget now. Four o'clock."

"I'll remember. . . . Well, good-bye. I must go on."

He made his purchases in Rathfarnham and started back for home at once. Madge was in the hammock again when he passed, but he did not know that she had carefully calculated the probable time of his arrival and that she had been waiting for him for three quarters of an hour in the chill of the dusk-fall. The conversation that ensued was short and disappointing to her, and she was mortified to observe that the young man showed no emotion in parting

from her at this magic flower-scented hour, and that he made no attempt to retain the hand that would willingly have lingered in his.

Thursday came, and Stephen was welcomed at the gate by Madge. She led him over to the lawn where, under the shade of a couple of hawthorns, Mrs. Conroy was dispensing tea to her guests. Her husband lolled in a deck chair chatting with three young ladies who laughed industriously at regular intervals. Two young men in flannels were handing round tea and cake. A third, little more than a boy, stood apart fidgetting and distraught, gazing at Stephen and his conductress as they drew near. A game of tennis was in progress on the court just beyond.

"Mother, this is Mr. Ward."

Madge's parents greeted Stephen effusively. Then he was introduced all round and set in a deck chair with a cup of tea and a slice of cake precariously balanced in his hand. He felt like a dark spot on the prevailing whiteness, for, though he had spent some time in making himself spruce for the occasion, he was the only male present who was not in white flannels, and all the ladies were in the daintiest summer frocks.

"Madge told me all about the rescue," said the girl sitting nearest to him. "How on earth were you so quick? I can't understand it. I'm sure *I'd* have been out of my wits."

"Romantic, wasn't it?" observed another girl, in a harsh and rather scornful voice.

Madge brought over a chair and planted it down beside Stephen's. The youth who had been standing apart thereupon moved round unobtrusively and sat on the grass close at hand. He kept looking anxiously at Stephen and Madge as they talked. There was general conversation punctuated by the musical clink of tea cups for a while. Then the tennis players, Teddy among them, having finished their game, strolled up.

"Our turn now," said one of the girls.

"Do you play tennis, Mr. Ward?" Madge inquired. Stephen shook his head.

"I've never had a racquet in my hand," he said.

Madge turned to the melancholy youth on the grass.

"Mr. Lascelles," she said, "will you and Miss Ridley play Fanny and George?"

"I'm not in very good form today," the young man demurred. "I've got a stiff wrist."

"Nonsense."

"Fact."

"Well, will *you* make the fourth," she asked another young man, who gladly accepted. The four moved off to the tennis court.

"Let's go and look on," said Madge to Stephen a few minutes later.

"Yes. I've never seen a game before," said Stephen, and they set off after the players.

The young man called Lascelles stood looking after them for a moment, longing and yet afraid to follow.

"He won't leave me for a minute," whispered Madge to Stephen. "I hope we've shaken him off now."

"Who is he?"

"He's a school friend of Teddy's. They're in the same class at Ashbury, you know. Teddy brought him to see us last holidays and he had the impudence to fall in love with me. He's been the plague of my life ever since."

"Love is a queer thing," said Stephen meditatively.

Madge looked at him sideways, seeking to divine a particular meaning, but Stephen's eyes were quite impersonal. They had started in the direction of the tennis court but somehow their course had got diverted towards a shrubbery to one side of it.

"I wonder why you should dislike him for loving you," said Stephen. "But I don't know much about these things. I've lived practically alone all my life."

"You wouldn't dislike some one for loving *you*, then?"

"I don't think so. But then I don't know. No one *does*, anyhow."

"Somebody might, some day."

"I'll think about it then. What did you say that boy's name was?"

"Lascelles . . . Eugene Lascelles. Rather a mouthful, isn't it? Like the hero of a novel. . . . He won't be the hero of mine though."

"I've never read any novels."

"Really? Well, I don't read much myself. Books are such dull things. . . . But you're so clever looking I was sure you'd be a tremendous reader. I declare, I'm quite relieved to find you aren't."

"You mistake me. I do read. But not novels. History and philosophy and that sort of thing, you know."

"I know. Of course that's what one *really* means by reading. That's what I'd *like* to read if I could, but I'm a wee bit afraid that perhaps I'm not clever enough."

"Nonsense. If you've got enough intelligence to like that sort of thing, you've enough to understand it."

"I do hope so. That's very encouraging."

After a pause Stephen said: "Will you and Teddy drive over to Glencoole some day? It's a lonely spot, but it's very beautiful. I could show you some of my books if you like."

"I should *love* to," said Madge.

"Now, let's have a look at this tennis," said Stephen. "I'd like to learn it."

The party came to an end. To Madge's feeling the lengthening shadows of the evening were not colder than Stephen's farewell.

4

On a pleasant afternoon a fortnight later Madge and Teddy drove over to Glencoole.

"I suppose I'll have to be tactful and keep in the background," said Teddy as they neared the Wards' cottage.

"Silly!" said Madge, with a blush.

Stephen and his father met them outside the gate and they had a somewhat sedate tea in the cool of the sitting-cum-dining-room. Teddy told inconsecutive anecdotes about tennis and cricket and Ashbury and Lascelles and a terrible ass called O'Dwyer, a friend of the latter; and Madge made complimentary remarks about the weather and the road and the garden and the tea.

"And oh!" she exclaimed, "your books! How lovely!"

She insisted on going round the shelves and reading out the titles of the books, just as if she were well acquainted with them.

"I never knew you were a book-worm, Madge," said Teddy.

"Oh, Teddy! How could you!" said the deceiver reproachfully.

Stephen rose and followed her to the book case. He took down some of his favourite volumes for her inspection, fondling them while he did so as a book lover does.

"Lovely! . . . beautiful! . . . how interesting!" Madge kept exclaiming.

"The Wisdom of the world is in this," said Stephen, taking down Plato's Republic.

"How nice," said Madge.

Stephen fetched down a fine edition of Shakespeare.

"The only poet I care about," he said.

"I don't like poetry either," said Madge.

"Most poets," went on Stephen, "seem to be so pre-occupied with their own moods and emotions. Shakespeare's so different. He's the essence of humanity and the storehouse of wisdom. . . . Don't you think so?" he inquired, turning to where Teddy still lounged in his chair.

"Well, personally I think Shakespeare's an awful ass," replied Teddy.

"Oh, Teddy," remonstrated Madge, "I think Shakespeare's *frightfully* nice," she put in for Stephen's benefit.

"Have a cigarette?" said Teddy, offering his silver case.

"No, thanks. I don't smoke," said Stephen.

"Heart?" inquired Teddy.

"No. I want to have a minimum of things I can't do without."

Teddy's face expressed pitying scorn. A person who didn't play tennis or cricket, didn't smoke, and enjoyed Shakespeare, was something less than half a man in his estimation.

Stephen suggested a walk down the glen, and the three of them set out. When he was not pointing out some view or object of interest Stephen talked philosophy and theology at Madge, which she punctuated with her ever-recurring exclamations, while Teddy walked beside them in silent boredom and disgust.

"I say, I think Ward's an awful ass," said Teddy, in the trap on the way home. "I was fairly bored stiff."

"I wasn't," said Madge.

Teddy stared hard at her.

"I do believe you're gone on him," he said.

At the same time Michael Ward was saying to his son:

"Stephen, I'm afraid that girl is fond of you."

"Rubbish," said Stephen.

"Nothing of the kind," declared his father.

"I'm not fond of her anyway," said Stephen.

"Well, take care what you do."

"I did. I talked philosophy at her the whole afternoon."

"Not much use, I'm afraid. Women are queer creatures."

"Fools," said Stephen.

"I'm afraid you're heartless," said his father.

"I hope so," said Stephen.

"That shows your ignorance then."

"Good-night," said Stephen.

5

"So the leader of the Irish race at home and abroad has agreed to accept a little emasculated parliament house as a final settlement?"

It was Stephen who spoke. He and his father were just finishing breakfast.

"What does it matter?" said Michael Ward carelessly.

"Matter!" exclaimed Stephen. "It's wrong! It's illogical! It's damnable! How can we logically or honestly accept a Home Rule Bill framed by England? Isn't our whole case based on the fact that England has no right to legislate for us at all?"

"There's no logic in politics, Stephen. Logically we shouldn't send members to London at all, but what do people care about logic? I gave up all interest in politics years ago and I'd advise you to do the same."

"And assist British rule by my acquiescence. No, thanks."

"To try and overthrow British rule in this country is to attempt the impossible."

"I don't admit such an impossibility."

"I'm talking from experience. In my time I tried and failed."

"You tried?"

"Yes. I never told you anything about it because I hoped you'd never interest yourself in this unfortunate country's affairs. Well, I'll tell you the whole story now, and let it be a warning to you."

Michael Ward re-told the tale with which the reader is already acquainted. When he had finished Stephen said:

"Very well. You tried and failed. I must find a better way, that's all."

"Stephen," said the father, "do nothing hasty. For all you know Home Rule may be better for Ireland than Independence."

"That's a matter for discussion among Irishmen," replied Stephen. "It's no concern of England's. All we want of

her is the simple requirement of justice — withdrawal from our country bag and baggage. Then we can decide for ourselves whether we want a partnership with her or not."

"You needn't expect justice from England."

"I'm quite aware of that. It's no argument for accepting half measures. By right and justice we claim independence. All that remains to be done is to devise a method of securing it. Force has failed: compromise is illogical, dishonest, and I believe will also fail. There must be another way and I'll find it if I have to spend my life in the searching."

This prospect of a long wait reassured the father that his son would do nothing rash. Indeed, so convinced was he of the impossibility of solving the problem that he felt satisfied that "nothing rash" really meant "nothing."

"My dear boy," he said, filling his pipe as he spoke, "to the truly philosophical mind the ephemeral affairs of men are not worthy of prolonged consideration. Do you see that apple on the plate there? Science tells us that it is divided into an enormous number of infinitesimal molecules all in perpetual motion, and that the very molecules are divided into still tinier atoms. Yet we see nothing but a quiet, rotund solidity. Now consider the universe in which we live. Our earth is but an atom of the molecule called the solar system, and that molecule is but one of the millions that compose the universe. Look at that apple again. Wonderful happenings may be in progress in one of its atoms but of what ultimate import are they? Similarly I can imagine a gigantic being contemplating our universe which he sees as small and as solid as we see the apple, and amusing himself by wondering whether things could really happen in one of its atoms. How small it all is really."

"That's a very pretty thesis," replied Stephen. "I'd often thought of it myself. But, my dear father, you mustn't let yourself be carried away by relativity of size. To regard size and importance as synonymous is the most revolting kind of snobbery. I've come to look at everything

from the absolute point of view in regard to size and the intrinsic point of view in regard to value. That match you're going to light your pipe with is a small thing compared with . . . say Jupiter; but it has a definite size. And if you compare both with the vastness of infinite space the difference between them is very slight. Then the match has an intrinsic value of its own. It's complete in itself and perfect to its own end. . . . You couldn't light your pipe with Jupiter. . . . If, then, the match is absolutely important, how very much more so is man, who, small as he is, has an immortal soul and carries the Kingdom of Heaven within him."

"That's right, Stephen. Stick to philosophy and leave politics alone."

"They're all one to me," said Stephen. "The battle between right and wrong, truth and falsehood is going on everywhere: here in Ireland, billions of miles away in some planet revolving round Alpha Centauri, and away in some corner of space invisible from the most distant star we can see. And I want to be on the right side."

"How are the potatoes doing?" asked Michael Ward.

6

Life pursued its even course at Glencole for more than a year. Then one morning at breakfast Stephen read out from the newspaper the account of the formation of the Ulster Volunteers.

"That settles it," he said. "There'll be no Home Rule now, thank heaven. It's just the excuse England was looking for."

He read silently for a few moments, then dropped the paper and sat wrapped in thought for a while.

"I have an idea," he cried suddenly.

"What is it?" asked his father.

"I must think it out," replied Stephen, and became silent.

7

"This strike," said Stephen some months later, "brings us to realities at last."

Michael Ward grunted. Even in his youthful days he had been a re-actionary on social questions, not so much from conviction as from the old Fenian desire to demonstrate a purely spiritual Nationalism uncontaminated by material aspirations.

"And oh!" said Stephen, "the mess they're making of it! The hopeless muddle and mess! No controversy even, much less any attempt to get at the truth. Mere vituperation and mud slinging. Why amn't I there?"

"You're better where you are," said his father, and there was an anxious note in his voice.

"Shall I sit quiet while my fellow men fall? . . . I know what should be done . . . I have things to say that are worth saying. . . . The question is, is society to be a chaos of fighting animals, each getting what he can for himself, or is it to be a commonwealth of civilized beings where all co-operate to make the world as fine a place as possible?"

"You'll find that these labour people are just out for themselves."

"No wonder, under existing conditions. In that they're the same as every other class. But for all that the foundations of the better system are in them. . . . I'm going to Dublin, father."

"My boy . . ." exclaimed Ward. There was anguish in his tone.

"I must," said Stephen. "I've things to say and do . . . in this question and others. . . . They're all one, remember."

"Stephen, if you really must go I suppose you must. . . . You're a man now, and I've no right to stop you. . . . But think first what you're going to do. . . . You're my only son. . . . All I have to care for, and I've had a hard life, laddie . . . a lonely life. If anything happened to you . . ."

"Nothing can happen, father. I'm not a hot headed young fool. I've never done anything I didn't think out first, and I never will."

"And how are you going to live, Stephen? I can allow you a little money, but it won't go far in a big city."

"We're told not to be over anxious as to what we shall eat and wherewith we shall be clothed, aren't we? . . . Trust me to find enough to live on anyway."

The next couple of days were spent in preparation for Stephen's departure. His more bulky luggage — and even that was but some clothing in a parcel — was sent by post to a small hotel on the north side of Dublin owned by one, Doran, a friend of Ward's of days gone by; and at last with a satchel on his back and fifty pounds in his pocket Stephen said good-bye to his father at the end of the glen. Michael Ward looked older and more haggard than ever.

"I can hardly bring myself to let you go, Stephen," he said. "You're going off full of hope and vigour . . . to waste yourself and break yourself in a useless struggle for an ungrateful people. . . . My boy, when you're tired and worn out won't you come back to your old father and rest?"

Stephen laughed lightly.

"I'll come back often," he said. "And pretty soon too. There's no need to be tragic."

"Well, good-bye, my boy. Write soon."

"Of course. This very night."

They shook hands, and Stephen went down the road towards the city. It was the afternoon of Saturday the 30th of August, 1913.

An hour's walk brought him to "The Beeches," where, over the low wall, he could see Madge and a young man swinging in hammocks close together.

"How are you, Miss Conroy?" he called.

"Hello, Mr. Ward," she replied. "I haven't seen you for ages. Where are you off to?"

"Dublin," said Stephen. "Good-bye."

"Good-bye : . . and good luck."

"Who's that, dear?" inquired the young man, after Stephen's departure.

"Oh, a terrible bore who lives up the mountains. . . . I only know him slightly."

"He looks rather a rustic idiot," said the young man.

"He is," said Madge.

Stephen walked on to Rathfarnham, where he took the tram to the city.

CHAPTER VIII

A DEAD HAND

I

MRS. GUNBY ROURKE gave a summer dance at her house at Dundrum. The great drawing-room was beautifully arranged for the occasion. Graceful palms and green and white decorations gave a cool appearance to the eye and electric fans kept the atmosphere pleasant. The glass doors at one end of the room opened on to the garden, where the dancers could come out and refresh themselves in the balmy night air. At a table in a rose bower a couple of bored but ever polite servitors dispensed drink and ices to all who sought them.

Bernard and his pretty partner emerged from the ball-room, the girl fanning herself vigorously.

"Will you have some refreshment?" inquired Bernard, conventionally solicitous.

"Please . . . I think I'll have an ice."

They approached the bower and Bernard asked for their requirements.

"I'm sorry, sir," said the butler humbly. "No ices left, sir . . . Short, sir . . . The Strike, sir . . . Lemonade, sir? or claret cup?"

"Those awful strikers!" said the girl, sipping claret cup. "Why can't they be sensible?"

"That's what they are," said Bernard.

"But they're so discontented. . . . Always wanting something more. Give them all they ask now, and they'll ask twice as much next year. . . . The world was such a pleasant place until all this trouble arose. . . . I'm sure I don't want to change a bit of it."

A year ago Bernard would have hated her for the small-

ness of her mind but he was growing more tolerant nowadays. Hers was but one of many types of mind, all human. Surely, he reflected, it had its own merits,—merits of which, perhaps, superior minds were destitute.

He brought her to a seat in a secluded corner of the garden. She babbled on about "those horrid strikers" for a while and then broke off to say:

"What a lovely night!"

She was sane and stupid and kindly and pleasure-loving. She was human. That love of humanity which is fundamental in every revolutionary thinker, even though he know it not, suddenly welled up in Bernard's heart. He loved the silly lovable humanity in her, and moved by a sudden impulse he put his arms around her and kissed her.

She thought it was an ordinary ballroom kiss and said:

"Oh, Mr. Lascelles!"

"I'm sorry," he said, recovering himself.

"Oh, don't mind," she said. "You can do it again if you like."

And he did.

After the sun had risen they were still dancing.

2

Through sordid lanes and decayed old streets Bernard and Crowley followed their weary little guide. It was night, but they were bent on a different errand from that which we last described. Crowley carried a bag. They were passing through slums that had been aristocratic quarters in the days of Ireland's prosperity. Every doorway they passed was a thing of battered beauty; the rusted and broken area railings showed the craftsmanship of a bygone age; and one might fancy that the thin wisp of smoke eddying round one of those chimneys was the product of the combustion of some carved oak panel.

"Epitome of our history," said Crowley. "My God, what waste!"

Bernard looked at him, a little surprised at his tone. Was

this the Crowley he knew,— the Crowley of the Common Rooms and the Billiard Saloons?

"The pity of it!" went on Crowley. "The wasted endeavour of the days of hope! It would have been better if we had never succeeded at all. It would have meant less wreckage."

Bernard made no answer, for he was not sure what Crowley was talking about.

"Dublin," said Crowley, "is a city of blighted beginnings. Look at the Bank of Ireland, built to house an independent parliament, and not yet completed when the parliament was taken from us. Look at our Custom House, built in the days when we had control of our own revenue, and its function taken from it within a few short years. Look at Sackville Street, the commencement of a great town planning scheme that we haven't been allowed to continue. . . . Rule, Britannia, and God save our noble King!"

The bitterness in his tone as he made this last exclamation astonished Bernard. Could the Crowley who thought like this, he asked himself, talk like the other Crowley? They walked for a while in silence, and then Bernard spoke.

"I'm afraid things are going hard with the strikers. It looks as if the employers were going to win."

"I'm afraid you're right," said Crowley. "Damnation on it! What's wrong with the world at all that the right is always beaten?"

They turned down a narrow and filthy court through an archway under one of the tumbledown mansions of the main street. It was a hot summer night and the air here was stifling and fetid. They trudged on past many open doors each of which gave forth a new and viler stench. The roadway was pitted and rutted, and littered with rubbish. Foul heaps of sweepings occurred haphazard. Buckets of horror stood on the pathway outside some of the doors; dirt was piled on the steps of others.

"I was at a dance the other night," said Bernard, "and

one of my partners said she was quite satisfied with the world as it is and wouldn't change a bit of it."

" 'Uncertain, coy and hard to please,' " said Crowley with a sniff.

"Here y'are, docther," said the little boy who was their guide, stopping before a crazy door held together with packing-case battens. A dirty, towelled little girl with nothing on but a tattered pinafore that had once been white answered his knock.

"This way, docther," she whispered, preceding them up a stairway, her bare feet pat-patting on the boards. This was not a decayed mansion but a modern jerry built house, and the stairs, as far as one could see in the darkness and through their own grime, were of plain deal, warped and rickety. So were the banisters, which had been cut away in places, probably for firewood. They passed a landing and went up another flight of stairs even dirtier than the first. On the next landing the little girl opened a door and beckoned to the two students to enter.

The room was twilit by the flicker of half an inch of candle stuck in a porter bottle on the window ledge. The first thing that caught Bernard's eye on entering was the figure of a man lying on the floor dead drunk and snoring in the corner opposite the door. The walls of the room were covered with a dirty wall paper of indeterminate pattern which was peeling off everywhere in large patches. The ceiling was black save where more recent flaking off of the plaster had left white splotches. The bare floor was black with dirt and littered with rubbish. Some half-washed tattered garments hung across the room on a string, intercepting what little air came through the window, one of whose broken panes was stuffed with rags and another with a piece of cardboard. About half the floor space was occupied by the bed, where amid a heap of torn and filthy bedclothes lay the prospective mother. Leaning over her and comforting her were four women of the neighbourhood. A little boy and girl aged two and three sat up among the

blankets at the foot of the bed, wide-eyed and expectant.

The entry of the two students was the signal for instant commotion. The four women came bustling forward with offers of assistance, but Crowley quickly sent them packing.

"One's enough," he said. Then to the cleanest, a fat matron of about fifty, "You stay, ma'am. The rest of you can clear out, every one of you."

He drove them expostulating to the door as one would a flock of hens.

"Some hot water, please," he said to the woman who remained, and she went away and presently fetched some in a dirty chipped enamel basin. A petticoat was torn down from the clothes line for him to wipe his hands on.

A ramshackle chair and two packing-cases were the sole furniture of the room. The little girl came forward to offer the chair to the doctor, dusting the broken seat of it with the hem of her pinafore. Cats could be heard squalling on the roofs. Somewhere a clock chimed the quarter. The woman and the two young men sat down to await the birth of one of the heirs of the ages.

3

"Look here, Eugene," said Bernard, "you've been moping too much lately. It's bad for you. What's it all about?"

Eugene smiled wanly.

"Nothing," he said.

"You don't mean to say you're still sighing for Madge? . . . You are. . . . I say, you know, this is absurd. 'If of herself she will not love, Nothing can make her, The Devil take her.' There are other fish in the sea."

"That's no consolation when you only want the one."

"Oh, this is insanity. What's a girl? A human female. None of them is very much better than any other. They eat, drink, talk and think very much like ourselves—not quite so well as a matter of fact. . . . Shut your eyes, take

a deep breath, and forget her. I've often cured myself that way."

"What do you know about love?" said Eugene. "A fickle philanderer like you. . . . How is it that you can be so constant to principles and so changeable towards women?"

"As my friend Crowley says, we're all mixed and streaked. What would life be without inconsistency? You're a damned faithful lover, Eugene, but you're infernally self-satisfied."

"I'm not . . . I know quite well I'm unworthy of her."

"You're wrong there, my boy. . . . But you're self-satisfied for all that. . . . I know you'll deny it, for you couldn't be self-satisfied knowingly. . . . Look here, this love sickness is absurd. Love's too trivial a thing for a man's total outlook. The world's before you, you know, so shake it off. Get your togs and we'll buzz over to the tennis club."

"Very well," said Eugene listlessly, but he complied with the request.

They went on the top of a tram to the grounds of the Baggotrath Tennis Club, and all the time Bernard lectured his brother.

"Love," he said. "What's love? Poets rave about the beauty and the wonder of it as they rave about the songs of birds and the scent of flowers, and yet all of them are merely physiological incidents in the phenomenon of procreation."

Eugene blushed.

"Bernard, you're almost Rabelaisian," he said.

"What? Have you read Rabelais?"

"Not likely."

"Then why take his name in vain?"

"I know what he's like."

"I suppose you were told by some one who hadn't read him either."

"He's on the index as an immoral writer."

"That word 'immoral'!" exclaimed Bernard. "I'd

like to cut it out of the dictionary. It means too many things for you people who think loosely. Rabelais may be dirty, but he's a sight less demoralizing than hundreds of books that aren't on the index. . . . I suppose you wouldn't dream of reading Ghosts or Widowers' Houses?"

"Certainly."

"Well, why would you read Macbeth or Coriolanus? They deal with Murder and Treason. Isn't that just as immoral as unchastity and harlotry?"

Eugene shuddered at the mention of the last two words.

"I don't like to discuss this kind of subject," he said.

"Funk!" said Bernard. "I'd just like to tell our theologians what I think of their attitude to sins of the senses. They aren't the worst sins by long chalks. I can always find some excuse for an adulterer, but none for the oppressor of the poor. Christ himself was lenient to the sinful woman, but he had nothing but anger for the Pharisees and money-changers."

"You do mix up religion and indecency!" said Eugene.

"Let's talk of something else, for heaven's sake."

They played tennis throughout the afternoon, and there was an interval at half-past five for tea in the club house. The elegant Molloy was there, a picture of lounging prosperity. Naturally execration of the strikers formed a large part of the conversation.

"Personally," said Molloy, "I'm doing rather well out of the situation. You see, these fellows who have been arrested aren't well off and can't afford to go to the big men in the profession. That gives us beginners a chance. . . . Of course they're rather a low type of client, but so long as they pay I don't mind."

"By jove," said Bernard, "that's damn decent of you."

"My brother's a socialist," said Sandy, whom Bernard had not noticed before.

"I say! . . . Not really?" exclaimed another young man.

"Yes. Isn't that awful?" said Bernard.

"Get away. You're joking," said the young man. "Come and have another sett."

"Damn that smug, stupid, unprincipled snob Molloy!" exclaimed Bernard on the way home. "Whatever happens, good or bad, he'll be there to make money out of it. I wonder does he know what a worm he is?"

4

The industrial crisis was now at its height. Collisions between strikers and police were frequent, and arrests were increasing in number. The employers were determined to break the labour movement for good, and relied on starvation as their principal weapon. Already this was beginning to have its effect. Infant mortality is high in Dublin at the best of times: now it was becoming appalling. But at last English labour woke up to the importance of the battle in Dublin in regard to its possible effect on their own position. So ships laden with food sailed into the port of Dublin and enabled the wearied people to hold out a little longer.

One afternoon Bernard set out with O'Dwyer on a tour of inspection. They met McGurk in Westmoreland Street and stopped for a moment to talk, but two burly policemen interrupted them.

"Move on now," said one. "No gatherin's are allowed."

The "gathering" broke up, McGurk continuing his way towards Grafton Street, the other two making for the river. A patrol of mounted police clattered by.

"Stimulating, isn't it?" said O'Dwyer. "I do love a bit of coercion."

On the quay they came upon the end of a queue of women and children waiting their turn to be served with rations from one of the distributing stations. They carried sacks and boxes and all kinds of queer, battered domestic utensils. In their eyes was a uniform look of patient misery. Bernard and O'Dwyer passed the whole length of the queue, which was nearly two hundred yards long: two hundred yards of human dirt, disease and wretchedness.

"My God!" said Bernard, "how can men allow this kind of thing to go on?"

Just then Molloy emerged from the distributing office. Evidently he had been there in connection with the affairs of one of his unfortunate clients.

"Phew! What a crew!" he said, lighting a Turkish cigarette, and went his way.

One of the food-ships had been sighted just before this and was now making her way to the quay-side. Bernard experienced a queer kind of thrill when he saw her.

"See!" he said to O'Dwyer. "She's from England, the country you hate. How do you reconcile that with your national quarrel theory? This is a class war, and the working class is solid whatever flag flies over it."

"Rot!" said O'Dwyer. "The English labour crowd want their battle fought out here. It saves them the trouble and expense. What are a few tons of food to them?"

Bernard shrugged his shoulders, feeling that O'Dwyer was entrenched impregnably in prejudice. They turned now into the wilderness of slums behind the quays. Here they encountered sights which Bernard had often seen before, but which were now stripped of the covering of night. Tumble-down houses propped up with beams; roofless wrecks still inhabited in their lower stories; skeleton walls; heaps of rubble where a house had collapsed; windows boarded up; windowpanes smashed and stuffed with rags and paper; dirt and ugliness everywhere: all this made a hideous picture of desolation in the middle of the capital of a civilized country.

And the people; they were as repulsive a picture as their houses. Men: slouching, emaciated, unkempt, yet healthy and strong; tubercular wrecks; rickety children grown up; men with the vacuous faces caused by adenoids; cripples; degenerates. Girls: pasty-faced and slatternly; some pretty, but with blackened, decayed teeth or none at all; hunchbacks; sore-encrusted faces; grimy creatures all, clad in filthy clothes put on anyhow. Children: some dirty, half-naked

yet healthy, happy little squallers; others rickety, scrofulous, strumous or crippled. Infants: some crushingly wrapped in the foul shawls of their sisters; others sprawling amid the germ-laden dust of the roadway. Old women: the most horrible of all; vermin-haunted bundles of rags with grime-enseamed faces tottering to the grave. "Citizens of a mighty Empire!" said Bernard to himself.

"Lord, how I wish I was in politics," he said aloud. "I've got such schemes, you know. Our housing people at present seem to have got hold of the wrong end of the stick altogether. Look at that new model tenement house over there. Already half the windows are smashed, the usual dirty linen is hanging on that ridiculous balcony, and the inside is as dirty as ever. What's the good of building new houses without altering the people? In a few more years that new model thing will be just as bad as the old mansion that it replaced, and not half as picturesque. We ought to smash the whole thing up. Strip the people of their rags and camp them all by the side of a lake somewhere in the country. Then have a big conflagration and burn up the houses, dirt, bacilli, and everything. Then build a new city on my plan,—or, better still, start building first on a new site altogether. I've never seen a garden city, but I think my plan is something altogether new. In the first place I'd forbid high houses: they prevent proper circulation of the air. Two stories high would be quite enough. My houses would all be square with flat roofs, perhaps with a central court yard, and of course they'd be detached. They'd stand inside a garden, having a few yards of ground in front and at the sides and a space of say thirty yards or so at the back. Then the houses would surround a square, so that there'd be a big common area in the centre, into which the back garden of each house would enter. I'd plant that with trees and have it all grass. This plan gives every house plenty of free space and a fair amount of private space as well. Then all the streets would be as wide as Sackville Street, and I'd have them

lined with trees and have fountains here and there. Oh, and above all I'd abolish the possibility of slums, aristocratic quarters, snobbery and class hatred by appropriating all house-property to the state and having a low and universal rental, so that scholars, commercial men, shopkeepers, labourers, and marquises (unless I succeed in abolishing them) shall live side by side and their children play in the common square. . . . What do you think of that scheme?"

"It would require some acreage."

"That's obtainable. But what really stands in my way? The natural conservatism of the human mind, and muddled, stupid, irresponsible, inefficient government."

"*British* government," said O'Dwyer.

"Always the same old answer."

"To me it's such an obvious truism," said O'Dwyer. "You take a country and you rob it of its government and exchequer, transferring them to another country across the sea. What must happen? The best brains and ability in the plundered country either waste themselves in a futile effort to regain their rights, or else go over to the foreign capital to employ their capacities where there's an outlet and a market for them. Their own country is thus left to the mediocrities and the incapables. Keep that process up long enough and you eventually get the state of things now existing in Ireland. . . . My dear chap, England won't let us improve our position. If we were to prosper we'd soon cease to be her kitchen-garden and dumping-ground, which is what she wants us to be in the interests of her own economic position."

"But Home Rule is coming, and that ought to settle that difficulty."

"Well, I'll believe we're going to get Home Rule when our Parliament is actually sitting; not before. But how a glorified county council for local affairs, that hasn't even got control of its own finances, post office, commerce or police, is going to change everything beats me. . . . Besides, we've a *right* to independence, confound it."

"Hang it all!" said Bernard. "I'll chuck Moore's advice overboard and go and read some Irish History."

"About time you thought of it," said O'Dwyer.

They had almost shaken off the slums by this and had reached a more respectable locality. Bernard turned back for a last look, and said:

"The dirt and disease and discomfort of all this are bad enough, but I think the worst part of it all is its ugliness. What sort of souls can you breed down there?"

"Dublin fusiliers," said O'Dwyer.

They walked on in silence for a while and then O'Dwyer spoke again.

"What we've seen today is bad enough," he said, "but it's only one of a thousand results of British rule. Why are we cityless, harbourless, without industries, rottenly educated, and declining in population? There's a rather delightful article on Ireland in the old Encyclopaedia Britannica written by some one quite obviously prejudiced against us. In the year before the Union he says there were forty silk mercers in Dublin; that fifteen years after the Union, as well as I remember, only about half a dozen were left; ten years after that there was only one, and what became of him isn't recorded. Doesn't that speak for itself? Then, apart from France which is committing race suicide, we're the only country in Europe with a declining population: also we're the only country in Europe under British rule. Isn't that, to say the least of it, significant? The position of Unionists is to me incomprehensible. If Ireland is just a part of Britain as they hold, how is she poor, and without industries and cities, and declining in population? Cornwall and Aberdeen share the prosperity of Britain. Why doesn't Wexford? Their own phrase 'British Government in Ireland' shows that they don't consider us part of Britain. They don't talk of 'British Government in East Anglia.' They must know quite well that England regards Ireland as a conquered country, and how their Irish blood doesn't boil at the indignity is a puzzle to me. But I find it hard

ever to convert any one, for I was born a Nationalist and don't really understand the other side . . . don't know what to grip on to in them. You must have seen that yourself. I've longed to set Ireland free ever since I first heard she'd been conquered . . . longer than I can remember in fact. I dreamed of wars of liberation when I was a little boy in knickerbockers, and later on I dreamed of great projects of reconstruction. In my imagination I've built great cities and harbours, roads, bridges, fleets and forts. I've made laws and raised armies and founded industries. I've even built a cathedral more splendid than Solomon's Temple. These are the things that matter to me. It's torture to me to see pictures of Parliament houses in Venezuela, or harbours in Canada, or cathedrals in Italy. They only remind me of the might-have-beens of Ireland. Sometimes when hope for Ireland seems dead I go back deliberately to my imaginings and try to satisfy myself with them. But it's no use. Actuality is only too obvious. Here is Ireland, a land of tumble-down villages, wrecked cities, empty harbours, and tubercular people; the back garden from which John Bull gets his bacon and butter and the roast beef of old England. To say I hate England is to express a very small part of my feeling for her. I loathe her, I detest her and I curse her."

O'Dwyer stopped abruptly and seemed a little ashamed of his emotional explosion. But Bernard had lent only half an ear to the last part of his harangue. An earlier portion had caught and held his attention.

"I dreamed of cities and things like you," he said. It was the first time he had ever thought of making such a confession. "But it wasn't for Ireland," he added. "The world was my country then . . . but it's a big place."

"Why, we're kindred spirits," said O'Dwyer; and they started comparing notes.

5

The very next day the whole complexion of Bernard's life was altered by a letter.

It came into his hands under peculiar circumstances. He had just written a letter which had to be dispatched that evening, and at the last minute found himself without a stamp. He went the round of the house to borrow one but it chanced that nobody had any. It was too late for a post office to be open, so he decided, as his father was out, to search the sacred and inviolate bureau in his consulting room. In none of the drawers could he find what he wanted, and finally he opened a rather obvious secret drawer full of papers. Without really expecting to find a stamp he turned these over and suddenly came upon an envelope addressed to himself in a strange hand. He pulled it out and gave a gasp of astonishment, for in the top left hand corner were the words: *to be opened on his twenty-first birthday.*

For a moment he sat still staring at his find. Then he took out his pocket book,—the kind of pocket book that every young man keeps; a receptacle for notes, photographs, postage stamps, souvenirs, letters, and odds and ends,—and took from it the letter he had received from Mr. Murchison eighteen months ago. He laid it beside the other and quietly compared them. The inscriptions on both were the same, but in all else they were different: the paper was different, the ink was different, the writing was different. The fine bold lettering of the newly discovered envelope was a strong contrast to the puny backhand of the old one. Turning over the former he found that it had been sealed. The seal was unbroken and the top of the envelope had been cut open with a paper-knife. Bernard took out the enclosure and read as follows:—

3rd January, 1899.

My dear Bernard:

If ever you read this letter you will be reading the words of a dead man, for if I survive the enterprise on which I am about to set out I hope to be spared long enough to say to

you what I am now going to write. I find it difficult to realize that my words are addressed not to the little boy I parted from yesterday but to a young man of twenty-one. However, I shall begin at once.

When I was a boy I dreamt like you of wars and states and cities, and my games were very similar to yours. My ambition was to make the world a fine well-ordered place with good laws and good roads and beautiful well-built cities and a strong healthy population to inhabit it. Yours, I should think, would be the same. But I differed from you in one thing. My parents taught me to know and love my own country, Ireland. They taught me her history, her glorious beginnings, her splendid struggle, her miserable tragedy, so that the desire of my life has always been to drive out her oppressor and make her once more peaceful and prosperous like the land of my boyish dreams. As a young man I took part in an ill-conceived attempt to achieve this end. We failed. My companions all lost their liberty and I myself had a narrow escape. For years I have waited for another opportunity to strike a blow at the enemy, and now at last it has come. The British Empire is about to deprive yet another little nation of liberty and in a few days I sail from here to go to the help of the Boers.

So much for myself. I should be the last person ever to try and influence the principles of another. These I think should be the spontaneous outcome of the individual mind and will. But you, Bernard, are going to be brought up in ignorance of your country's history, in ignorance of her needs, in ignorance almost of her name. That I do wish to combat, and I earnestly implore you to break through that ignorance by reading now, if, as I suppose, you have not done so, the history of Ireland. What decision you may take after you have done so I shall not presume to say, but if you are the boy I take you for I am certain what it will be.

And what history should you read? Of course I should suggest an impartial one. But is there such a thing? Is

there such a thing for any country? Human nature is such that the history one writes of one's own country is sure to be prejudiced one way, and what one writes of another country will be prejudiced the other way. The truth is not in us. And the histories that profess to be impartial (for most of them realize the futility of the pretence) are really more misleading than any. They seem to think that impartiality consists in telling half the truth or in throwing sops to both sides. Therefore I can only advise you to read as many histories as you can and form your own judgment as to where the truth lies.

Most of my fortune is embarked upon our present enterprise, but the remainder I am leaving to you by will. It is not enough for you to live on, which is just as well, as I don't want you to become one of the idle rich. But it is at least enough to enable you to take your own line in politics by making you independent of the paternal purse. Call on Mr. Murchison, my friend and solicitor, who will give you full particulars.

And now, Bernard, I'll say good-bye. This letter may never have to be delivered. I sincerely hope so myself. But in case things go wrong, good-bye, and God bless you.

I remain,

Your affectionate uncle,

CHRISTOPHER REILLY.

The letter finished, Bernard sat back in his father's chair and literally gasped. Here was a revelation! The last shreds of political doubt were torn from his mind and the last shreds of filial respect from his heart by the clutch of a dead hand. The forgery was now quite obvious. That back-hand script was so clearly a handwriting disguised; the age of the envelope and paper so clearly faked; the ink quite evidently bleached, probably with peroxide. What damnable dishonesty and obscurantism! He sat for quarter of an hour in meditation. What course should he now pursue? Should he face his father with the evidence of his

deception? What need after all? It had failed in its object. Why raise unnecessary unpleasantness? Better put the letter back and say nothing about it. But then, he wanted Uncle Chris's letter; the letter of a hero; the letter of a martyr to an idea. . . . He had a sudden inspiration. He changed the envelopes of the letters, and replaced his uncle's envelope containing his father's forgery in the drawer, which he closed. Now if his father went to the drawer he would think his treasure safe unless he opened the letter, which was very unlikely. Chris's letter he placed in his pocket-book.

Suddenly the door opened and Sir Eugene entered. He was in evening dress.

"Hello! What are you doing here?" he said.

"I was looking for a stamp, father."

"Well, you've no business to go to my desk. Don't you know that that's dishonourable?"

The blood rushed to Bernard's cheeks, and his heart jumped violently. Before he could control himself he blurted out:

"And don't *you* think it's dishonourable to lie and forge letters?"

Sir Eugene's face became black with rage.

"You young brat," he shouted. "How dare you speak to me like that?"

Bernard was his father's son. His own anger boiled over simultaneously.

"What the devil did you mean by forging my uncle's letter?" he demanded.

Sir Eugene controlled himself by a visible effort.

"I forged your uncle's letter, did I?" he sneered.

"That's a nice accusation to make against your father."

"It's no use denying it, governor," said Bernard. "I have the original in my pocket."

Sir Eugene evidently realized that further deception was impossible, for he said nothing and sat down. But Bernard was not finished. His tone was bitter as he said; "You're

the fine moral teacher, aren't you? 'I needn't tell you never to do anything dishonourable, for you're my son.' Hm!"

Sir Eugene winced at the quotation, but he sprang up to defend himself.

"I did my duty as your father in trying to keep from you the insidious suggestions of a traitor to his King and country. I wish to heaven I'd burnt the thing. I only kept it so as to show it to you when you were old enough to think for yourself."

"Ninety-nine?" suggested Bernard.

"Bernard, for God's sake tear the thing up now and don't read it."

"I've read it already."

"Well, burn it and think no more about it."

"Look here, father. You must think very highly of a cause if you're afraid that a few words in its favour will make me take it up."

"Young men are easily led into romantic absurdity, Bernard."

"Still, it would surely have been better to let me see the letter and put your case against it instead of deceiving me."

"I acted for the best, laddie. I was hasty, I admit, but I was so afraid for your future."

"Well," said Bernard, "I'll say no more. What's done can't be undone, and things have come out all right in the end. . . . Good night, father."

He made for the door but a sudden recollection made him stop, and turning to his father he said:

"The beastliest part of all your treachery was sticking that 'Pray for me' into your forgery. I'll find it hard to forgive that."

And without another word he left the room.

6

Two days later Bernard sailed out of Kingstown Harbour with a book and a lunch basket. The weather was perfect. A light breeze flicked the water into ripples that danced and

glinted in the sun and swished and lapped under his clinker planks. A heat haze was beginning to rise at the mouth of the bay, promising a flat calm. He headed for the purple lump of Howth and hove to a dozen cable lengths from her shore. Already the wind was dropping and his reef-points slap-slapped lazily against the slackened sail. In this idyllic way he commenced to read Joyce's *Concise History of Ireland*. He read for two hours to the accompaniment of the creak of his timbers, the plup-plup of the wavelets, and the screams of sea gulls. Then he stopped; lunched off ham sandwiches, sultana cake, and bottled beer; and smoked his pipe. That done, he resumed his reading until the chill of the rising evening breeze suggested home.

During the following week Bernard ransacked the book-sellers of Grafton Street and the quays and bought every book about Ireland that he could find. They made a miscellaneous collection: Lecky, Jonah Barrington, John Mitchell, Standish O'Grady, O'Connor-Morris, A. M. Sullivan, Mrs. Stopford Green, Joyce, Barry O'Brien; the Autobiography of Wolfe Tone, *The Jail Journal*, *The Spirit of the Nation*; recently published Nationalist and Unionist brochures; and most instructive of all, the works of Fintan Lalor. . . . Bernard was due for his final examination in September, and had already been studying for it for a month or more, but he resolved to postpone it till March in order to fill what he now realized had been an enormous gap in his education. It was now the sixth of August, and but for his examination work he would have been away from Dublin on holiday. His decision taken, he hired a tent, pitched it in a convenient position near the sea at Malahide, stocked it with his books, and sailed over to moorings in the estuary three days later. Then he settled down to his task.

He read the History of Ireland. He read of her half-legendary beginnings, of her semi-historical heroic period, of her early arts and sciences. He read of her astounding conversion to Christianity and of the glorious days when she seemed to be entirely devoted, as no other country be-

fore or since has been devoted, to religion and learning: of the days when she was a university to a dark and savage Europe. Then he read of the desperate, long-drawn-out struggle with the Norsemen when she seemed doomed to destruction but won through by the valour of her sons and the genius of Brian Borumha. Evil days followed on her triumph and he read with dismay of the sickening dissensions that broke up the nearly completed unity of the nation and left it at the mercy of the organized invader from England. Then he read of the seven hundred years' struggle against the strangling grip of the conqueror: of Godfrey O'Donnell and Edward Bruce and Art MacMurrough; of the Geraldines and Shane the Proud and Hugh O'Neill;—heroic efforts, tragic failures that served only to rivet the chains more firmly. He read on as generation after generation in turn took up the sword only to fall beaten and exhausted: Owen Roe O'Neill and the men of 1641; Sarsfield and the men of the Williamite wars; passed in a splendid and mournful pageant before his eyes. Then came the penal laws and he saw his disarmed and broken countrymen clinging manfully to their persecuted religion. Then came the gleam of temporary hope and fugitive success in 1782, followed by the lurid catastrophe of 1798, and finally the sordid transaction of the Union with Great Britain came as a pitiful anti-climax. Yet for this indomitable nation the struggle was not yet over. Came the tithe war and then the battle for religious emancipation, won eventually from the fear of the conqueror for this disarmed and weary people. Then the Repeal agitation, the trumpet call of Young Ireland, the hideous tragedy of the great famine, and the miserable collapse of the '48 insurrection. With quarter of the population dead and another quarter flying over the seas for life was Ireland conquered yet? No. At the call of the Fenians he saw her draw the sword again, and again fall beaten to the ground. And then he came to Parnell and modern history and saw the survivors of that wonderful nation peaceably, reasonably, yet firmly for all that, asking for a tithe of

their rights, and clinging to their demand in face of perpetual rebuffs. The history of a wasted island.

"Good God!" groaned Bernard, "what we might have done for the world had this heavy hand been lifted off us! The wasted, wasted effort!"

He thought of the mighty men who had worn themselves out in the futile struggle: of Hugh O'Neill, as great a monarch as Louis XIV., beaten and broken to a miserable surrender; of Owen Roe, as great a general as Cromwell, already with a European reputation, who threw up all to serve his country and die in the attempt; of Wolfe Tone, a statesman of the noblest type, who attempted a greater task than Hannibal, and perished by his own hand in a dungeon cell; of the brilliant constructive intellects of the Young Irelanders wasted and smashed by the conqueror's unrelenting hand; of Parnell, sacrificed to the hypocrisy of pretended liberators. What might not the world have gained from these had not duty called them to take up their motherland's eternal cause? Burning hate entered into his soul at the thought; righteous hate; hate such as he had never felt before,—save once. The same feelings surged up in him, only more intensely, as on that distant day at Ashbury when he had seen Sherringham smash Reppington's steam engine. "You've destroyed something you can't replace," he had said on that occasion and the same phrase recurred to him now.

And then for the first time he realized fully the selfishness and shallowness of the class he belonged to: of his father, of the Heuston Harringtons, of the Harveys, and of hundreds of others. The tragedy of their country was a closed book to them, and if they knew anything of its contents they took care not to think about it lest it should interfere with their way of life. They call it "politics," he reflected, and so banish it from polite conversation. A phrase of Mitchell's occurred to him.

"Dastards!" he said. "Genteel dastards."

And again:

"I was to have been brought up that way. Thank God I was saved from that."

"All our middle class is the same," he said later, "even those who call themselves nationalists. And there's less excuse for them, because they know the facts and disregard them. They think aright, most of them, but won't act for fear of injuring their damned respectability."

Later still he asked himself:

"And what now? What can I do? I must act, for he that isn't with Ireland is against her. Every one who stands by and does nothing acknowledges and assists British government by his acquiescence."

The problem was a difficult one. Home Rule he knew to be illogical, a delusion and a snare, and possibly a will-o'-the-wisp. Yet the people had accepted it. His democratic principles forced him to abide by the decision of the people, but he resolved to set out to convert them.

Suddenly he began to laugh to himself.

"Convert them! I? A young medical student. Recently a seoinin and a convert myself. . . . Well, stranger things have happened."

He remembered the state-making dreams of his boyhood. Surely, thought he, that was not all for nothing?

"Was I a statesman in embryo? Am I, too, with my plans and projects wasting to nothing under the blight of the conquest? Let's be up and doing. There are heads and hands in Ireland still, and let mine be among them."

All night he lay awake in his tent listening to the wash of the sea on the beach below, and through his mind passed visions of stately cities and teeming commerce and fertile fields and fine healthy men and women.

"How long, O Lord, how long?" he muttered, and fell asleep just as the sun crept up out of the eastern sea.

CHAPTER IX

A MEETING

I

A YOUNG man in the middle twenties, not tall but powerfully built, with a leathern satchel on his back and a tough ash-plant in his hand, alighted from the Rathfarnham tram at Nelson Pillar and stood looking about him with mingled interest and astonishment. To a dweller in the country, as everything about this young man from his bronzed complexion to his rough-cut clothing proclaimed him to be, his first impression of a city, even if he be prepared for it by photographs and descriptions, is bound to be one of stupefaction, for no description can adequately convey an appreciation of the eternal roar and rattle of traffic, and no photograph can impart the sensation of being alone in a crowd of hurrying and unnoticing humanity. And on that day Dublin must have been more than usually stupefying, for the streets were more than ordinarily thronged with people, many of whom stood about in little whispering groups until the police came and moved them on. The police were very much in evidence, the glittering metal work of their helmets showing here and there above the heads of the crowd, while others patrolled the street on horseback. There was mental tension in the atmosphere, perceptible even to the stranger.

He turned and addressed a dirty ill-clad figure lounging against the railings round the pillar.

"There seems to be some sort of expectation in the air," he said. "What's going to happen?"

The loungee took from his mouth the short black clay pipe he was smoking, spat voluminously into the street, and replied contemptuously.

"D'y'e mean to say ye don't know that?"

"Obviously," returned Stephen, for it was he, "or I shouldn't ask."

"Yer English, maybe?" said the loungee.

"Maybe I'm not," said Stephen.

"Then yer accent deceived me."

"Well, what's going to happen anyway?"

"Is it the counthry yev come from now?"

"Yes. But . . ."

"Ah, it's fine to be livin' in the country at this time o' year. I do be mindin' the time I was livin' in the county Wexford an' me a boy. Them was the gran' times entirely. But musha 'twas another thing for the young men. Up workin' before the sun an' maybe not gettin' to bed till a long time afther. Sure the city's good enough for me."

He gave a sigh and began to pare chips off a plug of greasy tobacco he took from his pocket.

"But will you tell me what's all the excitement about?" said Stephen as patiently as he could.

"Yerra, what would it be about but Jim Laarkin? He has the whole town turned upsydown this twelve months maybe. . . . Him an' his 'To Hell with conthraacts.' Why can't he let well alone? That's what I say."

"But what has he done now?"

"It's going to hold a meetin' he is, as if we hadn't enough and to spare this three months. . . . I'd meetin' him begob if I got me hands on um, so I would."

"And when is the meeting to be?"

"It's not goin' to be at all. . . . It's . . . what d'y'e call it? . . . Proclaimed. Laarkin swears he'll hold it all the same though. An' maybe he will, an' maybe he won't."

"And where and when is it to be?"

"Sure there won't be anny meetin' at all I'm tellin' ye. Leastways there mightn't be."

"But supposing it's held where will it be?"

"It'll be here, o' course, afther twelve o'clock Mass."

"I see. Thank you."

"Have y' e'er a match?"

"No. I'm sorry."

"Arra, what good are ye? Why, I mind the time. . . ."

But Stephen did not wait for any more reminiscences. He went over to the sweet shop at the corner and asked the way to the street where his hotel was. Dusk was falling as he climbed up the slope of Cavendish Row. Five minutes' walk took him to his destination, a shabby looking house grandiosely labelled in large soot-grimed gilded letters:

HO EL NEPTU E

He waited in the tarnished hall wondering what could have induced any one to buy the vases, mirrors, stands, statues and pictures with which it was encumbered, while the slovenly streeeling maid went to fetch the proprietor. The latter emerged eventually from dim regions at the back of the house, a fat genially-smiling man clad in shiny grease-spotted clothes. He held out a fat moist hand to Stephen, saying:

"An' are you the son of oul' Mick Ward? I'm right glad to see you. Yer bag's here safe an' sound. An' how's yer father? Come along up an' I'll show ye yer room. Mind ye don't thrip there. I've been goin' to have that carpet tacked down this three year, but I always forget, an' sure what does it matter? Ye mus' be tired afther yer thramp. I've toul' them to bring y'up some tay to the coffee room, an' maybe ye'll thry a bit o' cold mate."

At this point they reached the room assigned to Stephen, who was glad to see his bag lying in one corner.

"When yer done washin' ye can come down," said his host, leaving him alone.

Stephen surveyed the room. Its seedy appearance and musty atmosphere were very oppressive to eyes and lungs accustomed to greenery and mountain air. But the room was large and had a generous window, for the Hotel Neptune was an Old Georgian Mansion in the second stage of

the descent which Dublin houses of that kind inevitably follow. When the Act of Union drove its original aristocratic owner to London it had become the abode of comfortable people of the middle class. This was the first stage of the descent. As the house grew shabbier and society deserted the north for the south side of the city such tenants no longer sought it, and it descended to the second stage. When its present proprietor smashed or died it would pass into the third stage, becoming converted into offices for obscure societies and struggling young solicitors. Finally it would become a tenement house, and remain so until the day of its ultimate collapse.

Stephen washed and went down to the coffee room where on a table-cloth stained with gravy and mustard was laid a meal consisting of tea, bread and butter, jam and nearly cold beef. In the centre of the table was a dismal and crooked cruet stand; one of whose bottles was missing, another empty, while dried up mustard occupied the third, a pinch of pepper the fourth, and quarter of an inch of vinegar the fifth. The tea was served in a chipped earthen-ware pot with a cover that did not match; the handles of the knives were loose and the blades worn and battered; while the prongs of the fork were bent, with traces of dried up egg between them. In spite of these deterrents to appetite he made a good meal, distracted a little by the chatter of his host who sat with him for a while. Almost immediately after he went upstairs to bed, and lulled by the gradually decreasing sounds of traffic, fell asleep.

2

Mass was over at the Pro-Cathedral. The congregation swept in a dense jostling stream along the narrow alley leading into Sackville Street carrying Stephen along with it. In the great thoroughfare there was an air of expectation tenser than on the night before. There were small knots of Transport Workers here and there, but most of the occupants of the street were church-goers in their Sunday best

who had paused on the way to and from their devotions in anticipation of excitement. The police were even more conspicuous than on the Saturday and there was a compact force at the north side of the street.

"Jem'll keep his word, never you fear," Stephen heard a working-man say to an inquiring clerk.

Suddenly there was a murmur and then a cry from the crowd. Stephen, following the direction of the general gaze, saw a bearded man in a frock coat step out on the balcony of the great hotel before him and raise his hand. In a second the beard and silk hat were cast aside revealing the well-known features of the labour leader. A cheer went up from the crowd, to be changed immediately into a cry of alarm. The press grew denser to Stephen's left, swayed a moment, and then broke up into stampeding units. Above the heads of the people Stephen could see the helmets of the police, who had formed into a close line and charged. Shouts and the sound of blows could be heard. He was almost lifted from his feet and borne away by the living avalanche. All round him men, women and children fought and scrambled their way to safety. After yielding at first Stephen managed eventually to hold his ground. The line of police was nearer to him now. He could see the rise and fall of their batons striking indiscriminately at the crowd. Women and old men seeking for nothing but escape were struck as savagely as young men who had tried to resist. Stephen saw one policeman deliberately strike on the head a middle-aged man who had already been beaten to the ground. Suddenly events took a new turn. The police thrust a wedge into the heart of the crowd, and the portion in which Stephen was included was driven back on the portico of the General Post Office. Some of the unfortunate people descried a lane here which offered some prospect of refuge and there was an immediate rush in that direction. Stephen was swept along in the general panic into the narrow alley, which, however, proved to be a cul-de-sac, a veritable death-trap. The police were now fighting mad and beyond control. A few of them

followed the terrified crowd into the cul-de-sac plying their batons with demon fury on their unresisting victims. Shouts and shrieks hurtled through the air. In the main thoroughfare the crowd had broken up in panic flight pursued by the unrelenting forces of the law. In the blind alley the huddled and paralysed mass of people was at the mercy of its assailants. A young woman near Stephen shrank cowering into the shelter of a doorway as an enormous policeman raging like a bull ploughed his way through the crowd towards her as if he had singled her out for destruction. Stephen hurriedly interposed with his ash-plant, but before he could free his arm sufficiently to use it the policeman's heavy baton had descended with crushing force on his head. Uttering a sharp cry Stephen fell to the ground insensible.

3

When he regained consciousness he found himself lying on the ground, his head, which was bound up with a handkerchief, being supported by a young man who was kneeling beside him.

"What's happened?" said Stephen.

"You're all right," replied the young man. "You got a nasty bat on the head, but I don't think it's done any real damage. Let me shift you over so as you can rest against the wall there."

With the young man's help he propped himself up in a sitting position in a slight recess. Looking round him he saw that the alley was like a battle field. Slightly injured persons were moving away tying up their wounds with handkerchiefs; three or four prostrate figures were being attended to by their friends; ten yards from where he sat lay the senseless figure of the policeman who had assaulted him.

"Not a bad bit of work that," said Stephen's protector, following the direction of his glance. "He bent down to finish you off with a second tap, so I caught up your ash-plant and laid him out. . . . Some stick!"

He fingered the ash-plant affectionately. Then he said suddenly:

"If you're anyway fit to walk let's get a move on. Goodness knows what's happening, but if that mass of viscous adiposity," he indicated the policeman, "were to come to, he'd identify us. . . . We might get a cab in Parnell Street. Where do you live?"

Stephen told him. The young man assisted him to his feet, and Stephen found that though his head was painful and his limbs shaky he was well able to walk. They made their way out of the alley into Sackville Street where the likeness to a stricken field was even stronger. Turning to the left they passed along Upper Sackville Street and by good fortune secured a cab in Parnell Street. As they drove towards his hotel Stephen said:

"My name's Stephen Ward. What's yours?"

"Lascelles," said the young man. "Bernard Lascelles. . . . You're not a Dubliner, I suppose?"

"I only arrived here last night."

"You've had rather a rough welcome, I'm afraid. But we're used to that kind of thing here. This was really only a culmination. . . . How's the head?"

The ramshackle cab drawn by its decrepit old horse rumbled on. Stephen had time to observe his rescuer. He had an interesting face: there was firmness in his finely modelled lips, will and purpose in his powerful jaw, thought in his broad brow, and laughter and sorrow in his light blue eyes. The carriage of his head showed confidence and good breeding, the latter not belied by a certain untidiness in his clothing,—the untidiness of the student not of the sloven.

Bernard on his side was also making observations, less openly perhaps by reason of the conventions in which he had been educated. At first it was the physical perfection of his protégé that attracted his admiration. Then he glanced at Stephen's eyes—the cold steel-blue eyes of the impersonal thinker.

"A baton is an excellent means of driving home the logic of a case, isn't it?" he said.

"It's an argument which can only be answered by a *reductio ad ashplant*," replied Stephen . . .

"Holy God!" exclaimed the paternal proprietor of the Neptune as he and Bernard assisted Stephen to bed. "I'd have the tripes out o' them peelers, so I would. Every bloody mother's son o' them . . . them an' their batons. . . . Ah, it's a quare world, glory be to God!"

4

When Bernard arrived at the Neptune next day he found Stephen sitting in the smoke-room along with another man, a dark-haired florid-complexioned man of about thirty, whom Stephen introduced as Mr. McCall.

"Here's a man," said the latter, speaking with a slight Northern accent, "who expects to appeal to the employers by reason."

Bernard laughed.

"Why not?" said Stephen. "The arguments used on both sides in this controversy have seemed to me stupid rather than malicious. I thought there was room for a little sound reasoning and that's why I left the mountains and came to Dublin."

"Well," said McCall, "as far as the stupidity of the arguments is concerned you're right. But you needn't imagine that the people who use them are stupid. They aren't. They only use stupid arguments because the public is stupid, and because, owing to the hypocrisy of modern society, malicious arguments don't pay. I've been a journalist in my time, so I ought to know."

"But surely if truth and reason were put before the public . . ."

"My dear sir, the public doesn't know the meaning of the words. If truth and reason were of any avail the strike would have been settled months ago by A.E's letter."

"The fact is," said Bernard, "that the employers mean to smash the Transport Workers' Union once and for all, and smash it they will. The strikers are half-starved already and can't last much longer."

"A fight by an isolated section is bound to end that way," said McCall, "and I'm not really sorry. The workers will have to join in with the National fight now and make their cause a part of it."

"You're an Ulsterman, aren't you?" said Bernard. "Well there are a few questions I want to ask you. I'm a recent convert to Nationalism and there are a few difficulties I'm always running up against in controversy. One is the question 'If Ireland's poverty is due to British government why is Ulster so prosperous?' Can you explain that?"

"Well," said McCall, "the best answer to that is that it's not true. Certain individuals in Ulster are prosperous but the province itself isn't. There's worse sweated labour in Belfast than in Dublin, and worse slums, too. You've heard of the famous linen company of Addison and Monkhouse? Addison himself is a millionaire and a political boss, but do you know what he pays his workers? Take the poor old women who work the initials on the handkerchiefs he sells at fifteen and eighteen shillings the dozen. He pays them twopence halfpenny the dozen, and it takes them a whole day to earn it. When I was a boy I served my time in a well known cardboard box factory that employed a couple of hundred girls. They were paid according to the amount of work they got through, and the most efficient of them could only manage to earn about nine shillings a week. Of course the average was much lower than that. . . . Ulster prosperous! Good heavens, Ulster's population is dropping just as rapidly as Leinster's."

"So I've pointed out. But people said that was an advantage as it left more wealth to those who remained behind."

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

quoted McCall. "But I wouldn't be surprised if the dead hand of Whately had cut those lines out of the school editions."

"Who was Whately?" asked Bernard.

"Whately was the Protestant Archbishop who dominated the beautiful educational system of this Catholic country a generation ago. His job was to knock the national spirit out of the children and if he failed it wasn't his fault. First he attacked the language. Irish was forbidden in the schools even in the Irish speaking districts, and children who knew nothing else were punished for using it. Then he took hold of the reading-books and expurgated them. He knocked out every reference not only to Irish patriotism, mind you, but to patriotism of any kind. One of the poems he cut out was Scott's 'Breathes there the man with soul so dead?' Instead of it he inserted this touching verse:

I thank the goodness and the grace
That on my birth have smiled,
And made me in these Christian days
A happy English child.

Can you imagine the little barefooted Connacht children reciting that drivel? . . . And mind you, that kind of thing is going on still. Only five years ago a Protestant member of the Board of Education insisted on cutting the line 'Embrace the faithful Crucifix' out of Mangan's *Lament for the Princes*. Damn it, I'm a Protestant myself, if I'm anything, but I'm ashamed of my Church."

"I've never been in Belfast," said Bernard, "but from all I hear of them the people there must be a hard bigoted lot."

"No," said McCall. "They're mad and ignorant on politics and religion, but otherwise they're just the same as the rest of the Irish,—a decent, kind-hearted, hospitable people. Of course their politics are absurd. I had to leave Belfast on that account. I was never more than six months in a job before they found out I was a Nationalist and gave

me the sack. And the whole thing's just sheer downright ignorance. In their schools they never learn a word about their own country. They know they're Irish and not English just as they know they're male and not female, or vice versa, but it's a matter of no importance. The only history they learn is English History and they think King William founded the Orange Order."

"Didn't he?" asked Bernard.

"Not he. It was founded in 1795 as a political expedient. I once told an Orangeman that and he wouldn't believe me. I showed it to him in a book and he wouldn't believe the book; and it was written by an Orangeman. That's the Ulsterman all over. He knows what's so and nothing will ever convince him he's wrong. . . . But don't think the Ulsterman is loyal to England. He supports the Union because he's under the delusion that it makes Ulster prosperous. If he ever finds out his mistake — and some day he will — he'll cut the cable quicker than any of you. He's a business man, you know, and sentiment counts for nothing with him."

"The Ulster Volunteer movement shows how little he cares for parliament," put in Bernard.

"Quite so. . . . Lord, what a mess the Irish party have made of things. Why on earth didn't they set out to convert Ulster instead of the English? The good will of the English doesn't matter a damn, whereas a united Ireland could bully the British government into anything. Instead of that they went abusing their possible friends, and conciliating their historic enemy. It'll serve them right if they get a kick up the backside for their trouble."

There was a momentary silence and then Stephen spoke.

"We've one thing to be grateful to Ulster for anyway," he said. "They've demonstrated a possibility."

"What's that?" asked Bernard.

"Volunteering is a game that two can play at."

"Begad!" said McCall, "I wonder we never thought of that before."

"I've thought for years," said Stephen, "over the solution of our dilemma. Physical force has failed every time, and its failure becomes more and more certain as year by year makes England stronger and Ireland weaker. On the other hand, Constitutionalism is illogical, demoralizing and futile. Failure is written all over the present Party. A little more stiffening on the part of the Volunteers and the Liberals will climb down. . . . Well, what remains for us? Why not a mixture of the two methods. Leave the Party to blither at Westminster and raise an army of Volunteers here to show we mean business."

"Great scheme!" ejaculated McCall.

"Then," said Stephen, "Volunteers will come in useful in the not very distant future, when . . . I suppose you'll agree that a European war is inevitable sooner or later?"

"I doubt it," said Bernard. "Civilization's got beyond that."

"Has it?" sniffed McCall. "I give Europe five years more of peace, and then ——"

"I give her less," said Stephen. "Well, if the war comes before Home Rule, the Volunteers can extract some pretty strong measure of self-government right at the start. And if Home Rule comes first, the Volunteers will be there to extract a few more of our rights, and perhaps to maintain our neutrality."

"You're a statesman," said McCall.

"Pooh! That's common sense. I wonder no one else thought of it. I came to Dublin in order to get hold of people well enough known to father the scheme."

"The Party won't cotton on to it," said McCall. "They're tied hand and foot to the Liberals. I wouldn't be surprised if they even denounced it."

"I never even thought of the Party," said Stephen. "The people I want to get in touch with are the Gaelic Leaguers. They've more grip on reality than any politicians."

"Well, I can introduce you to some of them," said

McCall, and they set to discussing ways and means. Shortly after Bernard took his leave.

"I shan't see you again for a fortnight or so," he said. "I'm running over to England on a visit to a friend of mine. . . . He's a candidate in this Deeping Bye-Election, and a damn decent fellow and very friendly to Ireland though he's a Tory. I'll put him in touch with some of the facts of the situation and see how they go down with the English electorate."

"These honest amiable philo-Irish Englishmen," said McCall, "are more dangerous enemies to us than the other kind, for they don't really count in English politics and we're apt to soften our attitude to suit them."

"I think Willoughby will count some day," said Bernard. "Well, I'll be off. See you again in a fortnight. . . . Take care of that head of yours, Ward."

5

On a mellow evening in September Bernard arrived at Deeping. Willoughby met him at the station. Four years had made little alteration in their appearances: if anything Willoughby had aged rather more than Bernard, and he was actually the elder by a year. They had much to talk about on the drive to the Towers, for neither cared much about letter writing.

"The first thing I've got to tell you," said Willoughby, "is that I'm engaged to be married."

"My dear chap, I congratulate you. Why didn't you tell me before?"

"It only happened a month ago, so I thought I'd keep the news until you came. . . . Do you remember a Miss Morecambe who was staying with us when you were here? It's her sister. They're both on a visit at the Towers at present."

"And how's Mrs. Slitherly?"

"Maud's very well. . . . Second son arrived six weeks ago."

"Have you heard anything of your old friend Murray?"

"Not a word for ages. He did brilliantly at Oxford, but he only wrote to me once since he left, and that's nearly a year ago. . . . We did miss you in our little set. Rotten luck I call it."

They talked for a while about the careers of various schoolfellows, but eventually Willoughby harked back to the subject that is always uppermost in the minds of young lovers.

"No," said Bernard in reply to a feeler, "I've been into love, through it, and out at the other end dozens of times. The woman doesn't live that I could be faithful to."

"Nonsense," objected Willoughby. "You'll meet your fate some day, and be worse than any of us. That's what always happens to your sort."

"I hope not," said Bernard. "I've more important things to bother about. How's the election going?"

"I haven't the ghost of a chance, I'm afraid. You see, the Tory push wouldn't have me as I wasn't true-blue on the Irish question,—and a couple of others as well; so I'm going up as an Independent. It'll be a three-cornered fight. Do you remember Frank's friend Hastings? He's the Liberal candidate, and the Unionist is a crusty old soldier—Major Allardyce. It's between those two really. I'm too young to catch votes and my views don't seem to go down somehow."

"We must have a talk about that later on. I've heard and read nothing but Irish politics for the last three years and I haven't an idea what's been happening over here."

They swept along by highway, by-way, Roman Road and cedar-bordered avenue to the well remembered entry to Willoughby Towers. Everything was the same as on Bernard's previous visit four years ago: a picture of unchanging prosperity. The squire's welcome was as hearty, his wife's as frigid as on the former occasion. The two Miss Morecambes came down to the drawing-room dressed for dinner. Bernard's attention was entirely occupied by Wil-

loughby's fiancée, Dorothy, who was fair, graceful, and extremely pretty, that at the salutation with which he greeted her sister was of the most perfunctory nature. Dorothy though pretty, was no doll, and Bernard highly approved his friend's choice, a fact which he communicated to him in a whisper as they moved in to dinner.

"Have you ever been back to Ashbury?" Bernard asked Willoughby during the course of the meal.

"Oh, yes," said Willoughby. "I go there every year for the Easter retreat. . . . You're not at all popular there, you know, ever since that article of yours on the morals of Public Schools."

"What did they object to in it?"

"They objected to it altogether. In the first place, they said, even if it was a true statement you'd no business to make it, and in the second place they said it wasn't true."

"Just what they would say. If a person who has first hand experience isn't entitled to speak, who is?"

"They call it lack of esprit-de-corps . . ."

"I suppose they'd prefer to leave the question to be thrashed out in the mawkish pages of *John Bull*. Well, if they don't like me they can lump me."

"Are things really as bad as you say?" asked the Squire.

"What things?" asked Dorothy innocently, whereat Mrs. Willoughby cut into the conversation with some incisive remarks about the weather, giving the while an angry glance at her son for having introduced so unfortunate a topic.

Then the squire began gently to chaff Jack about his political speeches and about Tory democracy in general.

"Jack thinks it a good compromise between Toryism and democracy to take up both," he said to Bernard.

"You talk as if they were opposites," objected Willoughby.

"So they are, my boy. In my father's time all true Tories held the very name of democrat in horror. You might as well talk of a Christian Atheist as a Tory democrat.

"If I thought that," said Willoughby, "I should cease to be a Tory."

"So you have, except in name."

"Look here, father, can you not conceive a democracy of gentlemen? That's what they have in Ireland."

"In Ireland!" interrupted Mrs. Willoughby. "What nonsense you're talking, Jack. Ireland's a country of small farmers, cattle drivers, and murderers."

"Mother!" exclaimed Willoughby. "Remember Mr. Lascelles."

"Oh, Mr. Lascelles knows what I mean. The Irish upper classes are different. I don't really count them as Irish. They're mostly of English descent, aren't they, Mr. Lascelles?"

"I don't think we bother much about our descent," said Bernard. "I'm Irish, and as for our being murderers, if any one came to put you out of Willoughby Towers because they wanted the site to graze cattle on, I think it wouldn't be long before you took up a gun yourself."

"We're not tenants, you know," said Mrs. Willoughby, looking haughtily along her beautiful nose. "Willoughby Towers is our own."

"My dear madam," said Bernard, aggressive in his turn, "before England was ever heard of the O'Neills were lords in Tir Owen."

This retort produced silence, for the point of it was utterly lost on its hearers. The altercation had introduced a certain embarrassment into the atmosphere, which Willoughby hastened to allay.

"You've picked up the deuce of an Irish brogue, Bernard, these last few years," he remarked.

"In Dublin," replied Bernard, "I'm perpetually chaffed about my English accent. I wonder what sort of accent I have in reality."

"The most charming brogue I ever heard," asserted Dorothy. "What do you think, Janet?"

Janet regarded Bernard whimsically a moment.

"You've a distinctly Dublin accent," she said.

"You speak daggers to me," laughed Bernard.

"Dorothy's never been in Ireland," said Janet. "She thinks it's an island near Killarney where the people wear red petticoats and caubeens and keep pigs as pets and shoot each other with shillelaghs."

"Janet stayed in Connemara for a month once," said Dorothy, "so she thinks she's a great authority. Have you a shillelagh, Mr. Lascelles?"

"Yes. Five or six. I use them to drive the pigs to market."

"How lovely!" exclaimed Dorothy. "I should so love to have one."

"I'll send you one for a wedding present," said Bernard.

"Oh, do! . . . And, do you know, Jack wants to spend the honeymoon in Ireland. Do you think I ought to agree?"

"Certainly. But make him bring a revolver."

Dorothy gasped. But here Janet interposed.

"Don't mind him. He's only 'taking the cod of you,' as they say in Ireland. You're a regular stage Irishman, Mr. Lascelles."

"Can't help it, Miss Morecambe," Bernard sighed. "You see, I'm on the Irishman's favourite stage."

"What's that?" asked Dorothy.

"England," said Bernard.

6

To leave the lovers alone together Janet took Bernard for a stroll in the garden.

"It was a good deed," said Janet, "to answer Mrs. Willoughby the way you did . . . even though she is our hostess. What was the point of what you said about Tyrone?"

"Irish landlordism only dates from the English conquest. There were no owners of the soil in ancient Ireland. The chieftains were just leaders of the people, who owned the land in common. That was the only thing in the old Gaelic system that appeals to me."

"So you've been reading your history since we last met? It's altered your outlook, I'm sure."

"Yes, I'm a convinced Nationalist now, and ruthless logic has driven me to believe in the necessity of Separation. . . . You English, I think, picture an Irish revolutionary as a dreamy idealist sentimentalizing over a green flag. So did I at one time. But nothing would be further from the truth. Anything harder, colder, or more practical than the young Nationalists who are responsible for any conversion you couldn't imagine. The real sentimentalists are those ardent Home Rulers like Murray — do you remember him? — who believe in the goodwill of England and expect justice from her. . . . I hope you don't mind such plain speaking?"

"Oh, no. I know what our politicians are like, and it's they who run our policy."

"Well, as I say, I'm logically convinced, but I can't help a feeling that the cause is rather a small one. . . . I wish I could explain myself. . . . You see, all my enthusiasms are for mankind as a whole. Since first I could think I've thought in terms of the world, and I've a feeling that it's a narrowing, strangling thing to get caught up in an obscure local squabble. . . . I've a sort of fear of losing sight of the big human issue and getting stained in the muck of party politics. For it is a muck in spite of all the fine ideals of some of the fighters. . . . If you could hear some of the speeches I've heard. . . . Then the cause doesn't grip me very vitally. I feel to it rather like a sympathetic outsider.

"When I first read Irish history the tragedy and injustice of it filled me with wild emotions and resolves. But they had no roots. I feel that this is only one of a thousand tragedies and it has no more motive power for me than any of the others. . . . It isn't vital to my being like the great ideas, Republicanism or Socialism. . . . The *Marseillaise* means more to me, if you understand, than *A Nation Once Again*. A couple of bars of the *Marseillaise* is

enough to set my heart throbbing and my nerves thrilling, whereas the other — it's just a song."

"Then you don't . . . love Ireland?"

"I confess I don't see much to love in her. I can't stand my countrymen at all. . . . They're shiftless, inefficient, not very honest, not very clean, very thin-skinned and down-right intolerant of criticism. They never keep appointments, they talk a great deal too much, they're insincere, and they're damnably shallowly clever. Why, their very virtues are only the reverse side of their vices. People praise their unworldliness and indifference to material gain: it's just part of their shiftlessness. They've a reputation for courtesy, but it's only part of their insincerity. And as for their charm and hospitality, as soon as the stranger has turned his back they're laughing at him and abusing him."

"They have the softest voices in the world," put in Janet. "So different from our strident screeching."

"Maybe so," said Bernard. "I don't like them all the same. . . . So much for my people. As for the country — well, you can get beautiful scenery anywhere, and I don't think ours very great shakes anyhow."

Janet laughed lightly.

"You don't understand the merest A.B.C. of patriotism," she said. "Do you think I don't love England because I hate her oppression of other countries? Because if you do, you're wrong."

If England was what England seems,
And not the England of our dreams,
But only putty, brass and paint,
How quick we'd chuck 'er — But she ain't.

The man who wrote that is a professional patriotic rhapsodiser, but he's as ignorant of the first principles of patriotism as you are."

"I'm still in the dark," said Bernard. "I may be deficient in patriotism, but whatever the reason may be, while

I'm firmly convinced of the righteousness of the cause I feel no overwhelming desire for action."

"I'm afraid I must leave it to nature to help you out," replied Janet.

They talked for a while on various topics. Janet's social work, Bernard's August reading, and the labour crisis in Dublin were the chief.

"That's what the papers called a riot," said Janet, when Bernard had described the famous baton charge. "Good heavens, it's . . ." she paused for words but failed to find them, ". . . it's unspeakable," she added lamely. Her eyes shone and her voice shook with indignation. For a moment she was almost beautiful.

There was silence between them for a while. This girl troubled the very depths of Bernard's soul. His mind leaped responsively to hers, and he was conscious of a reciprocal movement of hers to his. And now he was aware of an unfamiliar feeling of contentment in being with her, and as they walked in the ever deepening darkness among the cedars he gave himself up to the enjoyment of this sensation. For many minutes the crunching of gravel beneath their feet was all that disturbed the delicious silence . . .

Then he turned to look at her and the spell was broken. The primitive savage in him hungered for physical beauty, and while all that was fine and civilized and cultivated in him cursed him for a shallow sensual fool the primitive savage won the day. A hard, brutal desire to wound that which troubled him thrust itself uppermost in his consciousness.

"Jack and Dorothy seem very happy," said Janet: an indication of the way her thoughts had run.

"I don't envy them," said Bernard. "I distrust and fear happiness. . . . I never see a happily married couple — especially an elderly couple — but I thank God I am not such as they."

"Why?" asked Janet, a touch of alarm in her voice.

"I think happiness is demoralizing. Also I think it's an accident. We weren't put here to be happy but to work. Happiness this side of the grave is a fraud and a snare, and when you die your little smiling heaven dies with you. Leave happiness to cats; man has for ever: that's my motto, if I may misquote Browning."

"You don't know what you're talking about," said Janet. Then, rather timidly, "Have you ever been in love?"

"Too often. That's the trouble. I've gathered roses and they've turned to dandelions or nettles in my hand."

Janet laughed at his tragic tone, a pleasant, tinkling laugh peculiar to herself, and said:

"You talk like a disillusioned old rascal of fifty, and I don't suppose you're twenty-four yet."

"I've no use for love," said Bernard. "A man in love is a pathetic idiot, and a girl in love is simply cloying."

"Mr. Lascelles!" Janet gasped. "I don't think you realize what you're saying. . . . You're . . . Oh, you're . . ."

She turned away from him abruptly and fled. Bernard stood staring stupidly after her for a moment, feeling a kind of gloomy satisfaction.

"Lord!" he muttered. "I've done it now."

7

"Of course," said Willoughby, "I'll go on with it to the end, but I haven't a dog's chance. My views don't go down somehow. . . . You see, the British electorate are a lot of children. They want their politics to be either amusing or exciting. They certainly don't want them to be serious. . . . Perhaps I'm a bit of a proser, but when I talk of an enlightened British Democracy with a great destiny of construction and education before it they simply yawn. That's not their notion of politics. They don't care about construction or education. They want a sort of Punch and Judy show, with comic papers for programs. . . . And their notion of a political speech is a string of humorous or bitter attacks on one's opponent mixed up with gross flatteries of

themselves. Hastings and Allardyce are what they like. Hastings tells funny stories about the other side, paints Bonar Law as a harmless ass, Balfour as a doting old villain, and Allardyce as their tool. And he talks about Asquith and Lloyd George as if they were compounds of Solomon and Good King Wenceslaus with a touch of John Hampden thrown in. As for Allardyce, he just calls Asquith a traitor, Lloyd George a thief, and Redmond a rebel, and calls upon Old England to remain always Old England. . . . You should hear the cheers those two can raise . . ."

"My dear Willoughby," said Bernard, "all this simply goes to prove that your ideas about England are sheer rubbish. How can you expect a democracy like that to lead the world? What right have they to an Empire about whose geography they know damn little and about the people less? The only thing that seems to impress them in the whole affair is its size, and they're not even sure of that. All they know is that it's bigger than any other Empire."

But Willoughby's belief in his ideas and in their practicability was unshaken. Throughout the next few days he pursued his canvassing and oratorical course as vigorously as ever.

On the evening before polling day the squire motored his guests in to Deeping "to see the fun." Threading their way slowly and with great difficulty through the crowds they passed close to the platform from which the Liberal candidate was addressing his supporters. Hastings had altered considerably in appearance since Bernard had seen him last. His figure verged on the middle aged, and there was a laughable suggestion of Broadbent about his attitude.

"There is a well-known story," he was saying, "which, however well known, I feel justified in repeating because of its remarkable aptness in the present political position. I refer to the story of the gentleman who met one day on a road a small party of workers followed at some distance by a solitary man, very tired and anxious and having obvious difficulty in keeping up the pace. 'Why,' asked the gentle-

man, 'are you following these men?' 'I must follow them,' replied the other in plaintive accents, 'because I'm their leader.' " (Loud laughter.) "Mr. Bonar Law," resumed Hastings, "seems to be in a similar plight." (Laughter.) "He is the leader of a party, but . . ."

Here the motor, being clear of the crowd, took a spurt forward and the rest of the sentence was lost. Almost immediately they ran into Allardyce's audience and caught a few sentences as they passed.

". . . In the House no doubt they profess loyalty, or what they choose to call loyalty, but the motto of their followers is 'Ireland for the Irish.' " (Groans.)

"There's Redmond's 'Great Heart of the British Democracy' for you," said Bernard to Janet.

She agreed with him listlessly. She spoke to him but seldom now and never on her own initiative. He had long wanted to recall the cruel words of that first evening but did not know how to begin, and with the lapse of time the difficulty increased.

They reached Willoughby's committee rooms and found him inside with his dispirited agents and friends.

"Hello, Jack, why aren't you out speechifying?" asked the squire.

Willoughby grinned helplessly.

"No good," he said. "Couldn't get a crowd. Let's go home."

Polling day came and went, and in the evening Deeping was a seething, shouting mass of people waiting for the result. It came at last. Hastings was in by over eight hundred votes. Willoughby's total poll was seven hundred and sixty-nine.

"Well," said Janet, "that's something. Seven hundred enlightened people in a county division is a good deal."

"Not in the circumstances," said Willoughby grimly. "At least half of them are villagers who voted for t' Squire's son, and half the remainder are disgruntled Tories who don't care for Bonar Law."

Cheer upon cheer burst from the crowd as the results were announced. Then there were cries of "Speech! Speech!" and Hastings went out on to the balcony to address his constituents. There was a crescendo of cheers and boos, and as they died down scattered female voices cried "Votes for Women." Then there was a momentary silence.

"Gentlemen . . ." began Hastings.

"Votes for Women!"

The persistent female voice was drowned by hoarse shouts of hostility. "Put her out! G-r-r!"

"Ladies and gentlemen, from the bottom of my heart I thank you for the honour you have done me. I am going to Westminster to assist in furthering the great measures of the Liberal Government for increasing our constitutional liberties . . ."

"Votes for women!"

"Practise what you preach!"

So it went on, the meaningless speech and its meaningless interruptions, and in the end the squire and his party drove home through the mob that howled and sang and waved torches late into the night.

"Never mind," said Bernard to Willoughby. "Politics doesn't consist in sitting at Westminster in a silk hat. . . . The pen may or may not be mightier than the sword, but it's certainly mightier than the voice of a non-party back-bencher."

"By Jove, I must think about that," said Willoughby.

8

Bernard returned to Dublin in October and at the first opportunity called at the Hotel Neptune. Stephen, however, was out, and McCall had gone the way of all commercial travellers. Bernard called again twice, but each time Stephen was away, and the proprietor informed him that he was very busy and seldom appeared even at meal time.

The last occasion was a Saturday afternoon and Bernard found himself with nothing to do. McGurk and Crowley

and Moore were out of town, and O'Dwyer when telephoned for was not to be found. So Bernard took his bicycle and rode out through Terenure and Rathfarnham along the Glencree road. Reaching the stiff slope leading to Featherbed pass he was forced to dismount and walk. Half way up the hill he halted and sat down by the roadside to smoke.

He fell presently into a reverie, wondering at his strangely inconsistent attitude towards the vital necessities of his country. Why this intense logical conviction unaccompanied by any desire to act? This was the question that puzzled and dismayed him. He knew many young men who as far as conviction went held views as strong as his own and had held them long before he had. These men also, able and intelligent as they were, felt no impulse to act. Was he cast in their mould? He hoped not, because with all their abilities and good qualities he rather despised them. One in particular occurred to his mind, a young barrister called Kennedy, who protested himself a strong Separatist but took no steps towards joining any Separatist organization, and, though he could write admirably, never wrote a line for any Separatist paper. Was he, Bernard, like Kennedy? No. For Kennedy was one of those who would have resented any suggestion of action being required of him, whereas Bernard's inaction caused him acute uneasiness. . . . Moore also thought right and took no action. But that was because of his vile philosophy. . . . An echo of his first conversation with Moore recurred to him. "A man without a country. A cleruch."

"By Jove, yes! I'm a member of the garrison. A seoinin. A West Briton. . . . Yet I feel no loyalty to England. Loyalty! Already I hate her as much as O'Dwyer does. What's wrong with me at all?"

He gave up the problem and resumed the climb. He emerged at last on an open space where the road divided into two. One branch went winding back through rusting woodland to the plain beneath. The other curved over

heathery bog to disappear in the mist among the looming purple mountains. Here on a shelf as it were between the hills and the sea he paused to take breath leaning over his bicycle. The fresh damp autumn breeze fanned his cheek; autumn tints were in the landscape and autumn grey was in the sky. Bernard looked around the scene with an admiring eye. The panorama of mountain, waste land, wood and farmland made an instant appeal to his sense of beauty. He turned from the mist haze on the hills to the smoke haze hanging over the city dim and distant in the plain, and then out again to the grey mystery of the sea. . . . And suddenly the feeling inspired by sheer beauty gave place to a new unnameable feeling that sprang into being with inexplicable suddenness, a feeling of ownership and yet of service, of intimacy and yet of homage; and on that instant he loved the hills and the forests and the plain and the city itself and the whole wide horizon with a love incomparable to any human love save perhaps that of a son for his mother. It was the birth of patriotism.

In that moment all doubts were solved and he saw his position as clear as day. A well-worn proverb which in the arrogance of his cleverness he had long despised flashed before him now pregnant with meaning. "Charity begins at home." Slowly he began to realize the lonely ineptitude of his philosophical position. He had feared to cut himself off from the world by serving Ireland; now he saw that only in her service could he come in contact with the world. Alone he could achieve nothing, but with a liberated and regenerated homeland for a model what precepts could he not demonstrate to men? Ireland as Ireland might yet have a place in the world's councils; might eventually lead them: Ireland as West Britain could have none. The great world-thinkers of other lands had not, after all, neglected their own countries. They had not been less national for being international, less international for being national. France by her Revolution had re-made the world, but her revolutionists had arisen for France. Germany by

her scientific work had become the school of Europe, but it was in developing herself that she had become so.

And Ireland set free would have her mission too. Even now in her subjection the germs of her genius could be seen. Her polity would aim at combining the maximum of personal liberty with the minimum of individual licence, the maximum of public good with the minimum of private restraint. She would be a land of courtesy and hospitality free from the curse of commercialism, and she would show the nations how to be strong without being aggressive, how to be free without being arrogant, how to be rich without soul-killing industrialism, and how to be great without being large.

But first to set her free ——

To shake off this oppressive weight of English Government under which Ireland was being steadily suffocated — that was the immediate task. If the world could but realize its loss, thought Bernard, it would arise in its wrath and end the tyranny. But the world is a collection of men who attend to their own affairs; the men of world-vision are few, and insufficient to leaven the mass. Bernard could imagine here and there — in other oppressed countries: Poland, Finland; in America; all over Europe too — stray people like himself, probably young like himself, who sympathized with this distant oppressed island and amid scorn and indifference yearned for the unity of mankind. But of what avail were they? Ireland must work out her salvation alone and self-reliant. The magnitude of the task both appalled and braced him as he contemplated it.

“To work!” he cried exultantly, and mounting his bicycle whirled down through the pine forest to the city.

CHAPTER X

THE RUSTY SWORD

I

THROUGH a powdery drizzle that danced and sparkled under the street lamps hundreds of men moved in one direction along the main thoroughfares of Dublin. Bernard coming down Nassau Street plunged into the stream at the foot of Grafton Street and was carried along in its course. This human river moved steadily and almost silently. Here and there a laughing girl with a red-clad soldier or a smart draper's assistant moved in the contrary direction like foam against the current.

Near the Rotunda the press grew denser, and it took Bernard twenty minutes to force his way into the great skating rink. Through a door opposite to that by which he had entered came a procession of young men four hundred strong, the students of University College, among whom Bernard could see McGurk and O'Dwyer. They were followed almost immediately by another and somewhat smaller procession of grim dirty men carrying sticks and hurleys,—members of the Transport Workers' Union still on strike.

"There'll be trouble wid them fellas," said an ancient sage next to Bernard.

The crowds still poured in. The seats were filled, all standing room was occupied, and still multitudes clamoured for admittance. The atmosphere was stifling and already thickening with tobacco fumes. . . . An outburst of applause welcomed the appearance of a little group of men on the platform, amongst whom Bernard recognized the stalwart figure of Stephen Ward.

When the applause had somewhat abated Eoin MacNeill the Chairman, a bearded scholarly-looking Ulsterman, stepped forward to speak.

"We are meeting in public," he said, "in order to proceed at once to the enrolment and organization of a National Force of Volunteers. We invite all the able-bodied men of Ireland to form themselves into a united and disciplined body of freemen, prepared to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland."

He went on to point out that the Irish Volunteers would be a non-partisan, non-sectarian movement whose sole object was to maintain the elementary right of freemen to bear arms for the preservation of their natural liberty. Their liberties were now menaced by the armed force of a section of their countrymen who were openly backed by one of the great English political parties and winked at by the other, and this line of action was calculated to diminish and mutilate the form of Self-Government which was ready to be put into force.

"If this is so it is plain to every man that even the modicum of civil rights left to us by the Act of Union is taken from us, our franchise becomes a mockery, and we ourselves become the most degraded nation in Europe. This insolent menace does not satisfy the hereditary enemies of our national freedom. Within the past few days a political manifesto has been issued, signed most fittingly by a Castlereagh and a Beresford, calling for British Volunteers, and for money to arm and equip them to be sent into Ireland to triumph over the Irish people and to complete their disfranchisement and enslavement."

The speaker concluded by pointing out that the proposed Volunteer force was to be on a Territorial basis, the members contributing to its funds and electing their own officers.

A savage yell burst from the Liberty Hall men as the next speaker, a stern, black-bearded man, came forward. He stood for a few moments waiting for the uproar to subside but it only increased in volume. In vain MacNeill requested

a hearing for the speaker. He pointed out that those who had come together that evening had done so in the cause of their common country and that no sectional disputes should intrude. This was too altruistic a philosophy for the Transport Workers, and as soon as MacNeill had resumed his seat the din broke out afresh.

"Who's the speaker?" Bernard asked of his neighbour.

"Larry Kettle, one o' th' employers."

"Put out them Liberty Hall men!" yelled a voice.

In spite of the noise the dark man read out a long document from beginning to end at the top of his voice. All the time the Transport Workers kept up a deafening clamour, shouting, booing, stamping their feet and clattering their sticks on the benches, so that not a syllable of the manifesto could be heard.

"Well, to hell with the Larkinites," shouted a man near Bernard.

"Come on, boys, and stop their row," cried another, and a little knot of men began to make its way round the room in the direction of the disturbers. Things looked ugly for a moment, but opportunely the reading of the manifesto came to an end, and when the next speaker arose the clamour ceased and a collision was averted.

A succession of speakers, some constructive and passionless, some fiery and oratorical, addressed the meeting, and then the chairman called for the National Anthem. A man on the platform rose immediately and a hush fell on the gathering. The song began:

"When boyhood's fire was in my blood,
I read of ancient free men,
For Greece and Rome who bravely stood
Three hundred men and three men."

For the first time the crudity of the versification and the banality of the tune failed to jar on Bernard. The vast size of the room, the vivid human excitement in the air, the emotions roused by ardent generous oratory, the portentous

nature of the moment, all combined to invest both song and singer with a certain dignity and symbolism. And as the voice of the singer, weak in the beginning, gathered strength and soared up to the girdered roof, he felt a pricking of the skin and a thrill of the spine such as only the Marseillaise had given him before.

“And then I dreamed I yet might see
Our fetters rent in twain,
And Ireland long a province be
A Nation once again.”

A vision of all who had died for that dream passed before Bernard's eyes and he knew he was one in thought and in hope with the rebels of all the ages. As the cadence surged up to the high note he felt himself swamped by waves of emotion. A myriad projects formed themselves in his brain and his soul made vows of service.

There was a pause, and the chorus came crashing from five thousand throats,

“A Nation once again!
A Nation once again!”

magnificent, passionate reiteration of the love and hate, the hope and despair, and the vengeful determination of seven centuries of woe.

“And Ireland long a province be
A Nation once again.”

Ere yet the echoes of the chorus had died away the singer had started on the second verse. Bernard felt that something was wrong. It seemed almost an indecent profanity to call forth again the emotions of a splendid moment. A second verse was an anti-climax. As it sped on its way Bernard became once more critical of the song (and indeed its later verses had better never have been written). Then the chorus came and he gathered himself together and joined his voice with the others.

And then ——

“No! No! No! He’ll never sing a third verse.”

But he did, and a fourth as well, and each verse was worse than the preceding, and even the stately reiteration of the chorus became a tiresome redundancy. It came to an end at last and the stewards bustled about distributing enrolment forms.

As Bernard signed his the two Mallows came up to him.

“Glad to see you’re joining,” said Austin. “This is the beginning of a new era in Irish History. We’re on the eve of great things.”

There was a feverish light in his eyes and his voice trembled.

“So you’re converted at last,” said Brian. “All due to me, you know.” He laughed hoarsely, and turning to his brother said: “You should have seen him at Ashbury. He was the rottenest West Briton you ever struck.”

“No matter,” said Austin sharply. Then to Bernard, “Won’t you drop in and see us some evening?”

Bernard promised and hurried out into the street. He heard McGurk’s voice calling him from somewhere in the crowd and making his way towards him with some difficulty found him standing beside a tall, sandy-haired man whose face was vaguely familiar to Bernard.

“Here you are, Lascelles,” said McGurk. “Let me introduce you. This is Mr. Hektor Hannibal O’Flaherty, all the way from Minnesota.”

“Perhaps you remember me,” said Bernard. “We knew each other as kids in Stephen’s Green.”

“Sure thing. So we did,” said O’Flaherty. “Put it there,” and they shook hands heartily.

“Some crowd, this,” remarked O’Flaherty. “Gee, we’ll waken this one-horse camp some before we’re through. Yes, sir.”

They watched the dispersing crowds for a while and were soon joined by Crowley and Moore. McGurk introduced the latter to O’Flaherty, who then said,

"Say, boys, I move that we all come up to my rooms for a bit. I'm living in a sort of backwoods shanty called the Neptune Hotel. Some hotel, take it from pop. But it'll do to be going on with."

"I know a member of the committee who's staying there," said Bernard, as they turned northwards.

"Stephen Ward?" inquired O'Flaherty. "Yes. I've met him. Good stuff, he seems."

They overtook Doran, the benevolent proprietor of the Neptune, on his way home.

"Well, Doran," said O'Flaherty. "Did you join up?"

"What else would I be doing? But sure what use am I? Fifty years of age and twelve stone o' me, God help me."

Arrived at the Neptune the whole crowd poured into the coffee-room and O'Flaherty ordered drinks all round. A few minutes later Stephen entered, bringing with him Lynch, O'Dwyer, and Eugene. After the necessary introductions had been made O'Flaherty called for a toast, and Fergus Moore, raising his glass, gravely proposed,

"The Volunteers! Ireland, fed up with herself and the world in general, decides to cut her throat."

"Moore, you're an ass," said Lynch. "Here's a proper toast for you." He paused a moment and said: "To the spontaneous rising of the Nation in arms in support of Mr. Redmond and the Irish Party. Here's to the Irish National Volunteers."

"Here, less o' that," said McGurk indignantly. "You fellows never can think of anything but your bloody old party."

"Well, well," said Lynch agreeably, "we'll leave the party out. Here's to the Irish National Volunteers."

"Cut out the 'National,'" said O'Dwyer. "It stinks too much of Westminster, and it's not the title anyhow. Here's to the Irish Volunteers."

The toast was drunk with acclamation.

McCall now came in to join the revellers and took a seat near to Bernard.

"Great meeting, wasn't it?" he said. "The movement's sure to catch on. The country's about sick of the Party's weakness."

"Let's have a song, boys," said McGurk, sitting down to the battered piano in a corner of the room and jangling the keys.

Thereat every one who was not already seated seized a convenient chair and made himself comfortable. Bernard let his eye wander round the assembly, studying each face and attitude in turn. There was Eugene, shy and uncomfortable, in the corner near the door, and beside him the expansive figure of Lynch, quietly enjoying a small cheroot. Then came the landlord, fat, vulgar and genial, smoking cut plug in a blackened clay pipe; then Moore, handsome and reckless, chewing a cigar; and Crowley with his chair tilted back against the wall blowing smoke rings up to the ceiling; and McCall meditatively puffing at a huge calabash pipe. On Bernard's left was O'Flaherty, square-jawed and masterful, and beyond him could be seen the flushed and excited face of O'Dwyer, whose teeth were clenched on an empty briar pipe. At the end of the line sat Stephen Ward with a smile of faint amusement on his features.

At McGurk's call Lynch rose and sang T. D. Sullivan's famous song, beginning:—

"Deep in Canadian Woods we've met
From one bright island flown.
Great is the land we tread, but yet
Our hearts are with our own.
And ere we leave this shanty small,
Ere fades the autumn day,
We'll toast old Ireland, dear old Ireland,
Ireland, boys, hurray!"

The chorus rang out lustily, and Bernard thought of the story he had heard lately of how an Irish regiment in the

Federal Army on the night before the battle of Chancellorsville had struck up that song round their bivouac fires, and when they had finished heard it come back like an echo across the Rapidan from the lips of another Irish regiment in the opposing camp.

"Come on, O'Dwyer," said McGurk, when the song was finished, "give us your parody of that."

O'Dwyer got up and sang to the same air:

"See bold Britannia greater grow
On her high imperial throne,
Small are the lands she loves, and so
She's added them to her own.
Then subjects all, both great and small,
Fill up your glass today
And toast old England, noble England,
England, boys, hurray!"

The company joined in the ironical chorus with a will, and verse after verse full of sarcasm and invective followed.

"Damn good!" cried McGurk enthusiastically at the finish, and then some one called to McGurk to sing the *Stuttering Lovers*. The next hour passed merrily with song and story, and then as people made preparations to depart, Crowley sprang up and said:

"Another toast, boys! Here's Sever the Ligature."

Those who had any dregs left in their glasses drank the toast and the remainder cheered.

"I suppose you signed on?" said Bernard to Eugene on the way home.

"Indeed I didn't," said Eugene. "I don't believe in violent methods. We have the law on our side and we ought to keep it that way."

"Good lord!" said Bernard. "You're not a Nationalist at all. You're only a Whig."

"I was a Nationalist before you were," retorted Eugene.

"Hmph!" muttered Bernard. "Logic was never your strong point."

2

Merrion Square and its environs was hostile to the new movement. The Tories of course were furious, denounced the Volunteers as blackguards and rebels, and plainly regarded the thing as an infringement of Ulster's copyright. The Whigs, while feeling as strongly about it, did not venture on such unqualified vilification. "Unfortunate," "ill-considered," "inopportune," were the epithets they applied to it. They were in fact both annoyed and frightened by this rattling of the sword of Ireland. It was but a few years since Nationalism had begun to live down its association with murder, dynamite, agrarian outrage, and pro-Boer-ism, and to become a respectable creed for a gentleman; and here was a definite lapse back to those bad old days of violence and defiance. So for a time the Whigs began to write letters to the papers sincerely deprecating this attempt to force the hand of the Government and substitute the out-of-date methods of violence for those of peaceful persuasion, or gravely announcing that their Home Rule Faith was seriously shaken.

And then the *Irish Times* came out with a leading article in praise of the vigorous and generous spirit of the young generation of Nationalists. True, the *Irish Times* had an ax to grind. It hoped that the Volunteers would overthrow Mr. Redmond and his party and wished to patronize and flatter them into that course. But the net result was to stabilize the wavering Whigs.

Then there were the neutrals, the people who claimed to have no politics. Mrs. Heuston Harrington, for instance, thought it rather absurd to arm and drill for the trifling and unimportant cause of Ireland, and Sir Perry Tifflytis expressed a hope that the Government would be firm and suppress both forces of Volunteers, Ulster and Irish alike. George, the only and darling son of Mrs. Gunby Rourke, was another neutral.

"I've no politics," he said. "But this armed bullying of parliament by both sides is a menace to order and government."

"I thought you said you'd no politics," said Bernard.

"Neither have I. I consider both sides equally in the wrong."

"But if you deny the right of ourselves or the Ulstermen to resist the Government you uphold the right of the Government to coerce us. Isn't that politics? My dear chap, it won't wash. You can't help being a politician if you live in a conquered country."

It was at one of Mrs. Gunby Rourke's Tango Teas that this conversation took place. Bernard was there as an escort to Alice who was an enthusiast of the new craze. They sat at tea in the front drawing-room watching through the folding doors the evolutions of the professional exponents of the dance. When these had finished Alice and George and another couple took the floor. Bernard watched his sister, looking, he thought, rather absurd in her outré frock, perform the movements of voluptuous symbolism with the nonchalance of perfect innocence.

"Isn't it lovely? Your sister dances beautifully, Mr. Lascelles."

It was Madge Conroy, Eugene's divinity, who spoke. Turning to her brother, she continued:

"You'll have to learn it, Teddy, and dance it with me."

"Too much brain work about it for my taste," said Teddy. "The jolly old One-Step's good enough for me."

"I say, you know," said Molloy, coming over, "this is a backward town. The Tango's been the rage for ages in London. Just about getting stale as a matter of fact,—and it's only beginning here. May I have the pleasure, Miss Conroy?"

He took her away to the dancing-room, and Teddy began to discuss critically with Bernard the musical comedy, a "London success" of the year before last, then being performed by a fifth rate company at the Gaiety. This interesting topic exhausted, he searched about in his mind for more to say.

"Awful rot this Nationalist Volunteer business," he said

at last. "But this Arms Proclamation ought to put the lid on them, what! And the good old Ulstermen are armed already."

"The Arms Proclamation doesn't matter a damn," said Bernard. "We can get arms in spite of it."

"We?" queried Teddy.

"Yes. I happen to be a member of the Irish Volunteers."

"Rot," said Teddy.

Bernard showed him his membership card. Teddy was stupefied and stammered incoherently.

"Thinking of joining?" asked Bernard.

"Me!"

"Why not? Tell me, do you think it right for Frenchmen to arm themselves in defence of France?"

"I suppose so."

"And for Italians to arm themselves in defence of Italy?"

"Yes."

"And for Englishmen to arm themselves in defence of England?"

"Of course."

"And for Irishmen to arm themselves in defence of Ireland?"

"Ah, that's different."

"Why?"

"I don't take any interest in politics, but I object to disloyalty."

"Disloyalty to whom?"

"To the King, of course."

"Then you disapprove of the Ulster Volunteers?"

"Oh, no. They're loyal."

"They're resisting an Act of Parliament."

"An Act that puts them under a rule they hate."

"Then is it always right to resist being put under a rule you hate?"

"Well — I suppose so."

"Then wasn't Robert Emmet right?"

"Oh, no. He was a rebel."

Bernard felt like taking Teddy by the feet and battering his head to pulp against the wall. But all he said was:

"Look here, Conroy, you're a fool. You'd better start exercising your brain by learning the Tango."

He got up quickly and took his cup over to Mrs. Gunby Rourke for more tea.

3

"And how are things shaping in your Company?" asked O'Flaherty. He and Bernard were taking tea in the same restaurant that had been the scene of so many conversations.

"We're pulling ourselves together gradually," said Bernard. "After a couple of drills we had an election of temporary officers. I'm first Lieutenant. Our captain's a preposterous little fellow called Brohoon whose principal claim to notoriety seems to be the letters he writes to the newspapers. He's an ass of the first water."

"This system of electing officers is absurd," said O'Flaherty.

"It's the only system we can manage at present. And I like the democratic idea of it."

"Sir, you take it from me, democracy's a cod. It's ridiculous enough in civil affairs, but in military matters it's a wash out, and I tell you, if we're to make this movement of ours a success it's got to be cut right out of it. That's all there's to it."

"You may be right as far as the military side is concerned," replied Bernard, "but I'm a democrat heart and soul in everything else."

"Well, I'm not," said O'Flaherty. "Democracy means the rule of cods, because it puts the government of a country into the hands of the men who can cod the people most. If you want efficient government you must have the efficient people on top, and they'll never be put there by the votes of a democracy. No, sir. Monarchy for me. If you've

a fixed and stable head to the state he can nominate the right people to the right place. . . . Look at Germany."

"I prefer freedom to efficiency," said Bernard.

"What do you know about it? I've tried both. You've had neither. . . . Hello! There are Ward and Crowley coming in."

He called them over and made room for them.

"Lascelles has been telling me he prefers freedom to efficiency," he said when they were seated.

"Freedom for me," said Crowley.

"The two aren't necessarily contradictory," said Stephen.

"I know," said O'Flaherty. "What I was going to tell him when you came in was that you can't be sure of keeping your freedom unless you're efficient, and you can't be efficient without giving up some of your freedom. I maintain that the German system is better than the English. They've good and efficient laws there that you're properly punished for breaking. In England you can do practically anything you like, especially if you're rich. So Germany's a safer country for poor men like you and me. We couldn't be run over there by rich men's motor cars with impunity. We couldn't have our public beauty spots destroyed by the selfishness of individuals. In Germany every one gives up some of his personal liberty for the benefit of others. In England every one does what he likes no matter how he inconveniences others. That's the distinction between freedom and efficiency. . . . Well, as I was saying, give me a Monarchy, where the King is a fixed institution that can pick and choose among the people for the men best fitted to govern."

"Well," said Bernard, "just look at the Kings of modern Europe. They're a nice lot. The only one worth his salt is the Kaiser."

"The result of in-breeding," said Crowley.

"Well, one remedy for that," said O'Flaherty, "would be, when a kingly line seems to be degenerating, pension them off or put them in a lethal chamber, and choose a strong healthy child of good, sound bourgeois parentage to educate

for kingship and so start a new line. A king, you know, doesn't need more than average mental qualities. His business is to pick out the good stuff in other people."

"It's an interesting proposition," said Stephen, "but it has obvious disadvantages."

"I daresay. But it saves us from the rule of cods anyhow. And that's what an Irish democracy would mean."

"The Irish people," said Crowley, "may be divided into four parts: cods, bags's, lunatics and élite. Cods are people who blither a great deal, mean nothing, are entrusted with the doing of everything, and with the maximum of fuss get through the minimum of work. Our friends Lynch and Mullery are cods, so are about a quarter of the Irish people, and about three quarters of the Irish Party. Bags's, on the other hand, while they blither as much as cods, mean a great deal and are very earnest and serious, but they never do anything at all, and don't want to. The balance of the Irish Party, mostly Sinn Feiners, all middle class Home Rulers, and nine-tenths of the students of University College are bags's. Geoffrey Manders is a typical bags. There's one really perfect bags I know, a man called by the melodious name of Cornelius Featherstonehaugh. He's a fat, prosperous man who goes to every Nationalist meeting or celebration — he was at the Rotunda meeting — and never does anything. He's a jolly decent fellow, but he'll never grow thin on his hard work for Ireland. . . . Where are we now? Oh, yes. The next division are the lunatics. Most of them are fervent physical force men. Physical force is their remedy for everything. If they don't like a play they smash up the theatre; if their dirty little minds consider a picture indecent they break up the shop it's on sale in. And as for their politics! Some of them, like Brian Mallow, really believe they can free Ireland with pikes and green flags. Others, like his brother Austin, think that if they get us thrashed often enough we can win in the end."

"And the élite?" questioned Stephen.

"There are two divisions of the élite," said Crowley.

"First the fine, quiet, sturdy rank and file that fought in Ninety-Eight and Sixty-Seven, and is pouring into the Volunteers at present, without waiting, like the cods and bags's, for the Party leaders to give the word."

"And then?" said Bernard.

"Then the intelligent politicians like MacNeill and our humble selves. . . . There's my complete analysis of the Irish people."

"Some people!" said O'Flaherty.

"It looks as if we shall have to do without the cods and bags's for the present," said Stephen. "The Party hasn't given us the seal of its approval yet. Quite the contrary in fact."

"The longer they stay out the better," said O'Flaherty. "But even the cods and bags's will begin to get fed up if the Party goes on hauling down the flag long enough."

An attendant brought tea and cake for Stephen and Crowley, and for a time the talk was on trivial subjects. Presently Bernard said to O'Flaherty:

"You've knocked round the world a bit since I last saw you. Tell us some of your adventures."

"I've had a few," O'Flaherty admitted.

"Well, spit 'em out, old chap," said Crowley.

"Where shall I begin," said O'Flaherty.

"At the beginning," said Stephen.

4

"Well," said O'Flaherty, "any one who took the trouble to study my habits and inclinations from the time I was a kid till I was seventeen, could tell I was cut out to be a soldier or a diplomat,—or both. Lascelles, here, remembers the games we had in Stephen's Green when we were youngsters; and when I was fifteen or so, when I wasn't reading military books I was studying the diplomatic news in the papers and trying to catch their drift,—as far as a man could for the flap-doodle and eyewash of the language it's written in. Well, sir, fathers as a general rule have about as much no-

tion of considering their sons' inclinations as a butcher has for a sheep, and mine was no sort of exception. He was bound I'd be a respectable sort of professional guy, but I wasn't having any. But this unfortunate island hasn't more opening for soldiers or diplomats than Maine has for saloon-keepers, and I'd no intention of dirtying my soul or my skin by putting on England's uniform. In fact, way down in my heart I'd always had a kind of hankering to be up against that same uniform. Well, one day just after I'd left school and was preparing for matric, I got about fed up and decided to skip off and join the French Foreign Legion. I waited about a bit and saved up some money, and the day I heard the examiners had stuck me I made a bolt for London, and a week later I shipped as a stowaway for Algiers. . . . A stowaway's life isn't all romance and adventure, by the way. It's mostly boredom and seasickness, but we won't go into that. . . . We reached Algiers at last, and as soon as I could escape from the ship, I struck out for the nearest depot of the Foreign Legion and enlisted.

"Well, boys, I daresay you've a lot of romantic notions about that Legion. I know *I* had. But they came out pretty quick in the wash I can tell you. You take it from me, boys, life in the Foreign Legion is no joke. It's a dog's life and about as profitable as selling bootlaces on O'Connell Bridge in wet weather. However, I'd joined up at a pretty exciting time. Some months before a French company had begun to build a railway from Casablanca in Morocco, and right in their track was a very ancient Moorish cemetery. With the characteristic tact of Christians in dealing with people of another religion, and with the humanity and politeness which so distinguishes Europeans in dealing with less civilized peoples, they decided to cut right through this cemetery in spite of the objections of the natives. Well, naturally there were ructions and some sacred European lives were lost. In next to no time we had invaded Morocco and marched on Casablanca. After some stiff fighting in the neighbourhood we bombarded the city,

wrecked most of it, and killed several thousands of the inhabitants. Gee, it was dirty work, and when it was over we occupied the whole Shawiya district around it, not without some stiff fighting, for the Moors are tough stuff.

"Now I hadn't read the diplomatic news of the last three years for nothing, and I knew that this invasion of Morocco was a flat violation of the Act of Algeciras, the treaty signed by the Great Powers in 1906 guaranteeing the independence and sovereignty of Morocco. France had already infringed it in a minor way by occupying Udja in retaliation for the murder of some damned idiot of a Frenchman who probably deserved all he got. Of course she made the usual promises of immediate withdrawal, but devil a one she kept, and as every one knows she's in Udja and Shawiya to this day. . . . I can tell you I was pretty fed up. I hadn't joined the Legion to help France with England's connivance to put her yoke on a lot of unfortunate Moors: — damn good stuff those Moors, take it from Pop. I got this scar over my eye taking a village in Shawiya: — anyway, I was fed up and took my first chance to desert. Getting away wasn't so very hard, though I had to tap a sentry who got officious on the head. Then I made my way southwards towards the desert. I had a bundle of native clothes with me that I stripped off a corpse (there were lots of corpses in Shawiya in those days) and as soon as I could I chucked off my uniform and put them on. All through the day I lay in hiding, thinking out a line of action. My only landmark was a great range of mountains a hundred miles away in the east. I knew Fez was behind them, and I decided to make that way, travelling by night and hiding by day, and then to pass myself off as a German and beat up the German consulate. (You see the Germans are pretty popular in Morocco because they're the only European nation that treats the Moors any way decently.) . . . Well, I struck out further south the next night so as to get clear of the French lines of communication, and hid again all through the next day.

"Things had gone gaily up to this, but now I hit a bad streak of luck. Lying in the sun all day must have been bad for my head, for I don't know what I did or where I went that night. I must have wandered miles off the track and then dropped in a faint, for when I came to it was daylight and a Moorish girl was looking down on me and my head was in her lap. You won't guess what had happened to me. I'd fallen into the hands of a band of marauding Nomads and she was the chieftain's daughter. I started babbling out at once that I wasn't French but German — in English too, like the sunstruck ass that I was. But it made precious little difference to the damsel, for she didn't understand a word. When my head got clearer I looked around and saw the band, half a dozen of the dirtiest-looking blackguards you ever struck, and a grey-bearded old patriarch, their chief. Their horses were tethered near at hand. (Arab steeds! Not on your life. A collection of the mangiest cab horses you could pick up.) Well the gang seemed to be holding a sort of consultation as to the best way of disposing of me. One ruffian quite obviously wanted to practise his marksmanship on me, but he was outvoted. The chief's daughter pleaded for me, and I was taken on as a sort of man-of-all-work to the gang. It wasn't a very dignified position for a white man, but it was that or starvation, which was rather a poor choice. I was given the spare horse.— Some horse! I bet I'd seen him on a cabstand in Dublin a few years before. Well, on that horse's back I assisted in their marauding till we'd made the district too hot to hold us, when we bolted for a season to the Sahara and lay low.

"I stuck that life for nine solid months. I've practised many professions in my time, but I think marauding is the last one I'd go back to. It's a bit monotonous, you know, with its perpetual alternations of riding, raiding and hiding. And I did get sick of that desert, all sand and sunshine. Don't you get taken in, boys, by any punk dope you may read about the free, joyous life of the nomads. Not that I was

badly treated. The chief was a decent old skin with an outlandish name I never quite got the hang of. I used to call him Methuselah. He kind of took to me because I reminded him of his son who had been captured way back in a raid on Tamagrut and tortured to death for the amusement of the Sultan. I got on all right with the gang too, all except the man who wanted to shoot me at the start. I never quite got *his* name either, so I called him Cain. It was he who rode after me and captured me the night I tried to escape, and stood by fingering his trigger in the hope that the old man would condemn me to death. Gee, you should have seen his face when Methuselah gave me a free pardon. The Sahara climate took a full week to warm my blood afterwards.

"But the chief's daughter — gee, she was a peach. Hair black as night, and the blush of the rose under her tawny skin. Eyes like two sloes with a flame in the depths of them like you get in an opal. Teeth as white as Pentelic marble, and a figure like the Winged Victory of Samothrace. She sure was some girl, and though you mayn't believe it, she got quite a mash on your humble servant. She'd a heathenish name that I couldn't pronounce but I used to call her Jenny, which pleased her just as well and suited her a lot better. . . . You boys won't like what I did next, but I believe in taking what comes to you, and I was fair sick of the gang and ready to do anything to get away.

"Yes. She tipped me the glad eye, and I responded so as to get an ally. I hadn't learnt much of her language but we fixed up a means of communication somehow. These things come easy if you know how. I won't give you the details, but the gist of the matter was that she arranged to help me to escape if I'd promise to come back some day and fetch her away with me. It wasn't a fair promise to make, but necessity knows no decency, and I meant to keep the promise at the time, and maybe I'll keep it yet. Anyhow, she put some drug or other in their supper one night, and I took the best of the horses and my leave. She came a bit of

the way to see me off, and there in the heart of the desert by the sandy bank of the Wady Saoora we took a tender farewell. The moon was up and the weird silence of the desert was all around us, and she clung to me and we kissed each other and she made me repeat my promise. Gee, it was just like a romance by Robert Hichens. It only needed a few bulbuls to complete the picture, but I guess there weren't any in that locality.

"She went back to the camp and I crossed the Saoora and followed the course of the Wady Susfana for several days. Then about twenty miles south of Figuig I struck off to the east into Algeria. This was the most dangerous part of my travels because I was on French Territory now and liable to be shot as a deserter, if caught. However, I came through all right. After four months of travelling by night and hiding by day, and starving most of the time (not to mention such details as sicknesses and fevers) I crossed the frontier into Tripoli and joined on to a caravan making for Egypt. . . . Boys, I never thought I'd live to be glad to see the Union Jack, but you'd be glad to see the devil himself if he marked the end of a journey you were sick of. At length I landed in Cairo, dead beat and without a red cent in my pocket.

"Well, I kept myself for a year in Cairo on all sorts of odd jobs, and at the same time I looked up the back numbers, so to speak, of the Moroccan situation. During the time I'd spent in the desert things had been going from bad to worse there. The French, you may remember, sent in an indemnity bill to the Sultan for a couple of millions. Something like England charging the Union bribery on Ireland, eh? By this time poor old Morocco was tied hand and foot by European finance, and the Sultan was forced to torture his people to raise enough money to make ends meet. Result, fresh chaos in Morocco and a demand for renewed French intervention. . . . Useful sort of vicious circle, don't you think? . . . Then Spain thought she ought to have a finger in the pie, and answered France's occupation of Fez

by pouring troops into the Riff. When I left Cairo there were a hundred thousand foreign troops in Morocco and the Act of Algeciras had been virtually torn up. Fine object lesson in Christianity and civilization for the Moors, what? Well——

“I shipped from Cairo as a greaser on a steamship for Boston. A hundred miles south-west of Cape St. Vincent we sighted a little German gunboat making south. It turned out afterwards to be the *Panther* bound for Agadir. You may remember the fuss kicked up in the English papers at the time about what they called this ‘display of German brutality.’ Well, the Germans hadn’t more or less right in Morocco than the rest of the powers, but they didn’t shell any city or occupy any territory anyhow. They didn’t as much as fire a gun or land a marine, and if they were out for aggression don’t you think they’d have sent more than a little tin gunboat? The Germans don’t do things by halves.

“But I’m wandering from my story. When I reached Boston I got the nastiest shock of my life. I found I couldn’t join the American Army until I was a properly squared up citizen. It was some jar, but I quickly decided I’d stay and serve out my seven years for Rachel, so to speak. For six months I loaded cargoes on the quays of Boston and was a good deal more than sick of it when I knocked up against Augustus X. Skinner. He was standing on the quay one day and seemed to be interesting himself in the way I manoeuvred the landing of a cargo of lions and camels. (I didn’t tell you I was foreman by this time.)

“‘Like a new job at four times what you’re getting now?’ says he.

“‘Sure thing,’ says I.

“‘Mind breaking the law?’ says he.

“‘Try me,’ says I.

“And that settled it. He was organizing a gun-running stunt on the Mexican frontier, and he’d spotted me as a likely second-in-command. Well, I stayed in that line of business for a good while, and when I’d put by a bit of cash

I decided to increase it by blossoming out as a financier. I went to New York, studied the markets for a bit, speculated, and in a couple of days lost half the money I had. I went careful after that and lost more. Then in despair I put all my money to the last dollar into a gamble that would bring me five hundred per cent. or ruination. For a marvel it panned out all right and I made a pile. For the next couple of months everything I touched turned to gold, and I became a rich man. . . . Then one day along comes a man I'd known at school,—Sullivan, now on the Provisional Committee. He was touring America to get support for the new Irish government. The idea of the old country arming herself and getting a buzz on things appealed to me some, and in a few days I'd packed my traps and come right over. . . . None too soon either, I think, because I tell you what, boys—when the *Panther* went to Agadir, I sized things up pretty well. I guess there'll be a scrap in Europe pretty soon, and Ireland will need every man if she's to keep her end up. Do you get me? What price armed Neutrality?"

The waitress came along scribbling the bill.

5

As may be expected Bernard's action in joining the Irish Volunteers did not long remain unnoticed by his family. His mother called him to her room one day, having, as she said, something very serious to say to him. He had not a moment's doubt as to its nature.

"Have you joined the Nationalist Volunteers?" she began directly.

"The *Irish* Volunteers," corrected Bernard.

"What does the old name matter?" said Lady Lascelles, irritably. "I hear they've made you an officer."

"Quite true."

"You should have consulted your father before taking a step like that."

"Why?"

"Because he's your father."

"I don't see the force of the argument."

"O, Bernard, what a nasty thing to say! As if you didn't owe everything to your father, even your very existence. . . . And he's the best of fathers, too. You've always had the best of everything—food, clothes, everything. The best of education and careers. . . . Everything," she ended, weakly.

"Well, as to food and education and the rest of it, my father could scarcely afford to let his children go about starving or in rags or send them to Christian Brothers' schools. It wouldn't look well for a man in his position, would it? As for my career, it was forced on me. I didn't want it. . . . And as for my existence—well, the less said about that the better. He wasn't thinking of me when he married you, anyhow."

"That's a very ungrateful way to speak, Bernard. Your father loves you, and you know it, and it's your duty to try and please him."

"Well, I've never done anything to disgrace him."

"These Volunteers, darling——"

"Look here, mother, I have my own principles and opinions in these matters. I don't want to interfere with his, and I refuse to let him interfere with mine."

"But he's your father."

"I'd have my own opinions if I'd fifty fathers."

"But you don't know how annoyed he is, my darling boy. I've had an unpleasant time of it these last few days, I can tell you. . . . Now, do give this up, just to please me. I don't want to have rows and unpleasantness in my home. I want peace and quiet."

"Even peace with dishonour?" said Bernard. "My dear mother, if father objects to anything I do he ought to come to me himself and not send you to plead with me. . . . It's no use anyway. I have a right to my own principles and to think for myself."

"Yes, darling boy. *Think* what you like. Nobody can object to that. Only don't *do* anything."

Bernard fairly gasped at this piece of advice. What could one say to this type of mind? Where could it be grasped? And how?

"Mother!" he said at last; "can't you see you're asking me to be a liar and a coward."

"No darling, I know my boy could be neither of those things. I'm only asking you to be sensible."

"Mother, I do believe that if we'd lived in Judea in the time of Christ, if I'd told you I believed in him and meant to follow him you'd have tried to stop me."

"No, Bernard. What a thing to say!"

"O, yes, you would. And you'd have said, too, '*Believe* what you like, but don't *do* anything,' meaning, 'Be a Nicodemus instead of a Peter.' Oh, yes. I can imagine it all."

"That's absolutely different, Bernard. Amn't I always trying to keep you to your religion?"

Bernard laughed and kissed her cheek.

"You're a darling, illogical, old mother," he said, and after another embrace ran away, leaving her very much puzzled.

Sir Eugene had, of course, been rendered perfectly furious by Bernard's action, but he knew that Bernard with an income of his own and within a few months of qualification, could not be diverted from his course by any display of parental wrath. He had, therefore, decided to play on Bernard's love for his mother, and had driven her to action by grumbles and threats to disinherit the boy. After her failure he redoubled his threats and the poor lady had visions of her home broken up and her favourite son a penniless wanderer over the face of the earth. Diffident of her own controversial abilities, she decided to secure allies, and went to her old friend, Mrs. Harvey, for advice and consolation.

"Why not get Augustine Reilly to speak to him?" said Mrs. Harvey.

Augustine Reilly was a distant cousin to Lady Lascelles.

He was a pietistic old bachelor of fifty who consorted with priests and old ladies and read the Bible, or rather the Old Testament, more assiduously than is customary among Catholics. From his rare knowledge of rubrics and ceremonial, he was supposed to be a great theologian, and his solemn platitudes passed among his simple relatives for deep philosophy and inspired wisdom. He was, as a matter of fact, a pompous old fool, who knew as much about theology and philosophy as he did about science (and the sum total of his knowledge of this was that the theory of evolution was wicked and not to be thought about). Lady Lascelles, however, was not in a position to know this, and like most of her relatives looked up to Augustine Reilly with awful respect.

"Yes. Augustine is just the man," said Lady Lascelles. "Bernard, I'm glad to say, is getting more religious. He talked to me about Our Lord the other day, so I'm sure Augustine should be able to manage him."

"That's splendid," said Mrs. Harvey. "I'll say a few words to him myself, if you like. I know just how these clever young men should be taken, you know."

"Do. That's awfully good of you. Why not come to lunch next Saturday?"

"Delighted," said Mrs. Harvey. "I'll bring Mabel along, too. It'll be a nice birthday treat for her."

In due course Saturday arrived and Mrs. Harvey with it. Mabel was now twenty years of age, a slim, fair haired, young woman nearly as tall as Bernard. Her pretty face was somewhat pale and there was a tired look about her eyes due to long hours of office work. She saw the sun only in the evenings in summer and not at all in winter; the air she breathed was mostly dust; the food she ate was not of the best quality, nor did she get enough of it; her surroundings, both at home and at work, were comfortless and unlovely; her pay was small and her mother took most of it; and she had but sixteen days' holiday in the year: yet she faced life bravely and with a smile. Bernard liked what little he had seen of her and he manoeuvred to have her beside him at

lunch. Lady Lascelles, however, had arranged things otherwise and took Mabel to herself. Bernard was at the foot of the table and Mrs. Harvey deposited her bulky form in the chair on his right. Alice sat on her mother's left and opposite to Mabel, and Eugene and Sandy were on Bernard's left. These two were deeply absorbed in discussing the route by which they intended cycling to Bohernabreena after lunch, and Lady Lascelles and the girls at the far end of the table formed a remote conversational group, so Mrs. Harvey had Bernard quite at her mercy. She talked winningly and sentimentally about Ireland, professing to hold moderate political views.

"I don't like extremists," she said. "I don't think they're practical. Mind you, I've no doubt the men who hold extreme views are honest and self-sacrificing. But I think our unfortunate country needs a little compromise and goodwill."

Bernard had no desire to argue and simply said, "Yes, yes," to everything she said, so Mrs. Harvey was able to reassure Lady Lascelles and to inform her that her son was a most reasonable and sensible young man.

"I'm sure he'll do well in his profession," she volunteered at parting. Her visit had been a double success, for there was a glittering birthday present in Mabel's purse.

A few days later Augustine Reilly called, as had been pre-arranged, when Bernard and his mother were alone together at afternoon tea. Bernard knew him but slightly, for he was an infrequent visitor, and was rather surprised to see him. When, a few minutes later, Lady Lascelles slipped away on a transparent excuse he realized what was coming and determined to make of Augustine a terrible warning to future missionaries.

Augustine was prematurely senile in appearance. The bald and shiny crown of his head was bordered by snow-white locks; his eyes were rheumy; and his gait was faltering. His manner was preternaturally solemn and his words were weighted and spaced out with silences. He began, in

a way he thought diplomatic, to praise fulsomely the virtues of youth: its courage, its vigor, its honesty, its idealism. But youth, it appeared, needed the restraint of experience. It needed the guidance of age. Bernard listened to this homologue without any attempt to conceal his impatience and contempt. Finally he took advantage of a pause to say:

"Look here, let's cut out the preamble. You've come here to advise me to chuck out the Volunteers, haven't you?"

Augustine was a little disconcerted by this sudden rupture of the veils of diplomacy, but he replied almost immediately:

"Well, frankly I have. Your dear mother, relying upon our time-honoured friendship — a friendship which began before you, Bernard, was born — has asked me to show you the . . . rashness of the course you have recently undertaken. . . . Personally, I think that your mother's express disapproval should have been enough for you. It certainly would have been for me. The love of a mother for the child of her womb is the most wonderful sacred thing in nature and entitles her to a corresponding obedience and respect."

"I'm not a child," said Bernard. "I've a right to decide my actions for myself."

"You are still a child to her. As I have said, the love of a mother for the child of her womb is the most powerful force in the universe. Did not even Our Blessed Lord give obedience to his mother?"

"She didn't try to interfere with his mission."

"My boy, don't let us quibble. A mother's love is an ever-present love. It makes her always anxious for the safety of her child. The thought that he may be in danger is a pain to her. We are bound to consider this in any action we contemplate. . . . Moreover, your action tends to disturb the peace and harmony of the household over which she rules."

"I can't help that," said Bernard. "I'm going to do what I think right. If other people upset themselves about it it's their own look out."

"My boy, it is never right to disturb the peace of a happy home. 'My little children, let you love one another.' Those are the words of Christ. Christ came to this earth to preach the gospel of peace and love, and woe to those who infringe God's peace!"

"As well as I remember, Christ said: 'I come to bring, not peace, but a sword,'" retorted Bernard. Augustine was a little nonplussed by this, but his stock of clichés was inexhaustible.

"The devil can quote scripture to his purpose," he said.

"Why did you quote it then?" said Bernard.

Augustine for a moment was at a loss how to continue. At last he resumed with his eternal tag:

"The love of a mother for the child of . . ."

But here Bernard interrupted him.

"I wish you'd drop that highly indecent phrase," he said.

"Very well, my boy, if you wish," said Augustine, blandly.

"But I wish I could get you to see how wrongly you are acting in opposing the wishes of your parents — those to whom, after God, you owe your first duty."

"I deny that," said Bernard. "My first duty, after my duty to God, is to myself, and my next is to my country."

"Yes. And you can best serve your country not by following the lead of rebels and anarchists, but by obeying the law and your parents. He who sets himself against the law, remember, sets himself against God."

"Look here," said Bernard, "I'm fed up with you. You simply don't know what you're blithering about. You may be a very good man in your way, but it's a rotten way. Good people like you are the curse of the world. It was good people like you who put Socrates to death, crucified Christ, imprisoned Galileo, and burnt the library of Alexandria. You've been gassing a lot about Christ just now, but what would you have said of Him if you'd been a respectable Jew of His own time? You'd have said, 'What a wicked man this Christ is! He attacks our established customs, reviles our priests, breaks our laws, gives the poor

thoughts above their station. He's an anarchist, a socialist, an anti-cleric. Kill the scoundrel.' That's what you'd have said."

"I should have said nothing of the kind," said Augustine.

"I consider you a very impertinent young man."

"Impertinent!" said Bernard. "Well, I like that. Who asked you to come and meddle with my affairs? The insolence of old people is astounding. They poke their noses in where they aren't wanted and then stand on their dignity if they get it in the neck." He suddenly rose, and, changing his tone to one of earnest solicitude, said: "But I'm forgetting my duties as host. I can recommend these hot cakes . . . or perhaps you'd prefer some of this chocolate cake . . . No? Then let me get you some more tea?"

But his attempt to mitigate the cruelty of the blows he had dealt was a failure. Augustine was implacable. From Christian duty he blessed Bernard henceforward in his prayers, but he never forgave him in his heart.

The consequences of Bernard's intransigence fell heaviest on his mother who was now deprived of what little conjugal affection still remained to her. Bernard, himself, was treated by his father with coldness and silence, but this worried him little, if at all, for he passed his final examination in the following March and set about finding a house for himself at once.

6

"The Lord has delivered them into our hands," said O'Flaherty triumphantly, and crumpling the newspaper into a ball addressed himself to his breakfast.

Mr. Asquith had announced a new solution of the problem in Ireland a few days ago, namely the partition of the country. Mr. Redmond had accepted it and Sir Edward Carson had contemptuously refused the concession, so a vital part of the national claim had been abandoned without result.

"This ought to settle the Party's hash for good and all," said O'Flaherty.

Stephen, on the other side of the table, looked gloomy.

"It's a pity," he said. "It sets up an issue between us at once, and our one hope of achieving anything is in unity. Why can't they be trusted to be strong even for a minute? Why can't they use us to put pressure on that quaking, shifting, bulliable government? Why can't they learn something from Carson?"

"Because what little good was ever in them has been sapped by Westminster air and ministerial breakfasts," said O'Flaherty. "May it poison them outright," he added.

"Well, it'll give a stimulus to our recruiting anyhow," said Stephen. "But what we want now is arms."

When they had finished their meal Stephen asked O'Flaherty what he intended to do that day.

"Going to meet a girl," said O'Flaherty.

Stephen gave a snort of contempt.

"You're some ascetic, Ward," said O'Flaherty. "You never smoke or drink or make love. Have you ever been human, I wonder?"

"Irishmen really haven't time for these things," replied Stephen. "With our country in the state she is she requires our undivided attention. I gave up all notion of enjoyment long ago. There was a girl fell in love with me once, and I took some sort of a fancy to her, too. But she was a fool, and I frightened her off by talking philosophy at her. . . . You can't be human and completely efficient, you know. Take our little crowd for instance. Good stuff every one of them, but not one but has his weakness to distract him. With Crowley and McGurk it's women, with O'Dwyer it's verse-making, with Lascelles it's vanity and dancing, and so on. . . . I wish we could make that man Moore shake off his confounded pessimism. He'd be a real acquisition."

"You've got very unsound dope," said O'Flaherty. "It won't be supermen who'll set this country free, and I'd rather have her free than sober, anyhow."

"The two hang together, I think," said Stephen.

"Well," said O'Flaherty, "I may be a man of low ideals,

but I've a pretty good notion which task is easiest. . . . Is anyone on the committee seeing about getting guns?"

7

So Ireland once more drew the sword that had been rusting in its sheath for nearly fifty years, and brandished it in the face of the enemy. For a moment she seemed astonished at her own audacity. At the end of 1913 no more than ten thousand men had enrolled in the Volunteers, but confidence came gradually and in five months more their numbers had increased sevenfold. Then came a sudden unexpected rush of recruits. In two months the muster-rolls were doubled and men were marching and drilling on hillside, plain, and valley, in town and village, all over the face of Ireland.

To Bernard, recent adherent to the cause, it was a sufficiently moving spectacle. To O'Dwyer it was well nigh miraculous.

"I wish I could make you understand my feeling in all this," he said to Bernard one day as they watched a company manoeuvring in County Dublin. "When I was a boy, I dreamed of nothing else but a day of arming and revenge, and I thought everyone else was the same. As I grew up, I met with nothing but disappointment. Those were the deadest days in Irish History, when even Home Rule was barely spoken of, and as Home Rule came to the front and a tame bloodless winning of a fraction of our rights seemed to be all the people wanted, I thought life a pretty humdrum affair. . . . And now to see this. To see the spirit of the people. To see armies rising out of the earth. To hear Irish war-songs again. To see men drilling by moonlight, as I did the other night. . . . Visions of Ninety-Eight, Lascelles. . . . Who would have thought it? After seven centuries of subjection. Lord, but we're a wonderful people! . . . Poland is doing nothing like this—or Finland. . . . Thank God, that we're alive this day."

"And to be young . . ." said Bernard.

CHAPTER XI

WAITING

I

IT was some time before Bernard fulfilled his promise to call on Austin Mallow. He had no liking for the disease-worn fanatic, and always experienced an odd uncanny feeling of uneasiness in his presence. However, one evening O'Dwyer induced both him and Stephen to pay the poet a visit.

Austin lived with his mother, brother, and sister in a small house on the Rathgar Road. Mrs. Mallow had a small private income on which she supported her invalid elder son, her incapable second son, and her unmarried daughter. Austin's poetry never brought him in a farthing, and Brian was still making futile efforts to pass his final engineering examination. Theodosia, their sister, was an ill-made, pasty-faced unhealthy girl who wore spectacles and bedroom slippers and spent most of her day reading. In a futile effort to assist their mother's finances they ran a monthly (more strictly an occasional) review called *Manannan*. Austin was editor and contributed his poems; Brian was manager and contributed an occasional political polemic; Theodosia was office-boy and contributed stray verses and stories as mystical as Austin's poems. The financial status of the paper can easily be imagined.

When O'Dwyer and his friends arrived they were admitted by Brian who welcomed them with crushingly hearty handclaps into a hall lighted by a small oil lamp. As he hung up his hat and coat Bernard noticed a faint aromatic odour in the air, which became suddenly intensified as Brian threw open a door to the left. Bernard now saw into a room

dimly lighted by two oriental lamps and cloudy with tobacco smoke which evidently was the source of the aroma he had observed. The mixed furnishing of the room produced a very bizarre effect. There were a table and chairs of mahogany of very ordinary pattern, and numerous easy-chairs. Along with them were a couple of Turkish divans, and in places the floor was heaped with brilliantly coloured cushions. There was no carpet, but its place was taken by rugs of various shapes, colours and kinds, from Donegal, Axminster and India. The windows were hung with curtains of Indian stuff, very fine and flaming with colour. In one corner stood a Ninety-Eight pike alongside a Japanese umbrella and an old-fashioned rifle. The wall opposite to the windows was adorned with three engravings and a tiger's skin, and over the mantelpiece were an antelope's head and an engraving of the trial of Robert Emmet. Most of the aromatic haze came from a hookah smoked by Austin, who sat curled up in an enormous armchair close to the fireplace. Opposite to him sat Theodosia smoking a cigarette, and on a divan at his left sat a small and rather corpulent man smoking a long churchwarden pipe, who was introduced as Mr. Umpleby. Mrs. Mallow did not appear.

Brian bustled about getting chairs and cushions for the visitors, and when all were comfortable he came round with new churchwardens and a terra-cotta bowl containing a spicy sandy tobacco.

"Well, as I was saying . . ." said Mr. Umpleby, and he resumed the story in which the entry of the visitors had evidently interrupted him.

He was a little man with the beginnings of a paunch, fat cheeks, and a moustache and prominent canine teeth that gave him a comic resemblance to a walrus. O'Dwyer already knew him slightly and by repute. He was a little over thirty years of age and lived on a small private income. He was known to be extremely vain, but his vanity took the harmless and rather humble form of pluming himself on the great people — poets, artists, politicians, rather than aristo-

crats — with whom he scraped up acquaintance. After this his principal characteristic was his habit of telling long, tiresome stories full of parentheses, and of parentheses within parentheses, such as could only be simplified by process of Algebra, and in which he frequently became so involved as to forget the main story altogether. He had taken no active part in politics until the formation of the Volunteers, into which movement he had flung himself with astonishing vigour. His present story seemed to be an apologia for this step.

"As I was saying, the whole world { or at any rate the whole civilized world (which is what really counts in these matters) } seemed to be about to perish of vanity and inanition, when on an instant this new movement [a movement which { in my opinion (and I give my opinion in all humility) } was { with all its faults (and they were many — almost as many indeed as its virtues) } at any rate distinguished by sincerity and a wish for achievement] sprang into being. Thereupon . . . "

"You've let your pipe go out," said Theodosia.

"Dear me, so I have," said Mr. Umpleby, and in the pause necessitated by remedying this misfortune Austin took a sheet of paper from his pocket and said:

"Would you like to hear my latest?"

There was general polite assent from the company, and a rapturous "Yes, *please*," from Theodosia, and Austin, clearing his throat, began:

"IGNIS IMMORTALIS

"Seven spears in the day of light
Shall avenge with might our blood and tears,
Seven seers shall in death indict
The blasting blight of the bitter years."

There was a terrible energy in the voice issuing from so frail a frame, and Bernard noticed a feverish gleam in the eyes set so deep in their sockets. Austin went on to the second stanza:

"Seven victims upon the altar
 Shall sing a psalter of faith renewed.
 The flame re-kindled no more shall falter
 Nor word-wise palter the multitude."

"Magnificent!" cried Umpleby, fulsomely.

"What does it mean?" asked Bernard.

"What it says, of course," said Austin, contemptuously.
 Then seeing Bernard's lips twitch slightly, he added:

"You may smile. I'd expect it of you. But some poems are prophecies, and perhaps you'll understand this one in a few years' time."

"I say, Austin," broke in O'Dwyer, "I've discovered a new poet who'd be exactly to your liking. He prefers to remain anonymous, but he gave me a poem to submit to your opinion."

"Read it to me," commanded Austin.

O'Dwyer took a folded sheet of paper from his pocket, and to Bernard's amazement read as follows:

"AISLING

"A Vision in the Void of Night!
 The moon her face in fear did veil;
 The stars did shudder at the sight:
 The firmament did quail.

"And through earth's rent and rotting rocks
 The boiling billows broke and burst,
 Whereupon cold flames in feral flocks
 Assuaged their thorny thirst.

"Black lightnings seared the fallow air,
 The quaking sun dissolved in gloom.
 Then oozed from out its loathsome lair
 The pallid Worm of Doom!"

"By Jove!" cried Austin in tremendous excitement,
 "that's wonderful! A true vision! . . . That was written
 by a great poet."

"Marvellous!" echoed Umpleby.

"I confess I don't see anything in it," said O'Dwyer,

"but then mysticism isn't in my line. I suppose there must be a deep meaning in it somewhere."

"The meaning is quite plain to any one who knows anything of mysticism," said Austin. "You must ask that young poet to come and see me."

"I remember once," began Umpleby, "a most extraordinary experience occurred to me. I was . . ."

But here Brian cut in with:

"Look here, everybody. What about drinkables?"

He wheeled forward a little table on which were a decanter of whiskey, a siphon of soda-water, bottles of stout, a bottle of white wine, and glasses. The kettle on the fire had just boiled, and Theodosia began to brew coffee in the urn on the hearth. When every one was served with his particular drink Umpleby had forgotten his story, and Austin launched into a dissertation on politics.

"This generation needs blood," he said. "We alone amongst all the generations of Irishmen have undergone no sufferings in the cause of freedom. We have submitted tamely to the yoke; the mark of slavery is upon us; and only by blood can it be wiped out."

"I don't see much sign of slavish acceptance in the Volunteers," interrupted Bernard.

"A parade army," said Austin. "Until they have taken and given blood they can be nothing but a political demonstration — like the Orangemen. Until England strikes at us we remain as we are: an army of flag-wavers."

"If England strikes we'll crumple," said Bernard. "I regard the Volunteers as a defensive force, of more value to stand up against political bullying than to take military action."

"Nonsense!" said Austin. "No bargaining for me! Martyr's blood is of more value than rifles."

Bernard said no more. As he watched that emaciated body eaten away by disease (Austin was suffering from a slow internal cancer) jerk for the blood-lust of the restless tortured spirit it harboured, he realized that he might as well

argue with a lunatic. There was something uncanny about Austin's drawn yellow cheeks and great luminous eyes, and Bernard was relieved by the interruption of Umpleby's commonplace voice beginning a new parenthetical story.

At ten o'clock Stephen arose and said:

"I must go. Good-night."

It was the first time he had spoken that evening. Bernard and O'Dwyer decided to accompany him, and in a few minutes they found themselves in the street.

"Some entertainment!" said O'Dwyer.

"That poem of yours did some useful work tonight," said Stephen. "It confirmed a suspicion of mine."

"Which?" asked O'Dwyer.

"Austin Mallow is a liar," said Stephen.

"Exactly what I wanted to prove," said O'Dwyer.

"Then that poem . . . ?" questioned Bernard.

" . . . Was my own," said O'Dwyer. "Look here, boys, the street's no place for metaphysical discussion. Let's drop into my place for a while and I'll tell you about a discovery I've made."

O'Dwyer's father lived at Stephen's Green, so they caught a passing tram and arrived there in five minutes. O'Dwyer let them in by latchkey and led them to his sanctum, a comfortable little room in the return part of the house.

"Draw up your chairs, boys," he said, lighting the gas stove. "And what about a *decent* smoke? . . . I'm half poisoned with that muck of Mallow's." He passed Bernard the tobacco-jar from the mantel-piece.

"Now, what about this discovery?" asked Bernard.

"Well," said O'Dwyer, blowing forth a dense cloud of tobacco smoke, "about a month ago I bought a splendid book: *Jean Christophe* by Romain Rolland. It's an enormous work — ten volumes of it, all packed with psychology and philosophy. But in the whole thing one sentence stood out for me that seemed to be an entirely new discovery and to be quite shatteringly true. It was this: 'Every nation has its lie, which it calls its idealism,' and the hero of the

novel exposes in turn the German lie and the French lie. I found myself immediately wondering: 'What is the Irish lie?' and thinking: 'If we can discover it and rid ourselves of it we shall have taken a definite step on the road to freedom.' Well, I set myself to the discovery. First, I asked myself, what did we call our idealism. I found that hard to answer, because the word has been so shockingly misused. Then I remembered that Jean Christophe discovered the French and German lies in their art, and I set myself to look for the lie in ours. The question at once arose: what is Irish art? In the first place, it is almost entirely literary. Our music, painting, and architecture are almost negligible. Then as to our literature, a further question arose. We could not fairly be restricted to Gaelic literature, but to how much of English literature might we lay claim? Some of our greatest geniuses — Sheridan, Goldsmith, Wilde, Shaw, for example — deliberately cut themselves off from Ireland and wrote *of England for England*. These I rejected. I felt we could only claim those who had written of Ireland and *for* Ireland, or took their inspiration from Ireland. I think we might go so far as to claim Swift among these. Well, now I took a survey of our whole literature. First, there was the old Gaelic stuff: the Epic of the *Táin*, and the Fenian Legends, and some minor things of the same period: that fine old saga, the *Wars of the Gael and Gall*, too: and St. Patrick's Confession: and St. Columba's Works — these are just samples. My knowledge is a little fragmentary, I'm afraid, for the next thing that I can point to is the History of the Four Masters. Then you come to the product of the worst times in our history, the Penal times, and it's all full of fierce and sorrowful songs like Jeremiads. After that, the next things you hit on are in English: Tone's Autobiography, Carleton's novels, and so on. Then you get the Young Irelanders: Mitchel, and Davis and Mangan. Griffin and Kickham and a few more follow them, and so we reach modern days.

"Now let's just glance back at the quality of all this stuff

of the past before we look too close at the moderns. The early epics are the product of the great men of a great people. They've all that bigness and spaciousness that you feel in really great art. The *Táin* is equal to the *Iliad* and better than the *Aeneid*. The *Wars of the Gael and Gall* is quite up to Herodotus, and the Four Masters run Thucydides pretty close. (Lord, what the world loses in not knowing of these!) Some of the poetry of the Penal times is wonderful stuff. Some of it is equal to Keats at his best, and there are patches that smack of Browning: very little descends to the level of Tennyson. Then look at Tone's Autobiography: it's the autobiography of one of the greatest statesmen, finest men, and heartiest humourists that ever lived: a really great work. I keep it on the same shelf with Shakespeare, Rabelais, Plato, and Robinson Crusoe. Carleton's a big man too, but Mitchel's bigger, and Ferguson and Mangan are on a line with the great poets of any country. Everything I've mentioned up to this is great stuff: the kind of stuff that makes you catch your breath and say: 'This is the thing.' The work of the great men of a great people.

"Well, now I looked at the work of modern days, and what did I see? Not badness, not clumsiness; no real fault you could point to; but smallness. Apart from Russell and Yeates, and including Synge, no one in Ireland of recent years has produced a work of decent size. Our much-boasted revival has produced hardly anything but short plays, short stories, and a bewildering multitude of tiny booklets of microscopic verses. You'd find it hard to point to a flaw in any of them (they aren't big enough to make big mistakes), but the smallness and mediocrity of the stuff is appalling. That's the great Renaissance we hear so much about."

"Yes," said Stephen. "That may be all quite true, but where's this lie you're talking about?"

"The lie," said O'Dwyer, "is not in the smallness of the literature, but in the reason for it. I'm coming to that presently. But there's one other thing I want you to notice,

and that is that half of the poetry turned out is what they call 'mystic,' and half the remainder is what I call 'misty.' As for the second kind, you know the sort of stuff I mean: poems full of 'white mist on the brown bog,' and that kind of tosh. The other's harder to deal with. You see it's quite unintelligible, and if you say so you're told you're unfit to criticize. However, after a careful examination into a number of these poems, I came to this conclusion: that they really mean nothing, and that anyone acquainted with the laws of prosody and gifted with a muddled head could produce them automatically by self-hypnosis induced by rhyme and alliteration. I immediately decided to try the experiment on myself, and produced the monstrosity you heard to-night. I had no idea in my head when I sat down. I honestly assure you of that. I wrote down the first line that came into my head and the rest were simply fitted in to suit the rhyme, and I tacked on to every noun the first alliterative adjective I could think of. *Voilà tout!* Mallow thought the result a great poem and thought he saw a meaning in it."

"If you were dishonest enough," remarked Bernard, "you could make a book of these things and pass as a mystic poet."

"And I wouldn't be the first. . . . Now do you see the lie? When nine-tenths of a country's literature is characterized by mistiness, mystery and brevity, what conclusion do you come to? There's no 'imagination' in mistiness; it's mere sentimentality. There's nothing in their mysticism but muddled and slovenly thinking (Mallow, for instance, couldn't think clearly if he tried). And as for their brevity — they're not men enough to produce work of any size. That's the long and the short of it. Why do you think there's so much poetry produced in Ireland? Because it's the easiest form in which to say nothing impressively.

"Well, there's our lie. We've been posing as a nation of poetical, unwordly idealists, and we're really a nation of

slackers. Our literature gives us away: it's the work of the lazy men of a lazy nation."

"Our laziness is a bad sign," said Stephen, "but we're getting over it. . . . Your poem showed up something much worse tonight. The man who could pretend to see a meaning in that drivel is a liar, and a self-deceiver. . . . Did you listen to his own poem?"

"Not particularly," replied the others.

"He called it a prophecy. It's easy to prophesy what one intends to carry out. . . . We'd better keep our eyes open."

2

239, HARCOURT STREET,
DUBLIN,
20th May, 1914.

My dear Jack:

I read your article in the Twentieth Century on recent events in Ireland with great interest, but you've been guilty of one inaccuracy. The Irish Volunteers were not founded to "protect the law and defend Parliament against those who would overawe it by armed force." The protection of your Parliament is none of our business, and Carson can bully it as much as he likes for all we care. In fact, our principal function is to do a little bullying of that same august assembly on our own account. Your Press and the Unionist Press over here has been preaching at us for the last fifty years that we can only obtain our autonomy by resorting to Constitutional methods. Well, we took them at their word, and what's the result? As soon as these methods begin to achieve anything, the law-and-order party flouts the Constitution, starts a rebel army, sets up a Provisional Government, seduces the British army, and threatens to call in the help of the German Emperor. No more Constitutionalism for us, thank you. The Curragh mutiny and the Larne gun-running have killed it.

Would you like to have a glance at Ireland as she really

is? I'm going north in June with my brother Eugene and a man called McGurk to Cloughaneely, an Irish-speaking district, and we'll be delighted if you'll form one of the party.

You may notice I've changed my address. I've taken the hall-flat of this house, consisting of consulting-room, dining-room, sitting-room, and bed-room, with use of kitchen, and I'm busy looking over my blind for patients. I've engaged a servant, too, an Englishman, a perfectly priceless person called Swathythe. Your "lower orders" make much better servants than ours. They're more servile.

Hoping to see you in June, if you aren't married by then, I remain, and the rest of it,

BERNARD LASCELLES.

This letter brought Willoughby over to Dublin at the end of May. Bernard took him all over the city, showing him the great public buildings, the treasures in the museum, the harbour, the slums, and, by special request, a company of Volunteers drilling at Kimmage, which impressed Willoughby mightily.

Two days later the party, with the addition of O'Flaherty, left Amiens Street by the nine o'clock train. They rattled above mean streets and sped out on to the great grassy viaduct that spans the inlet of the sea at Fairview. Over the flat hedge-bounded fields of north County Dublin they rushed, along the sandy coast of grassy Meath, and into the historic town of Drogheda.

"The river Boyne," said McGurk to Willoughby.

Willoughby rushed eagerly to look out of the carriage window, but he seemed disappointed somehow.

"I'd an idea from the newspapers," he said, "that all Ireland was camped on opposite sides of the river."

"The Boyne is a Leinster river," Bernard explained. "We're nowhere near Carsonland yet."

"Oh? I thought it was the frontier," said Willoughby.

At Portadown they had to change trains, and Willoughby was told he was now genuinely in the "North-East Corner."

He looked around eagerly for signs of Ulster Volunteers, but none were forthcoming.

"This is very disappointing," he said. "I thought the country was on the verge of civil war and I haven't seen as much as a bayonet."

"Our military activities are carried on at night," said Bernard. "During the day we have our work to do. If you want to see what Ulster Volunteers are like, just look round you. That porter there is probably one."

Willoughby became round-eyed with interest.

"Yes. He has a decidedly fanatical look," he said. (The porter was as commonplace a porter as could be found.)

"Say, Bernard," whispered McGurk, "this English friend of yours is an awful eejit."

The next change was at Strabane, where they took advantage of an hour's wait to have lunch, and Willoughby had his first experience of an Irish country hotel.

"Do you long for the Inn at Deeping?" said Bernard, as Willoughby picked a hair out of the butter.

"Oh, no," replied Willoughby, politely. "Everything's very charming."

On the light railway they leaped the Bann and plunged into the wildness of the Western World. The green pastures of Leinster and southeast Ulster were far behind them and they rattled through a land of bog and rocks. On and on they clattered and jolted, winding along in a serpentine track, now shrieking through rocky cuttings, now puffing peacefully over the open bog. Station after station fled past them, mere platforms of wood standing out of the heathery waste. To their left Errigal, grim and menacing, towered over his brother mountains. To their right stretched the flat surface of the bog, weird and lifeless in the gloaming.

"By the way, Jack," said Bernard, "you must remember that you're entering a democratic country. The people don't touch their hats to squire here. They reserve that for the

priest. You must shake hands with them naturally and as a matter of course: not in a patronizing way like a lord of the manor visiting a faithful retainer, or like a parliamentary candidate at an election, but as one gentleman with another. If you go into a shop to buy a threepenny packet of cigarettes, you must shake hands first and talk about the news or the weather, and if they give you sixpence worth of chocolate along with your cigarettes, remember it's a present and take it as such."

"How delightfully Irish!" said Willoughby.

A few minutes later they alighted on the wind-blown platform of Cashelnagore, and, having deposited their baggage in a donkey-cart, cycled the three or four miles to the little village of Gortahork, at the principal hotel of which they had engaged rooms.

3

Next morning after breakfast they sat in the sun on the bench before the hotel smoking their pipes. An old woman hobbled by.

"*Maidín breagh!*" she cried in a hearty voice, a smile wrinkling all over her face.

"*Ana bhreagh,*" replied Eugene and McGurk together.

"What was that?" asked Willoughby.

"Fine day," said Eugene.

A labourer going down the hill to his work shouted the same salutation, and three or four others who passed in succession did likewise.

"They seem mighty interested in the weather in this locality," observed O'Flaherty.

"No wonder," said McGurk. "It's not often they get the chance to say '*lá breagh*' up here. '*Lá bog*' is the usual complaint."

"Say, boys," said O'Flaherty a little later, "Willoughby's just itching to have a near view of the natives. What about a tour of inspection?"

All were agreed and they set out at once. They stopped

at a small but crowded shop in the village to buy cigarettes, and Willoughby for the first time realized that he was in a foreign country. Nothing was to be heard anywhere but this strange Irish language of whose existence he had been ignorant until quite recently. Dublin, save for some minor local peculiarities, had seemed but a part of his own country, where putting his watch back twenty-five minutes was the greatest wrench in the scheme of things. Now he suddenly felt himself a stranger isolated in a distant land.

On Bernard also this first continuous rush of the language that should have been his own had a strange effect, but a different one. The sound had a baffling enchantment for him and he felt an extraordinary desire to join in the conversation, half-expecting that his native language would come bubbling from his lips by some miracle of atmosphere and will-power. . . . He registered an instantaneous resolve to learn the language at once.

McGurk, who spoke Irish fairly fluently, made purchases for the rest of the party and was presented with a parcel of milk chocolate for his English friend. Emerging from the shop they encountered O'Dwyer and two other young men from Dublin.

"Hello!" cried O'Dwyer. "What? Is that Willoughby? What brings you to Cloughaneely? 'Old Ashbury, thy sons are found Beyond the Empire's furthest bound,' eh?"

Greetings followed. O'Dwyer's companions were two men in his own year, called Conachy and Leeds, and were a striking contrast to one another. Conachy was a dark-haired young man with a solemn face rather like a horse, a depressingly polite manner and a tactful, tentative way of speaking. He was neatly dressed in dark grey cloth. Leeds on the other hand was loud-voiced and self-assertive. His head was covered with a tangled mass of straw-coloured hair, and he wore an untidy saffron kilt and green plaid. With both of them Bernard and his friends were slightly acquainted. Conachy was harmless and of little note, but

Leeds summed up in himself all that Bernard disliked in Irish Nationalism. He was vulgar, stupid, ignorant and bigotted and always talked dogmatically at the top of his voice. He talked of nothing else but politics and always in an aggressive manner. He maintained that the ancient literature of Ireland, which he had not read, was the greatest literature in the world; that Irish music was the greatest music in the world; that the Round Towers were the most beautiful pieces of architecture in the world; and that the Book of Kells was a greater work of art than all the pictures ever painted. Those who differed from him in this opinion he considered traitors to Ireland, in which category he also placed everyone who had ever been in England, everyone who admired English literature, everyone who spoke English without a pronounced Irish accent, everyone who parted his hair or brushed his clothes, and everyone who did not, like himself, talk torrents of ungrammatical Irish on every unsuitable occasion.

"How do you like Ireland?" he asked Willoughby. His tone was intentionally hostile.

"Immensely," said Willoughby. "I think it's a delightful place."

"How very nice and patronizing of you!" sneered Leeds.

"Oh, I mean it quite sincerely, I assure you," said Willoughby, politely.

"Oh, do you?" said Leeds. "I say, do you know that Ireland was Christian and civilized when your country was full of painted savages?"

"So I believe," said Willoughby, mildly. "And I'm sorry to see to what a state English rule has brought you."

Conachy insinuated himself into the conversation.

"You were asking for that," he said to the discomfited Leeds. "Don't think we're all like him, Mr. Willoughby. Most Irishmen are prepared to forgive and forget. You seem to have run into a great crowd of extremists, but don't forget the majority are moderate men like me."

Leeds turned all his wrath on Conachy, and the two began

to wrangle about extremes and moderation, becoming so heated as to be oblivious to the rest of the company. McGurk seized this opportunity to whisper to O'Dwyer:

"Slip off from these eejits and come for a walk with our crowd."

O'Dwyer did so, and leaving the disputants behind the party set out in the direction of Ardsmore. The road led them up hill through a typical piece of Irish mountain scenery. The whole outlook was bleak and spacious, the land poor and unproductive, but dotted all over with ill-made and often unhealthy-looking cottages, the inhabitants of which maintained a meagre existence on potatoes grown in patches painfully reclaimed from the bog or hacked out of the stony hillsides. Here and there a man so labouring shouted greetings to them in Irish.

"Everything is delightful," said Willoughby. "The friendly hospitable atmosphere! And how delicious is that faint smell of turf-smoke one gets everywhere."

"How did you pick up with that pair of asses?" O'Flaherty asked O'Dwyer.

"Staying in the same digs."

"Couldn't you shift over to the hotel with us?"

"Too dear," said O'Dwyer. He turned to Willoughby and said, "That Leeds creature is what you friendly English people generally imagine an Irish extremist to be like. He's a lunatic of course, but he's not a bit more extreme in his desire for independence than I am. It makes me furious when English people won't believe I'm in earnest about separation because I don't look like Leeds."

"We're not a bit more at fault than you are," said Willoughby. "Your politics are based entirely on the assumption that the English people are a lot of blood-thirsty tyrants."

"Nothing of the sort," said O'Dwyer. "Quite the contrary. That has nothing to do with my politics. Even if England was populated entirely by decent civilized people like you, I don't want to be governed by her, or even under

her suzerainty: I've my pride, you know. I'm quite fit to govern myself, foreign affairs and all."

"Felim," said Eugene, "you're a fanatic — an unpractical extremist. Nothing can be done without compromise."

"Compromise!" snorted O'Dwyer.

"Yes. I'm a moderate man, and I believe that there must be compromise and give and take on both sides."

"In my vocabulary," said O'Dwyer, "compromise is another word for surrender, and moderation another word for cowardice."

"Well, if you *will* descend to abuse, in my vocabulary extremist is another word for lunatic."

"Here, you two," said Bernard. "Chuck it. Don't get excited. This is too nice a day for politics. Let's rest awhile."

They were now out on the mountain-side far above the village. They left the road and lay down, sprawling lazily in the heather on the turf hot with the sun. The irrepressible O'Dwyer at once returned to the attack on Eugene.

"You think I'm an extremist out of mere obstinacy," he said. "You think I like the battle for its own sake. Well I don't. I wish it was over, because I'm all for peace. I'm not a revolutionary like Bernard, who would never be content with things as they are. I want things settled quickly and at once so as I can chuck politics and get at my writing. I can't fiddle while my country falls, but I wish she'd stop falling so that I might have a chance to do some fiddling."

"All the more reason for moderation," said Eugene. "That's the way to peace and prosperity." He lay back enjoying the sun. "How beautiful and peaceful nature is, so different from the angry passions of men. Look!"

Sentimentally he gazed up at a skylark winging its way aloft. "Hail to thee, blithe spirit," he spouted.

Suddenly a hawk swooped from nowhere on its prey.

"What price peaceful Nature now?" said O'Flaherty.

"Nature's an extremist all right," said Bernard. "Only civilization saves your type from extinction, Eugene."

"Well, moderation is the civilized thing," said Eugene.

"I'm glad you admit it." He spoke triumphantly as having gained a point.

"You say you like moderation in everything?" asked McGurk.

"Yes."

"Well, what about moderating the number of your fingers? Lend us a knife, someone."

"Let me go!" cried Eugene as McGurk seized his wrist.

"Well, if you aren't the awful extremist! Isn't half a dozen fingers enough for you? Come on, Bernard. Let's do a fingerectomy on him."

"Chuck it, Hugo," said O'Dwyer, who had been scribbling in his note-book for the last few minutes. "I'm writing a poem on Nature."

"Let's hear it," said O'Flaherty.

"It began seriously," said O'Dwyer, "but like all my poems it took the bit between its teeth and bolted.

"I wish I could sing of the beauties of spring
When the lark's on the wing and the lambkins are bleating,
When every hour brings forth a new flower
And lessens our bills for lighting and heating.

And I wish I could write of the wonders of night,
The magical light of moon, star, and planet,
The shimmer and beam of the ocean, the gleam
Of the glow-worm: I would if I could but I cannot.

And if only the cloud of the mystic would shroud
And inspire me to ununderstandable language,
Ah, then you'd concede I'm a poet indeed,
But it doesn't.— So pass me a hard-boiled-egg sangwich."

"Bloody good!" cried McGurk.

"You've sound dope on poetry," said O'Flaherty.

"There's too much of this mystic rubbish going round Ireland at present. Now that's got to be cut right out. We haven't time for it. There was never a country in less need of minor poets than this, and never a country so full of them."

"There's too many of them on the Provisional Committee anyhow," said McGurk.

"Quite right," said O'Flaherty. "We're supposed to be a military movement and we're ruled by people like Austin Mallow, who instead of reading up military stuff, scribbles symbolical muck about swords and spears."

"You're wrong about Mallow," said Eugene. "I don't agree with his politics, but his poetry is beautiful."

"Shows how well you understand it," said O'Flaherty, contemptuously. "Isn't it all a symbolic appeal to Ireland to rise and avenge her wrongs. . . . He's got spears on the brain. . . . Precious lot of good an insurrection would do us now."

"I thought you were all red-hot rebels," said Willoughby.

"Do I look very red-hot?" demanded O'Flaherty. "No, boys. The sooner this Provisional Committee's kicked out, the better. I counted at least six poets on it, and I'm sure there's as many more."

"You're right," said Bernard.

"It's hard-chaws we want," said McGurk.

"The one good thing about the movement is the poets and idealists who govern it," said Eugene. "I look to them to redeem it from its present narrow and selfish policy and make it a means of reconciliation with England instead of a weapon to stab her. Your policy of hate simply sickens me."

"Eugene, you're a soft-headed old donkey," said Bernard. "You'll find precious little peace and good-will in Mallow's poetry. It's hate sublimated. I hate England as much as Mallow does, but there's some sense and coolness in my hatred. I wouldn't have Ireland cut her own throat to spite England, and Mallow would. He'd rush us into rebellion tomorrow just to have the satisfaction of killing one Englishman before he dies. He told me so himself a few days ago. The man's a lunatic, and I wouldn't trust him with a popgun, much less an army. . . . And I tell you this. There are more men than he on the Committee of that frame of mind, and I'm afraid of them."

"Well," said Eugene, "that only shows Redmond was right in opposing Volunteering. You've only yourselves to blame for joining them. I wish he'd never withdrawn his opposition."

"He had to," said McGurk.

"Well, well," laughed Willoughby. "It's true after all, Irishmen can never agree. What on earth can my poor country do with you?"

"Leave us alone," said O'Flaherty.

"I wish we could," said Willoughby.

"No more politics," cried Bernard. "Read us another poem, Felim."

Felim looked through his note-book and said:

"Here's a triolet, supposed to be spoken by a fair and inconstant maiden:—

"Jack, give me a kiss:
I'm weary of Willy's.
What *do* you call *this*?
Jack, give me a *kiss*.
That's no better than his—
Here he comes bringing lilies.
Jack, *give* me a kiss:
I'm *weary* of Willy's."

"You're a beastly cynic, Felim," said Eugene.

"Here are some personalities," said O'Dwyer.

"A. E. (George Russell)
Made the Celt bustle,
And turned his fairyland
Into a dairyland."

"Grand!" said McGurk. "Any more of those?"

"W. B. Yeates,
Weary of bills and rates,
Took a hive for the honey bee
On the lake Isle of Innisfree."

The sun mounting to the zenith suggested dinner. As

they commenced the return journey Willoughby said:

"You fellows aren't a bit like the champions of an oppressed people. Here you've spent the morning arguing, abusing each other, telling stories and reciting comic verses, while the battle for your liberties is being fought at Westminster."

"Alas! me poor Cathleen!" sobbed McGurk, taking out his handkerchief. "Is that the sort of thing ye want?" he asked.

4

For a fortnight their sojourn at Cloughaneely was uninterrupted. It was a perfect place for a holiday, and everyone did just as he pleased. Bernard, Eugene and O'Dwyer attended lectures every morning at the Irish College; O'Flaherty studied guerilla strategy in the mountains; Willoughby conscientiously wandered about the country-side studying the Irish Question and getting materials for articles and letters to the Radical reviews; McGurk took his ease about the hotel. In the afternoons they would assemble for a collective walk or a bathe, and in the evenings they would gather together in the hotel and tell each other endless anecdotes, compose Limericks about their friends, or listen to extracts from O'Dwyer's notebook. Occasionally they went to the ceilidhes at the college, and once even induced Willoughby to come. He made no show at the dancing, but came home in a very sentimental mood induced by certain Irish songs of plaintive melody and banal wording. The chorus:

*"Níl sé lá, níl go fóil,
Níl sé an oidhce, ná na mhaidin."*

affected him almost to tears, and another song, "*Cruacha na h-Eireann*," sung, though he knew it not, to a commonplace English music-hall air, made him, as he said, "appreciate what a wonderful people the Irish really are."

They decided to impress him as much as possible and took him one day to see what they called "the last independent

portion of Ireland." This meant a journey by sea to Tory Island, which has paid no taxes to the British Empire since the day when a gunboat sent to collect them got wrecked on its treacherous shores. But Willoughby was still more impressed by the sight of the corps of Volunteers drilling every evening in different parts of the country; for now all Ireland was organizing and two hundred thousand men were clamouring for arms.

He thought the Sunday Mass a very edifying spectacle. The church was a small one and it was crowded to the doors, the congregation overflowing even into the churchyard and the road outside. Round the Communion-rails the old women remained prostrate, foreheads to the ground, shawls drawn over their heads, all through the service. Bernard found the atmosphere and the sermon in Irish rather trying, but Willoughby was enthusiastic.

"I never knew what Catholicism was before," he said. "We English haven't the true spirit at all."

"Hmph!" said McGurk, "these fervent Catholics would cheat you in a business deal tomorrow."

"And maybe give you a present costing double what they'd made out of you the day after," put in Eugene.

"And abuse you behind your back for taking it," added O'Flaherty.

"We're a queer people," Bernard explained. "We've heaps of piety and no ethics; a craze for generosity, and no notions of charity."

"I find you all very charming anyhow," said Willoughby.

"Do you see these people learning to think Imperially?" asked Bernard, and Willoughby had to confess that he didn't.

"And this," said Bernard, "is the real Ireland. The foundations on which the Ireland you think you know is built. The edifice is superficially altered by climatic and political conditions, but it's of the same stuff as the foundations. . . . My dear Willoughby, we're a different people from you entirely. We haven't an idea in common. We're more different from you than the French from the Germans,

or the Tibetans from yourselves. . . . By force and fraud you may succeed in governing us, but we can never be partners."

"I love to hear Bernard spouting," said O'Dwyer. "He was a Unionist a few months ago.

"There was a young man called Lascelles
Who read Marx, Norman Angel, and Wells . . ."

"Shut up!" said Bernard, but O'Dwyer had the rapt look that told of further composition . . .

Willoughby had expressed himself "charmed" with everything he had seen up to this, but he was less pleased by a political meeting they happened to witness a few days later at Letterkenny. They had gone there to try and obtain some tobacco more suited to his taste than the brands obtainable in Gortahork. The moment they reached the station it was obvious that something big was afoot. The streets were full of hurrying crowds and the thump and rattle of different bands could be heard in the distance. One band swung past them in seedy uniforms, adorned with tarnished gold braid; a tawdry banner borne in front; a terrible blare bursting from its battered instruments. Behind marched a company of half-disciplined Volunteers in fours, armed with dummy rifles and commanded by an obvious ex-Sergeant Major of the British Army. Our friends—only Bernard, Willoughby and O'Flaherty had come to Letterkenny—followed in their wake to the focus on which all were concentrating—the market-place, one vast discordance of sights, sounds, and smells. Men, organized and unorganized, hurried here and there. Banners of motley kinds flaunted the sky. Pipes, bugles, fifes, drums rent the air. Shouts and bells added to the confusion. The atmosphere was stifling; it barely stirred the great green flag over the platform in the centre of the square.

Suddenly, a big, burly, red-faced man mounted the platform, and as he raised his hand, silence gradually fell.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "we have assembled here today, we men and women of the land of the O'Donnells" (cheers) "to pledge once more our renewed faith and loyalty" (cheers) "to the men who have fought for us so long and so faithfully on the floor of the House of Commons, and have brought the Home Rule ship to the mouth of the harbour" (cheers)—"to Mr. John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party" (loud and prolonged cheering). "And, ladies and gentlemen, we would associate with them in our gratitude those young men" (cheers) "who, inspired by them, called the people of Ireland to arm themselves, lest the rights they had won by constitutional means should be filched from them by the armed bullying of the Orangemen" (groans). "But——"

It was a long-drawn-out and ominous "But." It transpired that the young men who had founded the Volunteer movement were not the right people to carry it on. They were rash, unskilled in politics. Their leaders must be "tried and trusted men," for now "by a single false step the cup might be dashed from the Nation's lips just as it was about to bear fruit." In short, the speaker moved that this meeting requested Mr. John Redmond and the Irish Party to take over the leadership of the Volunteers. (Tremendous cheering as the speaker made place for another.)

"Shows the way the wind's blowing," remarked Bernard to Hektor. "Wonder what's happening in Dublin?"

"Goodness knows," said Hektor, gloomily. They had heard nothing from their friends in town since their arrival in Cloughaneely, and though they had gathered from the papers that there was trouble afoot between the Volunteer Committee and the Party, they could only guess vaguely at its extent.

They left the market-place and searched the tobacconists of Letterkenny, but to Willoughby's dismay no Perique was to be found, and he was forced to wire to Dublin for it.

"Why the devil couldn't the Party be content with co-

operation?" demanded Hektor, savagely, in the train. "Why must they dominate everything?"

Their news brought gloom to the jolly crowd gathered that evening at the hotel. Eugene deprecated; O'Dwyer raved; McGurk cursed ferociously; Willoughby looked on, politely puzzled.

And the next evening Stephen Ward arrived at Gortahork.

5

He was pale and haggard, and his weary eyes told of sleepless nights. He said little and went to bed almost immediately on his arrival. By the time he came down to breakfast the morning paper had told them that the Provisional Committee had yielded to Mr. Redmond's pressure and allowed him to nominate twenty-five members to their body.

"I know you'll think it weak of us," he said as he took his place late at the breakfast table. "But it was inevitable. We couldn't afford to split the country on the issue."

"Suppose not," was the unwilling agreement.

"Such work as we've had this last week," said Stephen. "All-night sittings, interviews, letters, negotiations—I need a holiday badly."

He attacked his breakfast almost greedily.

The following morning when the list of Redmond's nominees was read out there was a storm of indignation.

"Holy murder!" cried McGurk. "Half the crooks and jobbers in the U.I.L.! Is that what he calls his representative men? The bloody old cod!"

"Half of them are Dublin men, too," observed Stephen. "And one of the reasons he gave for wanting to enlarge the committee was that Dublin was too well represented."

"A good indication of the Party's honesty," said Bernard to Eugene.

"The question is," said O'Flaherty, "have they come in to make the movement subservient to the Party, or to wreck it?"

"To wreck it, of course," said McGurk. "That's what they've been trying to do all along."

"And what's to be done now?" asked Bernard, despairingly.

"We must hold together in spite of them," said Stephen.

He took Bernard and Hektor off for a walk away from the others that afternoon.

"Don't suppose I came here for a holiday entirely," he said. "There's work to be done still. While civil war rages on the committee the men have got to be armed, and our crowd will have to do it. There's a small committee just formed, we're raising money, and we're just thinking out the best way of bringing the guns into the country when we've got them. I came up here partly to see you fellows and partly to find out if there's a good landing-place on this coast."

"This looks like business!" said Bernard, his drooping spirits quickly reviving.

"What would be the good of landing guns in a place like this at the back of god-speed?" asked Hektor.

"Just what I said myself," said Stephen, "but our people have got obsessed with a notion that things must be done in a hole-and-corner way. I'd like them to take a leaf out of Carson's book and do the thing with a splash."

"That's the right dope," said Hektor. "Land the guns at Howth or Kingstown in full daylight; then you're near your base; everything is much easier; you get a good political effect; and the risk of being interfered with isn't a bit greater — not worth reckoning, anyhow. . . . Take your holiday, man, and waste no time speculating over Donegal."

"I think I'll take your advice," said Stephen. "And now there's one thing more I want to ask you. The guns will have to be bought on the continent, so we'll need men to go for them who have leisure, who know their way about, and who aren't too well known to the authorities. That description seems to point to you two, I think. Will you be ready when wanted?"

"Rather," said Bernard.

"Sure thing," said Hektor.

Stephen spent a week at Gortahork and then returned to town. Next day Willoughby, who was to be married in July, also took his departure. Bernard and Eugene saw him as far as Letterkenny whence he was to travel by Belfast and Fleetwood homeward. His last words to Bernard were a promise to fight Ireland's cause in England to the end.

As soon as they reached Gortahork they encountered Hektor who handed Bernard an opened telegram, which ran:

Come to town at once.

Stephen.

6

"You two will have a colleague in this business," said Stephen, as he, Bernard and Hektor set out from the Neptune next day. "His name is Umpleby,—Cyril Umpleby, and unfortunately he's rather an ass. But he has the tremendous advantage of being a good French speaker and he knows his way about Antwerp. He's not very discreet, he's a fair supply of brain, he's a sublime egoist and a snob of the first water. You'll find him amusing on the whole, but you'll have to keep him in order. I may add that he's quite insuppressible."

"Some handful!" said Hektor.

"In addition to him you're now going to meet two of the finest men in the world. I say that without any hesitation. The first is George Calverley. He's an Englishman, and one of the best friends Ireland ever had. He's a sportsman of the best type, and probable the best yachtsman in England. He's offered to run the guns for us in his yacht the *Cormorant*, one of the speediest boats of her size, I believe,—and, by the way, that reminds me. Umpleby is such a blitherer that we're telling him nothing he needn't know.

So he thinks the guns are going to be run home in a fleet of fishing smacks, and if that rumour gets around it'll be all to the good. Unfortunately the *Cormorant* won't hold all the guns we intend to buy, so we've had to ask another yachtsman to take half of them,—an Irishman this time, a real jewel of a man with an English accent that would knock you down. Have you ever heard of Angus O'Connor? I suppose not. He lives most of his time in London and he's well known there I believe. Calverley's going to run his cargo into Howth and O'Connor's taking his to Kilcool, to prevent accidents. O'Connor of course isn't the other finest man in the world I was telling you about. . . . He's . . . but you can judge for yourselves, for here we are at our destination."

They turned into a hotel in Sackville Street and, ascending to the second floor, entered a small private sitting-room. There were several men in the room, but one was of such distinguished appearance that he caught Bernard's undivided attention at once. He was standing with his back to the fire, leaning against the mantelpiece, his arms folded across his chest. He was very tall, well over six feet, and of magnificent proportions. His face was one of singular beauty and serenity, and his eyes were dark and kindly. The strength and character of his well-modelled jaw were softened but not hidden by his curling black beard. In short, this was a figure that in any assembly would be the first to attract the attention of an onlooker. When our friends entered he was talking with another man, Sullivan of the Provisional Committee; but he now looked up with an eager smile of welcome.

"This is my friend Mr. Lascelles," said Stephen. "Mr. Lascelles,—Sir Roger Casement."

"I've heard great things about you," said Sir Roger, with a courtly smile. His accent was that of the educated and travelled Irishman: that is to say it was colourless save for the faintest indications of that native tint that Irishmen give to certain vowels and consonants.

"Any relation to Sir Eugene Lascelles?" asked Sir Roger.

"Son," said Bernard.

"I knew him slightly in days gone by. He's not one of *us*, I'm afraid."

Bernard laughed. He was pleasantly flattered by the "*us*" spoken by this magnificent man, the world-renowned exposé of the Congo and Putomayo atrocities. Sir Roger turned now to greet Hektor, and Bernard had an opportunity of observing the other people present. They were three: two stood conversing in a far corner of the room and the third was bent over a table at the window with his back to the door, so intent on the study of a map as not to have paid any attention to the new arrivals. Of the other two, one was a tall, dandified man with well-oiled hair and a neat moustache: and the other he recognized at once as Cyril Umpleby. He was talking rapidly to his companion and did not cease at the entry of Stephen and his friends. However, Sir Roger now came forward and interrupted him by quickly going through the necessary introductions. Umpleby's companion turned out to be Angus O'Connor. The man with the map who now relinquished his labours and came up to be introduced was George Calverley, a sturdy, clean-cut sailorly man of few words and brisk action.

"Were you followed?" Umpleby anxiously inquired of Stephen.

"Who by?"

"G men, of course."

"I don't suppose so."

"Do you mean to say you didn't make sure?"

Stephen rudely turned his back on his questioner, as if to dismiss his anxiety as trivial, and remarked to Sullivan:

"Umpleby has G men on the brain."

"We can't be too careful," said Umpleby.

"Just what we can be," said Hektor, much to the general amusement.

"Let's get to business anyway," said Sullivan. "You three are going to buy the guns for us, I take it. Very

well, then. In the first place here's the money, divided into three packets for safety. Take one each."

He handed the three young men a packet each in his turn and went on:

"We've decided that Antwerp is the most suitable place for all our needs and your orders are simply to go there at once and get as many rifles as the money can buy, with a good supply of ammunition. You must then ship them down the river and out to sea to a spot marked on this chart,—I'll entrust it to you, O'Flaherty."

He produced another packet and handed it over.

"You must be at that spot punctually at midday on the fourteenth of July next, when you'll meet the — er — fleet of trawlers commanded by Calverley and O'Connor, who will take over all responsibility from then. This is the twenty-seventh of June, which gives you exactly sixteen and a half days for the job. Is everything quite clear?"

Hektor repeated these instructions correctly, and the three gun-runners decided to start by next morning's mail-boat. Umpleby immediately prepared to leave.

"I've a lot of arrangements to make," he said, "and then I've my packing to do. We can plan out the rest of our journey on board: I have a Bradshaw. Au revoir." And he went out.

"Thank heaven for his packing," said Calverley. He turned to Bernard. "You're Lascelles, aren't you?" he said. Bernard nodded. "I hear you can sail a boat?"

"Pretty well," said Bernard.

"Well, I'll have to pay off several of my hands for this trip as they aren't all trustworthy. Now I don't mind sailing the *Cormorant* out shorthanded, but I wouldn't care to risk it coming home with the cargo. So if you're willing I'll take you on."

Bernard was perfectly willing. It appeared that to make quite sure of punctuality the yacht was to remain longer at sea than was necessary, the date for delivering the arms at Howth being the twenty-sixth of July at 12:45 P. M., when

the harbour would be occupied by the Dublin Volunteers.

"I'll see you again off Antwerp on the fourteenth of July," said Bernard, taking leave of Calverley. "And you on the twenty-sixth at Howth," he said to Stephen. "Good-bye, Sir Roger."

"Good-bye," said Casement, "and good luck."

Bernard never saw him again.

He and Hektor descended to the street.

"I like these short business-like interviews," said Hektor. "They're rare in Ireland. . . . Well, we'll meet tomorrow."

They parted at that and Bernard turned towards home. Arrived there he summoned before him the excellent servitor Swathythe, mentioned in his letter to Willoughby. Swathythe was a treasure. He did everything for Bernard from tending his clothes and polishing his door plate to cleaning his motor. He was an impassive dark-haired man who might have been any age from twenty to forty and was actually twenty-six.

"Swathythe," said Bernard, "I'm going away again for a month."

"Yes, sir," said Swathythe.

"Tomorrow morning, Swathythe."

"Yes, sir."

"You show no surprise, Swathythe?"

"I am not surprised, sir. No business to be, sir."

"I'll be back to dinner at seven sharp on the twenty-sixth of July, Swathythe."

"Yes, sir."

"I'll have oysters, Swathythe."

"Yes, sir."

"And mutton broth, Swathythe."

"Yes, sir."

"And a sweetbread. And roast duck and green peas."

"Yes, sir."

"And a chocolate soufflée, Swathythe."

"Yes, sir."

"At seven o'clock on the twenty-sixth prox., Swathythe."

"Yes, sir."

"And now you might go and pack my bag, Swathythe."

7

All the world was at peace when Bernard and his friends started on their mission. The most disturbed spot in all Europe was Ireland, but even there the trouble did not seriously affect ordinary life. There was no need to notice it at all if one did not read the newspapers, and there was a general feeling that things would soon settle down to their normal state. Bloodshed and starvation seemed very impossible occurrences in those days: the thought of them never crossed the minds of ordinary men. The world sprawled in blissful ignorance under the glorious sun of June.

"Thank God for a quiet life," murmured O'Dwyer to McGurk, as they basked on the beach of Magheruary. "I wonder what fetched those fellows off in such a hurry."

At that very moment Gavrilo Prinzip in the streets of Serajevo fired the first shot in the great European War. The news was known over the whole world the following morning, but nobody anticipated the drama to which it was a prelude, or saw anything beyond the actual tragedy.

"The poor, poor Archduke! What a blow to the old Emperor!" exclaimed Mrs. Harvey, who always felt the misfortunes of royalty acutely and personally . . .

"Those savage Balkan states!" said Mrs. Gunby Rourke. "They ought to be exterminated. I hope Austria will wipe the Servians off the face of the earth . . ."

"What a lesson to our government," said Sir Eugene Lascelles. "They've no excuse for not suppressing these Volunteers now . . ."

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Heuston Harrington. "Fancy any one taking another man's life and risking his own for a wretched little country like Servia!"

And in a Hotel in Antwerp Hektor O'Flaherty said to Bernard:

"We aren't arming a bit too soon. This means war,"

CHAPTER XII

GUNS

I

CYRIL UMPLEBY hurriedly drew Bernard and Hektor into his cabin and shut the door.

"The less we're seen together," he said, "the better; for fear of spies, you know. I'm afraid I've been noticed already. . . . However, it can't be helped. . . . We'll just settle on our plans and then separate until we reach Euston. I consulted my Bradshaw last night and I find that if we leave London at seven tomorrow we can get an afternoon boat from Harwich that will land us at Antwerp in the small hours of Thursday. What do you say to that?"

Bernard and Hektor had no objection to this course, so they left Umpleby without any reluctance, and regardless of his warnings paced the deck together. After a calm crossing they reached Holyhead where they saw Umpleby, ostentatiously ignoring them, plunge into the first-class dining saloon. The friends were glad to be without him, and the journey passed uneventfully save for one incident. At Crewe a porter brought Hektor a note which ran as follows:

Spi on our track. Lady in black. Keep separate.
C.H.

"Spy on our track. Lady in black. Keep separate," read Bernard. "What an ass of a cipher. He might as well have written it in English. Need we bother, I wonder?"

"Umpleby has spies on the brain," said Hektor. "Unless he's been blithering himself no one could guess we're up to anything."

They took no further notice of the communication, and on arriving at the Euston Hotel waited so as to overhear the number of Umpleby's bedroom and then followed him thither.

"You got my note?" asked Umpleby in great excitement. "She got into the train at Chester,—a tall, slender woman in black, a typical adventuress. No doubt of it at all."

"That's too true to type altogether," said Bernard. "I'd be much more inclined to suspect an innocent looking pussy-like miss, or a friendly commercial traveller. Things aren't done in this dramatic way."

"See if she doesn't follow us here," said Umpleby.

"She might come here without being after us."

"I know, but we must make certain. If she's downstairs now, I'll go and order a reserved carriage for somewhere or other to put her off the track. Come down now, but don't keep together."

Sure enough a tall, slender woman in black was standing near the bureau in the hall. Umpleby glanced triumphantly at Bernard as much as to say: "I told you so," and going to the telephone asked in a loud voice (unnecessarily loud, thought Hektor the strategist) for a reserved carriage on the 2:15 train for Southampton next day. Then they returned severally to Umpleby's room.

"Now, wasn't I right?" demanded Umpleby. "We must separate at once. I'll start right out now for the Cecil. Lascelles, you'd better make for the Metropole. You can stay here, O'Flaherty, unless you've a preference. We'll meet again at seven o'clock tomorrow at Liverpool Street. Au revoir."

When he was gone Bernard said to Hektor:

"Leave him to the flesh-pots of the Cecil. Let's come down to dinner."

The lady in black was already at the soup when Bernard and Hektor entered the dining-room. She paid not the smallest attention to their presence and left the room while they were still lingering over coffee.

"That's no spy," said Bernard emphatically.

"I don't know so much," said Hektor. "She's a peach anyhow."

They strolled out into the busy streets and, after consulting an evening paper, made for an adjacent music hall.

Here, during an interval, they adjourned for a moment to the bar, where, in "immaculate evening dress," the first person they saw was Bernard's old school-fellow Molloy. Bernard introduced him to Hektor after a whispered injunction to "mark him well."

"Dull show, isn't it?" said Molloy. "I came here to kill time. Where are you fellows staying? I'm at the Carlton."

"Euston," said Bernard. "But we're only passing through. Surprised to see you . . . but one meets Dublin people everywhere."

"One does," said Molloy. "Considering what a little bit of a place it is its population scatters pretty well. Whenever I go I knock up against Dubliners. Lord Donegal's staying at the Carlton, and I met Sir Perry Tifflytis at the Ritz the other night. . . . How are things with you? Patients rolling in?"

"Slowly. However . . . we won't keep you. So long."

Bernard and Hektor returned to the auditorium.

"It's true what he says," observed Hektor. "You meet Dublin people wherever you go, from Oklahoma to St. Petersburg. . . . Why did you tell me to mark him?"

"Because he's the greatest snob I ever met, and his snobbery is of the very crudest kind. It's so crude that if you put it in a book your character-drawing would be called clumsy and obvious. . . . Did you notice how prosperous he looks? That man has no brains, yet everything he touches turns to gold. He's been two years in practice as a solicitor, and already he's rich. Of course he had money to start with, but he made heaps defending unfortunate rioters in the great strike, and he knows how to toady the wealthy. . . . I tell you what, Hektor, when we two stand

on the gallows, as well we may, he'll be there to make money out of us."

"No gallows for us, old son," said Hektor. "We're going to win this time."

2

Umpleby was already on board the train and buried in his newspaper when Bernard and Hektor arrived at Liverpool Street, so they did the journey to Harwich without him.

"No sign of the lady in black," said Bernard, as he watched the crowds on the platform before departure. "We must have given her the slip, or else she was never after us."

On the arrival platform at Harwich Umpleby, jostling against them, said between his teeth:

"Different hotels. I'm for the Royal."

The railway hotel was good enough for the other two, and there they took a hearty lunch, interrupted by occasional glances round for the lady in black.

"We've shook her off for sure," said Hektor. "Well, if she's a fair sample of the English secret service, God help them."

The boat was to start at half-past two, but Bernard and Hektor went on board half an hour beforehand to secure berths. That done they took seats on deck and awaited Umpleby's arrival.

"Who'll arrive first?" said Bernard. "Umpleby or the lady in black?"

"Ten to one on Umpleby," replied Hektor. "Black Lady's scratched."

"I'll chance it," said Bernard. "Take you in sovereigns."

"It's taking your money," said Hektor.

"Just you wait," said Bernard.

Scattered passengers kept coming on board during the next quarter of an hour, and they were beginning to feel anxious lest Umpleby should be late, when suddenly Bernard cried:

"You owe me a tenner, Hektor. Here's the lady!"

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Hektor.

Down the gangway came the tall, slim figure of the lady in black. She passed them without a sign of recognition and went down the companion way.

"Well," said O'Flaherty, "if she isn't after us, coincidence must have a jolly long reach. What'll Umpleby say?"

"That reminds me," said Bernard. "Where *is* Umpleby? The boat starts in four minutes."

They waited anxiously. Non-passengers were being cleared off the decks, steam was getting up, already one of the gangways had been pulled in, and still there was no sign of Umpleby.

"Twenty-eight minutes past," said Bernard, glancing at his watch.

Another minute sped by and preparations were being made to pull up the last gangway, when in an instant Umpleby leaped into view and literally hurled himself on deck.

"You've cut it rather fine," said Hektor.

"Sensible thing to do," said Umpleby, panting for breath. "Suppose you two . . . here this . . . hour or two. . . . Lay low till last minute. . . . That's the way to dodge spies."

"No luck this time then," said Hektor. "The lady in black came on board five minutes ago."

"My God!" said Umpleby. "And you two refused to believe me."

"Never mind, old chap," said Bernard. "The question is, What's to be done now? We ought to be able to give her the slip in Antwerp."

"No use," said Hektor. "If she gets even an inkling what we're up to there she'll wire back, and there'll be cruisers patrolling the straits for a month to come. She's got to be convinced that we're up to nothing."

"We'd better chuck her overboard when it's dark," said Umpleby, trying to make his funny little face look stern and relentless.

"No good," said Hektor. "You bet they know exactly

where she is and if she disappeared it would be just as good as a telegram declaring us dangerous."

The boat was now standing out to sea, and the lady in black emerging on deck went to the railings and gazed back sentimentally at the land. She was just within earshot of the three Irishmen.

"Isn't she like Milady in the Three Musketeers?" whispered Bernard to Hektor.

"A little too like for my taste," returned Hektor.

"What on earth are we to do?" whispered Umpleby.

"Really the situation's desperate."

"I've an idea," said Hektor. "Just leave me a moment to do a good think on it."

They relapsed into silence and the little steamer throbbed its way over the water. . . . After about ten minutes of cogitation Hektor spoke:

"We may take it that if we give Milady the faintest cause for suspicion, in fact if we don't eradicate the suspicions we've roused already, Antwerp will be watched by British cruisers for months. That means that we must convince Milady of our innocence before this sea trip is over. And how are we to do that? One of us has just got to go and make friends with her — make love to her if necessary — and tell her what good little boys we all are and how we're off for a summer spree over Belgium and Holland. Probably he'll also have to occupy her attention, if she stays in Antwerp, while the others do the work."

"Excellent," said Umpleby. "The question is, who's to be the man. . . . I'm afraid I'm not a very romantic figure, and I'm married anyway."

"It's your plan, Hektor," said Bernard, "so you'd better carry it out."

"I haven't the required artistic imagination," said Hektor.

"Besides, you're the best looking."

"No, thank you," said Bernard. "I'm not used to adventures."

"Don't be shy," said Umpleby. "If I had your advan-

tages I'd do it like a shot. . . . Look at her profile."

"Come on, Bernard," said Hektor. "It's up to you. What's the good of a handsome face if you won't put it to your country's service?"

"Oh, *very* well," assented Bernard, with a grimace. "But I'm going below first for a bracer."

It happened that Milady had decided on Bernard, the youngest and most guileless-looking of the party, as the one for her to pump, so, both parties being anxious for an excuse to meet, they were not long in making one. Bernard, having emerged from the saloon well primed with whiskey and soda, found his legs entangled by Milady's silk wrap which the rough breeze had torn from her shoulders. To restore it was but common courtesy; to remain, charmed by her beauty and the limpid sweetness of her voice, for a few moments' conversation was to be expected; the hint that she was tired and would like a seat quite naturally suggested deck-chairs for two in a sheltered spot. Friendship and even love, come quickly on the decks of liners, and it need occasion no surprise to find Bernard and Milady chatting together like old friends two hours out from Harwich. At first each was content merely to make a good impression and create confidence in the mind of the other. But after a time their ultimate purposes came into play.

Looking at her, Bernard found it hard to believe that she could be a spy, for she was undeniably beautiful. She had golden hair, a clear ivory complexion faintly tinged with pink, and very red lips, which, on parting in a smile, revealed a set of teeth as nearly resembling pearls as Bernard had ever seen. But the most distinguished characteristic about her was the colour of her eyes: they were a rich brown. Bernard wondered for a moment where he had seen brown eyes with fair hair before. In a moment he remembered. . . . Mabel Harvey. But Mabel's hair was not of this metallic sheen, but of the commonplace fluffy kind.

"I knew a girl just like you at home," declared Bernard romantically. "She had just your hair and eyes."

"*Had?*" queried Milady.

"She's nothing to me, any more," said Bernard ruefully. "She encouraged me and led me on, and then just threw me aside. . . . That's why I'm here. I'm travelling so as to forget."

"I must say you don't seem to find forgetting very difficult. You always seemed quite cheerful whenever I looked at you."

"I was very fortunate in meeting those two men you saw me with. . . . Mr. Umpleby, the small man with the moustache, is one of the wittiest people I've ever met. He has sometimes almost made me forget my sorrow."

"Indeed. I should like to meet him."

"So you shall, if I can manage it. Unfortunately he's extremely shy. One of the most unassuming and retiring men I ever saw. With his friends he's delightful, but he absolutely shrinks from strangers."

"Really? He doesn't look it."

"No. But it's a fact. However, I'll introduce him to you if I get an opportunity. . . . You've no idea what a kind-hearted soul he is too. He was going to France by Southampton originally and had ordered himself a special carriage (on account of his shyness, you know) but when my friend Mr. O'Flaherty told him of my misfortune that evening he changed all his plans and came with us, just to cheer me up. . . . You see, poor O'Flaherty's a good fellow, but very dull. I don't know why I chose him as a fellow traveller, but it doesn't matter now that I've Umpleby. . . . and you," he added shyly, ". . . that is, if I may venture to hope for your continued friendship."

"Is the fair — what is her name? — forgotten so soon then?"

"Blanche? Alas, why do you remind me of her?"

"Poor boy! I'm sorry. . . . This Mr. Umpleby, won't you introduce him to me soon?"

"Yes. But not yet. Let me have you to myself awhile first. . . . Almost you make me . . . forget."

"The other gentleman then,— Mr. O'Flaherty, I think you called him — has been with you from the start? Where did you meet Mr. Umpleby?"

"On the mail boat from Ireland."

"Ah! You are from Ireland? There's a great deal of excitement going on over there now, isn't there?"

"Yes. My friend O'Flaherty is a great politician. He's one of these Nationalist Volunteers in fact. I caught his enthusiasm for a time myself, and even drilled once or twice. But I must confess politics interest me very little. I think it would be a wise thing to have a sort of Council in Dublin to decide purely local affairs too trifling to submit to Westminster, but we are really unfit for full Home Rule. My father, of course, is a strong Unionist and wouldn't even agree to a Council, but I think that's so unreasonable. . . . But perhaps I'm boring you. I must apologize for talking politics."

"Thank heaven for the gift of the gab," said Bernard to himself. He had never found his tongue so fluent. On any subject that came up he talked gracefully and at great length, giving her no opportunity of getting in her sidelong tentative questions. He brought Milady tea on deck, supplied her with cigarettes (the best Sullivans), and in the evening took her down to dinner on his arm. She ceased her probing and he ceased his inventions and they talked agreeably about books and music and the pictures they intended to visit at Antwerp, where they hoped to meet again, and at Munich, whither Milady professed herself bound and where she longed, so she said, for Mr. Lascelles to follow her.

The steamer still throbbed its way over the water, and in the evening they watched the moon rise, standing together looking over the stern. Bernard had almost come to believe as firmly in her innocence as Milady had in his, but he stuck to his pose.

He became very romantic in the dusk and quoted Yeates' poem beginning:

One that is ever kind said yesterday:
Your well-beloved's hair has threads of grey.

And when he came to those last despairing lines:

O, Heart, O, Heart, if she'd but turn her head,
You'd know the folly of being comforted,

Milady put a kindly hand on his arm and consoled him so gently for his loss that he felt quite ashamed of his deception.

As midnight approached most of the passengers went below, and eventually they were alone on deck. And as they reached the mouth of the Scheldt and saw the lights of Flushing twinkling on the port bow Bernard and Milady bade one another a tender good-night and went to their respective cabins. Bernard gave Hektor a full report of his doings, and Hektor chuckled with amusement.

"We've been consulting Baedeker's hotel list," said he. "Where's Milady going to put up?"

"Hotel de l'Europe," said Bernard.

"Then Umpleby and I will go to the Grand Laboureur on the Place de Meir. Where would you fancy for yourself?"

"An English hotel for me, if you please. My French was made in Ashbury: damn little and pronounced wrong."

"Well, here's the thing for you." Turning over the pages of Baedeker he read out: "Hotel d'Angleterre. Quai Vandyck. Under English management . . ."

He broke off suddenly as Bernard, winking one eye hard, began to spout thus:

"I tell you, my boy, she's perfect . . . adorable. Didn't you see her hair, her eyes? . . . Oh, Hektor, the self same hair and eyes. . . . My Blanche!"

"Cheer up, old chap," said Hektor gruffly, "she seemed to take to you all right."

"Do you think so? Really? Ah, no . . ."

"Get into bed anyhow, I'm sleepy," said Hektor.

A few seconds later Bernard, cautiously opening the door, peered out and saw a black figure retreating down the passage.

"Milady," he said to Hektor. "I heard a slight rustle at the door that time I started spouting. . . . We've no doubt of her now, I'm afraid."

"Well," said Hektor, "go on as you've begun. May you have a pleasant time at Antwerp."

3

Next morning Bernard insisted on escorting Milady to her hotel.

"But your friends?" she said.

"I have no other friends when you are near," said Bernard.

She invited him to breakfast with her. The Hotel de l'Europe is run on English lines, so Bernard, whose hatred of England did not extend to the national dish, feasted full on bacon and eggs paid for by British secret service money. After the meal he excused himself, saying that he really must go to see his friends, and at the same time expressing a timid hope that he might meet her again in the afternoon. She graciously granted his request and asked where he and his friends were staying.

"The Rose d'Or," he told her and, anticipating inquiries, went there straightway and booked and paid for three rooms on his way over to the Grand Laboureur.

Hektor and Umpleby were arranging their line of action. Hektor was to purchase the guns and was already compiling a list of gunsmiths from a big directory, while Umpleby was to see about hiring some craft suitable for conveying the cargo to the rendezvous, and was ready to set out. Bernard was told to go and keep Milady quiet, so he left at once and repaired to his own hotel to wait for the afternoon. Not having anticipated the nature of his share in the expedition he was poorly provided for gallantry in the matter of clothes, so on his way home he went to a tailor and ordered a fashion-

able suit of clothes to be made for him at once. Then he went to a barber and a florist, and, adorned by these ministers of beauty, after a light lunch at the Angletterre, he went to pay his respects to Milady.

She suggested a quiet afternoon's sight-seeing, so they went out into the glowing sunshine of the Place Verte. Milady was no longer in black. She wore a delicious-looking white summer frock and carried a dainty parasol. Bernard began almost to fall genuinely a victim to her charms. What a pity, he thought, that such a beautiful creature should have to earn her living in so base a way. They duly admired the statue of Rubens in the centre of the Place and then turned to regard the magnificent façade of the Cathedral, whose south transept rose above them. They entered and inspected the interior of the building, and Bernard pondered long over Rubens' great picture, "The Descent from the Cross," and, scarcely inferior to it, his "Elevation of the Cross."

"I wonder why all these great painters love to put dogs in their pictures," said Milady, and Bernard's mind travelled back to the Ghirlandaio and Perugino chromolithographs at Ashbury before which he had so often asked himself the same question. Through the majestic nave and aisles of the Cathedral they wandered for nearly an hour, and then went out again to the Place. They strolled about the busy streets, rested for a while at a café, visited some shops, and altogether spent a very pleasant afternoon.

"How well their streets are named," thought Bernard. "Avenue des Arts, Avenue Rubens, Rue Van Dyck." He compared them with the Dublin streets, all called after departed Lords Lieutenant. "When independence comes we must change all that. . . . Wolfe Tone Street. . . . *Sráid Eoghain Ruaidh O'Neill* . . . Yes. The Irish way sounds better. . . . *Sráid Séumuis Fiontáin Lálor*. . . . *Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau*."

"Penny for your thoughts?" said Milady.

"I'm feeling hungry," said Bernard. "Where shall we dine?"

Milady suggested the *Restaurant Bertrand*, and thither they went. Then, having wound up the evening at a music hall, Bernard saw her to her hotel, and parted from her after arranging to visit the picture galleries the following day.

"Does she still suspect us? That's the question," said Bernard to himself. "If she doesn't, she wouldn't go on gadding about with me. On the other hand, if she does, she wouldn't let me keep her off the track so easily. . . . Perhaps she thinks I'm just an innocent red-herring dragged after the others. She certainly did keep coming back to their whereabouts very frequently. . . . Wonder did my jealousy stunt work? . . . I'll have to convince her of the innocence of the others. There's nothing else for it. They'll have to meet her. . . . I'll go straight over and see them now — stop though. Home first. She might be following me."

He made for the *Rose d'Or*, and after spending half an hour in one of the rooms there slipped out by a tradesmen's entrance, thus escaping the observation of Milady, who, true to his surmise, had followed him all the way.

Hektor was much perturbed by Bernard's suggestion.

"We haven't the time," he said. "We drew blank to-day. I visited five gunsmiths and they were all too inquisitive to deal with. Umpleby's story is the same."

"All the gunsmiths in the world won't help us if Milady gets suspicious."

"Quite true," said Umpleby. "Lascelles is right. We'd better see her."

"I believe you're smitten," said Hektor.

"Now, boys, this is serious," said Bernard. "When you meet her remember to keep up your characters. Umpleby, you're as shy as a schoolgirl with a witty sparkle about once an hour, and you, Hektor, are the dullest bore in Europe. . . . You'll hear from me tomorrow. Good-night."

Next day, after a couple of hours spent with Van Dyck, Teniers, Memling, Holbein, Rubens and other masters,

enough altogether to stagger the mind, Milady asked the usual question.

"I'm sure they'll be delighted at the honour," replied Bernard, and they made arrangements for meeting which he communicated that night to his friends.

The three presented themselves at her hotel next afternoon and they then drove off to the Zoological Gardens, where they strolled about and had tea. Milady afterwards professed herself charmed by "that dull, droll Mr. O'Flaherty," but was thoroughly bored by poor Umpleby's stories. Hektor had acted his part to perfection, but Umpleby in his vanity had cast away all pretence at shyness at a very early stage and striven to exhibit his wit.

"My poor Bernard," said Milady, "is that your taste in humour? The man is far duller than Mr. O'Flaherty, and unfortunately does not know it."

"He has been very kind to me," said Bernard.

"So I mustn't abuse him, eh?" said Milady. "Very well. But don't bring him near me again."

"He'll be disappointed . . . distracted."

"No matter. I could not endure him."

"Your wishes shall be obeyed, Madam," said Bernard, much relieved.

Milady's suspicions were now almost dispelled, but she was enjoying herself so much at her employers' expense that she decided to remain in Antwerp a little longer. Moreover, she had taken rather a fancy to Bernard and wanted to see a little more of him, so for the next few days the two of them went about together, flirting, picnicking, and sight-seeing.

On the eighth day of their stay Hektor at length announced that he had found a suitable gunsmith, one who was ready to give them two thousand rifles and fifty thousand rounds of ammunition for their money, and who asked no questions. Umpleby, however, had not yet found a boatman, and the two were going to continue the search next

day. So Bernard continued his round of pleasure with Milady and on the evening of the twelfth of July came again to inquire after his friends' progress.

"I wish to heaven you'd hurry up," he said. "My virtue won't stand the strain of perpetual temptation, you know."

"It's in your country's cause," said Hektor. "However, it's all right now. We've found our man, a sturdy Fleming called Klapdorp. He was a bit inquisitive — the Belgians are the most inquisitive people I've ever struck — so we told him we were running the guns into Mexico for Villa. That satisfied him."

"Two days to wait now," said Umpleby.

"I say," said Hektor. "You'd best arrange an all-night entertainment for Milady tomorrow. We'll be loading up then."

4

So to make quite sure that his friends should have a free hand in the most arduous portion of their task Bernard took Milady to a great public dance that night. It was a summer dance, and took place in a great hall that opened into wonderful spacious gardens where the dancers could wander to refresh themselves during the intervals. Bernard enjoyed the whole thing tremendously. Always full of the zest of life, now the importance of the moment and the anticipation of a rush of events to come, increased the natural excitement due to music, crowds and festivity. He and Milady were quite the gayest of the gay throng.

He called for her at half-past six and they went to the Queen's Hotel to dine. Milady looked adorable and Bernard's admiration for her was immense. His emotions were really beginning to be stirred and he was not a little proud to have so brilliant a companion to show off. Mrs. Gunby Rourke at a neighbouring table saw the sparkle in his eye and whispered something to her husband.

"An adventuress, I suppose," replied the latter. "Young fool."

"Mischief thou art afoot," thought Bernard, as he noticed

her presence and returned her distant bow. "Lord, this'll be all over Dublin when she gets home. What'll my mother say?"

They walked in the delicious evening air to the dance hall, and arriving early had some good dances before the floor filled up.

"I'm glad we had these dances," said Milady. "We can sit out when the crush comes. . . . You dance beautifully."

She danced like a leaf herself and Bernard was intoxicated with the charm of her. She thought he was hers as they stood in the garden later, and remembering her almost forgotten duty, she laid a hand on his shoulder and putting her face close to his said:

"You may as well admit it. You're here to plot with Germany, aren't you?"

But she was premature, and she had hit the wrong nail. Had she mentioned guns, Bernard might have given himself away, but she was sure that his mission, if mission he had, was something bigger than that.

"Germany! Me!" said Bernard, with well feigned astonishment.

"I believe you," she cried, and kissed him suddenly. He returned the embrace with ardour and said, with all the reproachfulness he could muster:

"Felice, you should never have doubted me."

"Forgive me," she pleaded, and he did so magnanimously.

The band was playing the familiar, sensuous strains of Offenbach's Barcarolle. They retired to a secluded nook in the garden and surrendered themselves to the enjoyment of each other's society. Milady stretched out her legs in front of her and looked admiringly at her graceful feet and ankles, Bernard was tempted to quoth a favourite triolet of O'Dwyer's:

"Why are ladies ashamed
To show us their ankles?
I have often exclaimed
'Why are ladies ashamed?'"

When I looked I was blamed
And the memory rankles.
Why are ladies ashamed
To show us their ankles?"

"We aren't nowadays, anyway," laughed Milady. "Did you write that?"

"No. It's by a friend of mine."

"I'd give anything to be able to write poetry," said Milady.

"So would I. Anything . . . with one exception."

"What's that?"

"You," said Bernard.

"Fickle boy!" said Milady. "And what of Blanche?"

"She is nothing to me . . . she is forgotten . . . she never was."

And all night long while these gallantries were in progress Hektor and Umpleby were assisting Klapdorp and his men to load the tug *Van Dyck* from the quays of the Scheldt.

"Artistic nation this," observed Hektor during a resting space. "This is the *Quai Teniers*, and the tug's called the *Van Dyck*. . . . Better than Ormand Quay and the *Mary Ann*, eh?"

They were in bed by four o'clock, but it was five before Bernard left Milady at the Hotel de l'Europe.

5

Later in the morning the tug stood with steam up at the quay side. Hektor and Umpleby were already on board, and at the stroke of eight Bernard, white-faced and weary, alighted from a taxi at the head of the gangway.

"Gee, you've been making a night of it," said Hektor. "You're a regular wash-out."

"My first need is something to eat," said Bernard. "I hadn't time for breakfast."

As the *Van Dyck's* screw began to churn up the waters of the Scheldt they took him below and rummaged out a meal of ham, bread, cheese, and bottled beer. While Ber-

nard made hungry inroads into these he told them about the night's adventures, and how before leaving he had left three letters with the Commissionaire at his hotel to be posted on three successive days. In the first he begged to be excused from meeting Milady that day owing to a headache resulting from the dance; in the second he pleaded continued indisposition, but promised to call on her next day; the third letter ran thus:

I die for love of Blanche. No flowers by request.

"I'd like to see her face when she reads that," said Umpleby, gleefully.

"I wouldn't," said Bernard. "I was beginning to like her."

Down the busy commerce-filled Scheldt they sped, out from the narrow river into the broad estuary. They passed Walsoorden at half-past nine and Terneuzen an hour later. By twelve they had left Flushing behind and were speeding to the rendezvous, a spot five miles out from the Zeeland coast. Before they reached it they could see two widely separated craft converging towards them.

"Those are our men," said Hektor, confidently.

As they watched eagerly the foremost yacht swiftly bore down on them. Nearer she came and nearer, and they could distinguish the figures on her deck.

"Is it dese are your Mexican friends?" inquired Klapdorp of Hektor.

"Oh, wee," said Hektor. "At least, *je pense ainsi*."

Someone standing in the bows of the yacht shouted something unintelligible through a megaphone, but in a few minutes more the screws of the *Van Dyck* were reversed, bringing her to, and the yacht came near enough for them to see that the man with the megaphone was Angus O'Connor.

"Connis thah thu?" came Angus's cultured voice across the water. "Are you the tug with the guns for Ahreland?"

"*Qu'est-ce qu'il dit?*" asked Klapdorp, suspiciously, turning to Umpleby.

"We're done," thought Bernard, but O'Connor's accent would have baffled people more skilled in English than the little Belgian skipper.

"*Je ne sais pas,*" said Umpleby, blandly. "*Il parle Mexican peut-etre.*" Then he shouted over to O'Connor: "*Dun do bhéal, dtuigeann tú. Tá tú amadán.*"

O'Connor grinned and called back:

"Dhia smirrah guth."

"*Vous parlez donc — Mexican?*" asked Klapdorp of Umpleby.

"*Un peu,*" said Umpleby.

The *Spindrift* now hove to about ten cables off, and the *Cormorant*, which had come up in the meantime, did the same. The transshipping of the cargo began at once, and was carried out by means of a large boat carried by the *Van Dyck*, assisted in a small way by the yachts' dinghies. It was difficult and dangerous work, for there was a swell on, and the ammunition cases in particular were extremely heavy and awkward to handle, but by good luck it was accomplished without mishap. Bernard went on board the *Spindrift* with the first boatload, and drawing O'Connor aside, told him about the Mexican fiction. O'Connor was delighted and thereupon set about giving the thing verisimilitude by shouting a fervent "*Caramba!*" at every hitch in the lading.

The *Spindrift*, which was the smaller of the two yachts, received half the rifles and twenty thousand rounds of ammunition, and as soon as she was loaded sailed off amid a salvo of cheers. The *Cormorant* was then loaded up in her turn, and Bernard bid good-bye to his companions on the deck of the *Van Dyck*.

"I'll have Umpleby all to myself now," said Hektor, ruefully. "He's just removing the twenty-first bracket from the fiftieth sentence in his sixtieth story. . . . Well . . . see you at Howth."

Bernard dropped into the dinghy and was carried over to the *Cormorant*. The *Van Dyck* immediately got up steam and pointed back for Antwerp. The *Spindrift* could be seen as a speck on the horizon.

6

They were twelve days at sea, and it was a most uncomfortable time. Being heavily laden their progress was necessarily slow, and in any case they dared not rouse suspicion by appearing off the Irish coast too soon. The fifteen cases of ammunition were stacked round the deck, and, in order to ensure speed in unloading at Howth, when every second might be of importance, the rifles were unpacked and laid in rows on the floor of the cabin to a depth of four feet. It was therefore impossible to stand up in the cabin, so meals were a succession of scrappy picnics held in odd corners and sleep was a process of little comfort. However, for all this, everyone was very cheery and full of a spirit of adventure—an unfamiliar feeling in those civilized days, when Europe had been at peace for years and danger and strife had been banished to distant parts of the earth. Not caring to trust a crew of paid hands, Calverley had enlisted the help of a few personal friends who were excellent company. There was his own brother Frank, a youthful irresponsible replica of himself; and Morgan, a very sentimental English Home Ruler—a good sort but destitute of tact, who was always talking of his sympathy for “poor Ireland”; and McCarthy, a cheery young London Irishman, who talked a good deal and played a concertina. Calverley, himself, was as good a host as he was a sailor and was the life and soul of the party.

On the second day of the cruise as they sailed slowly up the English Channel, the weather being fine and the sea calm, they were all basking on deck, except Frank Calverley, who was at the helm, while McCarthy played snatches on his concertina. Suddenly, the latter said:

“Give us a song, Morgan. I’ll accompany you.”

Morgan, who had a fair baritone voice, was quite ready to oblige, and with the best intentions in the world, meaning only to compliment, sang the following song:

“ ‘Don’t be ashamed you’re Irish,’
Said a mother to her son.
‘Wherever you roam, over the foam,
Or under the tropic sun.
Be true to the land of the Shamrock
Whatever the world may say,
And come back to Erin where the grass grows green
Next St. Patrick’s Day.’ ”

It was a terrible ordeal to endure, and it was a trying business to frame suitable words of applause. Calverley looked his sympathy at Bernard and tried to start a conversation that might prevent a resumption of Morgan’s vocal activity. But to no purpose. The dense young man insisted on singing again and this time produced, to the air of *The Wearing of the Green*, one of those monstrous “loyal” parodies of rebel songs, composed by some well-meaning fool of an Englishman like himself. It was called *The Red Entwined with Green*.

Bernard was seething with disgust and irritation. He lay back on deck with his eyes shut and longed for the genius of O’Dwyer to inspire him with retaliatory measures. . . . A line, born of pure rage, suddenly formed itself in his brain. He twisted and turned it and strove to match it as he lay there oblivious to Morgan’s drone. Fresh ideas occurred to him. As he wrought the lines into shape an odd jingle of a tune he had heard somewhere fitted them to its tempo and almost before he was aware of it he had composed two short stanzas. He repeated them over to make sure of them and then sat up.

“Anyone else got a song?” asked McCarthy.

“I picked up a little thing the other day,” said Bernard, modestly, and on being pressed to sing it, trolled out his new-born ditty. “It’s called *Please Keep Off the Grass*,” he explained, and began:

"You may slander, abuse us, and hate us;
You may curse and anathematize us;
You may plunder and exterminate us;
But, Englishman, don't patronize us.

Some day we'll forgive the Invasion
And the rest of our sorrows and wrongs
(If Freedom should grant the occasion),
But not if you edit our songs."

Morgan smiled fatuously, but failed to see the point, but Bernard's feelings had been relieved by composition and that was all he wanted. He could see Calverley's eyes twinkling with amusement.

That afternoon they reached Spithead, and passed right through the historic review of the British Fleet. As they gazed upon line after line of those magnificent ships, Calverley jestingly said to Bernard:

"Don't you wish you were an Englishman?"

"All this makes our little cargo sing very small, doesn't it?" said Bernard. "I can't believe we'll ever be free."

"I confidently hope that your freedom is very near," said Calverley. "Perseverance does it."

The following day they passed by a fleet of trawlers which was being held up and searched by a British cruiser. The yacht passed by all unsuspected.

"By gad!" exclaimed Bernard. "Umpleby must have blithered. Just like him. It's well we spun him that yarn. Luck seems to be with us for once."

"What did he say when he saw the yachts?" asked Calverley.

"Nothing," said Bernard.

"That was wise of him. It was all he could say, of course. He'd be too vain to ask an explanation."

"His face spoke volumes," said Bernard.

Hitherto the weather had been fine, but on the afternoon of the fifth day, forty miles south of the Lizard, a darkening of the surface of the sea and a cold nip in the breeze prophesied a change, and in a few hours the storm broke. The

next two days were one long thundering drenching confusion. Short-handed as they were, there was little time for anyone to rest, and Bernard seemed to be working perpetually in a ceaseless mêlée with wind and lashing spray. The *Cormorant* was a yawl and she rode out the storm safely on reefed mizzen and trysail. Calverley, himself, never left the helm for more than a few moments at a time. Bernard marvelled at the man's skill and endurance, and wondered how O'Connor, without half his ability, would weather the storm. On the second day, when the tempest was at its height, a fresh danger manifested itself. Some of the ammunition cases began to work loose from their fastenings, and two of them, becoming detached, began to slide and roll about the deck. It was an anxious moment. All hands immediately hurried up to prevent disaster, and with much difficulty, and not without many falls and bruises, succeeded in recapturing the cases, and, to lighten the labouring yawl, cast them overboard. "Four thousand rounds gone west," muttered Bernard. Then fresh fastenings were applied to the surviving cases, and the yawl began to ride across the waves more buoyantly.

Next day the storm had somewhat abated, but it was still blowing hard. They had been carried far out of their course and were now driving in a southwesterly direction out to the Atlantic. The weather-worn *Cormorant*, accordingly, went about and began to beat up northward almost in the teeth of the gale: a long and bitter struggle. Yet another anxious night was spent, but in the morning the sun came out and the breeze had considerably moderated its violence. They were able to heave to off the Scilly Isles in the afternoon and discuss the position. The principal danger now was from British cruisers, for, though they knew it not, the Irish sea was at the moment being actively searched and all trawlers were being held up and boarded. Four days had still to pass before the *Cormorant* was expected at Howth, and they spent three of them loitering about the lee side of the Isles as if for pleasure.

Meanwhile, those at home were rendered very anxious by the arrival of His Majesty's Cruiser *Forward*, which about this time took up her station just outside Dublin Bay and so right in the track of the white yacht for which they were eagerly watching. A rumour was accordingly spread amongst the numerous people in Dublin whose indiscretion could be relied on that gun-running on a large scale was to be indulged in on the coast of Wicklow. The result was that on the twenty-fourth of July the *Forward* weighed anchor and steamed south, leaving the way clear for the *Cormorant*.

Running before a stiff breeze the White Yacht scudded northward all through the night of Saturday the twenty-fifth, and in the morning set her course northwest, heading straight for Howth. At breakfast time the Dublin Mountains rose from the sea. An hour later they sighted Howth, and as the hot July sun mounted to the meridian they passed obliquely across the mouth of Dublin Bay, all glittering in his rays, rounded the Bailey, and came in full view of Howth Harbour and Ireland's Eye. As these dear familiar features, so reminiscent of childish days, slipped into Bernard's view under such dramatic circumstances and after such strange adventures, something seemed to clutch at his heart and he was suddenly filled with a wild impatience to leap ashore and embrace the earth.

Nearer and nearer they sailed. They reached the harbour mouth, and Bernard, straining his eyes, could see the heads of a marching column of men above the sea wall. At quarter to one exactly, the yacht crossed the bar, and at the same moment the column of Volunteers, one thousand strong, came down the East Pier at the double. The yacht was immediately brought alongside and the unloading began. At first the sight of the cargo so astonished the Volunteers that they broke all discipline in their eagerness. But only for a moment. Hektor, Stephen, and the other officers soon restored order. The men were formed up in two lines and the rifles were passed along from hand to hand, while a

number of motors came up and whirled off with the ammunition. Within forty minutes the work of unloading was complete and Bernard, stepping ashore, was greeted by Hektor and Stephen.

One of Bernard's first enquiries was for the *Spindrift*, and he was told that O'Connor had sent home word that he had been compelled by the storm to seek refuge in a Welsh harbour and would be in Ireland next week.

Meanwhile, the alarm had been given, and the first sign of opposition from the forces of the crown was the arrival alongside the yacht of a boat containing three or four coastguards. They were easily disposed of. A firing party of half a dozen men pointed empty rifles at them and they beat a hasty retreat. At the same time a few police tried to force an entrance to the pier, but were repelled by a rear guard, armed with oak cudgells, who had been drawn across the end of it. The most persistent enemy was the old Harbour Master, who came up clamouring for his dues, but had to go empty away.

Preparations were now being made for departure, and a small guard was told off to remain behind and secure that the *Cormorant's* retreat should be unmolested. Bernard returned on board to bid farewell to Calverley and then stepped ashore to rejoin Hektor and Stephen.

"I suppose I'd better go and join my company," he said, as the commanding officer ordered the "Fall in." "Come to my digs tonight, you two."

He went at once and reported to his Captain, the preposterous Brohoon, an untidy little man with a brown beard and a general air of self-satisfaction, but a welcome and homely figure to the wanderer from Antwerp and the high seas. Commands rang out:

"Battalion . . . Shun! Slope . . . Arms! Move to the left in fours. . . . Form fours! . . . Left! By the left . . . quick . . . march!"

An Irish army was marching on Dublin.

7

It was an historic moment; the beginning of a new act in the national drama. So Bernard thought as, rifle on shoulder, he marched by Brohoon's side at the head of the column. (It happened that theirs was the leading company.) The weapon he carried was a long, heavy, wide-bore Mauser of an old-fashioned type, but strong and serviceable. His spirits were high and he was fit and well after the sea voyage. It was rather restful, contrasted with all he had been through, to listen to Brohoon jabbering small talk. It appeared that the Redmonite nominees had been behaving very badly on the executive, obstructing at the meetings, and preventing progress, and evidently trying hard to break up the movement. This coup would come as a shock to them, Brohoon said, and added:

"See if they don't try to get a holt of the guns for their own crowd."

Meanwhile Bernard was wondering what lay ahead of them. If the Government could collect their forces in time they could easily hold the narrow neck of land joining Howth to the mainland against the Volunteers. On the other hand, if the Volunteers could once pass the isthmus, they had a choice of many roads, and could, if necessary, break up into small bands and so defy interception. The whole success of the expedition depended, therefore, on reaching Raheny at the far end of the isthmus in time, and the weary column of men pressed forward at their best pace in that direction.

"Can we do it?" was the anxious query in every heart.

For a breathless moment it looked as if they had failed. A handful of constabulary, armed with rifles, awaited them just outside Raheny, but, deeming it prudent not to interfere with so large a force, opposed no obstacle to their advance. Raheny was reached at last and a much needed halt was called, the exhausted Volunteers lying down by the roadside at once. Their weariness was understandable. They had been mobilized at ten that morning and had already marched

fifteen miles without refreshment, burdened during the last five with their exceptionally heavy rifles. And the column was made up of very uneven material. Many of the men were sturdy labourers, but many were in sedentary employment and so in bad physical condition. Many were poor and their footwear was unsound. Many were oldish men, many mere boys; none had imagined when starting that they were out for anything more serious than a route-march. Moreover, the day was hot, and to add to their discomfort they had encountered a shower of rain just after leaving Howth.

While they rested one of the advance cycle scouts rode back with the report that a military force had marched out to Clontarf, a mile and a half away, and seemed ready to dispute the passage. At once the order to fall in was given and, groaning and cursing, the dusty and footsore men tumbled into their ranks and resumed their march. Bernard wondered whether the leaders intended to fight their passage, but the truth was that the men were so tired that the staff had decided that it would be useless to attempt any manoeuvres and were relying on bluff and good fortune to carry them through. The prospect of a possible conflict made Bernard ask himself what his sensations were. Was he exhilarated or afraid? He was surprised to find that he was neither, and wondered over his coolness. As a matter of fact, his attitude was the same as that which dominated the whole of Europe, prior to the outbreak of the great War. He was so used to civilization, with its smoothness and peacefulness, that he did not really believe that violence was possible in this quietest of all possible worlds. His whole habit of mind led him to believe that, by what chance or miracle mattered not, at the last moment things would straighten themselves out and all would be well.

Painfully, patiently, the leaden-footed men plodded onwards. Bernard could hear Brohoon muttering things about "the bloody redcoats"—absurd melodramatic phrase—

under his breath. Stray complaints and curses could be heard breaking from parched lips in the ranks. Heavier and heavier grew his rifle. Sweat trickled down his face. . . . Then, rounding a bend, he saw the line of soldiers drawn right across the road a hundred yards in front of him. . . .

"Right wheel!" came an order from the rear, and the column turned into a byway that led to the Malahide Road, parallel with that on which they were marching. It was evident that the Volunteer leaders wished to avoid a conflict, but the military had other intentions. Doubling back along the tram road they reformed their line at the foot of the Malahide Road. The police were drawn up on the sidewalk in front of them. The Volunteers marched straight on and halted within a short distance of the flashing bayonets. After a tense moment of expectation, the Volunteer staff, amongst whom Bernard could see Umpleby looking immensely important and pleased with himself, went forward to negotiate with the officers of the Crown. There were a few moments of argument and then an order rang out. The police, drawing their batons, began to advance on the Volunteers. Some seemed to be hanging back, but the great majority, after a moment's hesitation, came on with a rush.

Brohoon gave a shout. Bernard gripped his rifle and swung it clubwise over his head. The foremost Volunteers lined up to meet the shock, and the next few minutes were a confused *mêlée*. A few stray revolver shots were fired and there was the sound of blows and the clatter of baton on rifle. Police and Volunteers became inextricably mixed up, and Bernard found his heavy rifle a crushing though rather unmanageable weapon. The dense mass of Volunteers in rear, pressing forward, drove the comparatively few combatants down towards the line of bayonets. Brohoon, who at the outset had been stupefied by what was happening, now lost his head completely and rushed about raging hysterically and shouting abuse at the soldiers. One of these,

getting irritated, made a pass at him with his bayonet and wounded him slightly, and about the same moment the police withdrew from the fray.

"It's all up, boys. Give up the guns!" cried Brohoon, and collapsed into Bernard's arms. Bernard lowered him to the ground and opened his shirt, but found nothing but a rather deep scratch. Dropping Brohoon's head with a good bump on the road, he went to the help of other sufferers who, now that the scrimmage was over, were sitting or standing about bandaging their hurts with the help of the first-aid sections. Fortunately, there were no serious cases.

Matters now seemed to have reached a deadlock, but the situation was saved by Umpleby. Approaching the Commissioner of Police he imperiously demanded that he should withdraw his forces.

"Not till you hand over those rifles," replied the Commissioner, stoutly.

"Now, look here," said Umpleby. "Let's thrash this matter right out from the beginning. Diarmuid and Devorgilla . . ."

"Diarmid and what's-her-name be damned! I want those rifles."

"All in good time," replied Umpleby, suavely. "Meanwhile, we must thrash out the rights and wrongs of the affair from beginning to end. Diarmuid and Devorgilla, I say . . ."

"Look here. I've no time for any nonsense of this sort," said the officer, angrily.

"I insist on your hearing me," answered Umpleby. "Nothing can be done satisfactorily without a clear knowledge of the facts and theories governing the case. Diarmuid and Devorgilla, I repeat, by their lax morality [not that I am a puritan by any means, though indeed I have a sincere respect for puritanism in moderation (for instance I approve of Rabelais though I cannot say the same for *Ghosts*) but I disapprove of open adultery (especially when attended by disastrous sequels as in the case of Helen of Troy and this same

Devorgilla)] Diarmuid and Devorgilla, I resume, are at the root of this whole affair. Henry the Second's claim to Ireland, resting as it did upon the immorality of the said Diarmuid and Devorgilla . . . "

The Commissioner of Police tilted his cap over his eyes and scratched the back of his head. He was stupefied by the torrent of Umpleby's language.

"Just a minute," he began, feebly, but Umpleby put up his hand.

"Allow me," he said. "If you interrupt, I shall have to begin all over again."

This prospect so alarmed the unfortunate policeman that he held his peace.

"Diarmuid and Devorgilla," resumed Umpleby — but we shall leave him to his task of holding the enemy's attention and return to the Volunteers.

As soon as it was observed that the Commissioner of Police was completely occupied with Umpleby the Volunteer officers ordered their men to disperse. Abandoning their formation accordingly, the latter began to leave the road and make their way across the fields and private demesnes in the direction of the city, so that when, during a pause in Umpleby's eloquence, the Commissioner of Police looked up he found that the strategical and moral questions involved had been settled by the disappearance of his opponents from the field of operations. He turned angrily on Umpleby and said:

"Well, I think, Mr. Umpleby, you've played me a very dirty trick."

"Not half so dirty as the trick Diarmuid played on O'Ruarc," retorted Umpleby.

The Battle of Clontarf was over. An hour later the solemn Swathythe admitted a dusty, tattered master to the trim flat in Harcourt Street.

8

"That's an excellent soufflée, Swathythe," said Bernard.

"Yes, sir," said Swathythe.

"You might run out and buy me that stop-press they're calling, Swathythe. It'll contain an account of my exploits."

"Yes, sir," said Swathythe and silently evaporated.

Bernard reflected what an excellent servant Swathythe was. Here was he, Bernard, obscure and not very rich, after journeying a thousand miles, perfumed and dinner-jacketed, eating the very soufflée he had ordered a month ago . . . without doubt an excellent soufflée. How imperturbable Swathythe was. He had made no comment whatever on his master's strange return, but had respectfully relieved him of the battered rifle as if it had been a walking-stick, placed it in the umbrella stand, and said: "Dinner will be ready in half-an-hour, sir," just as if Bernard had been out for a short stroll. And the dinner had been perfect: the soufflée was not alone in its excellence. . . . Luxuriously he revelled in the pleasure of being home again.

Swathythe returned and served coffee and the paper, lighted Bernard's cigar, and vanished. Bernard opened the paper and in an instant had read the terrible news of Bachelor's Walk: how the soldiers from Clontarf on their return to Dublin had been jeered and taunted by the crowd, and had finally turned and fired a volley that killed four and wounded forty people . . .

And then he came upon a letter to the editor, in which Mr. Cyril Umpleby, bubbling with modesty, and slashed with parentheses, told how, "ably assisted by Messrs. O'Flaherty and Lascelles," he had conducted the Howth run-gunning.

"The impudent little beast," said Bernard to himself. Then he turned to Swathythe who had come in to clear the table.

"Would you remove an enemy from my path, Swathythe?" he asked.

"In what way, sir?"

"O, by the dagger or by poison. I care not."

"No, sir," said Swathythe without a smile.

"Then you aren't quite such a perfect servant as I thought, Swathythe. . . . However, that soufflée was excellent."

CHAPTER XIII

WAR

I

THEN began that slaughter of the world's sons which is called the Great European War. It was a commonplace at the time, but none the less true, to call it a war without parallel. Never before had the horrors and sufferings of war been so tremendous; never before had they been faced with such daring and self-sacrifice. Never before had common men gone to war with nobler purpose in their hearts; never before had politicians and journalists lied so meanly and so detestably. Never before had financiers so callously raked in their blood-bought gains; never before had those gains been so stupendous. On the plains of Flanders and Northern France, among the wilds of the Carpathian Mountains, and in the marshes of the Russo-German border the common men of Europe slaughtered each other at the bidding of their masters and died gloriously for a lie.

For this orgy of destruction the nations organized themselves as they had never organized for any good or useful purpose. Personal liberty, a delicate regard for which had been so prominent in all opposition to mere Social reform, was cast aside, held as nought. Everywhere person and property were ruthlessly commandeered by the state. And not only the liberty of the body, but the liberty of the mind was assailed. Freedom of the press, freedom of speech, cherished fruits of bygone struggles, vanished of a sudden, and none were found to protest. National resources in blood and wealth were drawn upon without stint. The reserves of the past were exhausted in an instant; the supplies of the future were mortgaged lavishly, recklessly. The flower of

the world's youth, the source potential of the coming generations, the life blood of mankind, was poured in an ever-swelling stream into the insatiable gulf of destruction. Gay and gallant and clean-minded young men: honest and unsuspecting souls: they went forth from the peace and comfort of their homes, with a smile on their lips and love in their hearts — Frenchmen, Germans, Russians, English, Belgians, Serbs; smaller races innumerable — to face hardship and toil and sleeplessness and disease and danger; torture of the senses; wounds most horrible; mutilations unspeakable; death in a thousand ghastly forms. Kindly, quiet, gentle boys many of them; mothers' sons; they left the women they had kissed and embraced to slay and be slain. They slew each other from a distance with shell and ball; they disembowelled each other with the bayonet; they poisoned each other with gases; they rent each other asunder with explosives; in desperate combats in the night they stabbed and battered each other to death. And there were other and fearfuller deaths than these: drowning like rats trapped in submarines; living burials in mines; sickening falls from great heights; burnings. . . . All these things and more men faced because they were told — and believed. In the blasphemed name of patriotism the German student was taken from his studies and told that Shakespeare's countrymen were his foes; the French workingman was taken from his labour and told that the country of those whose cry for universal emancipation and brotherhood still sounded in his ears desired nothing but his enslavement; the dull English yokel at his plough was told that civilization was in need of his aid; and the simple Russian moujik was herded to slaughter he knew not why. All over Europe boys of eighteen and twenty, their generous emotions roused, were called to the defence of treaties and the fulfilment of obligations which the cynical politicians who summoned them would have been the first to repudiate should their interests so require: and all over Europe youth, ingenuous, trusting and obedient, answered the call. But to these simple virtues alone the mas-

ters of men could not trust. More was needed. During the long peace men had forgotten how to hate. The nations had grown interdependent: you cannot hate those with whom you buy and sell, or those with whom you share pleasures and interests: trade and the arts had united mankind. These ties must now be broken, so by tales of atrocities, by lies and misrepresentations, hate was deliberately remanufactured and righteous anger raised on all sides by slander and false accusations.

Until the storm had actually burst few among the masses of Europe realized what was happening. All through those sunny July days, while the diplomatists wrangled, the ordinary man went about his ordinary business, prepared for his holiday in August, and wondered how long the present spell of glorious weather would last. In Ireland people's minds were too much occupied with the course of events at home — with the Howth and Kilcool gun-runings and the Bachelor's Walk atrocity — to notice any signs of the impending disaster, and even when, two days after these occurrences, Austria-Hungary declared war on Servia (as we then called her) not many realized the inevitable sequel.

"Can't you see, mother?" said Bernard. "Russia's bound to defend Servia; that brings in Germany to back up Austria; France must then come to help Russia, and that brings England in, too."

Lady Lascelles was incapable of following a chain of reasons.

"I can't believe it," she said . . .

And then event followed event with surprising rapidity. Germany declared war almost simultaneously on Russia and France. Belgium was invaded, and the British Government having found the righteous excuse wherewith to delude the people of England, Scotland and Ireland, plunged into the fray. . . . There was a rushing about in the streets of great cities; and a shouting and a bustle on the bourses; and a buying of stop-press editions, and panic and chatter everywhere. People stood about at street corners in ani-

mated discussion of what they could not understand. Chance acquaintances stopped you to say: "Awful business this! Isn't it?" And you answered: "Yes, awful!" . . . Wild rumours were circulated and implicitly believed. There were accounts of great naval battles, with convincingly detailed lists of losses. Wiseacres darkly hinted that Paris had already fallen and the Government daren't admit it . . .

"Where do *we* come in?" asked some.

Before the days of madness were the days of ignorance when men waited to be told what they were going to fight for.

2

But while all Europe in those first fatal weeks went mad; while ordinary men raved like lunatics, and philosophers and thinkers babbled like angry children; while the wise equally with the foolish believed all they were told and hearkened to every rumour; in an obscure island in the western sea one little band of men remained calm and serene, unmoved by the passions of the war, undecieved by its lies. Stephen Ward with his keen unemotional insight; Bernard with his free comprehensive grasp of essentials; O'Dwyer with his hard piercing logic; Hektor with his downright common sense; McGurk with his bluff humorous honesty; Crowley with his lucid wit, even Moore with his morose cynicism: all saw through the mist of deceit and credulous passion down to the naked and repulsive reality below. The profession of the Allies that they were fighting for Christianity and civilization, truth and justice and the sanctity of treaties, the freedom of small nationalities and all the rest of it left them quite cold. Stephen knew how small a part truth and justice played in the councils of the world; Bernard saw no world-vision in Imperial England and Russia and Chauvinist France; O'Dwyer knew England's record in the matter of treaties only too well; Hektor was too well versed in the tricks of European diplomacy; all felt that the spectacle of the oppressor of Ireland coming forth as the

champion of small nationalities was, to say the least of it, humorous.

"The whole position's absurd on the face of it," said Crowley. "The Czar of All the Russias and Hetman of the Don Cossacks fighting for democracy and civilization! France fighting against militarism! The Harlot of the Nations fighting for Christianity and Justice! It couldn't take a baby in."

"The world's been taken in for all that," Bernard pointed out.

"The British Empire against world domination," exclaimed O'Dwyer. "Men must be a pack of fools."

"So I have ventured on previous occasions to remark," said Moore. It was felt distinctly that Moore had scored a point off the idealists.

"Well, Hell roast John Redmond anyhow," said McGurk.

Redmond's famous declaration of the unconditional adherence of Ireland to the British and Allied cause was already two days old on the occasion of this conversation.

"The question is," said O'Dwyer, "is he a knave or a fool? Could a man who's been as long in politics as John Redmond be such a fool as to take European diplomacy at its face value?"

"What I want to know," said Crowley, "is: has he got so completely West Britonized as to forget that an Englishman is most to be feared when he's friendly?"

"But the opportunity he's thrown away!" groaned Hector. "My God, he could have had Repeal of the Union for the asking. He could have held back every reservist in Ireland till he'd got it in force."

"We could have had Repeal working in a week and cut the cable at the first British defeat," said McGurk.

"And the opportunity's gone for ever," said Crowley. "Half the reservists are in England by this time."

"The question is: how will the country take it?" said O'Dwyer.

"Repudiate it!" said Bernard, promptly.

"I doubt it," said Crowley. "They've shown no signs of it yet, anyway."

"The Volunteers will repudiate it," said Hektor.

"They might," said McGurk. "But sure they're young and they haven't votes most o' them."

"I'll tell you how the country'll take it," said Stephen. "Volunteers and all," he added.

"How?" asked several.

"Lying down," said Stephen.

Bernard, full of the zeal of the convert, refused to believe this.

"You'll see I'm right," said Stephen, in his quiet, dogmatic way. "They're not ripe for bold action yet. Ireland's history has left her incapable of sound political thinking, so she'll just do what she's told. Perhaps things would have been different if the Volunteer movement was a year or two older, but as it is . . ." He shrugged his shoulders. Every one was unwillingly convinced that he was right.

"England's always had all the luck," said O'Dwyer. "Oh, for a Parnell!"

"Or a Carson," said McGurk.

It was the war and the anticipation of exciting possibilities that had brought our friends to the capital in August. Moore had returned hurriedly from holidays in France. Crowley had rushed up from Ballylangan in Ossory where he was now dispensary doctor. O'Dwyer had left his family down in Greystones. He was not yet qualified, nor was McGurk. The latter, indeed, showed signs of development into a "chronic" for he was due for his third attempt at his Third Examination in September. Bernard's flat was the scene of their assembly.

Events justified Stephen's prophecy. At first, indeed, Ireland was a little taken aback by the new departure. "That was a queer speech of Redmond's," was the general comment heard in trams and trains and public places generally. Mr. Redmond's step was unprecedented in the

annals of nationalism. The majority of even the most orthodox Home Rulers were at bottom only Home Rulers *faute-de-mieux* and regarded England as an enemy who, being too strong to be fought, had to be cajoled; and the traditional attitude of Ireland towards England's wars had always been one of hope for her defeat. Various, therefore, were the explanations put forward for the present policy. Some considered it mere bluff. "Redmond's coddling the English so as to make sure of Home Rule," they said. Others opined that he was genuinely convinced that a German victory would merely mean a change of masters for Ireland, and acted on the principle that "the devil you know is better than the devil you don't know."

"But anyone is likely to be an improvement on the person you know to be a devil," Bernard used to suggest to these, but without effect.

Few people then had sufficient political imagination and knowledge to see that it might be to Germany's interest to create a free and friendly Ireland: indeed, a free Ireland seemed to be beyond the purview of a generation suckled on constitutionalism and accustomed to having its thinking done for it. Very few also realized the completeness of Mr. Redmond's surrender. They did not see the insult implied in Sir Edward Grey's "One Bright Spot" oration. Ireland was not a consideration that would have to be taken into account, said Sir Edward, and Mr. Redmond had crawled gratefully to pick up the bone thus contemptuously flung at him, and found it marrowless.

"The slaves are content with their fetters and will fight loyally for their masters like the good little slaves they are." This was Crowley's paraphrase of Redmond's speech. The papers, however, both Irish and English, called the thing a "Statesmanlike declaration," a phrase bestowed henceforward almost automatically on each successive gracefully-worded surrender.

And the Irish people, as Stephen had prophesied, took it all lying down. Obedience to the Party had become a habit,

yet it took some time before people got completely accustomed to the new "Union of Hearts" as it was called. Their "loyalty," like a strange garment, clove not to its mould, needing the aid of use. This showed itself specially in the Volunteers, many of whose companies were presented with Union Jacks by enthusiastic Unionist ladies. This was felt to be rather too much. Home Rule was on the Statute Book all right, and there was peace between the nations, but flags are thicker than paper and Irishmen could not learn to love the symbol of their slavery in a day. So the flag of the Empire was generally accepted bashfully, and as soon as the innate politeness of the people allowed, relegated to the dust bin.

But the new way of thinking began to take root. Reservists, going to join their units, were fêted and escorted to the railway stations by the town and village bands. Young men flocked into the army. Soldiers were no longer looked upon as janissaries and alien conquerors; while the stern spirits who distrusted England and refused to acquiesce in the new régime were regarded as unforgiving, mean-spirited cranks. The Nationalists of the middle and upper classes were of course the first to adapt themselves to circumstances. They were in fact very much pleased with the whole course of events. The last remaining taint of "lawlessness" had now been removed from their party, and such of them (never very many) who adhered to the principle of remaining seated for the playing of *God Save the King* were relieved of that unpleasant necessity.

Bernard did not realize how far things had gone until one night at the beginning of September when he went to the Hippodrome with Geoffrey Manders. This man in his bloodless, muddled, and not very sincere cosmopolitanism, professed a very detached point of view both towards the war of controversy in Ireland and the war of steel in Europe. His interest lay in watching the effects of these things on others and he was rather amused at the heat and excitement of Bernard — the Bernard whose development he had quietly

watched from the days when he had held views very similar to his own (albeit he held them with a clarity, a sincerity and a passion of which Manders was incapable) down to his recent emerging as a "hillside" Nationalist.

The program that evening was a tiresome one. A war-song or two roused little enthusiasm. A conjurer made the audience frankly yawn. Then a screen was lowered, the house was darkened, and a succession of war-pictures was thrown upon the screen. The audience woke up. "*War Scenes from all Fronts*," they read. A Belgian cavalry patrol cantering across the screen was warmly applauded, and the orchestra played the *Brabançonne*, but nobody recognized it. *French Troops on the March* produced even warmer applause, for Irishmen, with memories of Ninety-Eight in their hearts, have always a soft spot for France; and as the first familiar bars of the *Marseillaise* sounded from the orchestra the song was taken up lustily in all parts of the house. Bernard's pulse could not help responding to the old song of the Revolution and he felt bitterly the hard stroke of fate in placing him amid the ranks opposed to it. There was a perceptible slackening in the popular enthusiasm when a view of Russian soldiers resting on the march was flashed forth, and Bernard wondered what was happening in Poland and Finland. How would they take the war? There would be less hypocrisy used with them anyway, he reflected. They might even be dragooned into quiescence: a more honourable fate than Ireland's. . . . And then came the climax: *British troops landing in France*, said the screen, and as the bustling scene was revealed, cheer after cheer went up from the auditorium.

"This is great!" chuckled Manders in much amusement. . . . "I wonder will they try them with *God save the King*."

The picture flickered along, and no sign of the anthem.

"They don't like to risk it," said Manders.

"It'd make the worms turn," said the disgusted Bernard.

But a moment later the slow solemn anthem rolled forth,

and Bernard was the only member of that vast audience who did not spring to his feet and burst into song.

"Fickle, fickle people," he said to himself.

When it was all over Manders lay back in his chair laughing loudly; a jarring blatant laugh for which Bernard never forgave him . . .

The Southern Unionists professed themselves delighted at the Nationalist volte-face. Their young men flocked into the Volunteers whom they now regarded almost as a part of the forces of the Crown, and their newspapers glowed with admiration for Mr. Redmond's statesmanship. "At last we see what we have long wished to see," quoth the *Irish Times*. "Ireland a Nation, brave, united, and in arms." Strange words from a paper whose policy was based on the denial of Ireland's nationhood, bravery, unity, and right to arm. For acting up to the ideal there mouthed so hypocritically Robert Emmet had been hanged. The Ulstermen were more honest, and changed not their attitude to the rest of their countrymen one iota. They vowed that when the war was over they would send Home Rule to the devil; and their reservists marched to the stations to the tunes of *Boyne Water* and *Kick the Pope*.

The fruit of Mr. Redmond's statesmanship, the return for all this surrender of principle and tradition and national advantage, was the passing of the Home Rule Bill followed immediately by a Suspensory Bill, postponing it until it should be modified as to be acceptable to the Orangemen, or, as McGurk said, till Tibb's Eve: and at the very moment that Mr. Redmond was foisting this "Treaty of Peace" and "Charter of Liberty" upon his countrymen's acceptance, the English Tories were denouncing the passage of the bill as treachery and openly promising to tear the "Charter" in pieces, while the Orangemen no less openly promised to put the "Treaty of Peace" in the fire. In a manifesto to the Irish people, Mr. Redmond announced the opening of a new era. The Democracy of Britain, he said, had kept faith with Ireland: it was now a duty of honour for Ireland to

keep faith with them. In other words, in return for a promise by an English party Government to restore (at some date unspecified) a tithe of her rights, and in spite of her experience of British promises in the past, Ireland was to give herself body and soul to assist her ancient enemy against a nation from whom she had never suffered wrong of any kind.

And Ireland, generous, sentimental, credulous Ireland, only too ready to forgive and forget, hastened at his bidding "to keep faith." And how did England receive it? Needless to say, England would not admit that Ireland had anything to forgive, but in her condescending way she decided that Ireland had come to beg forgiveness and atone for past rebellions by present loyalty. And in that spirit the bulk of the English people accepted the whole Irish situation as a matter of course. Official England heaved a sigh of relief at the trouble it had been saved.

"They've forgiving us for all the wrong they've done us," said Crowley.

"Where is it all going to end?" Bernard asked Stephen.

"Goodness knows," said Stephen. "I confess the workings of the Parliamentary mind are beyond me. . . . Of course, so long as Redmond speaks for his party and they accept him, we've no right to complain, not being Parliamentarians. But if he goes on pretending he speaks for the Volunteers, he's got to be stopped. There's nothing about Imperial Thinking in our constitution and Redmond's got to realize it. He can do what he likes with his own party, but hands off the Volunteers."

"That'll mean a split," said Bernard.

"Not necessarily," said Stephen. "Not if Redmond leaves the Volunteers alone. But if he insists on a split, he'll have it. Disunion is the devil, but there's one thing worse, and that is — acting a lie."

3

Meanwhile, in a seemingly irresistible rush, the German armies poured into Belgium and France, and the great slaughter began.

Bernard and his friends regarded the war in totally different lights. Bernard had come to Nationalism as part of a general revolutionary and Internationalist creed, whereas his friends were Nationalists first and such Internationalism as any of them possessed was but an expansion of their Nationalism. To Bernard, therefore, the war was evil unmitigated, whilst to the others the evil was considerably modified by the hope of freedom it gave to Ireland.

Bernard, however, was not a mere pacifist: he was perfectly ready to shed his own and any one else's blood in a good cause: but he hated to see human life and achievement wasted in the culmination of a mere game of capitalist diplomacy. So with a heart full of anxiety for his fellow-men he had watched all the manoeuvres that preceded the outbreak. Even after the formal ruptures he hoped against hope that the diplomatists would realize the horror of the game they were playing and pull up before it was too late: a perfectly disinterested hope, for he felt certain at the time that Ireland's attitude would be one of neutrality. But with the first news of bloodshed these hopes vanished, and as the sun rose on the second day of hostilities he knew that a thousand men who might have seen that dawn were dead. He felt it as a personal grief, as was his habit. . . . And then all Europe was ablaze with hatred. He saw quiet decent men and elderly ladies rejoicing over the news that four thousand German corpses had been counted on such-and-such a front: he saw his own friends rejoicing over similar heaps of British corpses. To him the slaughter gave a sickening sense of personal loss: every death was a separate tragedy: and every man cut off in the bloom of his youth made him think of the children who would never be born. . . . He hoped that the rulers, the organizers of slaughter, would even now relent when they realized the magnitude of

the massacre; would shrink from piling up yet more and more misery on the shoulders of men. But no. On went the appalling butchery, day after day, week after week, month after month, until hope died away, and he could only look on helplessly and bemoan the pity of it.

Very different were the views of the others. Hektor was not an Internationalist at all: in a free Ireland he would have been inclined toward jingoism. McGurk was much the same: he was no politician and merely wanted Ireland free. O'Dwyer was an Internationalist of a sort: he felt a benevolent neutrality towards all nations but England, whom he hated with all the powers of his soul; not merely British Government of Ireland, he would explain, but England herself, the English people, the make of their minds, their methods of thought, their alleged religion, the look in their eyes, and the screeching of their damned voices. To a virile hatred like this partisanship in the war was inevitable. And as for Stephen, the ruthlessness of his purpose left no room for vicarious sympathies.

All these, therefore, watched the German advance with hope and feverish impatience. They pictured the German army as a great relief force moving nearer and nearer to Ireland's deliverance, and while Hektor, with a professional eye, followed events on a large scale map and weighed and discounted reports, McGurk danced in jubilation over every fresh town occupied, and O'Dwyer prayed desperately at every check.

On came the grey masses. Liege fell. Namur, it was predicted, would hold out for months. Its fall was reported the next morning. Back went the Belgian army fighting manfully step by step. Back went the British: slowly, stubbornly, hitting out heavily, but still going back. Back went the French; grimly, desperately resisting; taking and giving blood for every inch of the fatherland surrendered: but still going back.

"*Germans on the Road to Paris*," screamed the newspaper placards. The war seemed to be won. O'Dwyer was

exultant; Hektor was calmly confident, full of soldierly admiration; even Stephen showed himself less impassive than usual.

"Paris tomorrow," said the optimists, but tomorrow showed no startling developments.

"Preparing to spring," said the optimists to console themselves.

And then came the Marne and the disheartening days of the retreat. The hope of a decisive German victory was gone, and the great days of the war were over. Later, indeed, when the Germans were fighting their way, step by step, toward Calais, hope for a time revived.

"When they've got Calais," said O'Dwyer, "they'll plank down some of those big howitzers of theirs and hold up the Channel. . . . Dover next. Then's our chance."

But the Germans never reached Calais. The fighting on the Western Front, after an orgy of bloodshed, ended in stalemate and settled down to the dull monotony of trench warfare, and the young strategists turned their attention to events nearer home.

4

"I suppose I'll be losing you one of these days, Swathythe," said Bernard.

"I hope not, sir," said Swathythe.

"What? Aren't you going to fight for your King and country, Swathythe?"

"King and country never did nothing for me, sir."

"I'm afraid you're a materialist, Swathythe."

"No, sir. Primitive Methodist, sir."

"And your country's call means nothing to you, Swathythe?"

"Never heard it, sir. Shouldn't recognize it if I did."

"Dear me. This is very disappointing. I met a man down town this morning who asked me what I was doing in the great war. I said I wasn't doing anything. He was very shocked and said: '*I've* given my son.' Now wouldn't

it have been nice if I'd been able to say: 'I've given my valet'?"

"Very nice, sir. For you."

"Exactly, Swathythe. That's what I said to the gentleman in question. . . . By the way, Swathythe, you might put the spare room in order. Mr. O'Dwyer is coming to stay with me for a few days."

"Yes, sir."

"And Mr. Ward, Mr. O'Flaherty and Mr. McGurk are dining here tonight. Mr. Ward may be late, but you may serve dinner in any case at half-past seven."

"Yes, sir."

Bernard had been rung up that morning by O'Dwyer, who told him that he had been ordered out of the house by his father on refusing to take a commission in the British Army, and requested an asylum while looking for lodgings. In the course of the afternoon O'Dwyer arrived, still seething with indignation, not only against his own father, but against paternity in general.

"New definition of 'father,'" he said. "An insolent tyrant who thinks he owns you body and soul. One who, on the strength of having begotten you, takes credit for all your virtues and repudiates all your vices. . . . The insolence of fathers . . . talking about 'giving their sons' . . ."

Bernard remembered the father he had met that morning.

"Tell us all about it," he said.

"Oh, we had ructions," said O'Dwyer. "We'd only just started breakfast when the Boss let me have it. 'I met Bonegraft at the club last night,' says he, 'and he told me he'd given his son to the war. I was wishing I could say the same,' says he. 'In fact, I was quite ashamed of myself,' says he. I sat tight and said nothing. Suddenly, he raps out: 'Why don't you apply for a commission?' 'You know my politics,' says I. 'Politics be damned,' says he. 'It's every man's duty to go to the front.' 'I beg to differ,' says I. 'O, do you?' says he. 'Well, differ or

no, you've got to do it,' says he. 'No, thank you,' says I. 'Look here, my lad,' says he, flying into a rage, 'I've never interfered with your holding what principles you like, but in a time of crisis you've got to obey *ME!*' (Fierce emphasis on the ME, Bernard.) 'There's a higher power than you,' says I, diffidently. 'None of your cant,' he yells. 'What? Is there no one higher?' says I, innocently, and with that he lets a screech out of him, and 'Out of my house you go,' says he. So I went upstairs and packed my bag. Then I telephoned to you, and after that I went off and had a farewell lunch with the mother and sisters at Jammets, . . . and here I am. . . . I composed a Limerick about it all, by the way. How does it go now?

That eminent man called O'Dwyer
Is with love of Old England on fire
Which flame sacrificial,
Howe'er he may wish, I'll
Not swallow the son of the sire.

Not bad that, eh? I composed it between the cheese and the coffee."

"This damned notion of *patria potestas!*" exclaimed Bernard. "There's too much of it in this country—in every class. When I see the way the farmers slave-drive their sons, I wonder parricide isn't commoner. And these middle-class despots! . . ."

He showed his guest to his room, and asked him about his prospects. They were all right, it appeared. He was due for his Final Examination at the end of the month and all his fees were paid. Moreover, he had a little money, some thirty pounds lying in a savings bank, which had been deposited there by a benevolent god-parent in his babyhood and had never since been touched. This, eked out by what his pen might earn, should keep him until he was qualified and even after. He could borrow then.

"What did you think of the Woodenbridge Oration?" asked Bernard.

This was the topic of conversation over all Ireland that day. On the previous afternoon Mr. Redmond had turned up at a Volunteer parade at Woodenbridge, Co. Wicklow, and told the Volunteers that whereas this was a war in defence of the "highest principles of religion and morality," it was the duty of Irishmen to rush at once to the fighting line.

"A split is inevitable now," said O'Dwyer. "Redmond is entitled to think that sort of flapdoodle himself if he likes. He can even dish it out to the U.I.L. if he thinks fit. But he's no business to put out that policy from a Volunteer platform. We're a non-party organization, formed to give Ireland a defence force, not to give England recruits. . . . Redmond and his party will just have to clear out of the force."

"They're the majority," said Bernard.

"No matter. They've violated the constitution, so out they'll have to go."

They went out for a stroll down Grafton Street, where Bernard laid in a supply of cigarettes for the evening. Then they returned to await the arrival of the guests. McGurk was the first to arrive, jovial and hungry, and, as he said, "Kilt with work." He was soon followed by Hektor, heavy with bad news from the Aisne. Stephen, not appearing when dinner was announced, Bernard explained that he had expected to be late as there was a session of the Provisional Committee to consider what steps were to be taken in view of the Woodenbridge speech.

The mere mention of this oration produced a highly censorable flow of language from McGurk, and Hektor pronounced the event the greatest disaster in Irish history since the Battle of the Marne.

Stephen arrived while they were still at the soup and was at once eagerly questioned. He took from his pocket a sheet of paper and read them the short pointed statement drawn up by the Provisional Committee and sent forth that eve-

ning to all the newspapers in the country. It said, in brief, that whereas, Mr. Reymond and his nominees had propounded for the Volunteers a policy fundamentally at variance with their own professed objects and constitution, they had ceased to hold any place in the administration of the movement: that the object and policy of the Volunteers still remained the same as on the day of its foundation: and that Ireland could not with honour or safety take part in foreign quarrels except through the free action of a national government of her own. It concluded by demanding the immediate establishment of that National Government.

"And what about Headquarters?" asked O'Flaherty, promptly.

"We've an armed garrison in occupation already," said Stephen.

"Good for you," said Hektor. "Dublin will stick to us anyway."

"Dublin stuck to Parnell," said O'Dwyer. "I wonder how will the country go?"

"To pieces," said Stephen. "We expect a backing in Kerry, Athenry, Cork, and perhaps Wexford, but the rest of the country will go with Redmond."

"Then," said Bernard, in slow realization, "we're in a hopeless minority."

"Hopeless," said Stephen. "About ten thousand men against the whole country."

These words came as a shock to Bernard. He had been looking forward to a great national fight for liberty, and here he found himself a member of an insignificant faction.

"Not only that," said Stephen, "but we'll have to go through a storm of abuse and misrepresentation and persecution. Our own countrymen will denounce us and the enemy will try to destroy us."

"Begob!" said McGurk, "we're going to get it in the neck. You take it from me, boys, all the dirty tongues in the Hibernians and the U.I.L. will be let loose on us."

"We're at war from this moment," said Hektor. "Ireland joins the Central Powers. Hostilities will commence at once."

"Well," said O'Dwyer, "it's a relief. The compromising of the last few days was getting to be a bore. I like a clear issue."

The prospect of what was before them seemed to brace his friends, but it had a depressing effect on Bernard. To have to oppose the will of the country he had so lately learned to love was a hard trial to him. He had none of the habit of hatred and opposition to England which buoyed up the determination of the others. They knew infallibly that, however Ireland herself might be led into wrong courses, the anti-English attitude was the only safe and patriotic policy. They knew, too, that it was the only policy to which, after the English treachery which would inevitably manifest itself, Ireland must eventually return. But Bernard had none of these consolations. He foresaw no change in the situation. Hatred of England had not been ground into his soul by circumstances, and love of Ireland was his predominant passion. To oppose her will, therefore, was a very painful duty.

But the others were quite hilarious. McGurk was already looking forward to the reaction.

"They'll be sick of loyalty in a month," he said, "and they'll be clamouring to come back to us. 'I told you so,' we'll be saying to them and we'll just give them a toe in the rump to teach them sense next time."

Hektor was less optimistic.

"They won't come back as quick as all that, Hugo," he said. "At least, not unless the English are clumsier fools than I think them. I give 'em two years."

"Sure the war'll be over by then," said McGurk.

"Not on your life," said Hektor. "The Marne's put the kybosh on that."

"We're at war with the Empire . . . our little crowd,"

suddenly interjected O'Dwyer. "Ten thousand men against — God knows how many . . ."

The prospect of a struggle against odds mightier than Xenophon's roused Bernard somewhat. And he remembered his duties as host.

"Hektor, you aren't eating. Another slice of duck? . . . Fill up Mr. McGurk's glass, Swathythe. . . . O'Dwyer, that's a new sauce made to my own recipe, *sauce franc-tireure irlandaise*."

"That was a nice little girl I saw you with in Grafton Street, Bernard, the other day," said McGurk.

"I don't remember her," said Bernard.

"Galong now! She was a neat little *cailin* with fair hair and brown eyes."

"Oh," said Bernard, "I just met her by chance."

"Will ye listen to him," said McGurk, "and he eatin' the face off her with his great hungry eyes."

"You're an ass, McGurk."

"Love's a queer thing," said O'Dwyer. "It makes shy things of us all. Fancy Lascelles blushing."

"I'm not in love," said Bernard, "and if I were I shouldn't be ashamed of it. I've been in love often, and I don't think anything of it. It's just an exanthematous fever we go through periodically. Like the flu, a previous attack seems to confer no immunity, but each successive illness becomes less and less serious."

"Love isn't a disease," said Hektor. "It's a game."

"Love's all my eye," said McGurk scornfully. "We all enjoy a bit of flirting round when we're young, but when I want to marry — which won't be for a long time yet, I hope — it'll be for something a little more solid and lasting than love. . . . Sure all that gibberish and *ráiméis* about love is the invention of female novelists."

"Hugo puts things a bit crudely," said Bernard, "but I agree with him in the main. We Irish seem to be a bit saner about love than the English. . . . Lord, how they

wallow in it, even the best of them. Wells's magnificent novels are sticky with the slush of it. . . . You don't find the sentimental heroine of the English novel in Irish art, thank heaven! And you don't find love the mainspring of the plot in more than a fraction of our plays and novels. We keep it in its place: the same place as it has in life."

"I wonder," said O'Dwyer, "if love has as big a place in English life as it has in their novels."

"God forbid," said Hektor.

"Summary of an average English novel," said O'Dwyer:

"There was a young lady in love
With a hero, all heroes above.
Some strife, and some stress
Then a murmur of 'yes,'
And 'my darling,' 'my sweetheart,'
'my dove!'"

"That's it to a T!" cried McGurk. "Now I like an author like Dumas. Tons of incident and hardly any love — and that without too many of the slushy details."

"Dickens and Scott answer to that description," said Bernard, "and so do nearly all the really great authors. It's our modern mediocrities that do the wallowing . . . for lack of better material."

The conversation was all on modern literature for a while and then reverted naturally to the original topic.

"To men," said Bernard, "love is a luxury. To women it is the necessary anaesthetic to render the hardships of procreation bearable."

"You're a cynic," said O'Dwyer.

Stephen, who had hitherto been silent, projected himself suddenly into the conversation at this point.

"That word 'cynic,'" he said. "It annoys me. Look here. You and I and all of our crowd know how this war's going to end if the Allies win."

"They won't," said McGurk.

"If they do," said Stephen, "we know that though Eng-

land declares she doesn't covet a yard of territory the peace terms will give her several thousand square miles. We know that this is no war to end war: we know that Allied militarism at the end of it will be a far bigger thing than German militarism today. We know it's no war for democracy. We know that all the democratic safeguards now given up won't be restored in a hurry. We know this is no war for small nations: we know Ireland will be still under the Act of Union and likely to stay there long after the Germans are cleared out of Belgium. We know that this is no war for principle at all, but a commercial war resulting from secret diplomacy. We know all this is so, and time will prove us right; but meanwhile we're called cynics."

"And the sentimental drivellers who believe all they're told about this freedom-and-justice stunt call us unpractical dreamers because we hold the very practical policy of drilling and arming to secure our own rights. And the very same people who call this policy dreamy and unpractical also call it selfish and narrow-minded. Lord!" said O'Dwyer, "the contradictory abuse that I've listened to these few days. 'Look here!' I said to one man, 'we may be dreamy idealists, or we may be selfish cynics, but we can't possibly be both. Your case against us is too complete, so the probability is we're neither.' But the average man isn't logical."

"We should be highly flattered by being called dreamers," said Bernard. "All the great things in life have been done by people who were called that, for every fact is the materialization of a dream. There can be no birth without conception."

"The fact is," said O'Dwyer, "that the only really practical people are the dreamers. The man who prides himself on being practical is mentally blind."

"I quite agree," said Hektor. "But that's a dangerous doctrine to let loose unqualified in this country. Our people are only too ready to take people for dreamers who are merely wool-gatherers."

Dinner being over, Hektor now arose, and in a mock after-dinner manner proposed the toast of the Captain of the *Emden*, then at the height of its career of destroying British commerce. When this toast had been honoured McGurk arose and said:

"Gentlemen, we surely cannot allow this occasion to pass without coupling with the name of the gay and gallant captain that of Madame Britannia, the cast-off mistress of the seas."

They adjourned to the sitting-room to smoke, and amid all the jokes and arguments that whiled away the evening, one thought kept beating in Bernard's mind:

"We're at war with our own country, and with the world."

5

The next morning the Volunteer manifesto appeared in the newspapers, and, in fulfilment of expectation, the vast majority of the Volunteers gave in their adherence to Mr. Redmond, only about two thousand men in Dublin and about ten thousand over the rest of the country standing by the original Committee.

Then the flood gates of abuse were opened and the fountains of decency were broken up. Reason and argument were consigned to oblivion and it was attempted to swamp the recalcitrant minority with a flood of obloquy. They were called traitors to Ireland who stood for the very cause for which Mitchel was jailed and Tone died. They were called cowards who had thrown down the gauntlet to a mighty Empire and had had the courage to stand out against their own country when she took the wrong course. They were called hirelings, many of whom went without a coat in order to buy a gun. They were called selfish who submitted to persecution and imprisonment for justice' sake. They were called narrow-minded, who stood for the oldest and greatest of causes — the cause for which the whole war was alleged to be fought — the sacred cause of national freedom.

And they were called Sinn Feiners. . . . Years before

Arthur Griffin had propounded a policy of economic development and abstention from Westminster. His views not meeting with the approval of the Party machine he was crushed and driven out of public life by lies and obloquy. The name of Sinn Fein, though the party had practically ceased to exist, was still remembered by the electorate as one of ignominy, and it was a simple matter for the Parliamentary leaders to attach that name, along with the whole load of calumny associated with it, to the Volunteers. So Bernard and his friends, most of whom had never belonged to Sinn Fein — Bernard himself had barely heard of it — were labelled Sinn Feiners: traitors and outcasts.

All this abuse hurt Bernard acutely. Reading the newspapers made him rage incoherently. Stephen, however, took it all very philosophically; advised him to be calm and not to read leading articles; and prophesied the inevitable reaction. But in vain. Bernard argued high and low with every one he met; broke with many friends; and wrote furious letters to the papers which were never printed. Still moving in the social circles to which he was accustomed he found himself perpetually involved in controversy. Mrs. Gunby Rourke having heard that he did not intend to apply for a commission, intimated that their acquaintanceship should come to an end. (Her own darling boy, George, developed a stiff ankle and served his country on "work of national importance," to wit, a couple of hours' clerical work per week in a recruiting office for the first few months, to be dropped afterwards when people had ceased to enquire were you "doing your bit.") Sir Perry Tifflytis and Mr. Bonegraft were very contemptuous of "shirkers and slackers," and laughed Bernard's politics to scorn.

"Wish I was your age, my lad," said Sir Perry. "I'd be the first in the firing-line. By gad, what a chance for a young man!"

Augustine Reilly said the war was for truth and justice and religion and all that Ireland held dear.

"It isn't," said Bernard. "But even if it was Ireland

couldn't fight in it unless she had a government of her own to declare war."

"We ought to stand by England," said Augustine. "She has given us Home Rule. It's our Christian duty to forgive her. 'Love your enemies,' says Christ."

"He didn't tell us to show it by making new enemies," replied Bernard.

"'Let every soul be subject to the higher powers,' " quoted Augustine.

"'No man can serve two masters,'" answered Bernard.

"I don't see the point," said Augustine.

"'Which of you by taking thought can add one cubic inch to his brain?' Oh, go and boil your head."

Mr. Bonegraft appealed to Ireland's historic friendship for France, and Bernard responded by appealing to England's historic friendship for Prussia. Mr. Bonegraft had no answer to this and Bernard took advantage of his silence to add:

"And talking about our French alliance in Ninety-Eight you'd have been the first to denounce it if you'd been alive then. You'd have called us pro-French and said that Ireland's duty was to help England in the fight against French domination."

"But this is Ireland's war."

"I don't see it."

"Ireland will be disgraced for ever if she leaves civilization in the lurch."

"She'll be disgraced in good company, then," said Bernard. "She'll rank with Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Holland, Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, and Italy, to say nothing of Asia and America."

"Well, how will you like the Germans to come over here?" said Mr. Bonegraft.

"They aren't coming."

"Look at Belgium."

"Look at Denmark. She's in much greater danger than we are. If the Germans are so desperately keen on annex-

ing small nations why don't they tackle these that are near at hand?"

Mr. Bonegraft was again at a loss for an answer, so he fell back on his last line of defence.

"Ireland must do her duty as part of Britain," he said.

"Then," said Bernard, "why didn't you say so at once? If you believe that, the other reasons don't arise; and I deny that we're part of Britain."

This was Bernard's universal quarrel with the garrison classes. They wanted to have the argument both ways: to deny Ireland's nationhood, and yet to use arguments for her entering the war that could only apply on the assumption that she was a nation . . .

"What a narrow, selfish view you take!" said Mrs. Heuston Harrington. "Sinn Fein: Ourselves alone: and the whole of civilization in danger!"

"England and France and Russia are all Sinn Fein," said Bernard.

"How do you make that out?" sneered Mrs. Heuston Harrington.

"Each governs itself alone, doesn't it? Aren't they all fighting to establish Sinn Fein for Belgium?"

"Yes, but they're all united for a common aim."

"So might we fight for the same aim if we were free to do so."

"But you *are* free."

"I beg to differ."

"Home Rule is on the Statute Book. What more do you want?"

"I'd like to see it in force before I went to war on the strength of it."

"But that would be so mean! A piece of political bargaining, with civilization hanging in the balance!"

"So you call it mean to demand our own freedom before we go to fight for the freedom of others."

"But, my dear Mr. Lascelles, we *are* free."

"I'm afraid we're arguing in a circle," said Bernard.

"Exactly! That's always the way with you Sinn Feiners. You always come back to your stale old hatred of England. That's so narrow-minded of you. France and England have made up their quarrel. Why can't Ireland?"

"Because our grievance is still unremedied."

"What grievance?"

"We're still deprived of our parliament."

"Quite right. Why should England give up what she's won?"

"I thought you said we were free? If England's right to conquer Ireland why is Germany wrong to conquer Belgium?"

"Oh, that's different."

"How?"

"They did it in such a disgusting way."

"I suppose England conquered us in a decent way?"

"Now you needn't dig up old grievances from Ninety-Eight. They're past and gone."

"So are the German atrocities in Belgium."

"They're things of yesterday."

"A small difference in the vastness of eternity."

"Well, it's no use arguing with me. I hate politics and I hate disloyalty, and Ireland's a sink of both."

"Ah! So you dislike Ireland?"

"I should think so. Nasty, narrow little hole!"

"Then why are you so keen on bringing it into the war?"

"I'd much rather it was sunk into the sea."

"So," said Bernard, "the whole of your broad-minded attitude is this, that you simply prefer another and bigger country to your own. You might as well consider yourself broad-minded for preferring a fatter man to your husband."

This was very bad taste on Bernard's part, especially as Mrs. Heuston Harrington was a widow. But he was thoroughly exasperated by her narrow, truculent, muddled little mind.

Lady Mallaby Morchoe was very severe on Bernard's hatred of England.

"Madam," said Bernard, "I love the English people a great deal better than you do. I should like to see them paid decent wages and properly fed and housed and educated, and I should like to see their execrable social system destroyed."

"Oh, you're a Socialist," said Lady Mallaby Morchoe . . .

Many a grave humbug lectured Bernard on this hatred of his, and then went away to buy an evening paper and gloat over the reports of German slaughter. Bernard, whose heart bled for every man killed, Allied or German, used to listen with a bitter smile.

Soon Bernard grew tired of arguing. The Whigs in their fatuous belief in the English Liberals and the justice of the war were scarcely less irritating than the Tories. With these latter, however, he soon found it impossible to converse without losing his temper. While the whole of Nationalist Ireland in its generous foolishness surrendered freely to the "Union of Hearts," these grim stalwarts, trenched in their haughty stupidity, made no sign of softening their opposition to the national idea, and, as Bernard found, all their arguments boiled down to a bitter sediment of hatred for Ireland. . . . Moreover, his father, already treating him with coldness as a result of recent events, now became completely estranged, and Bernard gradually ceased to associate with the class in which he had been brought up, and began to make a place for himself in the society of his political brethren.

The very day after the split was his company's drill night. The pompous little Brohoon looked almost majestic as he put the simple issue to the men drawn up in company column in the gas-lit hall.

"Those who consider that the only authority capable of committing Ireland to a foreign war is an Irish Parliament elected by the Irish people will remain in their ranks," he said. "Those who accept the rule of the British Parliament will fall out. No doubt they will immediately go and enlist in the British Army."

With the issue put so clearly few men, however loyal to Mr. Redmond, had the courage to step forward. Only four, bashfully and with hesitation, fell out, and handed in their rifles to Brohoon. A jeer from the remainder was instantly suppressed by the officers. Bernard hoped for a while that this was a sign that Stephen's prophecy would be falsified, but next week only eighty men out of one hundred and ten turned up for parade, and the following week only sixty. Within a month their strength had been further reduced to less than fifty, but after that it decreased no more. By that time the popularity of the Volunteers had reached its lowest ebb and the inevitable flow had begun.

6

A few days after the Split, Mr. Asquith addressed a select meeting in the Mansion House. He proclaimed the justice of the Allied cause and appealed to Irishmen to join the forces of the Crown. The contribution, he said, must be the free gift of a free people, a pledge which, like all English pledges, was violated in little more than a year by the introduction of a Conscription Bill.

Bernard went out into the street that night to observe the temper of the people. It was quite clear that either the authorities did not fully trust this new-born loyalty, or else feared some desperate deed from the recalcitrant minority, for the Irish public, to whom the Premier's words were addressed, was carefully excluded from the Mansion (admission being by ticket, and the tickets being reserved for trusted members of the garrison who must have smiled at the amiable sentiments expressed by Mr. Asquith) and the streets swarmed with police, who formed a cordon round all approaches to the Mansion House, while a squadron of cavalry was said to be waiting in the Castle Yard in preparation for all eventualities.

The streets were crowded, and there was a general atmosphere of curiosity and excitement. Questions of policy were freely discussed by groups of people meeting one an-

other for the first time in their lives. The sentimental Englishman wandering amidst the crowds would have heard little to flatter him from these people whose "loyalty" had touched every soft heart in the Empire; for the great war was looked upon entirely from an Irish point of view, and Irish "loyalty" was quite obviously conditional. The universal argument that turned the scale everywhere was that German rule would probably be worse than English rule, and the fact that France was on England's side was the only argument in favour of England's sincerity that carried any weight whatever. The general belief in France struck Bernard as rather pathetic. Many Irishmen who would otherwise have been as anti-British as Bernard were led to join the British Army out of a belief that Ireland ought to repay France for the help she had given us in Ninety-Eight. "France'll see us through all right," said one man to whom Bernard expressed doubts of England's good faith. Bernard had not the heart to tell him of the ways of diplomats.

In the streets leading to the Mansion House the "free people" surged fruitlessly against the rocky line of police. Mounted constabulary clattered up and down the centre of the streets. Men and women, white-faced under the arc lamps, wandered aimlessly hither and thither. Sounds of singing came from divers directions: rebel airs now deemed harmless.

Resting on a seat outside Stephen's Green, Bernard found Edwin D'Arcy the young poet who frequented Mrs. Heuston Harrington's at homes.

"Well, what's your opinion of all this?" asked Bernard.

"I have none," said D'Arcy. "Opinions form no part of the poet's equipment."

"What about Shelley?" said Bernard, promptly.

"His ideas, such as they were, merely spoiled his poetry. I prefer to stand aloof from material happenings. Politics are no concern of mine. They're a dirty game."

"Not essentially," snapped Bernard. "Only so far as

men make them so. Man's a dirty creature. He dirties everything he touches from Religion to literature. But you wouldn't give up Religion on account of the Inquisition or the Penal Laws, or literature on account of the Heptameron. Then why Politics?"

D'Arcy swept the hair back from his forehead and said dreamily:

"They are too small and finite for the poet's attention."

"Ass!" cried Bernard. "The life of man is in politics. All his greatness and smallness, all his nobility and meanness. You describe a man fully to me if you tell me his religion and politics, and if you desert politics you desert life. Great art can't be made out of the pathology of a neurotic soul. Man is the only theme worth singing, and man collectively should be the hero of great novels."

"Lascelles, you're a philistine," said D'Arcy.

"The hair of the human head," said Bernard, "is a hollow tube growing from a follicle. If allowed to exceed a certain length a hair is liable to split and dry up. You really ought to get your hair cut, D'Arcy."

He left him, gaping prosaically.

And now the opposition element began to make itself felt in the streets. Arriving at the top of Grafton Street Bernard could see above the crowd a string of torches approaching. In their midst was a waggonette. Arrived at the open space the waggonette halted and was immediately surrounded by the torch-bearers and a cordon of armed men, whom Bernard recognized by their uniform as members of the Citizen Army: dark, stern, dirty men, they stood at attention, their fixed bayonets flashing in the dancing light of the torches. In the waggonette Larkin arose and addressed the crowd.

Bernard shook himself free from the press and walked back towards Dawson Street. Behind him he could hear an occasional cheer punctuating the Labour Leader's speech. At the top of Dawson Street he encountered Mabel, Molly, and Jack Harvey.

"Hello, Lascelles! This is a pleasure, old chap," cried Jack in his effusive way. "Magnificent display of loyalty, what? Makes one proud to be Irish, doesn't it?"

"Does one need the compulsion?" asked Bernard, drily.

Mabel and Molly both laughed.

"Jack's a desperate loyalist," said Mabel.

"Well, I should think so," said Jack. "Even the most extreme Fenians must realize that England's on the right side this time."

"I don't know," said Bernard. "And even if she is, I don't see that it's any reason why we should fight for her. We're not called upon to fight in every war that happens to be just — unless we're a very exceptional nation."

"But we're British subjects," said the scandalized Jack.

"Oh, go to hell!" exclaimed Bernard, impatiently.

He saw Mabel watching his impatience with eyes gleaming with amusement.

"Let's have a stroll around," he suggested.

"Oh, let's!" cried Mabel, and, starting off by his side, left Molly to follow with Jack.

"Are you a loyalist, too?" asked Bernard.

"I don't know what I am," replied Mabel. "You see I've never taken much interest in politics up to this. . . . I only want what's best for Ireland, and it's so hard to know . . . It seems a shame to throw Redmond over . . . after all he's done . . ."

She spoke tentatively and with hesitation, blushing a little, and Bernard listened patiently.

"From my knowledge of Irish history," said he, "I'm convinced that the only safe course is never to trust England. We've never trusted her yet without being let down, and I don't believe she's mended her ways."

"I have the same feeling myself," said Mabel, "but Jack says women have no business meddling in politics. He says they follow their hearts rather than their heads."

Bernard laughed loudly at this.

"Really," he said, "even though he is your brother, I

must say Jack's a donkey. Is he thinking of joining the army, by the way?"

"Oh, yes. He's applied for a commission already."

Bernard found Mabel an interesting companion. They walked on, discussing a variety of subjects, quite oblivious of the crowd. At the remote end of the Green they came upon a little knot of people gathered round a tiny motor car from which Brian Mallow was delivering a passionate harangue.

"Let's listen to him," said Mabel, and they pressed forward towards the car.

"They may talk about German atrocities," Mallow was saying, "but *we* know of atrocities nearer home. What about the pitch-caps and half-hangings of Ninety-Eight? What about Bachelor's Walk only the other day? Victims of that atrocity are lying in the Dublin hospitals at this very minute. They may talk about small nationalities, but let us tell them that kindness to small nations might begin at home. They can set Ireland free without plunging into any European war. And as for broken treaties, what right have they to complain of broken treaties who have the Treaty of Limerick, and the Renunciation Act of '82, and the Home Rule Act of the day before yesterday to their credit? . . . Oh, Irishmen, don't be blind, trusting fools yet again after your long history of broken faith. England is a liar, England is a tyrant, England is a hypocrite, England is your enemy! . . ."

At this moment a squad of police came pushing its way through the crowd. Mallow, seeing that escape was hopeless, cried out:

"Oh, you can seize and imprison and murder me if you like. But the truth you can never kill. . . . Irishmen are used to persecution . . ."

There was a murmur from the crowd as the orator was dragged roughly from his place. True, Ireland had decided to join in the war, but the tradition of seven centuries will not vanish in a month, and from the moment that Eng-

land laid her hands upon an Irishman he ceased to be a factionist and became a patriot and a martyr. As Bernard saw the glittering helmets of the police recede in the distance he felt that the tide had already turned. Brian Mallow, pig-headed, stupid and sincere, had killed Imperialism.

"I jolly well hope he'll be shot," said the voice of Jack from behind. "That kind of fellow almost makes one ashamed to be Irish."

"Well, hurry up and get naturalized English," snapped Bernard, and hurried away with Mabel.

"That *shows* how the English look on us," said Mabel.

Bernard looked at her, admiring her flushed cheeks and flashing eyes.

"I'm glad you don't agree with Jack," he said.

A moment later Molly overtook them.

"It's nine o'clock," she said. "We must be getting home."

"You can get a tram at the Pillar," said Bernard. "I'll see you that far."

He covered the distance as slowly as he could, which was not very slow owing to the necessity of keeping ahead of the others. At the tram he held her hand in his for quite three seconds. It made no resistance.

"By gad!" he said, on the way home, "she's a great girl. . . . Pretty . . . my word! . . . and she can talk, too."

He played with visionary possibilities and thought about her all the time he was undressing.

7

"Well, if the English aren't the bloody limit!" said McGurk. "What do you think of this?"

He took up his newspaper and read:

"O, the Irish love a fight,
Says the Shan Van Vocht,
If the cause be wrong or right,
Says the Shan Van Vocht.
But their hearts most bravely glow

And they deal their hardest blow
 When their foe is freedom's foe,
 Says the Shan Van Vocht.

That's out of an English Unionist paper," he said. "Hell roast them!"

"I could forgive Redmond almost everything else," said Bernard, "but I can't forgive him for letting us in for that kind of thing. The English papers seem to be crammed with these 'loyalist' parodies. I suppose it flatters some people."

"Not it!" said McGurk. "It'll sicken them. It's the best thing that could happen. Listen to this now:

"God save our noble King!
 Says the Shan Van Vocht,
 Let dissensions all take wing,
 Says the Shan Van Vocht
 Hibernia bends the knee,
 To Britannia bold and free,
 And hurrah for loyalty!
 Says the Shan Van Vocht."

"No more, for heaven's sake," said Bernard. "Who the blazes does the author think the Shan Van Vocht is?"

Enthusiastic Englishmen, with that stupidity, self-sufficiency, and incapacity to see any point of view but their own which distinguishes their race, were at this time indulging in the above kind of nauseating patronage of Ireland by the ream and the volume. The true reason and nature of Ireland's advocacy of the Allied cause they were incapable of appreciating, and it would have offended them had they discovered it. England's real feelings towards Ireland were not long in manifesting themselves.

"Every man," said a Volunteer officer to his company on the occasion of the Split, "who conscientiously believes that this is Ireland's war and that he is fighting for Ireland in fighting the Germans, should hasten to don the khaki. We, however, who do not hold that view, will remain Irish Vol-

unteers." He was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for "prejudicing recruitment."

One day, Bernard and Stephen attended a recruiting meeting in a village in the North County Dublin. There was a platform decorated with green flags, Union Jacks, and the French and Belgian flags, in the street, and a band was playing Irish and British airs alternately. As the two young men entered the village it had just finished *The Felons of Our Land* and it began immediately on *Rule Britannia*.

"Who called us a logical people?" said Stephen.

The speakers ascended the platform and the population began to gather around. The chairman was a retired Colonel (to judge from his appearance) and the principal speakers were a young subaltern in uniform, a Member of Parliament, and the President of the local branch of the United Irish League. The subaltern led off with a few formal remarks about the justice of the war and the duty of every British citizen to fight for his King and country. He was listened to with cold attention. Then came the M.P. He ranted in the approved style about gallant little Belgium and France, the friend of Ireland, and the rights of small nationalities. He was lavishly applauded. Then arose the local light.

"Since England has given us Home Rule," he declared, "it's only fair we should help her in her own hour of trouble. . . ."

But the chairman quickly called him to order.

"I can't allow political speeches," he said with some asperity.

The speaker scratched his head, clearly puzzled as to how to proceed. The only valid reason for Irishmen to go to the front being taken away, he could not think of any other. He floundered for a minute, and then a mischevious look came into his eyes.

"If the Germans come to Ireland," he said, "they'd treat us like the English did in Ninety-Eight . . . or worse, maybe."

"Hear! Hear!" yelled Bernard in delight.

Purple with rage the chairman bounded from his seat and stalked off the platform. There was a cheer from the crowd and the band struck up the tune of *Who Fears to Speak of Ninety-Eight?*

Bernard laughed heartily as he and Stephen strolled away.

"That kind of thing is worth tons of our own propaganda," he said.

He and Stephen and Hektor and O'Dwyer had spent the last few weeks in a feverish rush of writing, each putting the Volunteer case in his own characteristic way. Stephen, in cold lucid language, appealed to pure reason; Bernard wrote passionately about historic analogies; Hektor revealed the workings of European diplomacy; and O'Dwyer wrote scathing verses. Stephen issued a handbill which ran as follows:

TRUTH AND REASON

The truth at the bottom of any question is simple and easy to find if honestly sought. The essence of truth is simplicity, and if a case is complex it should be looked upon with suspicion. One simple all-sufficing reason is more cogent than a multiplicity of arguments, for in multiplicity lies redundancy and contradiction. The Volunteer case is simple. In accordance with all the principles upon which Nationalism is based we deny the right of any body or party to commit the Irish People to a foreign war save only an Irish Parliament freely elected. This argument is all-sufficient, and no plea of the justice of the war or Ireland's interest therein or any other reason or excuse can stand against it or need be discussed. On the other hand the Parliamentary Party's case is too well bolstered up with arguments to be essentially sound. Suppose for the sake of argument we grant their contention that Ireland's interests are at stake in this war. How then does their second contention stand, namely that we are bound to assist England out of gratitude for Home Rule? For surely it is no return to England to fight for our own interests? There is not, in fact, a single argument of the Party's which

is not open to question, whereas not even Mr. Redmond himself dare deny our basic principle.

Stand by the simple case and join the Irish volunteers.

Bernard harped a good deal on one point, namely, that the Home Rule Act was not regarded in England as an international treaty, but as a party measure, which another English party might rescind without in any way tarnishing England's honour in the eyes of the world, and that Nationalists need not count upon Home Rule as a reward for her services, since the Unionists could with equal justice demand its repeal as a reward for theirs.

O'Dwyer's verses were of a ribald kind. Phrases like Sir Edward Grey's "One Bright Spot," Mr. Asquith's "Free gift of a free people," and Redmond's "sharp curve in our policy," he gleefully seized upon as refrains. One typical example was sung by McGurk at a concert:

"O, the Bill is on the Book,
Says the John-John-Joe.
'Tis a comfortable nook;
Says the John-John-Joe.
And tho' the curve be sharp,
From the Bulldog to the Harp,
Sure 'tis only cranks will carp,
Says the John-John-Joe."

But all their wit and effort went for naught, for nobody but those who already agreed with them ever read their papers.

And it was not long before the enemy struck back. Irish Volunteers were deported from one end of the country to the other, or confined to certain districts. Thus, one prominent local leader was banished from his home in Kerry and assigned the northern half of County Wicklow for his future habitat; Crowley was confined to a radius of fifty miles around Ballylangan; another man was forbidden to approach to within ten miles of any coast; and finally Stephen re-

ceived an order confining him to the city and suburbs of Dublin.

"Will you obey it?" asked Bernard.

"Until it becomes inconvenient," said Stephen. "I've no desire for imprisonment, but I won't submit if I don't want to."

Then their newspapers were attacked. There were three of these: *Sinn Fein*, a long-established weekly, organ of the relics of the political party of that name; *Irish Freedom*, an independent and very outspoken monthly; and *Ireland*, a daily, a fearless supporter of the cause of the Volunteers. One morning a force of police and military arrived at the offices of each of these organs. An entry was forced; all copies of the papers were seized upon and carried away; the printing machinery was dismantled, and, in one case, smashed; and further publication was prohibited. The only paper to survive the storm was the *Irish Volunteer*, which, being entirely devoted to technical military articles, furnished no handle that its enemies could lay hold of as an excuse for suppression.

"Opening of hostilities on the Irish front," announced McGurk. "British troops occupied several Irish positions this morning. There were no losses but honour."

There were two or three arrests for writings and speeches at about the same time, and Brian Mallow, coming up for trial, received three months' imprisonment.

"What will they say of this at Ashbury?" thought Bernard. He had recently received a copy of the *Ashbury Chronicle*, which announced the deaths in action of several Old Ashburians, among whom were Bernard's old enemies, Sherringham and Tomkins. Tomkins was described as "a gentle, good-humoured boy, with a deep devotion to St. Aloysius," and Sherringham was "a model of all that an English Catholic gentleman should be."

"He looks better in uniform than in my memory," said Bernard, surveying the accompanying photograph.

8

"This suit positively sings your praises as a valet, Swathythe. How do I look?"

"Very genteel indeed, sir."

"There are only two kinds of people in the world, Swathythe. Those who wear their best clothes on Sunday, and those who wear their worst."

"Yes, sir."

"That was a very snobbish remark on my part, Swathythe."

"Yes, sir."

"But very profound all the same, Swathythe."

"Yes, sir."

"I think, however, one may safely stretch a point when taking a young lady out to tea for the first time."

"No doubt of it, sir."

Exceptionally spruce and very pleased with himself, Bernard set out for the rendezvous. It had not taken him long to fall in quasi-love with Mabel, her prettiness, attractive conversation, and evident liking for himself making him a very willing victim. Of passion he had none as yet — but what young man will refuse the companionship of a pretty girl when it can be had for the asking? We like the love that comes easy, and laughing love runs smoother than *grand passion*.

She ran smiling to meet him at the railway station and they took tickets for Howth. At first they said little; just sat in opposite corners and smiled at each other. They could not look at each other without breaking out into beaming smiles. It was a dull, cold day, and Bernard feeling a nip even through his heavy frieze coat, wondered how she kept from shivering in her thin tweed jacket, eked out with a shabby and exiguous fur. He noticed a chilblain on one finger that peeped through a hole in her glove, and he thought of those chilly little hands busy typewriting in the rawness of the early mornings when he was only just rising

from bed. . . . He cursed the world's economic system fiercely in his heart.

"If mother only knew what I was up to!" exclaimed Mabel, happily.

"Is she very puritanical?"

"Oh, no. Selfish, merely. She thinks we ought to stay at home to keep her company. We'd be always dancing attendance on her if she had her way. Susan gives in to her and never gets a breath of fresh air in consequence. I always have to make up some unpleasant excuse if I want to get away. If she thought I was going to enjoy myself there'd be ructions."

"The appalling selfishness of parents!" declaimed Bernard. He told her about O'Dwyer's casting forth.

"Mother made Susan promise not to get married during her lifetime. She was a fool to do it, I think, but then . . . Susan . . ."

Bernard laughed as she hesitated.

"Go on," he urged.

"O, nothing," she said.

At Howth station they took a tram to the summit, from the top of which they had a fine view of the harbour, Ireland's Eye and Lambay, all seemingly asleep in the grey light of the December afternoon. Bernard told her about the gun-running, omitting, however, all reference to Milady and to the part Mabel's own simulacrum had played in the drama. He had not yet finished his narrative when they came to a cottage with the inviting signboard:

TEA AND HOT SCONES

They went inside and over steaming hot cakes and toast and black currant jam she listened eagerly to the conclusion of the tale: the storm, the landing, and the battle of Clontarf. Tea over, they sat talking over a hundred different subjects, Bernard smoking his pipe, she with a cigarette balanced between her dainty lips. She could chatter interestingly

enough, and she had an amusing gift of repartee, but Bernard was a little disappointed at her attitude towards the things of which he thought most highly. She cared nothing for poetry, and laughed at any he quoted. Most of the great novelists she thought "dry," yet her taste in literature was neither cheap nor vicious. Her favourite writers were mediocrities. She knew nothing about painting, but she "liked" certain pictures: Landseer's work, and Hobbema's *Middleharnis Avenue*, and *The Fighting Temeraire*. She "liked" music, too, she said, and it happened that her taste was good. She preferred *Figaro* to "any of those musical comedies," and she was very "fond of" some of Beethoven's work. But she did not know that music possessed a meaning (she thought it was no more than a sound-pattern); and she did not know that Beethoven was great and Verdi second-rate; she had no standards of merit and merely went by her preferences.

It did not take Bernard long to find out all this, and then he resigned himself to the inevitable and allowed her to chatter in her own inimitable way: which was quite sufficient to charm away his disappointment. She was quick to see, too, where his main interest lay, and it was not long before she started to question him on politics.

"Tell me," she said, "could Ireland really manage to get on if she was independent? Everyone I know says we couldn't do without England's money."

"Everyone is extraordinarily ignorant," said Bernard. "Especially those who are most dogmatic. So far from our getting any money from England, she gets it from us. For the last fifty years the amount she's spent on us has always been about three millions less than our annual revenue. If we were free we'd have our whole revenue to ourselves, and it would be quite sufficient for our needs. Norway and Sweden and Denmark and Belgium and Bulgaria and a few other small nations have all revenues in or about the same as ours: some a little more, some a little less. And on that they run Kings and courts and armies and navies

and diplomatic services and mercantile marines, and much better educational and agricultural systems than ours. . . . So far from not being able to manage without England, I don't see how we're going to escape ruination unless we get rid of her at once."

"I'm so glad to know that," said Mabel. "I shan't be sat upon in argument again."

Evening fell, and wandering out under the stars, they walked slowly down the hill. They spoke little, and when they did their voices were strangely hushed. . . . She shivered slightly, and apprehensively he caught her arm.

"You're cold?" he said.

"Only slightly," she assured him. With her upper arm she imprisoned his hand against her side. He slipped his arm right through and held hers close. United in warm intimacy they strode down the hill keeping step together. Her eyes shone in the darkness. . . .

Quite frankly their hands dwelt upon the farewell hand-clasp as he left her at her door . . .

"She's mine . . ." he said to himself that evening, and not even a fleeting vision of a certain avenue of cedars could disturb his satisfaction.

9

Within a week of the declaration of war Sandy applied for a commission in the British Army, and Eugene was not long in following his example. Sandy's action was only to be expected, for he was a gay, thoughtless youth who took no interest in politics and leaped at this chance of change and adventure. But Bernard took it upon himself to remonstrate with Eugene.

"It's no use, Bernard," replied Eugene. "Only your biased frame of mind prevents you seeing the justice of this war. Freedom, Civilization and Christianity are at stake, and my conscience tells me I must go to their defence."

"I like your self-righteousness," said Bernard, angrily. "You religious people seem to think no one has a conscience

but yourselves. Biased frame of mind, indeed! I've as much care for Freedom and Civilization as you have. That's why I'm in the Irish Volunteers."

"Don't let us quarrel over it, anyway," said Eugene, and Bernard, looking at his honest, good-humoured and perturbed countenance, and thinking of dreadful possibilities, relented. He criticized no more, and said:

"Well, good luck, old man."

About the same time he received a letter from Willoughby, who was in training at Salisbury Plain.

"I think even you will agree," it ran, "that England is fighting for a just cause this time. Believe me, Bernard, we didn't want this war. It is Germany's doing entirely, and when that monstrous war-machine is smashed you will rejoice with us that war has been banished from the earth . . .

"Religion, morality, all the amenities of civilization as we know it, are at stake. The free man of the English and French ideal is at issue with the trained machine of the German system . . .

"I knew that in such a cause Ireland would not be backward. Her action in this crisis has won her many friends. Even my brother Frank has become a Home Ruler . . .

"I expect I'll meet you one of these days on a field in France . . ."

"Moore was right," groaned Bernard. "What hellish power rules us that can turn the honesty and bravery of these fine young men to its own vile ends? . . . And what can I say to Willoughby?"

IO

Soldiers marching to battle. . . . Bernard stood at the foot of Grafton Street to watch them. First came the band, playing a stirring martial air that set the heart beating and made the feet want to go a-marching. Next came the fightingmen, khaki-clad figures carrying rifles, heavy laden with packs, great-coats, trench tools, and mess-tins. A thousand

men . . . two thousand. One day's casualty list. . . . They'll bury as many tomorrow. Every day a mass of men like these will be blotted out of life, ever to be replaced by fresh drafts from home.

"Morituros vos saluto," muttered Bernard.

But these doomed faces are cheerful. Boyish faces most of them . . . Irish faces. Sons of the soil of Ireland marching to die for — what? Famine and war and emigration have drained her of her sons for centuries. The flower of her manhood is gone beyond recall. She is a nation bled almost white. . . . Yet forth they go as their kind have ever gone, believing that the motherland requires it.

"Two thousand Irishmen lost to Ireland," says Bernard, and bitterly curses those responsible for the wastage.

The column passes on: the band ceases: the men strike up the well-known air of *Tipperary*. The common-place, hackneyed melody, sung by voices, soon to be silenced for ever, mingles with and is drowned by the hum of traffic. Unexalted melancholy takes possession of the listener.

II

Christmas came: the first Christmas of the war, and the last before the food-shortage. But it brought no peace or good-will. In the trenches, attempts to fraternize on the part of the men on both sides were sternly discountenanced by the Allied Commanders. The last shred of humanity was torn away from warfare.

Owing to the uncompromising attitude of his father, Bernard was not invited to share the family Christmas dinner and was looking forward to eating it in solitary state under the servile patronage of Swathythe when he received an invitation from Stephen to spend Christmas week with him at Glencoole. Bernard accepted gladly, and it was arranged that they should motor out on the night of Christmas Eve.

He spent the afternoon with Mabel. He met her at three o'clock, and they strolled about the streets together in the ever thickening crowd. There was no sign of war about

the city that evening. The streets were brightly lit, the shop windows gaily adorned and blazing with light; the restaurants were packed with chattering people, and the air of universal cheerfulness associated with Christmas was in no wise diminished. The war had not yet brought its hardships.

Bernard and Mabel mingled with the crowd of shoppers, parcel-laden, wrapped and muffled, breathing steam into the frosty air.

"I love jostling with a good crowd," said Bernard.

"So do I," replied Mabel.

They went to a book-shop where he bought her a volume of Mangan's poems and Mitchel's *Last Conquest*, and then she shyly presented him with a tie-pin which she had kept concealed in her hand-bag up to this. After that they went to Mitchell's and after a long wait secured a rather scrambled tea. Bernard's every sense was acute to seize its own particular pleasure. He enjoyed the crimson-shaded lights, and the cheerful glow of the red berries amid the black holly-leaves of the decorations. He enjoyed the stupefying clamour of many voices with its accompaniment of clattering cups, mixed as it was with the alternate crescendo and diminuendo of the street-noises as the doors swung open and closed again. The sense of being at one with all humanity that always seized upon him when in a crowd thrilled through his being now. . . . The maid bustled up with the tea: delicate fragrance of China: warmer of the hearts of men. He watched Mabel pouring it out, holding the pot gracefully as only a girl knows how. . . . Delicious creamy cakes that seemed to melt in the mouth. . . . The world seemed a good place in those few minutes.

"Hurrah for living!" he said, looking into Mabel's eyes, and she responded with a laugh . . .

Stephen arrived at Harcourt Street that night at the time appointed and they set out at once in Bernard's little car. They rushed through the sleeping villages of Terenure and Rathfarnham and out along the slushy roads through the

cold night air towards the mountains. As they climbed towards the high ground they felt the nip of frost, and the surface of the road hardened, and glittered under the lamp-light of the car. Up and up they panted, then slid down the dark glenside, crossed the bottom, and up again.

"By the way," said Stephen, "don't talk politics to my father. He's a bit queer on the subject. He's an old Fenian and got badly let down by some of his friends, so he's been sour about it ever since. . . . He looks on politics much as your friend Fergus Moore does, but he's bitterer. . . . Whoa! Here we are."

Bernard pulled up as they reached a cottage gate. Stephen leaned across him and tootled the horn before dismounting, whereupon an old man came rushing out of the cottage and embraced Stephen with an effusiveness that rather embarrassed Bernard.

"Come in! Come in!" cried Michael Ward, and as Bernard came blinking into the light of the sitting-room the first thing that caught his eye was a large photograph of his dead Uncle Christopher over the mantelpiece.

Before he could make any comment, however, he was hustled upstairs to a low-ceilinged, plainly-furnished bedroom, while the old man ran off to hasten supper. As he performed his ablutions Bernard shouted across to Stephen's room that the photograph in the sitting-room was of an uncle of his and asked for an explanation. Stephen was much surprised.

"He was a great friend of my father's in days gone by," he said. "They were mixed up in one of those Fenian plots. . . . To think of his being your uncle!"

"He was more. He was my godfather . . . and he had a lot to do with making me a Nationalist."

"By Jove! . . . He did the same for me."

"How?" asked Bernard, all curiosity.

"I'll tell you later," said Stephen. "We'd best be going down now. . . . Remember what I told you."

There was a steaming dish of bacon and eggs with tea

and potato-cakes on the table when they came downstairs. Michael Ward was keenly interested to learn that Bernard was Chris Reilly's nephew. Shaking his hand with renewed warmth, he said:

"Sure he was talking to me about you the last day he was here . . . it must be fifteen years ago."

Bernard and Stephen fell to on the appetizing supper, and Michael Ward sat and watched them.

"Have you reformed the world yet, Stephen?" he grunted after some moments' silence.

"We've made a beginning," said Stephen, quietly. "How's the farm going?"

"Well enough, Stephen. But I wish I had you back, my boy."

When the meal was over they sat and talked for a couple of hours. Bernard brought his uncle's name forward several times in the hope of hearing some of his past history. He had often questioned his mother on the subject, but she knew nothing of the political side of Christopher's life, and was disinclined to talk about what she considered the discreditable end to it. But old Ward, though ready to speak in terms of enthusiasm about his friend's qualities, was very reticent about his history, and Bernard soon dropped the subject.

As they went upstairs to bed that night Bernard said to Stephen:

"I say. You know you've broken bounds?"

"I know," said Stephen. "And it's not the first time, either. I risk it now and again."

12

Bernard began for the first time to know Stephen fully during that visit. He had been inclined to underrate him before, thinking that his intense occupation with the things of the moment was a sign of narrowness. Now from close acquaintance he could see that Stephen's outlook was as wide as his own while he had a power of concentration on the

matter in hand and a grip of detail in which Bernard was woefully lacking.

"Going up the glen today?" asked Michael Ward one morning as they set out from the cottage. "It isn't what it used to be," he said, sadly. "Most of my woods have been cut down . . . gone to make masts for British ships, most likely. . . . Divil sink them."

"Father's crazy about trees," said Stephen, as they climbed the far slope of the glen. "He's right, too. I'm afraid it looks as if our children will be born into a treeless island. Look at that."

They were passing a clearing: the site of the very wood in which Michael Ward and Chris Reilly had walked fifteen years ago.

"I think a clearing is one of the saddest sights there is," said Bernard. "To think that this is going on all over the country. And how irreparable it is. If we got a Republic tomorrow the country wouldn't be fully afforested in our life time. . . . *Auri sacra fames!* What soulless vandalism!"

"It's rotten economics, anyway," said Stephen.

They turned back and surveyed the valley behind them.

"What a pretentious bridge that is," remarked Bernard. "It would be big enough for the Shannon."

"Funny you noticed that," said Stephen. "Your uncle made the same remark to me years ago when I was a boy." And he told Bernard all about Chris's visit.

It was a typical Irish winter's day, soft and moist, with a tinge of grey over everything. Heavy grey clouds hung in the sky with a pearly shimmer on them in the region of the sun. The bracken and frocken were dank and heavy and the turf was black and sodden. They passed a cottage, an ill-built miserable affair. The walls had not been white-washed for months and they were splotched and mouldy. The unhealthy looking roof of rotting thatch was caved in. Ruinous out-houses had been dropped about it anyhow. There was a large dunghill close to the doorway, whose

brown, stinking drainage puddled the yard and the adjacent roadway.

"Habitation of a citizen of the British Empire," said Stephen. "The son of the house has gone to fight for civilization etcetera when he'd be much better employed in making this little spot fit for a civilized man to live in. . . . Good-morning, Mr. Dolan, how are things?"

This was addressed to an old man smoking a foul clay pipe who appeared at the half door at this minute.

"Ah, sure they might be better, glory be to God. An' how's yourself?"

"Couldn't be better, thanks. Any news of Barney?"

"He's not at the front yet, thank God. But he soon will be. . . . These is terrible times, Mr. Stephen."

"Terrible," said Stephen.

"Will we be seein' Home Rule soon at all, do ye think?"

"We will not, Mr. Dolan, and that's my honest opinion."

"Glory be to God, an' what are all the boys goin' to the war for?"

"God knows, Mr. Dolan."

"'Tis a terrible thing us to be losing our young men and no showin' for it."

"It is that, Mr. Dolan, and you can thank your leaders for it."

"Sure I felt that all along, but musha, what can you do?"

"You're a Sinn Féiner, Mr. Dolan," said Stephen.

"I am not," said the old man, angrily.

Stephen hastily changed the subject.

"What's wrong with your hens?" he asked.

"I think it's the cholera they've got."

"How did they manage to get that?"

"Faith, I dunno . . . unless it's from pickin' in the dung-heap there."

"Why don't you rail it in then?"

"Sure it mightn't be that at all."

"Well, we'll be going on. Good-bye, Dolan."

"Good-bye, Misther Stephen."

"See that," said Stephen to Bernard as they passed on. "No Imperial thinking there. The heart of the people is sound at bottom, even if loyalty to their leaders leads them astray superficially."

"Rubbishy remark that of Juliet's about What's in a Name," said Bernard. "That man obviously believes in independence, yet he objects to being called a Sinn Feiner."

The road swung out on to the open bog.

"These bogs are playing the devil with out national character," said Stephen. "They enervate the whole atmosphere. That's why we're what we are: a lazy, inefficient people. We think everything worth doing, and nothing worth doing well. Look at that man with his hens. And he's not the only fool like that in Ireland. Nearly every cottage in the country has its dung-hill at the front door, and its drainage going to waste and being a nuisance."

"How little sense of beauty they have," said Bernard. "Those awful out-houses! And the makeshifts they have everywhere for gates: bits of old bedsteads and the like."

"Due to history," said Stephen. "In the old days your rent was put up if you had a geranium in your window, so the habit of the poor mouth grew up and sticks to them still."

"How very uncouth in their habits our people are," said Bernard. "What a pity they don't adopt the continental habit of wearing blouses at their work. How gross their family life is when you come to think of it, with the men coming home in their dirty working clothes. We'll need to restore civilization in this country when we've got our freedom."

Stephen told Bernard about all his reconstructive projects: the improvement of agriculture, the construction of a mercantile marine, the development of fisheries; the completion of the canal system begun by the Irish Parliament of 1782 and cut short by the Union; afforestation; industrial development and utilization of mines and other natural resources; and finally a complete reorganization of education.

Bernard, if the truth must be told, did not listen very attentively. The image of Mabel was disconcertingly prominent in his thoughts; it hovered before him in the daytime and came to him in his dreams at night. He dwelt upon the image with pleasure when it came, and even conjured it up deliberately in idle moments.

And she had written to him. In his pocket was a letter he had received that morning. She was going to a dance at the Gresham on New Year's Eve, she said. Would he be back in time for it? Inly he swore that he would and was even now casting about for excuses to shorten his stay at Glencoele.

"Then the army in a free Ireland," went on Stephen, "wouldn't be an unproductive service like in other countries. I'd employ the soldiers on national work — reclaiming of bogs, afforestation, and what not. . . . I wouldn't keep them in barracks either: they'd live in specially built military villages with their wives and children — the villages to be modelled, more or less, on ancient Sparta. . . . Suppose I wanted to reclaim this bog here for example. I'd run up a village quickly on that firm patch over there, and camp a regiment there till the work was finished. . . . By this means we could keep up a far larger standing army than we could otherwise afford. And we'd need it, too, with the world the way it is."

They got on to the question of education for a while. Stephen insisted upon the necessity of a philosophic basis for education.

"Modern education," he said, "teaches too many facts (and too many lies also) and makes no attempt to get people to *think* . . . That's why men are so easily deceived and imposed upon. . . . That's why this war's going on today. . . . Lack of thought, incapacity for deduction, that's what does it."

Bernard was more concerned with organization than with the curriculum. He revealed to Stephen the horrors of the Public School system as he had known it.

"Let's have no big schools," he said. "Boys' schools should be divided into three classes: Primary, for those under ten, secondary for those from eleven to fourteen, and tertiary for those from fifteen to seventeen. Let there be plenty of widely-distributed primary and secondary schools, and let none of them be boarding-schools. The tertiary can be boarding or day as you like, but young boys become savages if they're separated from their mothers and sisters."

Thus disjointedly and at haphazard as they wandered about the neighbourhood of Glencoole they discussed their plans and projects. Sweeping projects they were: broad in outline, but lacking in detail: rather absurd some of them: but all honest and disinterested: young men's plans. . . . And always at the very height of their enthusiasm they would be pulled up by the melancholy reflection that the first step, the very essential to making any attempt to realize their dreams, was yet unaccomplished. The shadow of the occupation still lay over everything; and their own countrymen were still hostile to them and seemingly content to rest in its obscurity.

New Year's Eve approached, and Bernard felt his longing for Mabel growing irresistible. To dance with her would be joy supreme. To spend a whole evening, perhaps, in her company. . . . His hopes were ecstatic.

"Look here, old chap," he said to Stephen, "I'm afraid I must leave tomorrow. There's a patient I can't put off"

And Stephen knew he was lying, and was thankful to be exempted from the tender emotions.

13

The ball-room was ablaze with lights and garlands, the air throbbed with music, and the floor was slippery as ice. Bernard had come early, and prowled about with impatience gnawing at his heart, looking out for Mabel's arrival. Girls he knew looked in his direction expecting to be asked for dances, but he pretended not to see them. He had two

empty programs in the pocket of his piqué waistcoat.

Mabel was late.

"That curséd dawdling brother of hers!" muttered Bernard, savagely, to himself.

The first dance was well under way when she appeared, a dainty fairy-like figure clad in white net with a pink waistband, the light gleaming in her hair.

"I thought you were never coming," he said. "Here's a program for you," and he handed her the fellow of his own.

"Where are they to be had?" asked Jack, whereat Bernard gave him directions and they were rid of him.

"Well, how many may I have?" asked Bernard.

"How many do you want?" she replied.

"I daren't ask for that many," he said.

"They get nothing who don't dare," said she.

"God help me" said he.

"Be brave," said she.

"But I want such a lot. . . ."

"Here's Jack coming back."

"I want them all," he said, desperately.

"That's a large order," she said, and his face fell.

"That's my maximum demand," he said. "You can make your deductions from it."

"Well, I've promised Jack two, and I must keep six for duty dances. . . . You can have the rest."

With trembling fingers he marked off the dances on both programs.

"How am I to remember who X is?" she asked.

The air was suddenly rent by the opening chords of a wild ragtime tune, and in a minute he was swinging her over the hyaline floor. She danced well: too well. She seemed to have no volition of her own, and melting into his arms responded automatically to every movement of his. The mad ragtime strain, with its fierce dissonances and breathless syn-copation, surged through him stirring his blood and thrilling his nerves with a vivifying current of electricity. Wild

imaginings passed through his brain, and all that was primitive in him leaped to the surface. He abandoned himself to the sheer joy of dancing. His limbs seemed tireless. He felt as if he could go on like that forever.

And then abruptly the dance came to an end and Mabel was fanning herself and praising the floor. The next dance was promised to Jack and Bernard retired to soothe his impatience with a cigarette in the dressing-room. Here he was in no way surprised to meet Molloy, who was an habitu  of the Gresham.

"Hello!" said Bernard. "I thought you were at the Front."

"I haven't time," said Molloy. "I'm frightfully busy at present. I've three or four of these sedition cases coming up shortly. . . . I'm defending the blighters, too, though personally I'd like to see them all dumped in the Liffey. . . . I say, I saw you dancing with a damn pretty girl just now. You might give me an intro? . . ."

Languid waltz and vivid one-step alternating, the evening sped by. Bernard and Mabel sat out most of the second part of the program, and talked. They talked about everything—and themselves: but chiefly about themselves. He told her things that he had never told anyone else. He told her about the nursery Babylon and his imaginary island. She told him about her home life and her dreary work. They had become confidants . . .

"Which do you like best, the waltz or the one-step?" she asked, suddenly.

"The one-step, I think," replied Bernard. "I like the frank savagery of it. It puts the devil into you: rips the wrappings of civilization off you and turns the ball-room into a battlefield where you carry off your bride like a primitive skin-clad man."

"Hmph! . . . I prefer the waltz. It makes you fall asleep on life and dream of operas and scenes in books."

They were silent awhile, and then Mabel said:

"What a lovely night!"

"I've never had such a night before," said Bernard.

"Nor I."

"'On such a night,'" Bernard quoted, "'Troilus methinks . . .'"

"Try a new one," said Mabel.

"Hm, let's see . . . On such a night Tristan methinks, with cheeks incarnadined And beating heart, first looked into the eyes Of Mark's intended in the spacious halls Of Chapelizod."

"Hear! Hear! . . . let's try and out-night you. . . . On such a night Giulietta in a mirror caught The soul of Hoffmann."

"On such a night Cyrano's nose did blush amid the verse Wafted towards Roxane's window."

"On such a night Stood Tessa weeping by the Grand Canal, And uttered messages to birds a-wing For Barataria."

"On such a night Giuseppe lilted like a love-sick boy Of sparkling eyes to Marco."

"On such a night I feel like having an ice. Come down and get me one."

"You're some poet," said Bernard on the way down.

"I did *The Merchant* for the Intermediate my last year at school."

"Don't spoil it all," said Bernard.

They went to the ball-room and had another dance: a waltz to the tune of *Come Back to Erin*. When it was over they tacitly returned to their former nook. They had so much to say that dancing seemed an irritating interruption . . .

An hour went by thus; and then Bernard said:

"We must preserve that poem of ours. Let's write it down before we forget it."

He started to scribble on the back of his program, she looking over his shoulder the while. Intoxicating presence! It distracted his memory and she had to prompt him fre-

quently. Their heads were very close together, and a strand of her hair tickled him. Then, when the task was done, Mabel wanted to dance again.

"It must be nearly the last dance," she said, and they rose from their shelter to go downstairs. As they faced each other for a moment a wave of passion swept over Bernard. He found himself stammering uncontrollably.

"Mabel . . ." he said, and stopped, tongue-tied.

She looked up at him timidly.

"Dear!" he ventured.

She seemed to shrink from him for a second, and then she was in his arms and submitting languorously to his kisses.

The last waltz saw them not.

14

He awoke next morning to find Swathythe by his bedside.

"It can't be ten yet, Swathythe," said Bernard, sleepily.

"No, sir, but . . ."

"Well go away and don't disturb me. Didn't I tell you not to call me till ten?"

"Yes, sir, but I thought . . ."

"You'd no business to think, Swathythe."

"Mr. Ward has been arrested, sir. I thought . . ."

Wide awake at once Bernard sprang out of bed. Swathythe respectfully handed him a newspaper.

CHAPTER XIV

AN AMATEUR ARMY

I

MRS. HARVEY was somewhat taken aback when Bernard and Mabel came to tell her of their engagement. Mabel, the beauty of the family, was expected to make a match which would restore their fallen fortunes; she knew it, and so had kept her affair with Bernard a secret. The revelation was, therefore, an unpleasant surprise to Mrs. Harvey, but she recovered her equanimity in time to avoid betraying herself.

"You're a rash pair of children," she said. "Well, God bless you. May you be happy." And she expressed a desire to have a chat with Bernard.

He called on her a few days later when Mabel was away at her work, and in a short time she was pretty thoroughly acquainted with his financial position.

"And now," she said, "I've one piece of motherly advice for you. You take far too much interest in politics. Steer clear of it, or you'll never get on in your profession."

"If Washington had taken that advice America wouldn't now be free," said Bernard.

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Harvey, serenely. "But Washington wasn't a suitor for my daughter." Which bowled Bernard over completely.

Mrs. Harvey was less pleased than ever with the prospect of the marriage, not for her daughter's sake, but for her own. Bernard and Mabel could, as a matter of fact, have married quite comfortably by the end of the year, but that would not have satisfied Mrs. Harvey's requirements at all. She was tired (and no wonder) of her present toilsome life, and wished to become a lady of leisure once more. Her daugh-

ters, therefore, would have to look for husbands who would be wealthy enough to compensate her handsomely for the loss of their earnings, and as Bernard was not rich, nor, owing to his infatuation with a very lost cause in politics ever likely to be so, he was a very undesirable son-in-law from Mrs. Harvey's point of view. Moreover, there was a certain social stigma associated with a party whose adherents so frequently found themselves in gaol (where Bernard might be landed any day himself) and as Mrs. Harvey's insatiable ambition was to regain that social status which she had lost, her chagrin at her daughter's choice can well be imagined. She was not, however, so foolish as to oppose it openly. Mabel, she knew, was not a girl of particularly strong character, but she was proud and could be far more easily led than driven, more potently influenced by ridicule than by force. For the present, therefore, Mrs. Harvey bided her time, and, while outwardly she blessed the engagement, she set herself to the discovery of a more desirable rival, contenting herself, meanwhile, with stray disparaging remarks about Bernard — his seriousness, his untidiness, and so on — with occasional reflections on the comforts of wealth, fervent hopes that Bernard would attain it, and despondent prophecies that this was very unlikely.

This policy Mabel treated at first with indifference, but gradually she became uneasy and communicated her fears to Bernard. He, however, only laughed, and said her mother was over-anxious about her happiness.

"Cheer up," he said. "The spring is coming: you can feel it in the air. I'll work like a nigger now, and then in the summer, perhaps. . . . Meanwhile, we have our Saturdays and Sundays and our evenings together, so don't be downhearted. . . . And, dear, who knows but Ireland may be free by our wedding-day. The tide is turning already."

The anger and despair and bitter laughter that had tortured Bernard through the winter had not been ousted from his soul by love: requited love, however, now distracted him,

and simultaneously hope began to revive at sight of the already changing attitude of the people. Hostility towards the Volunteers was still strong, and still widely spread, but it was no longer uncompromising, and it was narrowing in scope. Even those who strongly disagreed with them recognized that they had a case and that it could not be controverted by mere abuse. . . . They were seldom called traitors now, though names like "factionists" and "cranks" were still flung at them.

These were Spring days and it was good to live and love. He took Mabel for long walks: out to Howth; up the Three Rock, through the Glen of the Downs. One breezy, sunny day they climbed to the Hell-Fire Club. They raced each other up the grassy gorse-clad slope of Mount Pelier, and arriving breathless at the top were nearly blown to pieces by the wind. The gusts hurtled and shrieked round the rough stone walls of the naked ruin and in and out of its bleak chambers. Bernard tore off his cap and let the wind ruffle his hair and rattle his unbuttoned rain-coat with a noise of rending cloth.

"Isn't it glorious," he said, joyously inhaling the exhilarating fluid.

"I'm so cold," said Mabel, and drew him into the lee of the building, pulling his arm round her for comfort. They seemed lapped in a magic silence now after the turmoil outside.

"What a *sight* I am," exclaimed Mabel, adjusting her hair by the help of a pocket mirror.

"You look your best untidy," said he.

"Go away!" she laughed and added, "You're a perfect *sketch* yourself."

"What ho for a hot cup of tea?" said Bernard, and they ran down the sheltered hill hand in hand.

"If anyone *saw* us," remonstrated Mabel.

They walked along the Velvet Strand another day from Portmarnock to Malahide, a great deserted stretch of beach at that season.

"What a dull spot," said Mabel.

"Is it bathing-machines and nursery maids you'd like to see?" asked Bernard.

"I don't like this loneliness," she said, holding his arm closer.

They stood listening to the thud and jingle of the breaking and retreating waves, while the wind whistled in the bent-grass on the sand dunes behind them. Sky and sea were grey and mournful. The air was scented with brine and sea-weed. They let the wind sweep them at a run along the hard crinkled sand, crunching sea-shells under their feet.

They reached the road winding above the rocks towards Malahide.

"Don't you love that sound?" said Bernard, stopping to listen to the sighing hum of the wind in the telegraph wires, mixed now with the plashing sound of the waves chopping among the rocks.

"What wild, weird things you take pleasure in!" said Mabel.

"*You're* not wild and weird, are you?" asked Bernard.

"I soon will be if I associate much with you."

"Well, if you're afraid . . ."

"Silly!" said Mabel.

Sometimes they had no time for walks like these and contented themselves with a stroll in Stephen's Green, calm oasis in the noisy city, or they would walk out to the Phoenix Park, or along the Canal side, or suburban avenues, or even the less frequented city streets.

"The glorious dust!" says Bernard, as they emerge blinking from a cloud of it, a swarm of sharp specks that prick their skin as it drives before the blast and passes on with a rasp of withered leaves slithering along the pavement.

"Horrid stuff!" says Mabel. "I'm half blinded."

"A peck of March dust is worth a ton of tonics."

"Thank you. I can dispense with both."

"You don't like anything I like."

"You like all sorts of queer things better than me."

"Mabel!"

"Yes, you do."

"You're cruel, dear."

She laughs, and immediately repents.

"Don't mind me, old boy. I never mean half what I say . . ."

"Jack," said Mrs. Harvey to her son that same day, "next time you're in town on leave I wish you'd bring up one of your friends with you. . . . Some nice young officer with money, you know. . . . Brothers ought to do those things for their sisters."

2

Meanwhile, Stephen was in gaol.

He took the whole thing in his habitual philosophic way: nothing ever seemed to disturb the equanimity of this taciturn young mountaineer. While he was awaiting trial his father came to see him (it was the old man's first visit to the city for more than quarter of a century) and shed tears in the visitor's cage, for which his son sternly rebuked him. At the court-martial Stephen made no defence; he maintained a dignified silence throughout the whole procedure, which apparently concerned him not in the slightest, nor did he seem to hear the sentence of three months' imprisonment which was passed on him. . . . Mentally, he was resolving that those months should not be wasted months.

So when he was locked in his cell he wasted no time repining over the inevitable. After a brief survey of the narrow bare apartment, he took up the Bible which lay on the shelf near the door and read, most of it for the first time, the Old Testament.

"Imperialism skilfully mixed with religion," was his comment as, after reading as far as Joshua, he stretched himself on his plank bed for the night. "Well, well. They say there's nothing new under the sun."

In spite of the hardness of his couch he slept soundly.

In the morning he awoke to the monotonous regularity

of prison life. He took the successive events as they came and made the best of them. Breakfast was a coarse, unappetizing meal consisting of sour bread and milkless, unsweetened cocoa. Skilly and potatoes were the variants in other meals: meagre unsavoury sustenance, but he devoured it healthily and complained only of its insufficiency. In his hour of exercise he trod the prison yard vigorously, taking great breaths of air, and planting his feet down hard and firmly. He was set to the task of chopping wood, and he chopped skilfully, taking pleasure in the work. He cleaned his cell with the zest one gives to a work of art. He burnished his tin mug till it shone like silver. In the exercise yard he gathered dandelion leaves to flavour his dinner. . . . By such mitigations he made life tolerable.

For an hour in the mornings, when the day was fine, the sun shining through his window painted a golden square on the opposite wall, and Stephen used to place himself so as to intercept the beam that traversed the cell. By standing on his stool he could plunge head and shoulders into the life giving ray, made to seem almost substantial by the dust particles that danced within it, and breathe in warmth and nourishment. . . .

Sunday Mass was a respite amid rigour. Assisting at the holy sacrifice he could forget he was a captive in the sublimity of the occasion, in the feeling that his spirit was in communion with all the worshippers attending the same ceremony at the same time all over the world. Wondrous rite common to all men, friends and foes, bond and free! Sacrifice offered perpetually in the same manner and in the same tongue by warring and allied peoples; in prisons and palaces, in chapel and cathedral, on ships at sea, on rude altars in the open air under savage skies. Intimate consolation of the single soul; potent unifier of mankind.

"If our International doctrinaires could be induced to come to Mass . . ." thought Stephen.

"Thank God, I'm a Catholic, not a piping little protester whose creed is unknown beyond his own doorstep. . . .

What fools were those men who rejected their share in the one common possession of Europe . . . ”

He had plenty of time for thought in the long hours he spent locked in his cell. He revised his whole philosophy and found it unaltered. He was filled with exultation at realizing how hard the universal battle between light and darkness was being fought. His faith was confirmed.

He read also. The prison library was a poor one, but he extracted value from it. On the second day of his captivity the librarian, going the rounds with his basket of books, tossed a volume into the cell, which Stephen hastened to pick up. It was a very soiled and battered Third School Reader, published by an English educational firm. Disappointed though he was, Stephen started to read it. The first lesson was an essay on the ant, which was more concerned to point a moral than to be accurate in natural history. This was followed by a story about a boy, a nobleman and a cow, brought together to illustrate the profitableness of honesty as a business policy. Then came the highly edifying story of the painter who found in the same person at different ages the models for his pictures *Innocence* and *Guilt*. Four tales had for their themes different phases of England's career of world conquest, and Freedom was patronized by the stories of two men who had fought against conquest by countries other than England: Hofer and Kosciusko. Two poems, *Excelsior* and *Ye Mariners of England*, together with the most priggish of old Aesop's fables, completed the collection.

The book was a revelation to Stephen. It showed him the mould in which the English mind was cast.

“No wonder they are what they are,” he reflected, “if this is the kind of thing they're brought up on.”

He saw English Imperialism at its source: commercial morality (“Be good and you shall prosper”); the natural deduction therefrom (“We prosper, therefore we are good”); and that sublime assurance which sets aside as perverse the views of other people about their private concerns when those views fail to recognize that the highest

morality is to aim directly at promoting England's prosperity . . .

He remembered that Bernard had once told him that the average Englishman really believes that to be governed by England is freedom, and more.

"Why," he thought, "the Irish lie is bad enough, but it's a pleasant, harmless lie that hurts no one but ourselves, and it's a white, shining truth beside the English lie."

He began to speculate upon the war.

"Perhaps on every side the truth is fighting with the lie: the French and English truth fighting the German lie; the German truth fighting the French and English lies . . .

"But it achieves nothing but material destruction . . .

"No. Metaphysical half-truths won't carry us very far. . . . Secret diplomacy is only too evidently the cause.

"The whole thing is wasted effort. There's no national truth at stake at all . . .

"Why not set the universal truth to tackle the ubiquitous lie? . . . More metaphysics! . . ."

He began to feel that the conquest was not for Ireland an unmixed evil.

"If we'd never been conquered we'd now be a great power . . . with foreign possessions . . . a slice of Africa perhaps, and some Pacific Islands. . . . Bearers of the white man's burden — and curses. We'd be thinking on lines like *this* . . ."

He flung the Third School Reader from him.

"It's better as it is. When we're free we'll be a small nation like Switzerland, Bulgaria, or Norway . . . sensible onlookers at the European tragi-comedy . . . a people in good training, not bloated degenerate giants like the great Powers . . ."

The next book they gave him was Reade's *Foul Play*, but Stephen cared nothing for novels, so he asked to have it changed, and they gave him a School History of England. After that he was given a very dilapidated *Hamlet*, and now he was happy. True, the version had been barbarously

bowdlerized by a Protestant clergyman in order to make it "fit for the home circle." Not only was it purged of all grossness, but even such words as "damned" and "bloody" were replaced by softer epithets: Horatio swore that he would "cross" the ghost "though it slay" him, and the speech in which Hamlet unpacked his heart with words and fell a-cursing like a very drab could not have brought the blush of shame to the cheek of modesty. Still it was *Hamlet* all the same, that wonderful poem, ever familiar, yet ever startling those who think they have plumbed its depths with some fresh undiscovered beauty or subtlety. Stephen's taste favoured rant, probably because his own manner was the reverse, and he spouted to the echoing walls of his cell things like:

And thus o'ersized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles. the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks,

and:

Let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart.

He fell to thinking, ever and again, over the question of the punishment and prevention of crime.

"What good could jailing do anybody?" he asked himself. "Can spending twenty-three hours of the day locked up by yourself and getting bad and insufficient food improve any one's character, let alone a weak one? . . . But a comfortable jail would be no deterrent. . . . Nonsense. In a properly-run state loss of liberty would be enough punishment and deterrent for anybody. It's poverty makes jailbirds. . . . What sort of prisons shall we have under the Republic?"

The problem occupied him for days.

"No good," he said at last. "Atmosphere isn't suited

to constructive thinking. . . . Prisons should improve men anyhow, not waste them . . ."

The weeks went by and the months. The more frequent appearance of his ray of sunshine told Stephen that it was Spring in the world outside. Nature was awakening from her sleep; the armies of men were making renewed preparations for slaughter; and for all his stoicism Stephen's blood throbbed impatiently for freedom. The last weeks before his release seemed interminable.

3

The Volunteers were a nation in miniature. They had their Parliament and Executive; their Exchequer and Postal System; Industries, a Labour Exchange, and an Insurance Society; newspapers; a women's organization; boy scouts; a secret service even. They were a nation at war ever on the alert: a unanimous nation with a single purpose: a disciplined democracy: a nation of citizen soldiers.

Bernard was now in a position to materialize some of the dreams of his childhood. At a re-election of officers he displaced Brohoon as captain of his company and set to work vigorously to drill, organize and arm his men on more efficient lines than that officer had followed. Their numbers had risen again: new members had rejoined and old ones were slipping back to their allegiance. The average attendance was now about seventy. Less than half of these had rifles, but arms were being steadily and surreptitiously brought into the country, and nearly every week Bernard was able to produce a rifle to be balloted for and paid for in instalments. . . . What sacrifices this payment must have involved for many! Some of the men were heroically generous: unskilled labourers with ragged coats and not enough to eat he knew must jealously hoard every penny to pay the weekly instalment for the rifle which was, in every sense, their dearest possession; and even the prosperous ones, the clerks and mechanics, must have had to dock themselves of many luxuries. . . . Brohoon was a man of slov-

enly habits and no disciplinarian, and Bernard found his hardest task in smartening up the men and teaching them a military gait and carriage,— the more so as he had neither himself by nature. He was at his best in the field, where he carried out hundreds of experiments as to the best methods of using and economizing his forces. (He would lie awake at night thinking out problems: how to block such and such a road with a force consisting of thirty-six riflemen, fifteen men with shotguns, and twenty-two men with pikes and revolvers: and so on.) He re-organized the company from top to bottom: into three sections he put his rifle and gun men, equally divided each in each; and into the fourth section the unarmed men (to be armed in sudden emergency with pikes and revolvers). He instituted a mobilization scheme by which the whole company could be assembled in forty minutes.

The drill-night for the company was Thursday, and on Saturday afternoons they used to attend the general battalion drill. Occasionally on Sundays there would be a field-day for the whole regiment: to Bernard a terrible sacrifice, since otherwise the day would be spent with Mabel. Mabel too used to resent his absence on these occasions.

"You like this horrid volunteering better than me," she would say.

"My darling, how unfair you are. If you only knew how I long to be with you. But a soldier isn't his own master, you know."

"You could easily get off if you liked."

"But it wouldn't be right, dear, especially for an officer."

"It isn't right to desert your girl, is it?"

"My dear, aren't men leaving their girls for their country's sake all over the world today?"

"That's different."

"Don't say a silly thing like that, dear. It's come to be the most annoying phrase in the English language for me."

"Why? . . . But what matter? Bernard, look at the sky. It'll be lovely at Howth tomorrow."

"It's no use, dear."

"Oh, well, *go* then."

They always ended thus, and the sacrifice was rendered all the harder for Bernard.

Came the field day. The defending side would march away first: to the Dublin Mountains or to Cuala. The attackers would follow in due course, and when the pre-arranged ground was reached there would be a scrambling amateurish battle. You would see straggling, skirmishing-lines blundering across the hedge-intersected fields or amongst the boulders and quarry-holes of the hillsides: fierce duels between opposing scouts: whole companies wandering about hopelessly at sea: charges in column on the road: stout old Hugo McGurk forcing his way through a hedge: a volley of hand-claps (to represent firing): Umpleby fussing about with a map, trying to find the way out of a morass in which he had impounded his company: Hektor O'Flaherty storming about as umpire: then a final rush by the attackers to end the battle, and fraternization by the troops of both sides over sandwiches and ginger-beer . . .

Then the march home, tired and dirty, in the evening. Oh, the brave music of marching feet! Physical exhilaration of braced shoulders and legs rhythmically swinging! Surge of primal instincts in peace-tamed hearts! Two thousand feet moving in unison: tramp-tramp on hard frozen roads; splash-splash on muddy ones. O'Dwyer spins by on a bicycle. "Easy time those fellows on the staff get," mutters Bernard. Tramp-tramp. "Suppose we were really marching on Dublin." Splash-splash. "Shall we ever, I wonder?" Tramp-tramp-tramp. "Are these infernal miles Irish or English?" Some one behind strikes up a song:

"Deep in Canadian woods we've met
From one bright Island flown . . ."

Rings out the chorus:

"Ireland, boys, hurrah!
Hurray!

Ireland, boys, hurray!
We'll toast old Ireland, dear old Ireland,
Ireland, boys, hurray!"

"What sadness there is in that story about the two regiments on the Rapidan . . . slaughtering each other next day for a cause that mattered to none of them. They became soldiers in the hope of some day fighting for Ireland. . . . Poor devils, they slaughtered each other instead. . . . Eternal waste!" . . . Tramp-tramp. . . . A new strain swells forth:

"So-oldiers are we, whose lives are pledged to Ireland,
Some have come from a land beyond the wave.
Sworn to be free . . ."

A motor whizzes by, drowning the words with its whirr: a load of fur-wrapped superciliousness: "Disloyal asses!" you fancy them saying. Tramp-tramp-tramp.

"Steady, boys, and step together.
Steady, boys, and step together."

"Brave boys: a column of sturdy manhood. Ridicule and abuse haven't moved them from their purpose. They've worked and toiled for the cause through it all. Great stuff! Gallant souls." . . . A pair of laughing lovers passes by on the side-walk. "How much pleasure do these men get out of life? And they sacrifice that little for this." Plash-plash. "All over Europe armies are marching like this" . . .

"Let Erin remember the days of old
Ere her faithless sons betrayed her
When Malachi wore the collar of gold
Which he won from her proud invader."

"Emmet would wish to have seen this day. Oh, to be at the head of an army marching to that air," he said. "And here we march today. . . ." Tramp-tramp . . . Lights ahead: the outskirts of the city: traffic and chattering people. The Soldier's Song swells forth again and dies away:

"Tonight we'll man the Bearna-Baoghail
 In Erin's cause come woe or weal.
 'Mid cannon's roar and rifle's peal
 We'll chant a soldier's song."

Clatter of boot-soles on cobbles. On through the city . . .
 "March to attention!"

The column marches in silence with sloped arms amid crowds that either heed not or stare and scoff. . . .

The Volunteers had their own social life too. The different companies and battalions used to give concerts and ceilidhes; the Boy Scouts gave theirs; the Gaelic League gave more. Bernard became a habitu   of the ceilidhes. He loved the rollicking swing of the old Irish dances; the melancholy of the songs; and the irresistible gaiety of the dance-music. He induced Mabel to come with him once, but never again. She thought the company "low" (it certainly was not genteel) and the dances were too rough and strenuous for her. The master of ceremonies was too odiously familiar with her, she thought. He was a shock-headed youth, toothless from canine to canine, wearing an untidy saffron kilt which revealed a pair of very dirty knees; and in his good-natured eagerness to instruct Mabel in the intricacies of the dance he handled her (with those grubby paws of his) far more than she liked — far more than Bernard liked too, for that matter. . . . So Mabel went to no more ceilidhes, and Bernard in consequence was prevented from attending as many as he would have wished.

They were gay functions, those ceilidhes: skirling pipes and laughing fiddle and merry dances: wailing songs and fierce recitations; babble of Irish everywhere. Some one would come up to Bernard and say:

"*Cionnus taoi, a Bh  arnard?*"

"*T  im go maith, go raibh maith agat. Cionnus taoi f  in?*"

"*Go maith. Cionnus ar thaithn an Aonach leat?*"

"*Middling. Is better Sr  id Grafton   .*"

"Mhaise, greadadh chugat, is mór-chúiseach ataoi le do chuid Gaedhealach briste!"

"Cad is brigh le sin? Níl acht cupla focla Gaedhealacha agam."

"A Tá go léoir. Beidh tu Gaedheal mór go socair."

And the conversation would continue in English.

Every one came to those ceilidhes. Staid professors and scholars with European reputations looked on from the background: grave dames in Irish costume; little shop-girls in white muslin; a stray man in evening dress; Gaelic Leaguers in saffron kilts; Indian law-students in their brilliant native costume; Volunteers in their grey-green uniforms: a motley pattern they made as they threaded their ways in and out of the mazes of the Rinnce Fada or Ballai Luimnig. Here you would see McGurk dancing bravely in spite of his girth; there Umpleby hovering near a celebrity: here Brohoon strutting around like a peacock; there Austin Mallow gazing rapt into space . . .

One night Stephen and another man just released from gaol were brought in by a crowd of admirers,—Stephen obviously against his will. The dancers—it was during an interval—rose and cheered. The other man smirked and bowed, but Stephen scowled angrily. He came over afterwards and sat by Bernard.

"You're out early," said Bernard.

"You get a remission for good behaviour."

"Is gaol a very frightful experience?"

"No."

"Isn't it rather boring, then?"

"No. I learned a lot."

"Well, I suppose that's something gained. . . . Personally I'd rather dispense with it."

Stephen looked round superciliously on the scene of gaiety.

"Such a way of spending an evening," he said.

"A damn good way," replied Bernard. "You're a terrible anchorite, Stephen. You've nothing human in you."

"To see our Volunteers capering about like that! Ugh!"

"They're none the worse soldiers for it. . . . Red blood would be a political asset to you, Stephen. You'll never achieve anything if you can't allow for human nature."

"Seven centuries' oppression should have hardened us."

"Thank God it hasn't," answered Bernard . . .

Bernard had transplanted himself bodily from one stratum of society into another. He saw no more of the Gunby Rourkes and Heuston Harringtons and Bonegrafts and other denizens of the Square, and became acquainted with life on a totally different scale and governed by totally different conditions. In the Volunteers there were men of many grades, social and financial, but there was no sharp dividing line of snobbery between them: caste was unknown to them: their spirit was democratic, inborn and unconscious.

First there were the civil servants and clerks: prosperous most of them unless they married. A single young man can live very comfortably in lodgings, dress well, possess books, and have a fair amount of enjoyment on his pay of anything from twenty-five to sixty shillings a week; but marriage means children and a house. One of Bernard's lieutenants on whom he occasionally called was a man of thirty-five, married, with six children. He lived on the north side of the city in one of a row of exactly similar two-storied red-brick villas. There was a railing in front with a gate, on which was the name *Emain Macha* (the houses beside it were called *The Beeches* and *Roseville*). Inside the railing was a grass-plot four feet square, with a miserable enonymus shrub in the centre and some wilted London Pride in a parched flower-bed. A diminutive asphalted pathway led to the hall door, reached by ascending one step of granite. The tiny hall was so packed with unnecessary furniture that the door could only be opened half-way by the lady of the house, who would come down with sleeves rolled up and smelling of Sunlight soap, apologizing that this was her washing-day. Poor, bothered, worn-out young woman! She was crushed with the burden of making ends meet, keeping her

house clean, keeping her husband comfortable, and bearing and rearing children. She had long ceased to worry about her appearance, but she had evidently been pretty once. (Bernard wondered did her husband still love her: was there time for romance in their scrambled lives?) She would show him into the sitting-room, a musty apartment but little larger than the hall and most uncomfortably congested with gimcrack furniture. There he would sit talking over a meagre fire and a pipe with his lieutenant, a big man with a hearty laugh who seemed not at all stifled by his cramping surroundings. Upstairs they would hear the squealing of the children while their mother, unceasing in toil, put them to bed. A piano would jangle in the house next door and a gramophone screech in the one opposite.

"Room! room!" Bernard would say to himself. "This eternal huddling! Street upon street of these infernal villas: soul strangling cages: man's sacrifice of comfort to gentility. . . . Oh, damn, damn, damn the whole system."

The frank, unpretentious bareness and carpetlessness of the houses of the lower grade — the labourers and artisans — offended him less. They were less stuffy, and so were their inhabitants. They made no pretence to gentility at all; roared with laughter when amused; spat on the floor; and did not use pocket-handkerchiefs. Their uproarious evenings were a pleasure he did not indulge in often.

These two grades had a good deal of discomfort and not a little hardship in their lives, but there were Volunteers of a lower grade still: the class that exists on the hunger line: the class to which the war meant not dearer food but less food: not the substitution of margarine for butter, but the abandonment of margarine and the diminishing of bread. Life for them was a perpetual struggle and a losing one; they had little room for ideas, but their inspiration was a dumb instinctive patriotism. Their one sorrow was their inability to arm themselves. They would have starved themselves to do it, but they were already starving. Sometimes they tried desperate methods: a gaunt, hungry, ragged mem-

ber of Bernard's company turned up on parade one day with a modern Lee-Enfield rifle for which he had way-laid one of his Britannic Majesty's soldiers in a lonesome place. He established a valuable precedent.

One of Bernard's section-commanders was of this class, another was a grocer's assistant and the remaining two were clerks. One of his lieutenants was a mechanic, the other a civil servant. They met at his flat occasionally to discuss the business and progress of the company, and the lieutenants sometimes came in for a friendly talk. Swathythe used to sniff aristocratically at these visitors, waiting on whom he deemed beneath him. He approached Bernard once on the subject.

"If you'll allow me to say so, sir," he said, after some tactful humming and hawing, "I think it's a pity for a young gentleman like you to associate with such riff-raff. They'll just use you for their own ends, if you don't mind me saying so. Some of these fellows as come 'ere never brush their 'air, sir. They spit on the carpet, sir: I've awful work after 'em; they don't know 'ow to be'ave in a gentleman's 'ouse, sir. You ought to stick to your own class, Mr. Lascelles, wot knows your ways and you know theirs, for mark my word, sir, these people will just use you and chuck you aside when they done with you. . . . I 'ope you'll excuse me speaking so freely, sir."

"You haven't spoken a bit freely, Swathythe," replied Bernard. "You've spoken like the slave you are." . . .

It was about this time that there came to live in the flat above Bernard's a man called Malone: a stern-looking, grizzled Irish-American on the verge of fifty years of age. He came early to see Bernard and almost at once demanded point-blank:

"Does this Volunteer movement mean business?"

Bernard assured him that it did, but Malone did not appear satisfied.

"Are you going to fight?" he asked.

"Under certain conditions," replied Bernard.

"See here," said Malone. "I'd better tell you right away what sort of a man I am. I was born in Tipperary of quiet decent folk who paid their rent regularly and took no part in politics. When I was about six years old our landlord discovered that cattle paid better than human beings, so we were flung out on the roadside and our home pulled down. We had to emigrate, of course, but my father wasn't the sort of man to take tyranny lying down, and a few days before we started he shot the landlord dead: and, to be as brief as possible, he was caught and hanged for it. My poor mother and I made for America where she had a brother who had promised to help us, and in the coffin-ship we crossed in my mother died. . . . Well, my uncle was a single man and doing well, and he stood by me. I won't bore you with details of my life more than to say that I made good and became pretty well off. But I was never contented. Way down I always felt that I wanted to be even with the people who killed my mother and father, and I'd a kind of objection to being driven out of my country. My uncle, however, was always telling me to stay where I was and not bother about the old country. He said it wasn't worth living in so long as it was ruled by the English, and the English could only be driven out by war, and the country wasn't strong enough to fight: every time she fought she was beaten. I read some Irish history then, and came to the conclusion he was right. But about that time the Parnell movement began to look like winning out, and, thinking that perhaps there might be something in Constitutionalism after all, I came over her and lent a hand. But you know what happened: nothing but failure: and I went back to America disgusted. . . . Well, after that I stuck to my business for a while. Then, when the trouble between England and the Boers began I came over here again to see if the people were game for a rising. But not they. The country was just about dead, and there were no arms in it anyway. However, I got a chance to get my own back on England, for I struck up with some fellows who were getting

up a brigade to fight for the Boers and I joined them."

"Was there a man called Christopher Reilly among them?"

"Yes. Damn good stuff he was, too. He was killed in action afterwards. Did you know him?"

"He was my uncle."

"Then you're sure to be the right stuff. As soon as I heard the Volunteers had declared against England I came right over to join in the fight. When is it to be?"

Bernard tried to explain the policy of the Volunteers, and Malone was obviously disappointed with it.

"What's the good of shilly-shally?" he said. "If we don't fight now we'll never get such a chance again. European wars are rare birds, my lad."

They argued long and hotly, but Malone was impervious to reason. He was no politician; just a plain honest man of one idea: and while Bernard was exasperated by his stolidity he could not but admire him. He was very much against accepting any German help. Once let them in, he said, and there would be no getting them out again: all great Powers were the same.

His creed was very simple.

"Our own right arm and the help of God," he said, "will see us through. Fight whenever you can. What matter if you lose? If you fight often enough you're bound to win in the end."

4

The fairest part of the Irish year is that season when Spring is melting into Summer, when the lilac laburnum and hawthorn bloom triumphant over the fallen cherry blossom; when the foliage of beech and lime and elm and sycamore is fresh and viridescent; when the sunlight is still silvery and the breezes still cooling: the ideal season for lovers. Bernard and Mabel took full advantage of it. They spent most of their Sundays amid the bee-loud heather of Howth or scrambling amongst the rocks of the Scalp or

sailing about the shimmering Bay, and in the evenings they watched the decrecent moon of May waning in the eastern sky and at her going looked for the rising sickle of June in the West. In the nights of her absence they gazed upon the stars, making new groupings and constellations of their own: Mabella and Bernardus and Johannes Taurus Collapsus,—a romantic occupation.

They began to know each other, and to question. Bernard was something of a puzzle to Mabel. His seriousness; the long political lectures he used to give her; his sudden bursts of anger over some act of English brutality or hypocrisy; his fierce enthusiasms for beautiful things,—the plashing of a brook, the smell of damp woods, a stanza of poetry, what not — all his impersonal emotions: these things amazed and disconcerted her. She could not understand why, if he loved her, he would never desert a Volunteer duty for the sake of her company. She resented his tendency to sermonize. . . . And then there were the things she loved in him; the laughter and sadness in his eyes; the play of the wind and sunbeams in his hair; the gesture of his hand and thrust of his chin in argument; the way he held his pipe in his strong white teeth; his smile,—mostly in the eyes, with just a twitch of the lip; the queer impetuous things he said; and then the tenderness of his embrace.

And Bernard puzzled over Mabel too: her flippancy, her easy acceptances, her desire for mere happiness, her lack of interest in ideas, her blindness and deafness to the things he thought beautiful, her insistence on the personal equation in all things. He could not understand her unreadiness to sacrifice his company occasionally to the cause in which they both believed. He resented her tendency to turn everything into a joke. He would begin to ask himself if he really loved her and then a glance at her face would make him forget everything else. He loved her airy grace and the yielding slimness of her waist and the wonder of her eyes and the scent of her hair. He loved the queer little things she said, and the soft touch of her hands, the

warm tenderness of her lips, and her trustful surrender of herself to his embrace.

They loved and talked of love and made love to each other and built castles in the air and were happy . . .

They passed an organ grinder in the street one day.

"What waste of human material," quoth Bernard. "What use is a system that leaves hundreds of men, many of promising material, trying to grind out a living in that useless way?"

"Most people are poor through their own fault," proclaims Mabel.

Bernard has run up against that argument with infuriating frequency, so he starts on a new tack (Shavian of course).

"But take a baby just born into the world. Why should he be handicapped in the battle of life right at the start? How can he ever win his way if his parents are too poor to feed or educate him properly? He never gets a chance."

"His parents shouldn't marry if they can't afford children," says Mabel primly (innocent little Malthusian: Malthusianism of this sort is rampant among good and charitable folk). Against this rampart Bernard's arguments storm in vain.

"Bernard, I'm afraid you're getting indelicate," she says when he goes too far.

Reluctantly after a time Bernard realized the impossibility of carrying Mabel with him in his social ideas. She was one of those people who consider Christ's statement of fact about the poor being always with us as a complete argument against all Social reformers. The first time she used this argument against him he felt a desperate clutch of disappointment at his heart, and a fleeting memory of Janet Morecambe crossed his mind; but the next moment Mabel had said:

"Don't let's quarrel over horrid things, dear," and put an arm round him and kissed him. She was irresistible then . . .

One brilliant day they took a well-stocked picnic-basket and went by motor-boat to Ireland's Eye. Through bracken shoulder-high they trudged to the topmost point of the island. Half-way up they had to stop and kiss each other, and then just as he had released her he had to pull her back to him and kiss her again.

"Greedy boy!" she cried, and ran from him laughing.

Breathless they reached the top and stood upon the rocky pinnacle. Other picnic parties were landing on the beach: there were parties scattered all over the island, the smoke from whose fires curled up in thin wisps here and there, faintly perfuming the air.

"Look, dear," says Bernard, hand sweeping the horizon, "we came skimming round the Bailey there, just where that purple patch is, then we let her run before the wind right into the harbour. . . . Got in exactly to time just as we'd arranged a month before. Not bad, eh?"

"You're some boy, aren't you?"

"You'd say that if you knew *all* the secrets of that stunt."

"What secrets?"

"*Tu ue quaesieris; scire nefas.*"

"What's all that about?"

"Curiosity, thy name is girl."

"I suppose you like to be thought an enigma. Well, keep your old secrets. I don't care."

"Oh, what a gorgeous day! On such a day Deirdre methinks——"

"Here, open that basket and make yourself useful. I'm hungry."

They chose a mossy hollow for their meal. All round them insects buzzed and hummed: sea gulls wheeled screaming overhead: puffins scuttled through the air and darting down into the sea climbed cliffwards with silvery fish in their pink parrotlike beaks. The sun drew fragrant odours from the baking turf and the dead and living bracken and heather. Bernard and Mabel munched chicken and chocolate.

"Why can't we always be together, *mo chroidhe?* . . . When shall we be married?"

"I wonder."

"Why not now?"

"How *could* we, dear?"

"Why not? I have money."

"Not enough to marry on, I'm afraid."

"We could marry on a ten pound note."

"Yes. And be miserable and uncomfortable ever after."

"You talk as if I was a pauper," protested Bernard.

"One must be sensible, dear."

"Many people have married on less than I've got."

"And you may be sure they've regretted it."

"What a little bundle of common-sense it is!"

"I'd need to be, with a big lump of romance like you."

"But, dear, wouldn't you *like* to be married soon?"

"Oh, I suppose so, but I don't want to be scraping and saving. I've had enough of it. . . . How goes the practice, dear?"

"Not so badly. Nine patients on the roll. A new one yesterday."

"What was wrong with him?"

"Hay fever."

"Why don't your friends get real bad things that you could charge heavily for? We'll never get married on dyspepsia and hay-fever."

"Oh, every little helps."

"We've been engaged six months,—half a year."

"Tired of it yet?"

"Dear! How *could* you?"

"My darling!"

Silence for a while.

"Dear, will you promise not to be angry if I tell you something?"

"What is it?"

"But you must promise not to be angry first."

"Well, I won't be unless you deserve it."

"I've been appointed an organizer in the country."

"Is that all? Why should that make me angry?"

"Well, you see, it means no more Saturdays together."

"Oh, Bernard! How could you?"

"Dear, I couldn't help it. Some of our country corps are falling to pieces for lack of instructors and I have to do my share to buck things up."

"But think of me, dear."

"Indeed I do. If it wasn't for you I'd give my Sundays too."

"Oh, give them all if you like. Don't mind *me*."

"Darling, I wish you'd be reasonable . . ."

"I wish you'd be kinder."

Deadlock. Presently Mabel whimpers:

"And only just now you were wondering when we could be married. How can we ever be married if you neglect your practice, running all over the country?"

"You make things very hard for me, dear."

The joy of the day is clouded, but in the end there is reconciliation with kisses . . .

Another day.

A recruiting march through the streets of the city. A pipers' band in kilts, with green streamers from their pipes: a mighty flag of rebel green: the band is skirling out *The Wearing of the Green*. To gain recruits for the British Army everything is done to appeal to the national spirit which the very presence of that army oppresses and derides. The colours of England are never to be seen upon the recruiting platforms nowadays: the very recruiting-posters and hand-bills smack of Ninety-Eight: vile hypocrisy of England. What would Tone say to see his name used and his words misrepresented in order to delude his countrymen into the army of the oppressor? But to hear that air: "They're hanging men and women for the wearing of the green"—

"Good lord!" exclaimed Bernard. "They've no sense of decency."

"And look at that," he said, pointing to a recruiting poster which represented a body of troops marching past the old Houses of Parliament over which flew the green flag with the crownless harp. "The abandoned beasts! If our people don't hate the swine after that they never will. The damned, damned hypocrites!"

"How seriously you do take things!" said Mabel. "Don't worry your poor old head over nothing."

"Nothing!" exclaimed Bernard. He was thinking of the brave boys marching away to their death in response to appeals written by cynical old politicians with their tongues in their cheeks: marching to fulfil their side of a treaty whose breach by the other side was a foregone conclusion. "Oh, world of knaves and fools!" he thought. "How long shall the tragic farce go on? . . . And if I were to tell the fools what I thought of the knaves, the fools would laugh me to scorn and the knaves would jail or kill me."

"Where shall we go for tea today?" asks Mabel.

"Eh?— Oh, tea? . . . I don't know. Wherever you like."

"Let's try the Princess for a change, then."

5

Crowley was out attending to a case when Bernard arrived at his house at Ballylangan, but he had left orders as to his reception and the house-keeper installed him comfortably in the sitting-room with tea and papers. A large volume lay open on a table, and Bernard picked it up: it was Max Nordau's *Degeneration*. He began to read at the opened pages, which contained the slashing attack on Rosetti and the mystics.

"This man has sound dope," thought Bernard. "He says everything I've been thinking about friend Mallow and his gang. . . . Footling round with the number Seven and the rest of it. By Jove, he has all the stigmata."

Nordau becoming heavy after a time, he went searching

among the pile of periodicals. The mauve cover of *Manannan* caught his eye at once.

"Hello! Wonder what old Crowley indulges in this for? Thinks it a sort of duty, I suppose. I wouldn't waste sixpence on it."

He turned the leaves idly. There was a pompous little article on *The Art of Austin Mallow* by Cyril Umpleby,—mostly syrup; a very inaccurate account of the Howth gun-running—it might almost be called an Umplebiad—by Austin Mallow ("Quid pro quo," muttered Bernard); an article called "Jail Days" by Brian Mallow; and two poems: one a thrush-and-rosebud song by Theodosia, the other an obscure lucubration called *The Lord hath Arisen*, by Austin.

"Seven flames aflame in the blood-red sky
The pallid earth shudders, then leaps on high,"

read Bernard.

"Old Nordau, I wish you weren't quite so voluminous, or I'd publish you as a penny pamphlet. You're a tonic, Herr Professor," he said.

Crowley's voice sounded in the hall, and the door opened.

"Hello, old man, so glad to see you. What's that tosh you're reading? Lord I'm tired. Let me get these boots off. . . . Just been introducing a new subject into the sun-kissed Empire: future citizen of the Republic, let's hope: he didn't seem a bit keen on entering the Empire anyhow. . . . Stands the Castle where it did?"

"More or less, though Gussie seems to regard us more in sorrow than in anger. . . . The Party's still gratefully kissing John Bull's boots."

"Well—so long as it's only his boots. . . ."

"It's not doing them any good with the people though. The cranks and soreheads are markedly on the increase in town."

"Is that so? I wish I could say the same for this place."

"How are things here?"

"Pretty rotten, I'm afraid. There's about a dozen sound men in Ballylangan and a couple of score in the surrounding district. There's one good sign though. The National Volunteers are falling to pieces, and only meet once in a way for a resolution-passing stunt."

"It's the same everywhere. In some places companies are coming over to us holus bolus."

"So I believe. Rosaleen's beginning to see through her seducer."

"About time. Can we begin work soon?"

"Yes. I've ordered a parade in a central spot for eight tonight. We'll buzz over after dinner."

"The war goes well, doesn't it."

"Yes. The Russians have gone back so far that they'll have to publish new war-maps. . . . By the way, did you see Redmond's speech about the maps of Ireland?"

"I never bother wading through that sort of muck."

"This was a treat. He says that every German soldier going into battle has a map of Ireland in his pocket with the farm he's going to get marked on it. Now a map that size would make some bundle. It would take a man twenty-five feet high to carry it, I reckon, so you needn't wonder now how the Germans are able to beat the world. They're a nation of Supermen."

"But aren't we a green people? I suppose the audience swallowed it all right?"

"To the last foot of it."

Dinner was served presently and Crowley made inquiries about his friends in town. He seemed to chafe against his secluded life as a dispensary doctor.

"And how's our old friend Fergus Moore?"

"Still on the same old tack. . . . I remember years ago when I first met him (I was a seoinin then) he told me physical force was no good and constitutionalism was worse. I remember him one day comparing parliamentary agitation to a dwarf, beaten in a fight with a giant, throwing down his sword and saying, 'Here, let's reason this out.' I re-

member at the time suggesting a combination of the two methods, and when I met him the other day I reminded him of this, and told him the Volunteer movement tried to achieve that. 'Well,' says he, 'and what have you succeeded in doing? Split the country once more: that's all. Ireland,' says he, 'is a hopeless case.' I left him at that. These pessimists would make Mark Tapley gloomy. . . . I believe he drinks now on top of his other little weakness."

"Let him go hang. But he's a loss. He has brains."

"There's a hell of a lot of people with brains and no guts in this country. You know the academic intellectual type, for instance, that takes up a detached point of view and has the impudence to lecture the rest of us?"

"Kennedy, for instance."

"Exactly. . . . I'd like to kick that type. Smirking asses."

"Emasculated bookworms," said Crowley.

Crowley prided himself on his taste in cigars, and his housekeeper made excellent coffee. When they had just settled down to the enjoyment of both Bernard glanced casually at his watch.

"Great Scott!" he cried. "Eight o'clock."

"No hurry," said Crowley calmly.

"Isn't the parade at eight?"

"My dear Bernard, don't you know the national failing? In Dublin eight o'clock means half past, and in the country it means half-past nine."

"Not in my command," said Bernard. "In my company in Dublin the men have to be in the hall five minutes before the fall-in or we send them away."

"You'll find it hard to break the countrymen into that."

"It was hard to break the Dublin men in at first. But I gave them a stiff lecture on discipline once: told them how we lost the battle of New Ross: it had a great effect. Nobody's ever late now."

"Well, nobody'll be in time tonight anyway, so you needn't waste that J. S. Murias."

Shortly before nine Crowley got out his motor and they drove over to the meeting-place, the field of a friendly farmer some five miles away. About twenty men were already assembled when they arrived, and half a dozen more straggled in during the next quarter of an hour. Under the cold light of the moon Bernard drilled them: a weird and romantic experience. Upon how many such assemblies had that disc looked down through the long history of Ireland's passion? Fenians, Confederates, United Irishmen,—all had drilled and marched in turn under her gentle light. She had watched the tide of hope and despair generation after generation, and was still watching—for what? The ghosts of Ninety-Eight and Forty-Eight and Sixty-Seven seemed to be abroad that night.

In the shadow of a hedge a policeman stood taking notes.

6

The silvery sun of early summer had deepened to burnished gold: the air currents were hot and sluggish: the foliage of the trees was darkened and bedraggled. It was August. Bernard was in Cloughaneely again, alone this time. He wanted to learn Irish properly and was living in a cottage with a couple of old peasants who knew nothing else. He was trying to re-Gaelicize himself thoroughly in every way: to shake off the last remnants of Britishism that still tinged his ways of thought and drifted in his Huguenot blood. He wanted to catch some of that old Irish spirit which he had by some intuition dimly perceived among the people of Leinster and which was to be the foundation of the polity which lay half-formed in his brain. He set out to study the people. He had long conversations (dull in matter, most of them, and full of linguistic difficulties; for the Irish of Donegal is a harsher, flatter language than one learns in the Gaelic League in Dublin) with his *Fear Tighe* and *Beann-a-tighe*. He would stand and chat with people

on the roadside; he talked with the shop-keepers and with the kelp-burners on the beach. He admired the quiet dignity of all these people: they had neither the subservience of the English rustic nor the effusive familiarity of the Dublin demos. Their manners had the grace of simple charity untainted by pretentiousness or servility. They were the children of the dispossessed Gael, and they seemed to know it.

Yet there was a certain worldliness in some of them that disappointed Bernard. Frequently he would meet some one who would express surprise that one like him should come there to learn a language for which they could see no use, and when, in his halting Irish, he would try to explain his motives they would only laugh at him. He found little sympathy for the purity and ardour of his national ideas either: he saw none of the fiery political enthusiasm of Dublin: Volunteering was dead in the county. There was an apathetic patience about the people that galled him and roused him to indignation that could find no expression in his broken Irish. As for the war their attitude of detachment from it was sublime. Even in Dublin that conflict was beginning to take a back place in people's thoughts: in the country generally it was a thing of small importance: here in the Gaedhealteacht it was treated with complete indifference.

"Ireland is a neutral country if ever there was one," Bernard reflected. "And our politicians are telling the world we're heart and soul with the Allies. . . . I wish old Willoughby was here."

Willoughby was then at the front, in the trenches before Ypres, whence he frequently wrote to Bernard. He had ceased to mention Ireland in these letters. With the best will in the world he was unable to see Bernard's point of view, and, knowing Bernard as he did and being satisfied that he was pursuing the course he considered right, he had decided to drop the subject. He insisted, however, on the righteousness of Britain's case in the war, and Bernard, not

caring for the ungrateful task of decrying the cause for which his friend was risking his life, received these pleadings in silence. . . .

During his second fortnight at Cloughaneely Mabel arrived on the scene. In the office in which she worked she had made friends with another girl, an enthusiastic Gael, who had succeeded in imparting some of her spirit to Mabel and inducing her to agree that they should spend their annual holiday together in the Gaedhealteacht: a step to which certain conspiring with Bernard lent added attractions. Her friend was none too pleased to learn at the last minute that Mabel's fiancé was at Cloughaneely, foreseeing many afternoons when she would be abandoned to her own company, but Mabel paid no attention to her ill-humour.

"You can go and learn your old Irish," she said in reply to certain forebodings expressed by the disappointed one. "I'm out for a holiday."

She put an end to Bernard's studies, linguistic and psychological, immediately on her arrival, but he had grown to be so lonely without her that he did not mind. Mabel abandoned her friend altogether to her own devices and spent nearly the whole of each day with Bernard.

"What *would* mother say if she knew?" she exclaimed.

"We're engaged, aren't we?" said Bernard.

"Yes, but she's so proper. She's always telling me not to see too much of you. I think she thinks we might get tired of each other."

"As if we could!"

"As if we could!"

Kisses.

"I've been having a *dreadful* time since you left," went on Mabel. "Jack's always bringing up officer friends from the Curragh, and I have to entertain them. . . . Such frightful bores as they are!"

"Why do you have to entertain them? Couldn't Molly or Susan do it?"

"Mother insists that *I* must. She says a doctor's wife

must get used to entertaining people. . . . Have you any more patients yet?"

"A few."

"Why isn't there a plague of some sort?"

"Modern sanitation's too good, I'm afraid."

"Well, I don't see how we're going to get married without it."

"Life is long, my dear."

"But youth isn't. I'll be *passée* in another ten years."

"Not for me, darling."

"So you think now. But wait ——"

"Don't you trust me, dear?"

"Men are all the same."

"Hm. What do you know about men, miss?"

"I've learnt a lot these last few weeks."

"How?"

"Those Curragh officers."

"Damn them!"

"Are you jealous?"

"Have I need to be?"

"Ah! That's the question."

"Mabel! Have I?"

"No, dear. Don't be silly. I hate them . . ."

"What'll Miss Mulligan be doing without you all this time?"

"Oh, bother Miss Mulligan. . . . Are you comfortable in that cottage, dear?"

"Tolerably. But it's rat-haunted. I don't mind confessing I'm afraid of rats. . . . Beastly things."

"I don't mind rats a bit, but I'm terrified of mice."

"That's silly. They're so tiny."

"Exactly. That's why."

"Rats are repulsive things, and when I was a boy I read a story of a man who was eaten alive by them, so I've had a horror of them ever since. . . . I can tell you it gives me the creeps to hear them scampering about the floor at night."

"Silly old boy! . . . What a lovely sunset! . . ."

Miss Mulligan made great progress in Irish that fortnight for she scarcely saw anything of Mabel. The lovers enjoyed each other's society undiluted day after day. They cycled together to the foot of Errigal, to Dunlewy Lake, to Magheroarty: they climbed Muckish: they sailed to Inishbofin. This was perhaps the happiest part of their courtship: the period of questioning was over and they had come to the period of acceptance. The things in which they were in accord seemed infinitely more important than the things in which they were incompatible, and the sweetness of kisses compensated for the bitterness of misunderstanding. They had a kind of romantic tolerance for each other which is an infinitely better basis for marriage than romantic illusion, but unfortunately in their case, while it was Mabel's deficiencies that Bernard tolerated, her tolerance was for his virtues. Still for the present they were very happy, for no coming events cast their shadows over the bogland of Tirconnell.

"Sandy must be in action by this time," said Bernard one evening as they wandered by the seashore. (Sandy had sailed with the Tenth Division for the Dardanelles some weeks before.) "I wonder how these fellows manage to summon up any feeling against the poor old Turk. The only time he ever came in contact with Ireland was to send us foodships in the famine,—God bless him."

There was a green and gold sunset behind the black sprawling bulk of the Bloody Foreland. Inland was a wild waste of bog and heather sparsely scattered with cottages. Billows from the Arctic thudded on the shore. Little heaps of burning seaweed on the sand sent up fumes of violet smoke. At one of the heaps three cottagers were holding an animated conversation. Bernard stopped to listen to the music of the Irish tongue . . .

"This is the real Ireland," he said at last to Mabel.

"It's a dull place," said Mabel; then seeing a shadow pass over his face she added: "But not when you're here, darling."

7

Insatiably the world went on slaughtering its sons: reckless sterilizing butchery. An empty earth was the prospect anticipated by those who dared to think.

Bernard still used to receive the *Ashbury Chronicle*, which showed an ever-lengthening Roll of Honour. Of his own contemporaries, Sedgwick, his one-time football captain, had been killed at Ypres; Reppington and Lashworthy at Neuve Chapelle; and his friend Murray, crying: "Ireland for ever!" at the head of his company of Liverpool Irish, fell riddled with machine-gun bullets on the slag-heaps of Loos.

When Bernard returned to town towards the end of August Suvla Bay had been fought and won, and that strip of sun-baked beach had cost the quenching of laughter in thousands of Irish homes. Half the people he knew were in mourning and he found his mother pale and anxious, every day expecting one of those fatal telegrams . . .

It was Sir Eugene who received it when it did come, and he went and told her the news.

"Wounded!" she cried, and gave a great sigh of relief. "Thank God," she said fervently; for to be wounded in the Great War was the best chance of life.

8

Stephen and Hektor sat one evening in the smoking-room of the Hotel Neptune.

"I'd like to know your opinion of Austin Mallow," said Hektor. "Is he a knave or a fool?"

"There's a little of both in every man," replied Stephen. "What particular knavery or folly do you suspect in Mallow?"

"Well, I was over at his place the other day and he began to talk in an offhand way about rebellions and things. He asked me what I thought of the chances of a rebellion nowadays. 'Nil,' said I. He asked me would I be against a rebellion. 'Sure thing,' said I. 'A rebellion without some chances of success would be a mug's game.' 'It all

depends on what you mean by success or failure,' says he. 'Was Robert Emmet a failure?' 'A fiasco,' said I. 'Then you think his military failure was enough to condemn his action?' says he. 'No,' says I. 'But before you undertake a rebellion you must have good grounds to hope for military success. Perhaps he had them,' says I, 'and perhaps he hadn't. I don't know.' 'Then,' says he, 'you don't think a moral success any compensation for a military failure?' 'I'm a soldier, not a philosopher,' says I. 'And you think there's no chance for a rising now?' says he. 'Not a scrap,' says I. 'Don't you think,' says he, 'that if we fired the spark in Dublin the whole country would blaze up like a power-magazine.' 'Well,' says I, 'if you *will* talk in metaphors, the country isn't a powder-magazine. It's a wet bog. Besides, if the country did rise, what would be the use? There aren't ten thousand rifles in the place. An insurrection without foreign help would be squelched in a week.' 'I doubt it,' says he. Now is that man as big a fool as I think him? You're on the Executive and see more of him than I do. What do you think?"

"I must have a talk with him myself," said Stephen.

A few days later he got into conversation with Austin at the end of a meeting of the Executive and, after accompanying him part of the way home, was invited to come the whole way and have a cup of tea. This was served not in the sitting-room but in Austin's own sanctum, a small room at the top of the house, the principal article of whose furniture was a roll-top desk littered with sheets of paper on which were scribbled the beginnings and rough-drafts of poems, and with the manuscripts of contributors to *Manannan*. Amateurish water-colours and crayon-sketches — evidently Austin's own — covered the walls, and there were some weird symbolic designs in oils on the panels of the door. Austin lit the fire which was set in the grate, changed his coat for the Japanese gown he had worn on Stephen's former visit, and poured out the tea, which Theo-

dosia brought in, with a yellowish bony hand that trembled with the effort of lifting the pot.

"How's the war going these days?" he said. "I seldom read the newspapers."

"Much the same. I think it's fairly evident now that the Germans aren't going to win a military victory."

"Do you really think so?"

"I'm certain of it. The best we can hope for now is a draw."

"That'll be as bad for us as a British victory."

"Nothing of the kind. It might even prove better than a German victory: I distrust all great Powers. It looks as if the big nations will go on fighting to exhaustion point, and then comes our chance to wring good terms out of England."

"But we don't want terms. It's independence now or never. I've talked to several of the Executive about it, and they've mostly agreed that now is the time to strike."

"But why?"

"Isn't England fighting the strongest enemy she's ever had or ever likely to have? You don't get European wars more than once in a century. If physical force is ever to justify itself it must be now when the enemy is at his weakest."

"But he isn't at his weakest. So far from weakening England the war strengthens her. Her armies are five times as large as they were in peace time and she wouldn't miss the number that would be required to flatten us in a month. What forces have we? Twenty thousand men at the most, and less than two-thirds of them armed; and we haven't ammunition to last three days' hard fighting. My dear Mallow, we haven't the ghost of a chance."

"I don't believe our chance is as poor as you think, but in any case I hold that the fight itself is the thing. If we fail, we fail, but at least it can be said that we tried. We've been too long without bloodshed and in consequence the

national spirit is decaying and giving way to Imperialism. We must redeem the people by sacrifice."

"Don't you worry about the people. The present imperial tint is only skin deep, and it's wearing off already. Conditions aren't nearly so desperate as to need desperate remedies. If the people were really beginning to think imperially, to regard themselves as British, to regard the Union Jack as their flag, to talk of the British fleet and army as theirs, then perhaps a blood-sacrifice might be required to redeem them. But they aren't doing anything of the kind. They're getting less pro-British every day. The young men are coming into the Volunteers. The Volunteers are rapidly becoming a formidable weapon: they're steadily arming and drilling and learning to shoot: they're a fine disciplined force of the best material you could get anywhere. If we only keep on as we're going, when the war ends we'll be able to put up a stiff demand to England, well-backed with bayonets and with a united people behind us. To go into rebellion simply means the smash up of our movement and a fresh disarmament of the country, and giving the English a closer grip on us than ever. That might possibly produce a nation of ardent patriots, but I think our armed handful more useful. . . . Besides, the country doesn't want a rebellion, and a minority must assume infallibility before it can presume to commit the remainder.

Austin Mallow was silent a moment.

"Yes," he said at length, "I quite see the force of your arguments. I admit that they're convincing, and I can find no answer to them. But still, *I feel that I'm right.*"

"Great Scott!" cried Stephen. "Do you mean to say that you'd plunge us into rebellion in face of arguments you admit to be convincing, just because of some vague feeling that it might be a good thing?"

"How could I plunge you into anything against your will?" said Austin. "I'm merely expressing my own feeling."

"Were you?" thought Stephen, and drank some tea. He

watched Mallow while he did so and noticed that his yellowish face was working with some strange excitement. His last words were evidently an attempt to lull the suspicions which he felt he had roused in Stephen, but his self-control was insufficient to make them convincing. Stephen could see that Austin was literally bursting with revelations and in a state to blurt out anything. He accordingly put on an air of obtuseness and said:

"However we may speculate in theory, the whole notion of a rebellion in these unromantic days is rather laughable, isn't it?"

Austin, looking at Stephen, saw only a commonplace sceptic lounging in an armchair, and felt that he might safely give vent to the revelations which were tearing him. Stephen, looking up under lowered lids, saw Austin rise, contorted like the Delphian priestess.

"Fool!" cried Austin. "You think your cool reasoning can dispose of anything. But there are things above reason. I've seen you laugh over my poetry: I know you laugh at me and at all poets. But we poets are often prophets: I'm a prophet."

"Yes," replied Stephen. "I dare say. It must be jolly useful. What time is it?"

He had learnt as much as he wanted, and he took an early leave.

"Mallow," he said to Hektor afterwards, "is such a fool that his folly is quite as mischievous as conscious double-dealing. He needs watching. What can you do with a man who is *convinced* that he's wrong and yet *feels* that he's right?"

9

"Things are bucking up here under your régime," said Crowley. "Twenty new recruits this week, and we got sixty odd during September."

"That's all very well," said Bernard, "but I can't understand why we don't do even better."

"National purity of the Gael, my boy. He's afraid to

look on Freedom in naked beauty, and likes her to be decently clothed."

There was a heavy rat-tat at the hall-door at this moment, and presently the house-keeper came in and in an agitated voice announced that a policeman wanted to speak to Mr. Lascelles.

"Unsolicited testimonial to your organizing abilities, Bernard," said Crowley. "Slip out by the window there and buzz off in the car. I'll blarney them for a bit."

"I don't believe they want to arrest me," said Bernard, "or they'd have come right in without ceremony. "How many are there, did you say?"

"Only one, sir," said the housekeeper. "He's got a letter in his hand, I think he wants to give you."

"Well, show the blighter in," said Crowley, cocking a revolver which he took from a drawer and placed in his pocket in case of necessity.

The woman withdrew and ushered in a bashfully blushing young constable, who, avoiding Crowley's scornful glance, handed a long official envelope to Bernard, saying:

"Me ordhers is to deliver this into your hands."

"Thank you," said Bernard. "I'm much obliged."

The constable shuffled shyly with his feet for a moment and then awkwardly stalked out.

"Rather an unimposing instrument of tyranny," said Crowley. "What have we here?"

Bernard opened the envelope and they read the enclosed document, which said that whereas Bernard Lascelles, physician, had in sundry ways promoted disaffection among his Majesty's subjects and been guilty of acts prejudicial to recruitment for his Majesty's forces in and about the townland of Ballylangan, the competent military authorities, under the powers conferred on them by the Defence of the Realm Act, hereby ordered the said Bernard Lascelles, physician, to quit the following area, namely Ireland, within ten days of the receipt of the order, failure to obey which would involve severe penalty.

"New motto for the Party," said Bernard. "'Ireland an area. . . . *An Area Once Again.*' What?"

"This looks bad for you, old man," said Crowley. "What'll you do?"

"Consult headquarters when I go back to town. We've half a dozen other organizers on the road, and they'll probably all be in the same boat. . . . I wonder which is the more unpleasant life, dodging arrest or going to jail."

"Not much to choose between them, I fancy."

"I'm damned if I leave my country, anyway, for any blasted English general," said Bernard . . .

When he arrived at Headquarters next day he found two other organizers who had received similar orders awaiting the decision of the Executive, which was in session upstairs, as to their course of action. Presently Umpleby, who had been organizing in the South, came in.

"What? You too?" cried Bernard.

Umpleby ruefully produced the familiar envelope.

"I'll write to every paper in the country to denounce this tyranny," he said.

"Will you!" said Bernard. "Not if the Executive knows it. You'll obey order, my son, and that won't be one of them."

"But the world should know of this. We must have publicity, Lascelles. Never in the whole history of the tyranny of big nations over small ones [not even in Ninety-Eight with all its horrors, {an ancestor of mine, I believe, was flogged and pitch-capped in those days (he survived it too, poor devil) }] do we hear of such high-handed, barbarous, unrelenting . . ."

He was interrupted by the entry of Stephen, who came to communicate the decision of the Executive. The order was to be completely disregarded and organizing carried on as usual.

"What about informing the press?" asked Umpleby.

"That will be done officially," replied Stephen.

Bernard went home in pensive mood. He felt no heroic

exultation in suffering for the cause. He dreaded the prospect of gaol. He suffered in advance in his imagination the discomforts, the coarseness, the vile food, the loneliness of prison life. . . . And what would Mabel say? . . .

"Bah! Let's forget it," he said, shaking himself. "I've ten days' freedom anyhow. I'll make the most of them."

"Swathythe," he said when he reached home, "I suppose you are aware that I'm an enemy to your country?"

"Yes, sir," said Swathythe.

"You don't object, Swathythe?"

"No, sir."

"It isn't against your conscience to serve me?"

"No conscience, sir. Can't afford such luxuries."

"Sometimes, Swathythe, you talk like Lord Goring's valet in *An Ideal Husband*."

"Yes, sir. I always strive to model myself upon him."

"Hm. Well, look here, Swathythe, I'm going to entrust some of my affairs to you. I've had the honour of engaging the attention of the military authorities of your Imperial country, and the possibilities are that I shall find myself in gaol very shortly."

"I beg your pardon, sir?"

"I say, I may find myself in gaol, Swathythe."

"I'm afraid that puts a different complexion on the case, sir."

"I thought you'd no conscience, Swathythe?"

"Quite true, sir. But I've my prospects to consider. It wouldn't do me no good, sir, to have served a gentleman as 'ad been in gaol, sir,—if you'll excuse me, sir."

"Don't mention it, Swathythe. So I can't rely on you?"

"No, sir. And if you anticipate an early arrest, sir, I should be much obliged if you would make it convenient to dispense with my services as soon as possible."

"Certainly, Swathythe. You can take yourself to the devil at once if you like. Only you'll get no wages in lieu of notice."

"Perfectly satisfied, sir," said Swathythe, and withdrew obsequiously.

"What will life be without Swathythe?" cried Bernard.
"Oh, Ireland, you expect too much of your sons."

Then Mabel had to be told. She fairly broke down and cried when she heard the news, and Bernard, after some clumsy and unavailing attempts to console her, stood by helplessly waiting for the storm to subside. It was at her own home that this happened, but fortunately Mrs. Harvey was out.

"Everything seems against us," sobbed Mabel. "I don't believe we'll ever be married. . . . Where will you go to? How long will you have to stay away?"

"I'm not going anywhere."

"What are you going to do, then?"

"I'm just going to sit tight."

"But . . . ?"

Bernard explained. He might be forcibly deported: he might be imprisoned: he would know for certain in a few days. Mabel's grief burst forth afresh.

"Oh, Bernard, how could you? What will mother say?"

"Dash your mother," said Bernard irritably. "You don't think I *like* going to prison, do you?"

She was repentant in a moment.

"Don't mind me, dear. I'm horrid and selfish, I know. But oh, how I'll miss you, Bernard."

"Never mind. It can't be for ever, and we'll have a good time these next ten days, won't we?"

She smiled through her tears . . .

They made the most of his ten days' freedom. October was drawing to a close, damp and chilly, but they contrived to have at least one good walk together, and they went to many theatres and picture houses.

"How does your mother take it?" Bernard asked once.

"She hasn't said a word," replied Mabel.

Bernard whistled and said:

"That's ominous . . ."

He produced two pink pieces of cardboard from his pocket.

"What about a last dance together?" he said. "Thursday may be my last day of freedom,—or my last day in Ireland. Let's make it a pleasant one . . ."

"Oh, my dear," cried Mabel. "Why, why, why do things like this happen? . . . Is it all a nightmare?" . . .

Malone read the deportation order with grim satisfaction.

"Perhaps you'll admit now," he said, "that the time has come to fight."

"I don't," said Bernard.

"Are you going to wait until all the leaders are jailed or deported then? If you don't fight now you're disgraced."

"We're a military movement," said Bernard, "and we take our orders from our officers without criticism. We're the first disciplined movement Ireland ever had."

"I'd think more of a movement that wanted to fight," said Malone.

IO

On a raw morning at the beginning of November Bernard and O'Dwyer saw Eugene off from Westland Row Station bound for the Western Front. They stood on the platform together, but they could say little. Bernard and O'Dwyer hated the cause in which he was going to fight, but Eugene was going in all good faith to fight, as he thought, for Ireland: so there was little to say.

They stamped their feet on the platform and clapped their gloved hands and exclaimed frequently:

"By Jove, it's cold."

"Queer situation!" said O'Dwyer. "Two Sinn Feiners seeing off a British officer. It would make an Englishman stare."

"I suppose Englishmen think Sinn Feiners have horns and a tail," said Bernard.

"I hope we Irish soldiers will patch up that eternal quarrel," said Eugene. "Bernard, I hope you aren't in for

too bad a time. I hate to think of you in a prison cell in weather like this."

"Or any weather," laughed Bernard. "Win a V.C. and they might reprieve me on the strength of it."

"Not much chance of that, I'm afraid. I'm not built of very soldierly stuff."

Indeed it was hard to imagine those mild blue eyes lit with the spirit of battle, or those soft and gentle hands dealing out death. War and Eugene seemed things incompatible.

"What a decent, kindly fellow Eugene is," thought Bernard, and regretted the smallness of their intercourse together. "Has my neglect hurt him?" he wondered. "How unkindly I've sometimes spoken to him," he reflected bitterly. "I've never concealed my thinking him a fool: and he's no fool." He made great resolves for the future: he and Eugene were to be friends, and more than friends.

Eugene got into the railway carriage and stood leaning out of the window. The train began to move slowly.

"Good-bye, old man. Good luck!" said O'Dwyer.

"Good luck," said Eugene, smiling in that grave way of his.

Bernard could say nothing on account of a choking lump in his throat. He stood gazing after Eugene's face, still lit with its kindly smile, until something blurred his vision.

II

There was no joy in ragtime nor solace in waltzing for Bernard and Mabel when the tenth night came. Their souls were tremulous with the imminence of parting and they wanted to be left alone together. Early in the evening they left the ball-room and retired to that nook where nearly a year ago they had told their love. They could say little, but sat hand in hand, whispering to one another now and again some tender phrase.

"You'll think of me in prison sometimes, dear?"

"Sometimes, did you say? My darling, I'll think of nothing else . . . And you?"

"I couldn't think of you more than I do already. All day at my work you're never out of my thoughts. It's a wonder I don't type your name into the letters."

"My dearest!"

"And can I write to you?"

"Not for a month . . . What a long month that will be."

"How short these ten days have been."

"That month will seem like a thousand such days."

"Perhaps they won't put you in prison. Mightn't they deport you?"

"They might."

"Well, if they do, I'll come over the sea and marry you."

"Will you, really?"

"Yes."

He kissed her then, but he did not tell her that he felt sure that prison would be his fate.

"Time seems long when you look forward," he said, "but time past seems very short. We've been engaged ten months, and they've gone by like three."

"Like a week," said Mabel.

"There must be great days in store for Ireland. They seem a long way ahead now, but when they come we'll look back on these times and laugh. . . . What shall I be in the Republic?"

"Foreign Secretary."

"Ah, you'd like to be holding brilliant receptions, wouldn't you? But I'd rather be Minister of Education or head of some department for town-planning."

"How dull."

"You'd be the chief guest at all the school prize-days in the country, or you could give grand dinners to the town-planning experts."

"I'd rather entertain the foreign ambassadors."

"You can go to the foreign secretary's wife's receptions. That'll be that little girl who was dancing with Felim O'Dwyer tonight."

"What nonsense we're talking. . . . Bernard, Ireland will never be free."

"She will. And in our lifetime, too, with luck."

"It sounds so impossible. How long have we been under England?"

"Nearly seven hundred and fifty years."

"And you still hope?"

"England was four hundred years under the Romans, and people still hoped, and the end of it came at last. The Roman Empire is dead and gone, and England still lives."

Discussion had made them temporarily forget the coming separation. Then suddenly Mabel remembered it again, and threw herself weeping into his arms.

"Our last night together," she cried. "My dear, can nothing be done?"

He held her and comforted her and talked more nonsense to her and made her forget again. The evening sped by, and they went downstairs and danced the last waltz together. The tune was *Come Back to Erin*, a favourite finale, to which they had danced scores of times in happier days. Now the old melody seemed brimful of all the tears ever shed in Ireland, yet with something of hope arising through it. Bernard's mood was almost exultant, and Mabel, looking up at him with tear-dimmed eyes, wondered at the expression of his face . . .

As Bernard was getting into his overcoat in the dressing-room, Molloy accosted him.

"Having a last dissipation?" he said. "I hear that two of your colleagues were arrested this evening. One of them is a client of mine, too: Umpleby."

"We're making no defence, of course," said Bernard.

"You'll get it all the harder for that."

"Well, 'tis but in vain for soldiers to complain,' you know. How are things with you?"

Just then O'Dwyer rushed up to Bernard and said:

"You're done, old man. Three policemen and a taxi at the door."

"Damnation," said Bernard. "My G man's better than I knew. I thought I'd given him the slip."

"Will you try and dodge them?"

"Not worth it. May as well take what's coming first as last. . . . I say, will you look after Mabel and see her home?"

O'Dwyer having promised, they went out and found Mabel waiting in the hall. She took the news quietly and they went to the lounge together to wait for the crowd to disappear. In spite of O'Dwyer's presence she held Bernard's hand tight till the end.

Taxis hooted and whips cracked without and the laughing throng melted away. Bernard, Mabel and O'Dwyer arose and went out. Two taxis stood by the kerb. One was that which Bernard had engaged to take Mabel home: three policemen stood by the other. One of these came forward, but stopped when Bernard said:

"It's all right. I know what you want. I'll be with you in a minute."

He took both Mabel's hands in his and said:

"Well, au revoir, my darling."

Instantly, she threw her arms round his neck and they kissed: a long kiss: feast of desire that knows no surfeit and grows greater the more it feeds: joy ever soaring, yet reaching no culmination; yearning and satisfaction, bliss and woe, dominance and surrender, despair and triumph, all compounded. Into that moment they strove to pack all the rapture of the stolen months to come. Still unsatisfied, their lips reluctantly sundered. Then, abruptly, Bernard caught her to him again and kissed her fiercely and swiftly once. He pushed her from him after that and entered the taxi without looking back.

The policemen got in clumsily beside him.

"I see that young Bernard Lascelles has been sent to prison," said Lady Mallaby Morchoe to Mrs. Gunby Rourke in the costume department at Switzer's.

"Really," said Mrs. Gunby Rourke. "Well, I'm not surprised. He's a bad lot altogether. Poor Sir Eugene!"

"What makes you think him a bad lot?" asked Lady Mallaby Morchoe.

"I'm afraid I've been indiscreet. Isn't it enough that he's been sent to prison?"

"O, that's for something political. What else has he done?"

"Well, between ourselves, I saw him at Antwerp some time ago in the company of a very shady-looking woman, indeed."

"Probably some German agent."

"I shouldn't be surprised . . ."

"Have you heard about Sir Eugene Lascelles' son?" said Mrs. Bonegraft to Lady Mallaby Morchoe at the counter in Mitchell's.

"Yes. I'm sorry for his father and mother," said Lady Mallaby Morchoe.

"I wonder what he's done," said Mrs. Bonegraft.

Lady Mallaby Morchoe assumed a mystifying expression.

"A dark business," she said. "German intrigues have something to say to it, and I believe there's a woman at the bottom of it."

"Dear me," said Mrs. Bonegraft. "What sort of woman?"

"A notorious adventuress, I hear, and probably in German pay. He was seen all over Antwerp with her."

"Dear, dear," said Mrs. Bonegraft. "I always thought him such a nice young man."

"O, I don't mind a young man sowing his wild oats, but he shouldn't betray his country in doing it . . ."

"We should take care that we don't give our young men too much liberty," said Mrs. Bonegraft to Mrs. Metcalfe

in the cooling-room of a Turkish bath. "There's young Bernard Lascelles, as nice a young man as you could wish for, gone sowing his wild oats and disgracing himself and his family."

"What has he done?" asked Mrs. Metcalfe.

"O, don't ask me. It's too awful a story. German spies and wicked woman and all sorts of terrible things . . . There's some dreadful woman he associates with in Antwerp, his mistress, I suppose . . ."

So the story went from mouth to mouth, and, as in the whispering game that changes "Julius Caesar was stabbed by Brutus" to "The cat's in the kitchen," it reached Mrs. Moffat in a very much altered form, and a very spicy one, too; and Mrs. Moffat handed it on to Mrs. Harvey.

"My poor Mabel!" said Mrs. Harvey, and dabbed a handkerchief to her eye. Her eyes were large and luminous and her lachrymal glands were very readily stimulated. "My poor Mabel!" she repeated. "My innocent child."

But she congratulated herself on the acquisition of a weapon for which she had neither hoped nor sought.

CHAPTER XV

GATHERING CLOUDS

I

“**A**S a military expert,” said Stephen to Hektor O’Flaherty, “what did you think of the manoeuvres yesterday?”

O’Flaherty smiled reminiscently and said:

“Kind of hide-and-seek stunt, wasn’t it? When it was all over the Green Field-Marshal came up to me and said: ‘Well, umpire, who’s won?’ ‘Search me,’ said I. ‘If I’d some vague notion what the two armies were aiming at, and a sort of general idea where the blazes they’d all got to, a decision might be hazarded. But as it is . . .’ He didn’t like that a bit, sir.”

“He wouldn’t.”

“I wonder what the hell they thought they were up to? There were about nine hundred men engaged and they covered an area twice the size of the battlefield of Waterloo. I guess either line could have been broken by a determined billy-goat. . . . I was sorry for the rank and file. They seemed completely at sea. . . . As for the generals, it made me laugh to hear them issue their orders. You’d have thought they were Hindenburgs directing army-groups.”

“Yes. There’s a kind of megalomania afflicting some of our leaders: the intoxicating effect of power, I suppose. Those two generals of yesterday would think nothing now of tackling the British Army in the field.”

“I wouldn’t put it past them.”

“I’m worried about some of our Executive, that’s a fact. The old unanimity has been going from us during the last few months, and a party seems to be segregating itself from

the rest of us. This party is made up of the men whose judgment and ability I've most reason to distrust: men without a sense of proportion, and some of them mentally unbalanced. . . .

"Now, if you take a movement like ours, a military, revolutionary and party secret organization, and put at the head of it three or four men who are fools enough to think it a match for a regular army, a couple of plotters who are above being frank with their colleagues, and an unhealthy fanatic like Mallow who preaches a doctrine of blood-sacrifice — where do you think you're heading to?"

"It looks bad," said Hektor. "But I doubt if they've the guts to do anything."

At this moment Felim O'Dwyer entered the smoking-room wearing a look of unusual gravity.

"I've something important to tell you fellows," he said. "Let's go somewhere where we won't be disturbed."

"My bedroom," suggested Stephen, and they adjourned there at once.

"I'll begin right at the beginning," said O'Dwyer, pacing up and down the room, while Stephen sat on the bed and Hektor on a chair. "I met Austin Mallow casually at Headquarters today, and he asked me to come out and lunch with him. I was rather surprised at this, because we're not particularly friendly, and then I came to the conclusion he was going to ask me about the author of that poem of mine: *A Vision in the Void of Night*, you know; so I began to cast about for excuses for his non-appearance. However, Mallow said very little all through the meal: it was at the Dolphin: a good square four-course lunch, with a bottle of Burgundy. Then at the end, over coffee and cigars, he looked me straight in the face with those piercing eyes of his and said: 'What do you think of the way things are going?' At once, I remembered the interview he'd had with you, Stephen, so I looked as stupid as I could and said: 'What do you mean?' Then he began to talk quietly about the present policy. Did I think the arrangement to

fight from our houses in case of an attempt to disarm us a good one? Didn't I think we were taking the arrest of Lascelles, Umpleby and the others rather tamely? Weren't the men getting impatient of inaction? And so on. I said very little, but gave sympathetic grunts from time to time. Then he began to get more definite, and asked me whether we were likely to get a better chance of striking than the present. I became duller still, and he became so exasperated that he gave away far more than he intended. I got nothing consecutive out of him, but by piecing things together I deduce this in brief: that there's a party on the Executive who mean to strike a blow as soon as possible; that they're in alliance with the Liberty Hall crowd; and that the date is to be about Christmas."

"By gad, Stephen, you had sound dope," said Hektor.

"Wait though," said O'Dwyer. "When I'd got as much as I wanted out of him, I told him I didn't approve of an insurrection, and that I was sure the majority of the Volunteers were the same. 'You're wrong there,' says he, 'for I'm in a position to know. I must insist, however, that you regard all I've said to you as strictly confidential,' which was rather like tightening the strings after you'd let the cat out of the bag. So I've come straight over here, and that's that."

He took a chair and lit a cigarette.

"This is serious," said Hektor. "Gad, they must be bigger fools than I thought them. An insurrection in mid-winter! Why, the weather would be enough to quell it. The English needn't fire a shot."

"This has got to be stopped," said Stephen. "I'll see the sane members of the Executive after the meeting this evening and tell them your story, O'Dwyer."

"The Insurgent Chieftains will probably try and capture the Executive at the elections next week," remarked Hektor.

"I should say, certainly," replied Stephen. "They wouldn't stick at a coup, but they'd like the sanction of majority rule if they could get it. . . . We must put up a

ticket of sane men and canvass the country before the Convention meets. The organizers will make good canvassers and any I know are our way of thinking."

"I'll be on the country myself, next week," said O'Dwyer. "I've taken on Lascelles' district."

"Good," said Stephen. "The question now is: who shall we put on the ticket? There are—let's see: yes—six safe men on the Executive already. We'll put them up again and add three others. Plump for those and we get a clear majority. . . . Would you stand, O'Flaherty?"

"I don't mind," said Hektor.

"And you, O'Dwyer?"

"I'd find it easier canvassing for a ticket I wasn't on," said O'Dwyer.

"Well, the whole crowd will have to be consulted anyhow." He looked at his watch, and said: "Five o'clock. I must be off to Headquarters."

2

Bernard made no attempt to take his imprisonment philosophically. He chafed and fretted at his confinement, found the solitude intolerable, and could not stomach the food. Moreover, he was not, like those born to Nationalism, inured to English injustice: he could not take it as a matter of course, and he lashed himself into fury by thinking of it.

When the cell door first slammed behind him he stood for a moment surveying the narrow space in which for the next four months he was to spend twenty-three hours out of every twenty-four. The cold bare walls and floor, the small barred window, the plank bed, made a harsh and chilly prospect. Suddenly, his eye fell on a book lying on a shelf near the door. He hastened to pick it up, found that it was a Bible, and threw it down again. A fit of fierce impatience seized him, and he began striding about the cell, striking his heels on the floor, head bent and hands in pockets.

By-and-by supper was brought to him, consisting of the usual milkless, sugarless cocoa and sour bread, but he could not bring himself to touch it and went hungry to bed. To bed, but not to sleep, for the hardness of the plank, the pangs of hunger, and the searching cold of the November night, combined to keep him awake interminable hours. Blessed oblivion came to him shortly before morning, to be rudely broken into ere it had begun to refresh him, and he rose and dressed himself, eyelids heavily drooping and teeth chattering the while, in the bleak light of a winter's dawn. They brought him skilly for breakfast and hunger drove him to swallow the unappetizing mess, but he could not retain it. Sick and miserable, he sat for two hours with his head in his hands until he was cramped and numb with the cold. Then he was taken out to the exercise-yard and along with a score of other poor creatures set to chopping wood. Umpleby, from a far corner of the yard, grinned sympathy to him, and was roughly spoken to by the warder in consequence. Shivering with cold, Bernard chopped and chopped, which warmed him somewhat though it sorely blistered his hands. Then farewell to the sky and back to the cell again. . . . The librarian, going his rounds, tossed a book on his table. It was a Third School Reader and Bernard flung it from him in disgust.

He fell to thinking of Mabel and realized that for a day and a night she had scarcely entered his thoughts.

"Dear little girl, what made me forget her? Is she thinking of me now? Is she working, I wonder? No. She's gone out to her lunch: a bun and a glass of milk at the D.B.C. What would she think if she knew I'd forgotten her? . . . It was too cold to think. . . . Lord, I'm hungry. What would I like now? Mutton cutlets and potato chips, crisp and brown and piping hot. And a glass of foaming beer. . . . Damn it, I am hungry."

Dinner came: soup and potatoes. He drank a little of the greasy slop and dissected out the healthy part of a worm-bored potato. It served but to whet his appetite. He de-

voured the second potato ravenously, skin, worm-holes, and all.

"Are there no better books in the prison than this?" he asked a warder, holding up the School Reader.

The warder took pity on him; said it was hard on 'the likes of him' to be in a place like that; and gave him *Daniel Deronda*, which had been rejected by the burglar in the neighbouring cell . . .

The days went by ever so slowly. Bernard had none of Stephen's stoicism, and patience was not in him. Moreover, he was in love. So he fretted and fumed and could not even settle down to the enjoyment of George Eliot's masterpiece. He would pace his cell backwards and forwards for hours on end, or he would sit still lost in dreams of food, or Mabel. Sometimes a bar of sunlight would shine through his window on to the opposite wall and he would stare at it gloomily, fancying that it mocked his helplessness.

Mass brought him no consolation. Though he had that deep-rooted, sub-conscious faith that no Catholic was ever without and which recalls nearly every wanderer in the end, he had none of Stephen's intellectual convictions in religion. His intellect, in fact, nearly always led him away from it, and it was his emotions that invariably brought him back. In his adolescence it was the need of supernatural help in a crisis that had revived his lost faith, and the crisis over he had relapsed later on to unbelief. Then the magnificent music of one of Bach's Masses on a Christmas Day had recalled him again, to fall away once more after an argument over the question of eternal punishment. Thus, he had wavered all his life. The sacrifice of the Mass, therefore, had little inspiration for him when shorn of pomp and music, and the effect of the little ceremony in the bare gloomy prison chapel was, if anything, depressing. He found it difficult even to pray . . .

Poor Bernard was fond of the good things of life and he was accustomed to getting them, too. For all his hunger

he could not stomach skilly, and the prison bread gave him indigestion. Day by day he grew thinner and weaker. He came soon to think of nothing else but food and to dream of it when he slept. The common empyreumatic dishes conjured themselves up tantalizing before his vision. In his imagination he saw the rich brown of grills, heard the sizzling of fryingpans, smelt the savour of rashers. He would dream of feasts, and always some of the guests would be late, so that he would have to wait, hungrily eyeing the victuals. Then the late ones would arrive; he would draw out his chair to sit down; and in that instant he would awake.

Naturally of a nervous temperament, ill nourishment made him nervy. A horror of loneliness and confinement came upon him: a revival of the horror he had once endured as a small boy when a nurse had shut him up in a linenpress as a punishment for some naughtiness or other. A hysterical fear that he might be forgotten and left in his prison for ever took possession of him. He imagined himself caught here like a rat in a trap when the prison might be on fire above. He felt forsaken by all the world . . .

After a seeming eternity he realized that only ten days had passed — a twelfth part of his sentence.

"All that I've been through already over again," he groaned, "and again and again eleven times!"

Weeks went by, and the time came for Mabel's first letter to arrive. In the back of his Bible was the scoring made by some poor wretch of the days of his captivity (two years he had had) and Bernard used it at second hand to count the days up to the arrival of his letter. It came at last, a short and colourless note, and a day late at that.

Dear Bernard,

I hope you are quite well and not too lonely. It must be dreadful to be locked up in a cell this cold weather . . .

So it began, and after a few items of not very interesting news it wound up, without any expressions of affection, with her initials.

Bernard was disappointed and puzzled and then hit upon an explanation.

"Silly little dear," he said, "she was shy of the governor seeing what she'd write."

He wrote her a love letter, cramming all his feelings and a thousand endearments by writing microscopically into the official sheet of notepaper. At the end he wrote: "*Don't be shy of the governor. He's only a machine.*"

Christmas Eve came, and he remembered the last one so happily spent with Mabel. In his imagination he saw the glittering shop windows and the jostling crowds in Grafton Street, and heard the tinkling of tea-cups.

3

Felim O'Dwyer sat idly poking the fire in the bed-sitting-room which he inhabited in a little house on the South Circular Road. By daylight it was a horrible enough apartment, with its dingy yellow wall-paper, its faded thread-bare carpet; its blackened ceiling; with its enormous battered double bed, its rickety wash-stand, and tawdry dust-soaked mantel-hangings; and with its grimy window looking out on a dreary yard and the back of another house. But at night, with the blind drawn and the lamp lit, it looked cosy enough, and O'Dwyer had added to the furniture a couple of wicker arm-chairs and a book case, and had covered the table with a red baize cloth. His means being small, he was obliged to live modestly in order to afford a consulting room in Merion Street.

He ceased toying with the poker and took a little note-book from one of his pockets and a pencil from another. He chewed at the latter for about a minute and then scribbled the following lines:

It's very true, dear, that eyes of blue, dear,
And brown eyes too, dear, have charmed my sight.
But your eyes of grey, dear, my heart have made, dear,
Very much afraid, dear, that it's killed outright.

He paused here and muttered:

"Now if I go on with that I'll probably spoil it and make it comic."

He read the verse over to himself with approval.

"It would fit on a post-card," he said.

He read it again.

"What an ass I am," he said.

Felim O'Dwyer was in love . . .

There was a knock at the hall-door and some one was admitted. Then the handle of his own door was turned. Swiftly, he pocketed his note-book as Hektor O'Flaherty and Hugo McGurk entered.

"Hello, boys! Come right in." O'Dwyer poked up the fire to a blaze and produced cigarettes. "What are you doing in town, Hugo?"

"Working for my final," said McGurk.

"Lazy devil! I heard you'd got stuck again in Autumn."

"Arrah, what harm? Sure, I'm young yet,"

"How are things in your part of the country, by the way?"

"Looking up a bit. They've only got two recruits for the Army in the last three months, and they corner-boys that enlisted when they were drunk. There was a recruiting meeting hissed only the other day. McGovern, the local gombeen-man, was speaking: small nationalities, Catholic Belgium, and all the rest of it: fierce *ráiméis*. 'What would the Germans do if they came to Ballylennon?' says he. 'They'd take the land off ye,' says he. 'They'd batten on your flesh and blood,' says he. Then a fellow in the crowd calls out: 'Sure, ye wouldn't let 'em threspass on *your* presairves, McGovern.' You should have seen McGovern's face at that: it was a treat. He couldn't get another word in for the racket."

"The country's coming to its senses at last," said Hektor.

"How are things going on the new Executive?" asked O'Dwyer.

"That Executive," said Hektor, "gives one furiously to

think, as the French say. The party with sound dope has the majority but the other crowd don't seem to mind. I'm sure there's things going on behind the scenes, and I don't like it. No, sir. As you know, we faced them right at the beginning with the question of fight or no fight. McNeill put the thing to us fair and square in a statement that just put the whole case against insurrection in a nutshell. I watched the faces of the unsound dopers during the reading, and what did I see there? Conviction? Not on your life. Sheer downright obstinacy. There was a sneer on Mallow's face that I could have booted him for, and Barret was posing for a bust of Robert Emmet. When the statement was over the dopers got up each in turn and heartily endorsed every word of it. What more could be said? And yet it's as plain as a pikestaff that their minds are made up, and I'm as sure as death that they're working underground."

"I'll tell you a little tale," said McGurk, "that'll tack on to that. The other day I dropped in at Rathgar Road to have a crack with Brian Mallow. He didn't seem extra pleased to see me, and he took me up to Austin's study at the top of the house instead of the sitting-room. I was surprised, of course, but I said nothing. Anyhow, we smoked and talked for a while — a couple of hours, maybe — when brother Austin sticks his head in at the door and tells Brian he wants him for a few minutes. Brian goes out, calling on me to wait a bit and he'd be back. Well, I waited for maybe quarter of an hour, and then I remembered I'd an appointment that I'd be late for if I didn't go at once. I got up and went downstairs, and then I thought I'd look into the sitting-room and tell Brian I was off, if he was there. Well, I opened the door, and what do you think I saw? A meeting of anarchists it looked like. There was me bould Austin sitting at one end of the table looking as cute as a leprechaun: you know the eyes of him: and *P.H.P.* and Plunkett and all the rest of the dope crowd sitting in conclave. I tell you, Hektor, I got a look from the pote that fairly froze me blood, so I just banged that door and buzzed

off. . . . Now, sirree, what do you think of that adventure?"

"Hm. It looks bad, sonny."

"Damn it," said O'Dwyer, "it's clear as daylight what they're up to; only what have we to go on? What can we do? If we faced them with it they'd only give renewed assurances, I suppose."

"Exactly," said Hektor. "They're answered our suspicions twice that way already."

"Confound it," said O'Dwyer. "These fellows call themselves democrats. What do they think elections are for if they disregard their verdict? What would they say if *we* were the minority and tried to stick *them* in the back?"

"They used to talk about the corruption of the U.I.L.," said McGurk, "and the way the Hibs. rig elections, but sure these fellows out-do them altogether. And whatever you may say about the U.I.L., they never gambled with men's lives."

"It's an absolute betrayal of the men," said Hektor. "We've taught them discipline for their own undoing."

"But what can we *do*?" exclaimed O'Dwyer.

"We ought to recall the Convention," said Hektor, "and put the case to them fair and square. I know what that would mean. The delegates are a sensible crowd, and even those who didn't vote for our ticket don't want any insurrection dope. The lunacy of the movement, I'm glad to say, is confined to the Executive."

"Is that going to be done?"

"I'm afraid not. I put it up to our crowd, but they didn't think it would work — not yet, anyway. You see we've nothing but guess-work and suspicion to go on and the doper's assurances will be accepted without question."

"And meanwhile?"

"Meanwhile," said Hektor, "we must keep our eyes and ears wider open than ever."

4

A worried Chancellor of the British Exchequer, faced with a war-bill of some five million pounds a day, cast his eye round for economies which would help him to make ends meet and laid covetous hands upon the grant for the teaching of the Irish language in the schools of Ireland, thereby securing the continuance of the war for some ten or eleven minutes. The Party deputed to look after Ireland's interests in the Imperial Parliament took the robbery without a whine, whereupon the Volunteers took the matter up, convened a public meeting of protest in Dublin, and stepped out of the seclusion into which they had seemingly lapsed for more than a year. The Volunteers themselves were a little surprised at the size and tone of the audience which mustered at their call. The Round Room of the Mansion House was packed to the doors; the Parliamentary speakers were treated as men of no account, while the Volunteers were heartily cheered; and references to the Bill on the Statute Book, Small Nations, and the Sanctity of Treaties, were invariably greeted with sarcastic laughter.

"Sure, the bloody ould Empire's bust anyhow," shouted an interrupter in the middle of one speech.

"Begob!" said McGurk to O'Dwyer, "we're out of the wilderness at last."

But it was the Conscription question that really re-established the Volunteers as a force in Irish politics. While the Party hesitated as to a course of action the people of Dublin were once more summoned to the Mansion House. The numbers of the previous meeting were doubled: a second room had to be requisitioned, and even that was inadequate. There was no superfluous reasoning or argument in the speeches: simply a reiteration of the plain statement that Irishmen did not recognize the right of the British Parliament to conscript them, and the straightforward unmistakable resolution carried by acclamation: "*We will not have Conscription.*" In their effort to serve two masters the Party leaders at Westminster made a woeful spectacle of

themselves: they professed to regard the whole question as one of expediency, not of principle, and protested that Ireland was ready to accept the measure if it were proved necessary to the winning of the war — which nobody, not even themselves, believed. Their attempt to get the credit for the defeat of the measure failed lamentably, for the Irish people had once more come to realize that unyielding patriotism is a more potent argument with England than fine spun reasoning and to regard the Irish Volunteers as the saviours of the nation.

"We've turned the corner now," said Stephen to Hektor. "It's only a question of time before the whole people comes over to us."

"If only our own crowd would keep their heads," muttered Hektor.

The season of Spring must have an enlivening effect upon the minds of men. The Spring of 1915 had seen public opinion begin to veer round in favour of the Volunteers: by the Spring of 1916 a widespread feeling of respect was gradually expanding into unqualified approval. They were still a minority; still even a small minority; but they were no longer an insignificant minority. And their influence was out of all proportion to their numbers, for they were vigorous, earnest, honest, intelligent, and fearless, and, to all appearance, unanimous. Neutrals openly professed admiration for them, and many supporters of the Party looked on them with favour.

They seized an early opportunity of testing the popular sentiment. Fresh public meetings were held to protest against the persecution of Bernard, Umpleby, and the other organizers, and roars of approval greeted the announcement that for every organizer arrested two more had been sent on the road.

"So the more they arrest," said the speaker, "the more they'll have to arrest. . . . Now who stands for Ireland? Who tells England that her gaols have never stifled the soul of Ireland and never will?"

The popular imagination was caught, for, though the old traditions of nationalism had lapsed, they had not died. Scores of young men rushed to enrol themselves in the Volunteers.

St. Patrick's Day gave an opportunity for an organized display of strength. A review and march-past of the Dublin Regiment were held in College Green at mid-day, all traffic being forcibly suspended for the occasion. On the very spot where the Volunteers who had won the independent Parliament in 1782 had held their famous review the building that had housed that Parliament looked down upon their descendants marshalled in the same cause. The spectacle of this well-armed, disciplined, green-uniformed army was one to appeal to the heart of the populace. Here was an Irish army: an army pledged to fight for Ireland alone and owning no allegiance but to Ireland; an army that had drilled and armed in face of discouragement and persecution; an army that had flung the gauntlet in the face of the hereditary foe by announcing that any attempt to disarm it would be resisted to the death. A gallant army and a gay army: these men had seen through the lies that had deceived the rest of the nation for so long; they had used the enemy's catchwords as a gibe against them; they had turned England's war aims into a joke; their witticisms were on every lip; they took the enemy's persecution with a laugh and went to gaol jesting. And deep down in every heart was a feeling that since they were persecuted they must be in the right.

"The man in the gap!" shouted a spectator as Eoin MacNeill passed along the lines, and the epithet was enthusiastically applauded.

A war-office motor-car attempted to pass through the cordon during the course of the review. McGurk, who was in command of this particular section, stepped in front of it.

"Go back," he said. "You're violating Irish neutrality."

A choleric Colonel in the back of the car angrily de-

manded a passage, saying he was engaged on work of national importance.

"Show me your passport signed by Eoin MacNeill," said McGurk.

The Colonel ordered the chauffeur to proceed, but McGurk levelled a rifle at him, whereupon the Colonel cursed his impudence roundly, but deemed it prudent to retreat.

"Some demonstration of power," remarked Hektor, who had witnessed the scene, to Stephen.

"If we can only keep our lunatics in control," said Stephen, "we'll have all Ireland with us in six months."

5

Bernard's second month in gaol dragged itself slowly by. Once more he counted the day till the arrival of Mabel's letter. Once more it was a day late: two days: three. Then came a note briefer and colder than the previous one.

"So much for women's promises," said Bernard and wrote to her in similar vein, though not so briefly.

"What on earth is she up to?" he asked himself. "Wish I'd insisted on her taking the visits." The visiting time being in the midst of her working hours it had been arranged that his monthly letter should be from her and his visit from his mother.

The latter came punctual to the hour and babbled news to him. Sandy was home from the Dardanelles, poor boy, crippled for life. He had been buried by a high explosive shell and his legs had been so crushed that they had to be amputated, one at the knee, the other at the hip. They had not heard from Eugene for a week. Alice had become a V.A.D. Sir Eugene had burnt every photograph of Bernard that he could lay his hands on. She crammed an astonishing amount of information into the allotted quarter of an hour.

So his second month ended and a third stretched itself before him.

Bernard was by nature a propagandist. Any view that he held strongly he always wished to put before every one he met in an enthusiastic desire to convert them. In this he differed from Stephen who thought only of conversion in mass and would not waste time on individuals, and from O'Dwyer, who hated his opponents too much to wish to convert them. Alone in his cell now Bernard held imaginary controversies with all his enemies in turn. He tackled the Redmondites:

"According to your present theory, Sir Edward Carson is a more patriotic Irishman than Eoin MacNeill; George Gunby Rourke and Fred Heuston Harrington are true men, and Stephen and I are traitors. . . . But you wouldn't dare follow your idea to its logical conclusion or you'd have to drop it at once."

No answer.

"What could they answer without stultifying themselves? . . . Well, why not practise humility and do stultify yourselves?"

Again no answer.

He tackled the Unionists:

"You do a lot of spouting now about the honour and glory of Ireland. You presume to call yourselves Irish patriots, and yet you call me a traitor because I hold different views from yours as to what's good for Ireland. Go on. Stick to your old attitude, the attitude of England's garrison and you will at any rate be honest and consistent. . . . Ireland's War, indeed! You'd goad her into it even if it wasn't."

He tackled the "Intellectuals," as typified in Mrs. Heuston Harrington:

"You claim to be intelligent and yet you believe that this war is being fought for a principle. You claim to be broad-minded and yet you never read our side of the controversy. You call us narrowminded though we read far more of your propaganda than our own. You claim to be a thinker, and yet you find your level in the leading articles of the *Irish*

Times. . . . You call the Catholic Church the enemy of freedom; you call her persecution of heretics an attack on freedom of thought and her index an attack on freedom of speech and writing. Yet you support the British Government in its persecution of Irishmen, its censorship of their papers and its prohibitions of their meetings?

“ ‘Ah, that’s different,’ I hear you say. Fool!

“ You think it tame and cowardly of me to take the word of the Church for the truths of religion, yet you’d have me take the word of English politicians for the truth of the war. You scorn me for submitting to the laws of the Church, yet you’d have me submit to conscription by the English Parliament. . . . Freedom, madam! You don’t know the meaning of the word.”

He tackled the Academic neutrals:

“ Bloodless bookworms! ” he cried. “ Shake off your dust and live. Why leave doing to fools? You’d rather make nothing than make a mistake. Your greatest fear is the fear of looking ridiculous. Damn your dusty smugness! Better make fools of yourselves by doing things than be fooled by doing nothing.

“ What would they answer to that, I wonder? Relight their pipes and go on reading, I suppose.”

The fever of argument left him and he became reflective.

“ What fools men are! How readily they are deceived. Here are the common men of the world slaughtering each other at the bidding of the few they know to be their common enemy. Here are common men at the same bidding locking up me who am their friend. A world of idiots! Will it ever be sane?

“ If I could only reach to the minds of the people then the walls of my prison would be torn down in an hour. Would they? Bah! I doubt if they’d listen to me. . . . Education . . .

“ I’m in a prison within a prison. Ireland is a prison, and we poor captives stretch out our hands vainly to our fellow-men. If they only knew, if we could only reach their

minds. . . . But we can't . . . The people as yet know neither how to talk nor how to listen . . .

"When is the universal Revolution coming? Will France lead it? . . . Or Russia? . . . Why not Ireland? We are the only people who ever rose for an idea. It took hunger to make even France rise. . . . But we're too small. Who'd follow us? Snobbishness still rules the world. . . . Men! What dear stupid fools you are!

"One thing is certain. The present system is smashing itself. It cannot last for ever: it cannot last our time. . . . Will it smash the world in the process? Or will the people arise from the wreckage?"

Chaotically questions and ideas fermented in his half-starved brain. They wore him out, and yet he could not sleep.

And ever and again he would return to wondering at Mabel's reticence. It could not possibly be due to mere shyness, he told himself. Could she have ceased to care? He refused to contemplate the thought. Her tears at leaving him, the warmth of her last kiss forbade it. But why? Why? Why? He had so looked forward to those letters. He had hoped for some of her little jokes, for endearments that he could have read over and over again, so sweetening many a weary hour. Was she destitute of imagination that she could not think of this? Did it not occur to her that her letters would be his only gleam of sunshine? And oh, the coldness of those brief notes of hers, too disappointing to bear a second reading. Why? Why? Why?

She had become a part of himself and separation was gradually getting unbearable. He ached for the sight of her, hungered to touch her; and in a fever of longing the third month went by. His desire mounted higher and higher as the day for the next letter approached. It brought nothing. He waited grimly while three more days went by. The fourth brought a post-card hoping that he was very well.

6

By the end of March Ireland was pretty thoroughly awake. Recruits were pouring into the Volunteers, whole companies of Redmondite Volunteers were transferring their allegiance, country corps that had been dormant since the split were reviving, and the activity of 1913 recommenced. Recruiting meetings for the British Army found it increasingly harder to get a hearing, frequently they had to be cancelled for lack of an audience, and the number of recruits obtained was negligible. The Volunteers were now the most vital force in Irish politics. Still small in numbers their energy and ability were tremendous. They took the lead whenever any Irish interest was threatened by Westminster; they dominated the Gaelic League; student Volunteers permeated the life of University College, controlled the societies, were the leaders of the domestic politics of the College, and made of its magazine a Volunteer organ; in those villages in the country where the Volunteers were strong the police had ceased to be petty tyrants and were treated with the contempt they deserved. Irish Unionists took serious alarm at the complexion of things, and questions began to be asked in Parliament. The Parliamentary leaders made new protestations of loyalty and proceeded to apologize and explain matters. They attributed the changed spirit in Ireland to the re-actionary policy of the Ascendancy, to the introduction of Conscription, to the Government's repeated rejection of their own advice, to the repressive measures of the military, to German gold—to anything rather than to a revival of national spirit which was disgusted with the Party's own slavishness surrender, and lack of policy.

But, while externally the position of the Volunteers became every day more secure, internally their affairs were growing more and more unsatisfactory.

"I feel as if we're sitting on a volcano," said Stephen to O'Dwyer. "The Pearse crowd have given us the most definite assurance possible that they don't intend to rebel,

but I simply don't believe them. Mallow asked me the other day under what circumstances I'd go into rebellion. I told him that without the help of fifty thousand foreign soldiers and as many more rifles extra the thing would be suicide and disastrous to the country. 'I quite agree with you,' says he, but his eye couldn't deceive me. 'They're up to a deep game I'm sure.'

"Why not recall the Convention?"

"I've put that to our crowd a hundred times but they keep shirking the idea. They say we've no case to put before it and that if we had we'd only cause a split. Well, I'd risk it, but they won't."

"A split would be better than a rebellion anyway."

"They're hoping against hope that there'll be no rebellion."

"They may give up hope," said O'Dwyer. "Unless we take immediate action the rebellion will be upon us before we know where we are."

"Hello! Have you struck on a new plot?"

"No. But look at this."

He took from his pocket a folded periodical and handed it to Stephen. It was a copy of that month's *Manannan*.

"Page four," said O'Dwyer.

"Where have I seen this before?" mused Stephen, and read out:

"IGNIS IMMORTALIS.

Seven spears in the day of light

Shall avenge with might our blood and tears.

Seven seers shall in death indict

The blast and blight of the bitter years.

It sounds familiar, somehow."

"Mallow read it to us two years ago when we called at his house with Lascelles."

"I remember."

"That's a swan-song for you."

"What does it all mean?"

"I'll explain it to you. I know the tricks of the trade.

The 'seven spears' and the 'seven seers' are the seven dopers. The 'day of light' means the day of the insurrection. The rest is obvious. And I think the fact that he composed the thing two years ago and only publishes it now means that the bust up is close at hand."

"Hm. Somewhat fantastic."

"Life is more fantastic than poetry. I'll stake my neck on this. Read the second verse."

Stephen resumed:

"Seven victims upon the altar
Shall sing a psalter of faith renewed.
The flame rekindled no more shall falter
Nor word-wise palter the multitude.

Double Dutch to me," he said.

"It means that they don't hope for success, but mean the whole thing as a blood-sacrifice to restore the national spirit."

"What's wrong with the national spirit? It's coming along fine as far as I can see."

"Poetical impatience, my boy. They like the thing done dramatically."

"Well, Mallow and Co. are welcome to make a blood-sacrifice of themselves if they like, but I object to their playing the game on me. I'll be no bleeding corpse in a slaughtered heap for Pearse to die on."

"Nor I. And it's a rank betrayal of the men, too. They trusted us to lead them to some sort of success, not to make sanguinary object-lessons of them."

"This'll give the English just the chance they want, to grind us back into the mud we're barely rising from. They could crush a rebellion in a month, dragon the whole country, and apply conscription good and hard."

"Good God," said O'Dwyer. "A hundred more years of slavery. The blind idiots!"

"After this," said Stephen, "you'll probably begin to share my distrust of poets and poetry."

"I've more than poetry to go on," replied O'Dwyer.

"I was down at Ballylangan yesterday and Crowley showed me a document he'd just received from Headquarters — contingent orders in the event of military action being decided on."

"No such orders have been issued from Headquarters."

"I thought as much. These were signed, '*Austin Mallow, By Order of the Executive.*'"

"Positive evidence at last. Get me a copy of that and I'll face them with it on Wednesday."

"The impudence of them," said O'Dwyer. "Who knows but we'll find our own names some day fixed to an order for insurrection? . . . I must write to Crowley."

7

When Bernard emerged from gaol he was in such a state of pent up passion and curiosity that he would have rushed instantly to Mabel's house had not his mother met him at the gate in a taxi and taken him home with her.

"What'll the governor say?" he asked.

"He won't be back from his rounds till three, and he'll be stuck in his consulting room for a couple of hours after. . . . My darling boy, how thin you've got."

Merrion Square was reached in a few minutes. In the breakfast room Bernard found Sandy lying on a sofa near the window, a ghost of his former self.

"Some crock, amn't I," he said with a smile. "However, I'm told they make wooden ones just as good nowadays."

"We live in a scientific age," said Bernard. "Whether they smash us up or put us together again it's all done scientifically. Progress is a wonderful thing."

"Cynical as ever," chuckled Sandy.

By some instinct Lady Lascelles had hit upon the exact meal to satisfy Bernard at the moment. A huge dish of bacon and eggs and sausages, steaming hot, was brought in,

together with coffee, toast, jam, and muffins, and in a couple of seconds he was stuffing himself ravenously.

"By gad, you can put a meal away," said Sandy, admiringly. "Did they starve you, old chap?"

"Damn nearly," said Bernard, his mouth full. "This kind of meal has haunted my dreams for four months. . . . How goes the war for truth and freedom and Christianity and the rest of it?"

"Ugh!" ejaculated Sandy. "Don't talk about it."

"Why? What's happened?"

"These bloody English," said Sandy with tremendous emphasis. "By gad, I'm sick of them. So are all the Irish soldiers, and as for the Colonials, I believe they hate them more than the enemy."

"Why? What have they done?"

"They're yellow, my dear Bernard. You can't rely on them. They let you down. . . . Do you know, the Irish and Colonial regiments are beginning to refuse to go into action if there's an English regiment on their flanks. They can't be relied on to go over the top, and, of course, the flank they're on gets left in the lurch. . . . That's how I got knocked out. Our battalion did its work in fine style, cleared out three lines of Turkish trenches and was just going to settle down when we found ourselves isolated. The English battalions on each side of us had failed to come up, so we had to retreat, and on the way back I got done in . . . Lord, those bloody English! I've been a Shin from that moment."

"Hm!" said Bernard. "The failure of an English regiment doesn't seem to me to be a very adequate reason for a complete change of political conviction."

"You prosy old fish," jeered Sandy. "I thought all you Shins hated the English like poison."

"Exactly. We hate them like poison. You hate poison when it's boiling in your veins or hacking its way through your intestines, but you wouldn't waste time hating it in

bottle, or after the mustard-and-water have transferred it from you to a bowl."

"That's a lovely metaphor," said Sandy. "I must make a note of it. . . . Well, my heart is with the Shins anyway, and I wish I could be some use to them. Unfortunately, my body's a goner, and I never had any brains worth speaking about. . . . Lord, those bloody English."

"Have you used that expletive in the presence of the governor?"

"Yes, and by gad, his face turned all the colours of the Union Jack. . . . If you've finished gorging, the mater wants to see you in her room."

"What for?"

"Go and see."

He went upstairs and found his mother in her room. She had changed into a black dress.

"I've something to tell you, Bernard," she began, but Bernard had already guessed what it was.

"Eugene?" he said, and she nodded.

"Dead?"

"He was killed in a trench-raid soon after Christmas. . . . I thought it better not to tell you in prison. . . ."

Bernard was neither shocked nor very much grieved, for the news was only to be expected and he and Eugene had never been very intimate. He suffered, however, what was perhaps a more trying emotion: remorse. As on the day when they had parted, he realized poignantly how snappish and unkind he had often been to his brother, and how impatient of his harmless short-comings. Poor Eugene, what a gentle, kindly fellow he was: how soft and woman-like the touch of his hand: how serene and winsome his smile. It was a cruel fate that sent him who had never spoken an unkind word, who had never given pain to man or beast, who should have been a loving husband and father, out to that bloody shambles in Flanders. What unmitigated horror must the war have held for this sensitive soul. Bernard could picture the last cruel scene: the surprise at-

tack by night: the grey-coated raiders pouring into the trench: the short sharp struggle; Eugene, wincing from violence and hesitating to strike, ripped with a bayonet and left to die in agony. And now all that he had known of his brother lay rotting in a nameless grave. For what? Would that the ghosts of him and a thousand other innocents like him could return to earth and face the politicians with that question.

Bernard took an early leave of his mother and Sandy and hastened to his flat in Harcourt Street. He found there a heap of letters, including three from Willoughby and one from Eugene written the day before his death: a gay, yet wistful document the reading of which brought tears to Bernard's eyes. Almost he fancied he could hear the dead voice speaking the written words. . . . In due course he went to meet Mabel at the office where she worked, but having waited fruitlessly for ten minutes after all the other girls passed out, he hurried over to her home, puzzled and apprehensive. The maid-of-all-work admitted him.

"Is Miss Mabel in?"

"No, sir."

"Mrs. Harvey, then?"

"Yes, sir."

She showed him into the sitting-room, where he had to wait five infuriating minutes before Mrs. Harvey deigned to come down. The moment she appeared he blurted out:

"Where's Mabel?"

Exasperatingly placid, Mrs. Harvey deposited her jelly-like bulk in an armchair, serenely arranging the sit of her dress before replying.

"I didn't quite catch your remark," she said, in a casual tone. "Would you mind closing the door?"

Bernard slammed it with a movement of his foot, and demanded again:

"Where's Mabel?"

"I'm not sure that it isn't an impertinent question, but she's gone out for a walk — with her fiancé."

"With her *what*?"

"Her fiancé."

"But I'm her fiancé."

"Nonsense, my dear boy. That engagement wasn't serious. A mere boy-and-girl affair, I always regarded it. It was clearly understood that she was at liberty to change her mind if someone who could support a wife made her an offer."

"I never understood that. I was perfectly serious."

"If you were, I'm afraid I saw no sign of it. A young man who is really in earnest works hard at his profession and doesn't waste time over politics and suchlike nonsense. I remember giving you some such advice myself when you first came to ask my approval. Well, you were too high and mighty to listen, and must needs go gallivanting round the country organizing sedition and landing yourself in prison. I don't think that shows much consideration for my daughter."

Bernard heard this speech with amazement. He had not yet fully realized the situation.

"You — you're not fair to me," he stammered.

Mrs. Harvey shrugged her shoulders.

"I have my daughter's interests to consider," she said.

"You've set her against me," cried Bernard, angrily.

"I don't believe she'd have given me up of her own accord. She never said a word about it in her letters."

"No doubt she thought you had enough to worry you already."

"Well, I won't believe she's ceased to care for me till I've heard it from her own lips."

"You may believe it or not as you like. She's to be married in a fortnight."

Bernard was completely staggered.

"Married?" he gasped.

"Yes. They're to be married very quietly," said Mrs. Harvey, imperturbably. "Captain Musgrave's leave is nearly over and he has to return to India . . ."

"Captain Musgrave?" said Bernard.

"My future son-in-law. A charming man, Bernard, and very well off. A member of a good old English family. Probably you know him. He was educated at Ashbury."

A horrible recollection shot through Bernard's mind: a scene of his first days at school that had been indelibly printed in his memory.

"Stanley Musgrave?" he asked.

"Yes."

"My God!" exclaimed Bernard.

"I beg your pardon?" said Mrs. Harvey.

"Nothing," said Bernard.

"Have you any further questions?" said Mrs. Harvey.

Bernard turned and left the room. In the hall he nearly collided with Molly.

"Hello, Bernard," she said. Then she saw his face. "I say, I'm sorry about Mabel," she said. "It's jolly rotten of her. However, I'd forget it, if I were you. If you saw the thing she's chosen the shock to your vanity would cure your heartache."

Bernard found himself unable to answer. Molly pressed his hand sympathetically and let him out without further speech.

Heedless of his direction he strode rapidly through the streets, his mind a chaos of wonder, jealousy, anger, grief and humiliation. A shower of rain fell presently and for a long time remained unnoticed, but eventually it drenched him through and so drove him home.

It was nearly dawn before he slept.

8

He wrote to Mabel insisting on seeing her once alone. She complied, appointing an hour and a certain place in Stephen's Green. They exchanged not a word when they met, and Bernard led the way to a secluded seat. They sat down and remained silent for a few minutes, Bernard drawing lines in the gravel with his walking stick, and Mabel

fidgiting with her glove. All around them were the signs of another Spring: budding trees, chirping birds, ducks quacking on the pond, the sun blazing out at intervals when the clouds permitted . . .

"What's the meaning of it all?" said Bernard, at length.

She could not answer for a while. The reasons that had urged her seemed now so small and mean. Of course, her mother was at the bottom of it. Bernard had been only a week in gaol when she had begun to drop stray morsels of Mrs. Moffat's revelations in Mabel's way; a little later Mrs. Moffat, herself, was brought on the scene; Mabel had flounced out of the room at the first word, but the germ of doubt had found its entry. Mrs. Harvey's subtle methods of work after that defy analysis. She hinted that Bernard's pre-occupation with politics spoke badly for his affections; she repeated her forebodings about his financial prospects; she dwelt on the social stigma involved in imprisonment. She did it all so lightly and casually that no purpose could be discerned behind it. . . . Then Captain Musgrave began to appear more frequently. He had been introduced to Mrs. Harvey some time before by a friend of former days, and had been one of those stray guests whose entertainment had fallen to Mabel, of which she had complained to Bernard on a bygone day in Cloughaneely. It was at this stage that her first letter to Bernard became due, and in jealous anger against the past she suspected she wrote the brief cold note which had so puzzled him. His answering love-letter mollified her feelings but slightly, and she allowed herself, half out of a desire to be revenged on Bernard, half out of natural coquetry, to enjoy Musgrave's advances and even faintly to reciprocate. At this point her mother slipped in a hint of Musgrave's wealth and position, and one day, with that conscious tact which is the height of tactlessness, withdrew from the sitting-room in the very middle of afternoon tea in order to leave them alone together. Subsequently, the Captain was allowed to take the whole family to the pantomime; Mabel was given the seat next to him; and in the interval,

Mrs. Harvey's ever-ready tact sent them out alone to the buffet for coffee. Mabel was in such an undecided frame of mind at the end of another month that she scribbled off an even shorter note than the previous one to Bernard, and then took offence at his reply. She began to look kindly on Musgrave now: in her innocence of men and the world (she had, of course, like all Catholic girls, been educated at a Convent) she mistook for love and kindness what was only half-veiled sensuality, and favourably compared his considerate devotion with Bernard's off-hand comradeship. Bernard had sometimes found it necessary to control his honest passion with an enforced frigidity that made innocent Mabel doubt his ardour: Musgrave, having never in his life controlled his desires, was actuated by no straining spirit made violent by repression, but exuded a kind of sensual benevolence that looked for stimulation. Mabel began to look to him as a lover with pleasurable anticipation. . . . He proposed to her in the middle of the third month, and after consulting with her mother, she accepted him the following day. Mrs. Harvey valued the engagement-ring at a hundred and fifty pounds . . .

And now Mabel had to explain all this to Bernard. She could not bring herself to mention Mrs. Moffat's scandalous stories: looking at his face she found she could not believe them any longer, and her modesty would not have permitted her to discuss such a subject in any case. She put her excuse before him brokenly:

"I thought, perhaps . . . you didn't seem to love me as much as at first. . . . I thought you were getting tired of me . . ."

"Mabel, how could you imagine such a thing? Did I give any sign of it?"

"You — you wouldn't work at your profession. . . . You didn't seem in any hurry to get married. . . . You went on with your writing and drilling while I was slaving away in that horrid old office. . . . Bernard, you don't know how tired I was of that work . . . so dull and mo-

notonous . . . never any fresh air . . . hardly any holidays . . . a long scramble. . . I couldn't have borne it any longer, Bernard. I looked to you to take me out of it, and I hoped for such happiness with you. And you didn't seem to care, so long as you had your politics. . . And then my home, Bernard. The perpetual saving and scraping . . . the counting of pennies . . . the three of us sleeping in one stuffy little room so as to have more space for lodgers. . . . Mother always at us for extravagance if we bought ourselves chocolates or kept the light on at night to read. . . . It was bad enough before the war, but now — Bernard, I couldn't bear it any more. It was killing me. . . . Don't think too badly of me, dear. I . . . I felt I was wearing out. You wouldn't be able to marry me for another two years, perhaps. . . . And you mightn't have cared for me then . . . ”

She paused. Bernard remained silent, savagely digging at the ground with the end of his stick. A sparrow chirped monotonously in the plane-tree overhead.

“So it comes to this,” said Bernard, hoarsely, “that you've sold yourself. . . . Sold yourself. And without the excuse of necessity for which less fortunate women sell themselves. You've sold yourself for luxuries: for theatres and satin dresses. . . . My God, aren't your body and soul more value to you than that? . . . And to throw me aside who love you for a beast like Musgrave!”

“Don't say that,” said Mabel. “He's very kind.”

“Kind!” Horrible pictures passed before Bernard's mind. So Musgrave was kind? He could imagine the form his kindness took, and shuddered. In that moment the divinity slipped away from Mabel before his eyes, and she became as something soiled. He had never realized before that women are human: that good women have passions like good men. The thought of his Mabel, his innocent, joyous Mabel, yielding to a sensual impulse, horrified him.

There was a long and painful silence. They had ceased even to fidget, and looked into one another's eyes.

"Well," said Bernard at length, "I suppose there's nothing more to be said."

Mabel tried to speak, but the words refused to come. Bernard rose.

"Good-bye," he jerked out; hesitated a moment; then turned on his heel and strode away down the path . . .

Mabel remained in motionless reverie for the best part of an hour, and then wearily walked home.

Bernard would not have had her now if he could: she was spoilt for him for ever by the kiss of Musgrave.

"The thought of it! Ugh! The swine! The sensual, lecherous beast! A toad, a cuttle-fish were cleaner . . . He holds her with those flabby groping hands of his and kisses her—my God!—kisses her with that abominable mouth, the mouth that has dabbled in foulness and played with sin. Oh, the pollution of it! A nymph yielding to a satyr!"

In his madness he passed his own door unheeding and walked half the way to Dolphin's Barn.

"Vampire!" he cried in his heart. "Why couldn't he leave my little girl alone and stick to his harlots and pleasure-girls? Flogging a jaded appetite, I suppose."

Immersed all his life in ideas he knew but little of humanity: did not know that licentiousness hankers after innocence. . . . Discovering where he was he turned back and made for home. He passed it once more before entering.

He poured out some whiskey. Then:

"No. That's a mug's game," he said. "Only drink when you're happy, or you spoil both yourself and the drink."

The morning paper was on the table and he picked it up. Idly turning the pages his eye fell on a heading in the correspondence column:

THE HORROR OF JAILS
Letter from Mr. Cyril Umpleby.

In the most fluent journealese Mr. Umpleby dissertated on

the soul agony he had endured in the inartistic surroundings of Mountjoy. It was a heart-rending picture and it made Bernard laugh.

"Vain little beast," he said, and read the whole newspaper through, advertisements and all, forgetting Mabel in the process.

But he hungered for her still. He sought exhaustion in long walks and so secured sleep, but she haunted his dreams. He dreamed once that the Musgrave episode had been a dream, and that on emerging from gaol he beheld Mabel waiting for him at the gate. She smiled at him as she had been wont to do; he advanced to take her in his arms; but in the midst of the ineffable joy of her kiss he awoke, his sorrow and disappointment all the more intensified. . . . He could take no food though his sorely tried body clamoured for it. He could barely summon up the energy to dress himself in the morning; he put on whatever came handy and let his hair go wild; one night after a long walk he flung himself down on the outside of his bed and fell asleep in his clothes. He became utterly careless of life.

He shirked meeting his friends. On several occasions O'Dwyer, Hektor, and Stephen called, but they always found him from home. Stephen left a note once saying that he wished to speak to him about some new developments in the political situation, but Bernard paid no attention. On another occasion they met in the street, but Bernard was distraught, and after a few commonplaces they separated.

"I met Lascelles today," said Stephen to Hektor. "He was looking ghastly. I never imagined gaol could have such an effect on a man."

"It's more than gaol that's playing the deuce with Bernard," said Hektor. "Haven't you heard that he was shook by that girl he was engaged to?"

"Surely that wouldn't do it!" said Stephen.

Passers-by in the street used to stare at Bernard's pale, hollow cheeks and blazing eyes. He came near to a break-

down, but then Nature reasserted herself and sheer hunger drove him to eat. He began to mend physically from that out, but it was a long time before his melancholy grew any less. From the midst of his own gloom he looked forth distastefully on the movements of a spring-enlivened world.

He had a last glimpse of Mabel two days before her marriage. He had gone for a stroll by himself in the Phoenix Park and was walking along a narrow, unfrequented path, admiring the budding trees and bitterly wishing for one to share his admiration, when she came round a corner beside a khaki-clad figure. Bernard's heart stopped still for a moment and then began beating furiously. Mabel's face went first white and then red. Bernard looked at his rival. Musgrave at thirty was, in appearance at any rate, an improvement on Musgrave at seventeen. Military training had eliminated some of the grossness of his figure, straightened his back, and smartened his slouching gait. He wore a moustache, and his horrible teeth had been replaced by a well-made artificial set that gave a fictitious firmness to the salacious lips that had slobbered at Bernard in the dark lobby thirteen years before. He smiled sheepishly at Bernard, whom he evidently recognized. Bernard mechanically raised his hat. Musgrave saluted. They passed each other by and went out of each other's lives . . .

Next day he received a letter from Janet Morecambe. She had recently heard of his arrest, and she wrote to congratulate him on having found himself at last and to express a hope that his confinement had done him no harm. Bernard sat staring at the letter and then violently apostrophized himself:

"You damned fool! You shallow, sensual idiot! You might have had her for the asking and you rejected her. You deserve everything you've got."

He read the letter through over and over again, and then carefully placed it in his breast pocket.

"Baffled again," said Stephen to O'Dwyer in his room at the Neptune. "Mallow took that Order without turning a hair. 'I understood,' says he, as cool as a cucumber, 'that it was unnecessary for Directors to submit the routine work of their departments to the Executive.' 'There was nothing routine about this,' said I. 'Excuse me,' said he, 'but if you will examine the orders closely you will see that they are entirely contingent upon general orders, and that they deal only with demolitions, which is my particular department.' Well the Executive accepted the explanation and said it mustn't occur again. So of course they'll take care never to get found out again. They'll send no more orders to Crowley."

"Do you know," said O'Dwyer, "if their party supplies the knaves on the Executive, ours supplies the fools. I feel very uneasy about things. . . . I wish we had Lascelles with us again. He has very sound dope to hand out as a rule, and it would distract him from worrying about that woman. She was married a few days ago, by the way, to a damned Englishman. May his skin be tanned and made into slippers for the Kaiser."

"McGurk and O'Flaherty have gone to fetch him over here to tea, if they can find him. But he's generally out."

"Is McGurk staying here now?"

"Yes. He moved in about a week ago."

"By Jove, this is a regular Factionists' Home. Wish you were nearer Merrion Street and I'd move in too."

"How's your own little affair progressing?" asked Stephen with a smile.

"Not so bad. I took her to the pictures yesterday. I wonder could I dare ask her to come to the D'Oyly Carte Operas in Easter Week."

"I'm afraid I'm not an expert in those matters, but why not try? She can only refuse."

"Yes, but a refusal's such a blow. It seems to discount all the favourable omens for weeks before it."

"Faint heart, etcetera."

"I know what I'll do. I'll buy the tickets before asking her, and then she can't refuse."

"Not at all a bad plan, as far as my limited experience goes. . . . Come down and have some tea. The others should be back by this time."

They descended to the coffee-room and sat down to a plenteous, if inelegant meal of tea, bread and butter, boiled eggs, jam, and cake. They had only just set to when Hektor, McGurk, and Bernard arrived.

"Hello, O'Dwyer!" cried McGurk. "How's the form?"

"And the fair Gladys?" added Hektor.

O'Dwyer blushed and said she was quite well.

"Sit down, Bernard," said McGurk. "Tea'll be up in a minute. Ye won't scorn a humble tea, you that's used to dining late, will ye?"

Bernard protested his entire delight with the arrangement, and the newcomers drew up their chairs as the meal was served in.

"Holy murdher!" exclaimed McGurk. "Ye put no sugar in me tea, Stephen."

"I put your whole ration in," said Stephen. "You can have some more if you don't want a second cup."

"Well, to hell with the war," said McGurk. "Hektor, you rotten false prophet, how long more are the Germans going to spend taking Verdun?"

"I don't know," said Hektor gloomily. "They've made a bungle somewhere, I'm afraid."

"Poor old Ireland!" said McGurk. "The fates are ag'in her."

"They tell me you're qualified at last, Hugo," said Bernard. "When are you going to start practice?"

"Arrah, what are ye talking about? Haven't I done enough for one year? Say, boys, I've been and gone and got me exam., and this fella wants me to go and *practise!*" He took a slice of bread and butter, plastered it thickly with

jam, bit off a huge mouthful, and turned to O'Dwyer.

"Been writing any pothry lately?" he asked.

O'Dwyer shook his head.

"Felim has been better employed," suggested Hektor.

"I always thought courting was an incentive to pothry," said McGurk."

"Not to the kind of poetry you like, Hugo," said O'Dwyer.

McGurk burst out laughing and said:

"Janey Mack, he's been writing love pomes."

O'Dwyer blushed red, and Stephen intervened on his behalf.

"Hold your tongue, Hugo," he said. "Pass the cake, Hektor."

"This is a punk cake," said Hektor, vainly attempting to cut it without breaking it up. "Say, boys, we'll have to put a stop to the war."

Gathering afterwards in the smoke-room, where there happened to be no other guests, they discussed the political situation. Recent developments were disclosed to Bernard who received them with incredulity. He was not, like the others, personally acquainted with the leaders of the movement, but he had always felt sure that they were reliable, since their down-trodden cause could make no appeal to men who were not patriotic, unselfish, and honourable. Mallow being diseased, he left out of account.

"Do you mean to say that these men that ye've trusted would drag us into an insane rebellion by trickery?" he exclaimed at last.

"Every word I've told you is God's truth," said Stephen.

"The meanness and treachery of it," said Bernard. "I wouldn't have believed it of them. . . . But what can be done?"

"That's what's so hard to decide. They've repeatedly sworn that there's nothing on foot, and they've explained away any positive evidence we've produced. If we recalled the Convention the only evidence we could put before it

would be our recollections of certain conversations, the order sent to Crowley, and a poem of Austin Mallow's. We'd simply be laughed at."

"Perhaps you're alarming yourselves unnecessarily," said Bernard. "If your case is so very unconvincing how does it convince yourselves?"

"It's not a case where one can take any risks," said Stephen.

"Mallow's eyes glaring across the table at the Dolphin were convincing enough for me," said O'Dwyer.

"It's the devil of a puzzle," said Bernard. "What *good* do they expect from a rebellion?"

Stephen explained.

"I'm all at sea," said Bernard. "It's a hopeless muddle. I suppose we'll just have to keep our eyes skinned in the hope of hitting on a piece of evidence that'll appeal to the Convention."

"If you ask my advice," said McGurk, "I'd say: 'Take no risks. Poison their tea and have done with the whole job.'"

10

Towards the middle of April Willoughby came to spend the last three days of a fortnight's leave with Bernard. The latter was now looking more like his old self again, but his friend was shocked at the change in his appearance.

"This damned Prussianism!" he exclaimed.

"Why do you call it Prussianism?" asked Bernard. "I call it Britishism."

"Irreconcilable still," laughed Willoughby.

"Don't let's talk politics," said Bernard. "I'm about fed up with things in general, and it does me good to see you."

They had a pleasant three days together. They talked over old times and recalled old dreams they had once held in common. They talked of the dead: of Eugene and Murray.

"I got some nice letters of condolence from Ashbury

after Eugene's death. Father Bumbleigh told me he was one of those Irishmen who had died to make England great, and there were others nearly as bad. The *Chronicle* said he had died as an Englishman should."

"Lack of imagination, I'm afraid, is characteristic of our people," said Willoughby. "It looks as if it's gradually losing us the friendship of Ireland."

"You had Ireland as an ally, much to my disgust, at the beginning of the war, but that didn't content you. You must have her as a subject or not at all, so it looks as if you're going to lose her altogether."

"The average Englishman can't conceive of the Irish as distinct allies. He can only conceive of them as rebels and traitors on the one hand, or else as ceasing to be Irish and becoming British."

"Exactly," said Bernard. "That's why alliance between us is impossible. . . . Can you imagine Stephen and Hector and me being 'loyal' to Sherringham, Lashworthy and Co.? What have we in common? Oh, Willoughby, when will you and the decent crowd in England step in and stop this perpetual waste of Ireland? How long is our genius going to be stifled under your dead weight? Look at my friends. Look at Hector, condemned to play at soldiering when in any other country he'd be a great strategist. Look at O'Dwyer, who in any other country would be a successful author, wearing his soul out with useless hatred. Look at Stephen, a philosophic statesman of world-wide ideas, condemned to hold a second-rate position in an insignificant faction. Look at myself, wasted and wearing out like the rest. Why the devil do you let Sherringham and Co. stand between you and me?"

Willoughby had no answer, and Bernard dropped the subject to talk of other things.

"How's your sister-in-law?" he asked later. Somehow he found a difficulty about uttering her name.

"Janet? Oh, she's quite well. She's working in a home for blinded soldiers at present."

The days slipped by all too rapidly. The third night they sat up over whiskey and pipes till quite late in spite of the early train Willoughby had to catch.

"If all the men who love Irish whiskey loved Ireland she'd be free tomorrow," said Willoughby. "Here's Eerin go brar! The land of good drink and sound logic."

Bernard switched off the light and watched the fire-glow playing on Willoughby's honest, rugged features as he told tales of the trenches: tales of horror and humour; tales of sublime heroism and bestial cruelty; tales of the endurance and self-sacrifice of common men. Willoughby's eyes and voice expressed far better than his halting and limited words the love and admiration he felt for the little Cockney warriors he commanded.

"By Jove," he said, "if you saw them in action. Brave as lions, Bernard. . . . No, that's a silly phrase of poets and journalists and means nothing. Terriers fits them better. . . . And then when it's all over, their kindness to one another. I've seen a foul-mouthed little beast tending to a wounded comrade as gently as a woman. . . . And they take everything so philosophically, and joke through it all. . . . My little counter-jumpers and costers are made of better stuff than the old knight errants, I tell you. . . . No. They've no hatred of the Germans in spite of all the newspapers. They're decent, cynical little beggars . . .

"I wish our nations could be friends, Bernard. We could be, too, if only the people had their way. . . . It's men's natural instinct to be friends after all. Why I've known kindly feelings to cross No Man's Land from trench to trench. . . . What are we killing one another for? . . ."

Willoughby looked up and saw Bernard's gaze fixed intently upon him. He laughed uneasily. There was deep affection between these two men, but Willoughby's English stolidity and Bernard's Irish shyness forbade the expression of it. Bernard, however, with a foreboding of disaster in his mind was accumulating memories. They sat in silence until the fire died down. . . .

Bernard saw his friend off from Kingstown next morning, where they parted on the deck of the steamer with a handclasp and a "Good-bye and good luck." So Willoughby went his way, to be blasted out of existence a few days later upon a field in Picardy . . .

The news reached Bernard almost at once, and of the three blows which struck him in so short a space this was the hardest. Eugene's loss had filled him with remorse; thwarted desire had lacerated him on Mabel's defection; but Willoughby's death left him stunned with a deep and abiding sorrow.

II

Nobody — least of all those who knew them best — understood why Mr. Leeds and Mr. Conachy were such friends; for Leeds was a fanatical and ignorant Republican while Conachy was a very moderate Home Ruler; Leeds was loud-voiced and ill-educated, Conachy intellectual and refined; and finally Leeds had been at tremendous pains to find a Gaelic transmogrification of his appalling surname, while Conachy was acutely ashamed of the blatant Gaelicism of his. There was, however, one link between them, and that was that neither ever felt it incumbent upon him to act up to his opinions. Conachy had never taken Mr. Redmond's advice to join the British Army, and Leeds was not a member of the Irish Volunteers.

On Wednesday the nineteenth of April at five o'clock in the afternoon these two were having coffee in a Grafton Street restaurant, and discussing a handbill which had been given to them before entering. At numerous other tables the same handbill was causing excited discussion.

"*Secret orders issued to military,*" read Conachy. "I wonder what on earth it means."

"It means another plot by this bloody gover'ment to down th' Irish people," pronounced Leeds.

"By Jove, there's that fierce rebel O'Dwyer over there," said Conachy. "Perhaps he can explain it."

"Rebel, didja say?" said Leeds contemptuously. "The

man's a bloody West-Briton. Did jever hear th' accent of um? And he thinks Shakespeare a greater pote than Davis."

Conachy paid no attention to this harangue but waved his hand to O'Dwyer, who was sitting alone at another table waiting to be served.

"Won't you sit down with us?" said Conachy as O'Dwyer approached. "We want your opinion of this secret order."

"What secret order?" asked O'Dwyer.

"Haven't you seen it? It's issued as a handbill from your Headquarters."

"I'm only just back from organizing in the country," said O'Dwyer.

"Well, what do you make of that?" said Conachy, and handed over the document.

O'Dwyer took it and read it over, with knitted brows.

"The following precautionary measures have been sanctioned by the Irish Office on the recommendation of the General Officer Commanding the Forces in Ireland.' Hm. 'All preparations will be made to put these measures in force immediately on receipt of an Order issued from the Chief Secretary's Office.' Hm. 'First, the following persons to be placed under arrest: All members of the Sinn Fein National Council, the Central Executive Irish Sinn Fein Volunteers, Executive Committee National Volunteers.' Hello! This is getting interesting. 'Coisde Gnotha Committee Gaelic League.' By Jove! 'See list A 3 and 4 and supplementary list A 2.' I wonder what A 1 contains, and why should A 2 be supplementary to 3 and 4. . . . However. 'Police will be confined to barracks.' Hm. 'An order will be issued to inhabitants of city to remain in their houses.' Devilish exciting! 'Pickets will be placed at all points marked on maps 3 and 4. Accompanying mounted patrols will continuously visit all points and report every hour.' What sort of donkey drew up this, I wonder? 'The following premises will be occupied by adequate forces.' Hm. Adequate forces?"

He went on reading intently in silence.

"Well, what do you make of it?" asked Conachy, but O'Dwyer paid no heed.

An attendant brought O'Dwyer coffee and biscuits.

"What? No sugar?" he exclaimed. "You might bring me some saccharine."

"It'll make syrup of your coffee," said Conachy.

There was a cry of "Stop Press" in the street outside, whereupon Leeds rushed out and presently returned with a paper.

"The military say it's all a fabrication," he announced. "Just what they *would* say."

"They happen to be telling the truth this time," said O'Dwyer.

"What!" cried Leeds. "Wouldja take the word of the garrison against the word of yer own Executive?"

"I take nobody's word for anything," replied O'Dwyer calmly. "I'm going by internal evidence."

"The Higher Criticism," said Conachy. "But who's the fabricator?"

"I reserve my opinion on that point, but you may take it from me no pogrom is intended."

"Well you're a nice sort o' Volunteer," said Leeds.

"Doubtless," said O'Dwyer. "Well, Conachy, I'm afraid I must rush away. . . . Oh, damn!" This exclamation was caused by his having tried to drink off his coffee and scalded himself in the process. He caught up his hat and vanished.

"Well, I'm jiggered," said Conachy. "He's grabbed the hand-bill."

O'Dwyer hurried down Grafton Street, caught a north-going tram at College Green, and arrived in ten minutes at the Neptune Hotel in a state of breathless excitement. Stephen was out, but he found Hektor and McGurk waiting for tea in the coffee-room, and dragged them in spite of their protests up to the former's bedroom.

"Where did the original of that order come from?" he asked at once.

"From the secret service," said Hektor.

"Who runs the secret service?"

"Chap called Moran."

"What sort of dope has he?"

"He's rather a dark horse as far as I know, but he's a personal friend of Austin Mallow's."

"That's done it then."

"Why? What's up?"

"Couldn't you see that the whole thing's a forgery?"

"It seems all right to me."

"Good lord, Hektor, you're a soldier, and yet you think that document was drawn up by a military man! I'm ashamed of you. Look here. Read the thing."

He thrust the paper into Hektor's hand.

"I served in an O.T.C. at school," he went on, "so I know how orders are drafted. That's no military order. It applies to no one in particular. In what earthly way could any one obey the thing? You know how explicit military orders are. Now look at that. 'Pickets will be placed. . . . Patrols will report. . . . Adequate forces will occupy. . . .' Delightfully vague, isn't it. It's intended for the public, not for soldiers, and it's been drawn up, not by a soldier, but by a civilian with a smattering of military knowledge."

"Glory be!" exclaimed McGurk.

"You're damn well right, O'Dwyer," said Hektor.

"What a set of mugs we've been."

"The thing's a forgery on the face of it," said O'Dwyer.

"Look at all these lists and maps they refer to: A 3 and 4, and no A 1. Maps 3 and 4, and no 1 and 2. That shows your amateur forger trying to be too clever. Then do you notice the list of premises to be seized? All the Volunteer premises are marked by name and number, but they've been content to say vaguely: 'All National Volunteer premises.' What does that show? The authorities would surely put down the numbers in both cases, so we can only assume that this was drawn up by one of our people who was too lazy

to look up the necessary details about the other movements."

"Me dear Holmes!" said McGurk.

"Perfectly 'simple, my dear Watson," said O'Dwyer. "Now look right at the end and you'll see that in addition to the houses named they're to seize 'all premises in list 5 D.' More amateur cleverness. Surely if they had such a list as 5 D it's the notorious houses that would be on it, and any others that they thought of would be mentioned separately?"

"Quite true," said Hektor. "And I thought myself that they'd scarcely be such fools as to occupy the Archbishop's House."

"That alone is enough to indicate forgery. They've laid it on just a little too thick."

"But what's th' idea?" asked McGurk.

"It's an attempt to bring the whole country out in rebellion," said O'Dwyer. "They probably intend to strike at once and they hope to get people on their side by faking up a government pogrom against the whole national movement."

"The bloody grafters!" ejaculated McGurk.

"Where's Stephen?" asked O'Dwyer. "We haven't a minute to waste. They wouldn't have produced this thing unless they were going to take immediate action."

"'Seven Spears in the Day of Light,'" quoted Hektor.

"My God!" interrupted O'Dwyer. "What a fool I was not to see it before. 'The Day of Light' means Easter Sunday."

"Begob!" cried McGurk. "The manœuvres!"

Orders had been issued the previous week for the holding of reviews and manœuvres by the Irish Volunteer forces over the whole of Ireland, and it would be a simple matter for the agents of the conspirators to transfer the manœuvres to reality. The only course open now to the peace party would be a public announcement, but this was impossible owing to the fact that it would inevitably result in Government intervention and perhaps produce a Government offen-

sive which would be quite as undesirable as the rebellion they wished to prevent. They were therefore constrained to a slow and secret course of action at a moment when time meant everything. Hektor, plain, blunt soldier as he was, felt completely at sea; so did McGurk; O'Dwyer on the other hand had already begun evolving schemes with lightning rapidity, each more complicated and futile than the last.

"We're in the soup," he groaned. "They've had six months to conspire in. How are we going to undo it all in three days? I wish to the devil Stephen was here."

The mention of Stephen's name relaxed the tension at once. All had implicit faith in his cold, calculating intelligence, and at that very moment they thought they heard his step outside the door. But it was only Umpleby. He knocked and was told impatiently to enter.

"Hello!" he said. "I'm looking for Stephen Ward."

"He's out," said McGurk. "Wouldn't we do?"

"Well, I came to find out his opinion about this exceedingly disturbing document" (holding out a copy of the handbill). "I've just written letters to the editors of the *Daily News* and the *Manchester Guardian*, but I'm afraid we may find a sanguinary pogrom in progress before they can publish them."

"Arrah, be aisy now," said McGurk.

"I'm not at all easy, my dear fellow. I take this matter seriously. Never in the whole course of our country's tragical history; not even in the worst days of Mountjoy and Carew; not even in the sanguinary and sordid transactions before the Union; has such a dastardly and . . ."

"Hould on," interrupted McGurk. "Tell him the sad reality, Hektor."

The revelation made Umpleby gape. His parenthetic fulminations were terrible to hear, but it was hard to say whether the impending fate of his country or the slight inflicted on his vanity by the neglect of the rebel leaders to consult him were the more potent influence.

"This," he said, "is the most high-handed, calculated,

insolent, treacherous piece of cynical, audacious double-dealing and jerrymandering that it has been my lot to be the innocent, duped, and deluded victim of. I shall write a letter immediately to the *Irish Independent*."

"Holy Moses!" exclaimed McGurk.

"I'm afraid you'll have to restrain your epistolary activities," said O'Dwyer. "We don't want to drag the Government into the business, you know."

"But what's to be done?" asked Umpleby, very much dashed.

"Search me," said Hektor. "We're waiting for Ward. Meanwhile, let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may be arrested. I think I heard the gong . . ."

"The worst of it is," said O'Dwyer, "I've seats booked for the *Gondoliers* on Tuesday — for two . . ."

When Bernard saw the "Military Order" he doubted its authenticity at once on the same grounds as O'Dwyer did, a talk with whom confirmed his opinion. He went up to Malone's flat to discuss the matter with him and found him jubilant.

"There'll *have* to be a fight now," he said.

Bernard expressed his opinion of the Order.

"Nonsense!" said Malone. "It's what I've been expecting for the last month. I hope the Volunteers are ready for a scrap."

They argued for a long time but to no effect. Malone positively revelled in delight at the coming battle.

"All the world will know now," he said, "that Ireland hasn't surrendered. Whether we live or die the rottenest page in our history is going to be turned over for good. Get your gun out, my lad."

He produced a neat little magazine rifle from a cupboard and critically examined the breech.

On Thursday night Bernard sat at home sorting some of Eugene's papers which had been entrusted to him by his

mother. He realized now how little he had known of Eugene's inner life, of his ideals, emotions and ambitions. Having persistently underrated his brother's abilities he had been inclined to regard them as negligible, but these papers undeceived him. There were poems amongst them: religious and nature poems mostly, lacking in high inspiration but simple and sincere expressions of genuine emotion. There were three articles which he had sent in to different papers and which had evidently been rejected: all on the subject of the Dublin slums, honestly indignant, but sentimental rather than intellectual. There was an essay on the causes of the war, commonplace and platitudinous, but quite transparently an expression of opinions honestly held. And finally there was the rough draft of a scheme for the foundation of a society and a journal for the spreading of Irish ideas in Trinity College.

While he was engaged on this melancholy task he heard a ring at the hall-door and looking up saw that it was after ten o'clock. His house-keeper he knew would be in bed, so he went out and opened the door himself. He was surprised to see Brian Mallow standing on the steps outside.

"Mum's the word!" whispered Brian, and stepped into the hall with a darkly conspiratorial air. "Will you take me where we can't be overheard?"

Bernard conducted him to the sitting-room, gave him a chair by the fire, and returned to his seat at the table.

"Well, what's the mystery?" he asked.

"The greatest thing going," replied Brian. "The Republic's going to be proclaimed on Sunday."

"What!" exclaimed Bernard. He was startled out of his self-control, but Brian thought he was merely excited. Bernard restrained himself forthwith and determined to hear everything.

"Yes," went on Brian. "There's to be a rising all over Ireland at midday on Sunday, fifty thousand Germans are to land in Kerry, and the German fleet is going to sally out

and attack England. I got you the job of taking command in Kerry to receive the Germans."

"Oh. And when was all this decided on?"

"At a special meeting of the Executive last night."

"I never heard of such a meeting. Ward and O'Flaherty were dining with me last night."

"We're not telling them. They're afraid to rebel and they'd only try and interfere if they knew. They'll come in all right when it's on."

"Does MacNeill know?"

"Oh, lord no. He'd interfere too if he did."

"Well, he'll know from me then."

Brian began to look anxious.

"You mustn't tell any one or you'll spoil everything," he said. "Look here. All this was between ourselves."

"Pity you didn't mention that before," said Bernard. "I say, you don't mind my putting you out, do you? I'm going to see MacNeill."

"No you don't," said Brian and, whipping out a revolver, he pointed it at Bernard's head. "Hands up!" he cried.

"Nonsense," said Bernard calmly, and proceeded to fill his pipe. "You know very well you wouldn't dare fire. Don't be theatrical."

"Hands up," reiterated Brian.

Bernard struck a match and carefully lit his pipe. Speaking between the puffs he said:

"I wish you'd . . . put that thing . . . down. It might go off."

"You're not going to leave this room," said Brian, "if I have to spend the whole night with you."

"Indeed?" said Bernard.

Brian was standing up with levelled revolver, and the table was between them. With a sudden jerk Bernard drove the table hard against Brian, who, taken unawares, staggered back, tripped, and fell, striking his head on the fender. His revolver dropped on the floor and Bernard hastened to seize it.

"Damn you, Lascelles," said Brian, sitting up and fingering the bump on his occiput.

Bernard unloaded the revolver, put the cartridges in his pocket, and tossed the weapon back to its owner.

"Woe betide you if you give us away," muttered Brian.

"I'm sorry for my apparent inhospitality," said Bernard, "but I really must be going. You can follow at your leisure. Close the door when you're leaving, by the way."

"And you're the man I converted," said Brian. "I wish to hell I'd let you remain a Unionist . . .

"What'll Austin say?" he ruefully asked himself when Bernard was gone. He consoled himself by reflecting that things had gone too far to be stopped. Those fifty thousand Germans would be enough to ensure action.

"All the same," he said as he left the flat, "I'll get it in the neck from Austin. . . . Good lord, what'll he say?"

Meanwhile Bernard had taken out his car and run over to O'Dwyer's lodgings. He was out, the landlady said. Two gentlemen had called for him in a taxi about an hour ago. Bernard thereupon turned and hastened across town to the Neptune Hotel. He found McGurk in the smoking-room.

"Where's Stephen?" he asked.

"Oh, is that you, Bernard?" cried McGurk, springing up from the arm-chair in which he had been lounging. "Have ye heard the news? The fat's in the fire at last. Stephen and Hektor are gone to MacNeill's. There was a fella came in her a couple of hours ago who'd been in with the dopers and got cold feet. There's to be guns landed in Kerry and a rising on Sunday, and . . ."

"Are there German troops coming?"

"Divil a troop."

"I thought as much." He told McGurk about the Brian Mallow episode.

"Oh, there's to be no Germans," said McGurk. "Our man said so, and he ought to know, for he was thick as

thieves with them. Sure if there was, wouldn't we all be in it?"

"And what are our people going to do?"

"They'll be holding a palaver at present. Hektor swears he'll put lead in Mallow. I hope they'll shoot the whole bloody bunch."

"Then there's nothing I can do?"

"The best thing you can do is to go home where they can find you if they want you. Stephen told me not to stir from here."

Instead of going straight home, however, Bernard made for Mallow's house. He was in a most uneasy frame of mind, foreseeing nothing in the contemplated rebellion but the smashing of the Volunteer movement and the loss to the nation of its sole defence against conscription and its hope of freedom. Arriving at the house at Rathgar, as soon as he was admitted he pushed past the servant and opened the sitting-room door. Austin Mallow and another insurrectionary member of the Executive named Barret were sitting at the table poring over a map.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" said Austin.

"Yes," said Bernard, breathing hard. He expected a violent tirade from Austin, but the poet merely said:

"I'm glad you came. Sit down."

"I want to know the meaning of all this high-handed trickery," said Bernard, still standing.

"Certainly," said Austin. "Our methods are not quite what we'd like ourselves, but . . . under certain conditions. . . ." He shrugged his shoulders.

Bernard took a chair at the foot of the table.

"Do you seriously expect to beat the British Army?" he asked.

"We do," said Austin.

Bernard uttered an exclamation of derision, and Barret interposed.

"You don't understand," he said. "We don't expect to

win in a military sense, but we are confident of a moral victory."

"Hmph!" ejaculated Bernard.

"I appreciate your feelings," said Barret. "You and your friends are extremely clever young men, and all the force of reason and common sense is on your side. But . . ."

He paused, as if not ready to speak all that was in his mind.

"Well?" said Bernard.

"Reason and common sense are not enough. You have no vision. You are blind to the spiritual essentials. You will organize and drill and discipline your men for ever, but you'll never do anything decisive, because reason and common sense are always on the side of the big battalions. We see beyond these petty things. We see beyond failure and death to the victory which failure and death will achieve. Failure and death will be the voice by which we shall speak, first to our own people, and then to all the peoples of the world, and by our failure and death we shall forge a weapon which those who scoff at us now will afterwards use . . ."

"You may be right," said Bernard. "Personally I think you're wrong, but I won't argue that. But however right you may be you can't justify your acting against the will of the majority of the Executive or the way in which you have deceived us." He addressed himself to Barret, feeling it useless to argue with his fanatical companion. Barret hesitated at this, however, and Austin broke in:

"Do you think that when we've decided what must be done we're going to be held back by considerations of that sort? Do you think that we're going to place the feelings of our colleagues or even of our own personal honour above the interests of Ireland? Do you think that we'll allow ourselves to be thwarted by your timidity and lack of enterprise? No, thank you. Ireland must be saved in spite of the strength of her enemies and the weakness of her friends."

Bernard paid no attention to this harangue but continued to address himself to Barret.

"It isn't fair to the men," he said. "They joined the movement in the belief that if there was to be a fight it wouldn't be a hopeless one. To lead them out to what even you admit to be certain defeat is the grossest treachery to them."

"The men will endorse our action afterwards," said Barret.

"All Ireland will endorse it eventually," said Austin. "And just mark my words. Our minds are made up. The fight is bound to be fought. And any one who interferes with us from this out will be crushed. Ireland has been ruined by faint hearts too often. We shall see that it doesn't occur again. . . . That's a warning to you . . ."

"Hmph! Very dramatic I'm sure," said Bernard. "But don't you imagine that you're the only people who can play the crushing game . . . not by long chalks. And don't think you've a monopoly of patriotism. For myself I can say that I prefer Ireland to my theories about her, and that's more than you can say."

"How charming!" said Mallow, with a sneer on his thin lips. Barret turned to Bernard and said:

"I've no doubt whatever that you are as much concerned with the good of Ireland as we are. But consider this: nothing can stop the fight now, and interference on your part will only hamper us — no more. It's a pity we cannot agree, but there we are."

"I hold my view as strongly as you hold yours," said Bernard. "So I'll oppose you to the end. . . . Good evening."

He rose and went out.

13

Next morning Bernard was sitting down to a Good Friday breakfast — milkless tea, butterless buns, and a kippered herring — when O'Dwyer came in looking pale, heavy-eyed and exhausted.

"Can you give me some breakfast?" he asked. "I've a lot to tell you and I'm in a hurry. . . . None of your black tea and buns. I'm starving and worn-out so I'm giving myself a dispensation." He dropped heavily into the nearest arm-chair.

Bernard hurried out to give the necessary orders, but was back in a moment to ask:

"Tea or coffee?"

There was no answer. O'Dwyer had fallen asleep in the chair. Bernard left him so until breakfast was ready and then roused him with difficulty.

"Have I been asleep?" murmured O'Dwyer. "Lord, I'm fagged out. Up all night and running all over the city this morning."

Bernard poured out tea for him and O'Dwyer stumbled over to the table. He drank and ate a little and soon woke up completely.

"Listen now," he said. "Stephen and Hektor discovered last night that there's to be a rebellion . . ."

"I know," said Bernard. "McGurk told me."

"Good. Then I can skip a lot. They came straight over to my digs and fetched Sullivan from his, and we all drove out to MacNeill's. He's drawn up countermanding orders, and we've had them typed and addressed, and we're sending them out by hand all over the country. I've got about a dozen here for you, for corps scattered over southern Leinster. You'll take them, I suppose? . . . Good. I've another set for Umpleby: he's a sound man for all his absurdity. McGurk's doing the west, and I'm going north this evening after I've had a sleep. . . . Tea's great stuff, Bernard. I feel a new man already."

"I suppose I'd better start as soon as possible?"

"The sooner the better," said O'Dwyer, and handed over a bundle of letters . . .

So Bernard found himself driving all that day over Ossory and Hy Kinsella. First he posted straight to Ballylangan where Crowley — who was mightily indignant at the idiocy

and trickery of the whole affair — undertook the delivery of three of the documents whose addresses lived fairly near.

"What sort of an insurrection these fellows expect in this neighbourhood I can't make out," he said. "Our corps are all small and only a quarter of them armed, and they're scattered about all over the place. What the devil we could do beats me."

At shops in country towns, at doctors' houses, at farm houses, at labourers' cottages, at lonely cabins on the mountains Bernard left his missives, and the look of relief on the faces of the recipients was good to see. They were shrewd fellows, these young Volunteer captains, and there were few that did not realize the madness of the adventure to which they had thought themselves committed. They would not have hesitated a moment about obeying those orders, issued, as they thought, by the Executive they had elected to govern them, but the countermanding order was obviously welcome. Bernard's task was a long and tiring one, and not much more than half of it was accomplished by midnight, when he put up at a village inn where not only the son but the proprietor himself were Volunteers. He completed his round by the middle of the next day and hastened back to Dublin.

On arriving at the Neptune that evening he found Hektor sunk in intense gloom.

"What's the matter now?" he asked.

"We've our backs to the wall, sonny," said Hektor. "The insurrectors have beaten us at every turn. Sullivan and Hobson have been kidnapped and Stephen escaped by the tips of his eyelashes."

"Great Scott!"

"We had the insurrectors up to Headquarters and after a grand palaver they withdrew and apologized and swore that it was all off. The only thing to worry about then seemed to be the arms ship and we just prayed that Jellicoe might be propitious to us. Well, when all was squared up the dopers took their departure and about three hours later Stephen was sitting here alone when Austin Mallow arrived

in a cab and asked him to come to a conference at his place to settle up matters of detail. It seemed a bit thin to Stephen, but he went down to the cab, and if the fellows inside hadn't been just a trifle too quick on the draw he might have gone with them. As it was he just smiled and excused himself. Since then we've heard that the others have disappeared, but where they are we don't know."

"What does it all mean, I wonder?"

"It means that they're going to try and pull the thing off in Dublin anyway. You see the countermanding orders have never reached the Dublin men as the four battalion commandants happen to be insurrectors. However, Stephen's called the remainder of our party together and we've sent in a notice to the Sunday papers. Short of calling round on all the men individually I don't see what else we could do. . . . I'm fair sick of this game. I'm a soldier, sir, and my career in that line has been persistently interfered with. I joined this movement in a military capacity, not as a keeper in a criminal lunatic asylum; which seems to be my principal function at present."

The following morning on his way to Mass Bernard bought a Sunday paper. Prominent on the front page was the following notice:

Owing to the very critical position, all orders given to Irish Volunteers for Easter Sunday are hereby rescinded, and no parades, marches, or other movements of Volunteers will take place. Each individual Volunteer will obey this order strictly in every particular.

The day passed by uneventfully. Bernard spent it with his mother, Alice, and Sandy.

CHAPTER XVI

CATASTROPHE

I

ALL Dublin — that is to say all Dublin that felt that it really counted and a good proportion that had no idea that it didn't — was at Fairyhouse Races on Monday. The society papers said all Dublin was there, and as definitions are valuable to students and statisticians let it here be stated that in this context "all Dublin" means and includes five peers, six baronets, eleven knights, two generals, an indeterminate number of colonels, captains and subalterns, some hundreds of untitled gentry, and some thousands of the commonalty: with women and children over and above. The Earl and Countess of Ringsend were there, with their son Lord Sandymount. Sir Swithin and Lady Mallaby Morchoe were there; and Sir Perry and Lady Tifflytis; and Sir John and Lady Bonegraft (newly titled and striving to appear unconscious of it); Mr. and Mrs. Gunby Rourke were there; and Sir Eugene Lascelles; and Mrs. Harvey (whose newly acquired son-in-law had evidently been a sound investment). It was a most brilliant assembly.

The refreshment room behind the Grand Stand hummed with conversation during the luncheon hour.

"How dowdy Lady Inchicore is," said Mrs. Moffat to Mrs. Metcalfe. "Really, my dear, if I were a Countess I think I'd treat myself to a new hat now and then."

"It's a long time since Mrs. Harvey appeared in society," said Mrs. Metcalfe. "Has she come in for money?"

"My dear, haven't you heard?" said Mrs. Moffat, and proceeded to explain . . .

"How well Sir Eugene bears his sorrow," said Lady

Bonegraft to Mrs. Gunby Rourke. "To look at him you wouldn't dream that he'd lost his son only a few months ago. I think it's so brave and patriotic of him to be so cheerful."

Sir Eugene at the moment was enjoying a paternal flirtation with a pert little miss of seventeen. Sir John Bonegraft, who hated him, interrupted heavily, saying:

"Hello, Lascelles. Is that boy of yours out of gaol yet?"

Sir Eugene flushed angrily and said:

"I know nothing whatever about him." Whereat Sir John emitted his thumping laugh and went off to mimic him to Sir Perry Tifflytis . . .

A young man came into the refreshment room breathless with excitement and blurted out to the first person he saw:

"Heard the news? . . . Ructions in town . . . Sinn Feiners out. . . . Shooting everybody . . . The Castle taken . . ."

People pressed round him eager for news which, however, was received with incredulity.

"A mere street riot, I'm sure," said Sir Eugene Lascelles.

"No. They've got the Castle."

"Disloyal beggars!"

"What's all the excitement?" some one asks, pressing into the circle. The story is told again. There is a babel of questions and comments.

"Sin fainers: what are they?"

"But they've got the Castle . . ."

"It's all nonsense."

"They ought to be shot."

"I *knew* this would happen."

"This weak-kneed Government!"

"What can you expect with a man like Birrell? . . ."

"German gold, you may be sure . . ."

". . . And in the middle of the great war too!"

"I hope they'll all be shot."

"I'll bet it's all over by this time."

These are samples of the more intelligent of the remarks

which filled the air. The excitement lasted for some ten or fifteen minutes but for lack of definite information it quickly subsided, and incredulity took its place. Interest returned to the races . . .

The road was packed with pedestrians and vehicles when it was all over. The humble commonalty footed it to the station, or cycled, or crowded in half-dozens on to outside cars, while motors of every description, from insignificant little two-seaters to mammoth landaulettes, humming, hooting and screaming, threaded their courses Dublinwards through this chattering, jangling confusion. Mr. and Mrs. Gunby Rourke in their magnificent Rolls Royce were the first to extricate themselves from the multitude and hasten down a clear road towards the city, to their ultimate undoing; for at the end of a long suburban road they came upon the outermost of the barricades.

It was a ramshackle structure: a makeshift coacervation of diverse objects. An overturned tramcar made up nearly half of it; the remainder consisting of a couple of motor-cars, half a dozen bicycles, a few paving stones, some sand-bags, and the pillage of a second-hand furniture shop. There was a gap at one end. The fortification was manned by five men in the grey-green uniform of the Volunteers, and rifles could be seen projecting from the windows of the houses that flanked it. The inhabitants of the district, respectable and ragged, stood about staring, grumbling, or cursing.

"Halt!" rang out the voice of one of the garrison, and as if to guarantee the seriousness of the command there burst forth the sound of rifle-fire from a distant quarter of the city.

"Don't mind him," said Mrs. Gunby Rourke to her chauffeur, who had slackened speed. "Drive for the gap."

"I'll blow your brains out if you do," said the Volunteer, whereat the great Rolls Royce stopped dead.

"What impertinence!" cried Mrs. Gunby Rourke. "Drive on, Jennings."

"We'd best go back, madam," said Jennings.

"Ye'll do nothing of the sort, then," said the sentry. "If ye move wan inch I'll shoot ye dead."

"This is outrageous!" said Mrs. Gunby Rourke. "What can we do, Arthur?"

"I'm afraid we must bow to the inevitable, dear," said Mr. Gunby Rourke.

Another Volunteer, evidently a section-commander, now came out of one of the houses and crossed the barricade.

"We'll have to commandeer this car," he said, fingering the handle of a revolver at his belt. "May I ax ye to step out."

Mrs. Gunby Rourke was perfectly furious at this.

"Do you know who I am, sir?" she demanded.

"Ye may be the Empress o' Chiney, ma'am, but we've got to finish this barricade, and that car o' yours'll just do it."

Mrs. Gunby Rourke was almost speechless with indignation. She gasped incoherently and then turned on her husband, who was lying back in his seat passively smoking a cigar.

"Are you going to sit there quietly and hear me insulted?" she asked.

Mr. Gunby Rourke waved his cigar helplessly and said: "What can one do, my dear?"

"Do!" exclaimed his wife, and became incoherent again.

"Arrah, be aisy, ma'am," said the Volunteer. "We won't do y'anny harm, an' when the Republic's established sure we'll give ye compensation for the car. Will ye dismount if ye plaze?"

Mrs. Gunby Rourke turned her outraged eyes to heaven and sat still, but her husband and the chauffeur alighted.

"Come along, my dear," said the former. "We must yield to superior force for the moment, but they'll all be shot in a few days."

Mrs. Gunby Rourke made no answer, but seeing the Volunteer lovingly fondle the handle of his revolver she de-

scended from the car and walked off on her husband's arm. The Rolls Royce was stuffed into the gap in the barricade.

2

A shot and its echo sounded in the far distance. Bernard dropped the book he was reading and listened. Another shot rang out close at hand. Then silence.

He heard some one come down the stairs at a run, and in a moment John Malone burst into the room.

"Did you hear it?" he cried. "They're suppressing the Volunteers!"

Another distant shot was heard, followed by two others in rapid succession. A chill sense of realization came to Bernard.

"It isn't that," he said. "It's rebellion."

"Hurroosh!" cried Malone. "I guess I'm going for my gun." And he rushed out.

At the same moment Bernard heard the tramp of feet in the street outside and, going to the window, he saw a squad of men in green uniforms marching up the street.

"Foiled again," he muttered; and added: "Poor devils!"

Malone returned, carrying his rifle.

"Aren't you coming?" he said.

Bernard knew it would be useless to enter into a discussion with him, so he merely said:

"Not yet. Don't wait for me."

Malone disappeared. Bernard went out a few minutes later. Hurrying down Harcourt Street he was struck by the unnatural quietness everywhere. Traffic seemed to have been suspended, and people stood at their doors or in little groups on the sidewalks, talking in subdued tones, with every now and again an anxious glance down the street in the direction of Stephen's Green. Arriving at the corner Bernard saw a little bunch of people being hustled out of the Park by some of the Citizen Army, who, as soon as the

last of the civilians had been thrust outside, closed the gate and secured it with a lock and chain. In a shrubbery inside the railings half a dozen of the men in green were digging entrenchments. The people who had been expelled from the Green stood staring at them, and from the open doors and windows of all the houses in the neighbourhood the inhabitants were staring hard. Passers-by in the street stopped and stared in their turn. There seemed to be nothing else for people to do but to stare: they were too puzzled and stupefied to talk. An ominous silence reigned over all, broken only by the clink and scrape of the tools of the trench diggers and the occasional pop of a distant rifle.

Bernard had no time to stop and stare. He walked on along the east side of the square until he reached Grafton Street, where he stopped abruptly on seeing a section of his own company marching towards him. Bernard succeeded in catching the commander's eye and raised his hand, whereupon the latter halted his men, came over to Bernard, saluted, and stood to attention.

"How's this, Muldoon?" asked Bernard. "How did you come to be mobilized without me?"

"Captain Skehan mobilized us, sir," replied Muldoon.

"*Captain* Skehan?" queried Bernard.

"Yes, sir. He showed us his promotion order signed by Commandant-General Pearse. . . . I thought you'd been promoted to the Staff maybe, Captain."

"Not exactly, Muldoon," said Bernard. "In fact I rather fancy I've been cashiered."

"I'm sorry to hear that, Captain."

"This rebellion isn't an Executive affair at all, you know. It's mutiny against the President as a matter of fact. The whole thing's a frightful mix up and there's no time to explain it. I'm going down to Headquarters now to see what can be done. Meanwhile, what'll you do?"

"I suppose I'll have to carry out me orders, Captain. But between ourselves I don't know what we're out for. We'll be bet for certain."

"Something may be done yet. Where are Headquarters, by the way?"

"At the G.P.O., Captain."

"Very well. I suppose you'd better carry on for the present."

Muldoon saluted and returned to his men. Bernard resumed his way, passed down Grafton Street and Westmoreland Street, and arriving at O'Connell Bridge ran into Stephen and Hektor.

"Well," said Stephen. "What do you think of this piece of lunacy?"

"Can nothing be done?" asked Bernard.

"Look," said Stephen, and pointed down Sackville Street. The Republican Tricolour of Orange, White and Green was flying from the roof of the General Post Office.

"There's been a scrap already," said Hektor. "A party of Lancers went down the street about ten minutes ago and were fired on. Three were killed."

"Nothing can stop it now," said Stephen.

There was a burst of firing far away on the south side of the city.

"Attack on Portobello Barracks, I suppose," suggested Hektor.

Excited groups of people were standing about, on and near the bridge discussing the situation. Stray words from some of them reached Bernard's ears: "Bloody fools!" "What the hell do they think they're up to?" "I hope they'll all be shot."

"The Republic doesn't seem to be exactly popular," observed Hektor. "Physical force won't have much stock in the country when the dust up is over."

"I hope to heaven the country'll keep quiet," said Stephen. "How do things look where you were?"

"They didn't seem at all anxious to come out," replied Bernard.

"I bet they won't like abandoning Dublin," said Hektor.

"Well, let's hope they'll have the sense to do it all the same," said Stephen.

"I don't know that sense is everything," said Bernard. He was looking at the flag of Ireland flying in the breeze, and a longing seized him to fight and die in its defence. A thousand emotions were welling up in his heart. The spirit of the rebels of all the ages was calling to him; the music of Ireland was playing to him; the anger of Ireland was thrilling him; reason was being swamped in floods of passion. Stephen, reading all this in his face, said quietly:

"This rebellion will be the ruin of Ireland. It'll be crushed in a few days; the country will be conscripted; and when the people see the damage done they'll react to constitutionalism for another generation and the Union will have a fresh lease of life."

"I suppose so," said Bernard.

"Hello, you chaps!" said a voice suddenly, and turning round they were faced by Fergus Moore. They had not seen him for over a year, so they were startled by the change in his appearance, constitutionally wrecked as he was by long-continued dissipation.

"Where are you off to?" asked Hektor.

"I'm going down to the G.P.O. to see if they can spare me a rifle."

"I gave you credit for more sense," said Stephen. "Don't you know that this piece of lunacy is going to be the ruin of the country?"

"Who can be sure of anything? And what matter anyway? I've lived a rotten life, so I may as well die decently."

"At your country's expense?" said Stephen.

"If you saw D.T.'s in front of you you wouldn't split hairs over the morality of a fight that gives you a chance to die game, would you? I'd like to kill an Englishman or two anyway."

"There's no canteen in the G.P.O.," said Stephen drily.

"That's unworthy of you, Ward," replied Moore. "But

I'm going to my death, so I salute you. Good-bye all."

He shook hands sentimentally with the three and marched off towards the Post Office.

"I thought that kind of character didn't exist outside novels," said Hektor. "Who says Sidney Carton's improbable now?"

"Those who go seeking death never find it," said Stephen. "I bet you Moore'll come out of this scatheless: which is more than will happen to more useful poor fellows."

Suddenly Bernard cried:

"Hello! Here's Umpleby," and the others looking round saw the little man approaching from the direction of D'Olier Street. He was loaded up with equipment, carried a Howth rifle on his shoulder, and was quite breathless.

"Oh, I'm so glad to have met you," he puffed. "What's the meaning of it all? I was mobilized for a route march but it looks more like a rebellion. I thought we'd cancelled that . . ."

Stephen explained the position.

"But," said Umpleby, tentatively scanning Stephen's face. "Er . . . doesn't honour require that we should throw in our lot with our comrades?" He was hoping with all his heart that it didn't, and his brow was knit with anxiety.

"I can's answer for your honour," said Stephen bluntly, "but personally I'm going home."

Umpleby heaved a sigh of relief. Here was good company to err with.

"I'll do the same," he said. "Meanwhile I think I'll rid myself of these superfluous and incriminating impedimenta." Without more ado he divested himself of his accoutrements and dumped them, rifle and all, over the parapet of the bridge into the Liffey.

"Now I think I'll run off home," he said. "My wife will be very anxious about me." (Distant firing.) "Hear that. She'll think they're all hitting me. . . . Good-bye, boys. He shook hands hurriedly and scuttled back down D'Olier Street.

"I suppose I may as well be off home too," said Bernard.

"No. Come along to the Neptune with us," said Stephen.
"We can get you a room. We may as well stick together in case of trouble."

Bernard was very pleased by this invitation. Since Mabel's defection and the loss of Eugene and Willoughby solitude had become intolerable to him. He craved for human society, and now above all he needed the support of Stephen's strong will and character. Hektor supplemented the invitation in his bluff way and Bernard accepted it.

"Let's stroll on, then," said Stephen.

They crossed the bridge and walked down Sackville Street, which was a chaos of strange sights. In the upper stories of many shops the windows had been smashed and then barricaded with furniture, behind which could be seen the green-clad forms of Volunteer sentinels silently waiting. The street was still thronged with wondering people, who walked about, stood and stared, or flung jibes at the imperturbable garrisons of the shops. Excited children ran hither and thither, and a ring of them, with not a few of their elders commingled, was gathered round the body of the horse that had been slain in the affray with the lancers. At the end of Abbey Street some Volunteers were erecting a barricade of bicycles and rolls of paper under the curious and not very friendly gaze of a crowd of spectators. The toilers seemed to be embarrassed by this publicity, and a pink-and-white youth who acted as sentry was shyly endeavouring to make the crowd stand back. Some one chaffed him rudely, whereat he blushed and desisted from his efforts. He was a bashful revolutionary.

Bernard and his friends walked on and arrived opposite the Post Office, whose windows had been smashed and barricaded like those of the shops.

"I'd just like to go in and tell the dope crowd what I think of them," said Hektor.

"You'd only get shot for your pains," said Stephen.

Bernard drew their attention to a small crowd collected

at the base of Nelson's Pillar, evidently reading a poster of some kind. He went over, followed by the others, and from the outskirts of the crowd read:

POBLACHT NA HEIREANN
THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
of the
IRISH REPUBLIC

TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND

Irishmen and Irishwomen: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old traditions of nationhood, Ireland, through us summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom . . .

There were too many heads in the way to read any further, and the others called to him to come on. The three continued their walk, Bernard going slowly and very pensively. When they reached the Parnell Monument he turned back and saw once more the flag waving in the wind, the sunlight enriching its gold and green.

"It seems a shame to desert them," he said.

"Begad," said Hektor. "I hate leaving them in the lurch like that."

"Look here, you two," said Stephen. "Do you, or do you not believe that this rebellion is going to be ruinous to Ireland?" There was no answer. "Well then," he resumed, "have sense and come on. If these people are bent on wrecking the country we're not going to help them anyhow."

"But the rank-and-file?" said Bernard.

"Indeed I'm sorry for them," said Stephen, "but I don't

see how we can help them. We did what we could these last few days."

There was nothing more to be said. They turned their backs on the Post Office, walked on in silence, and in five minutes were at the Neptune Hotel. In the hall they met McGurk fully equipped and armed.

"What are you up to, Hugo?" asked Hektor in astonishment.

"I'm going into this bloody rebellion," replied McGurk.

"Don't be an ass, Hugo," said Stephen.

"Ah, sure I know it's absurd," said McGurk. "But I can't be deserting the poor boys."

"You'd rather desert your country instead?" said Stephen.

"Sure this fight finishes Ireland for our time," said McGurk, "so we might as well go down with it. We'll all be shot anyway whether we fight or not."

"That doesn't make it right to fight, Hugo."

"What matter? . . . And I want to kill a few of them bloody English before I die anyhow."

"Well," said Hektor. "Good luck."

"Good luck, boys."

And Hugo McGurk made his sally.

"What splendid material these fellows are going to waste," said Stephen.

"The best stuff in Ireland," added Hektor . . .

After lunch Bernard crossed town to pay a visit of warning and reassurance to his mother. The poor lady could not understand the situation at all: it was enough for her to know that her son would not be in the fighting, and she made him promise faithfully to take care of himself and not to stir out of doors.

In the evening he returned to the Neptune Hotel. The aspect of the streets was unchanged; no troops had as yet appeared on the scene; but the distant sound of sustained firing from three different directions indicated that fighting had already begun on the outskirts of the city. In Sackville

Street the crowds had increased, but they were of a different complexion from those of the morning. Dusk had sent respectable people to their homes and lured forth the underworld in search of loot. All the ragged, starving and deformed population of the slums was abroad and looting had already begun. Two sweet-shops and a boot-shop had been broken into and plundered to the very walls, and a draper's was being rapidly stripped when Bernard appeared on the scene. The dead horse still lay in the centre of the street but attracted no more attention. Ragged children ran about clad in all kinds of finery. Old women staggered along with sacks bulging with loot. Drunken harlots danced and sang. The crash of another window brought every one racing in its direction for more plunder. The shouts of quarrelling thieves rang through the air. In the distance was the muffled roar of the fighting.

Bernard passed on. A dirty, dishevelled young woman wearing a gorgeous hat and with a sealskin coat over her tattered blouse and skirt was dancing in the middle of the street yelling:

"The Volunteers is up! Ireland's free! Hurroo!"

Another equally repulsive creature was shouting obscenities at the garrison of the Post Office.

"Up th' Alleys an' to Hell wid the Kayzer!" she shrieked.

Grim and silent stood the Post Office in the gloom. The tricolour hung limp from its staff. Bernard walked on. The uproar in Sackville Street sank to a murmur and finally died away.

3

The dawn of Tuesday the twenty-fifth was heralded by fresh bursts of rifle fire. Bernard and his friends had an early breakfast; and a meagre one, too, for the Neptune, having many mouths to feed, had begun to ration already. Dolan, the landlord, came in to them full of news.

"Sure, they're not doing so bad at all," he said. "They've got the Castle and the whole country's up, and the

Jairmans have landed in Kerry, and there's an English cruiser sunk off Fenit and the Pope's sent Pearse his blessing."

"Get out of that, Dolan, you old cod," said Hektor.

"It's God's truth I'm tellin' ye, Misther O'Flaherty," said Dolan. "I wouldn't tell ye thruer if ye were the priest of God and I was on me knees to ye in the Confessional. Sure the milkman told me this morning, an' his brother told him, an' the brother has a son in the Volyunteers, so he has. . . . Arrah, why aren't yez all in the fight? It's down to the G.P.O. I'd like to be going meself, so I would."

"If we went down to the G.P.O.," said Hektor, "it's precious little you'd ever see of the money we owe you, friend Dolan."

"Sure, you're welcome," said Dolan, and went over to abuse the rebels and all their generations to a Unionist customer who had just come down to breakfast.

The three went out into the streets, which, as on the previous day, were again thronged with the curious. Looting was still going on in Sackville Street which was strewn with paper, card-board boxes, and broken and discarded plunder. The sacking of Lawrence's great toy-shop was in progress.

For half-a-crown Hektor obtained a copy of the *Irish Times* from a newsboy, from which they learned that Dolan's news was untrue. The attack on the Castle had been attempted with insufficient forces and had completely failed; there had been no German landing but a ship, laden with arms, had been sunk off Cork; the country was quiet, with, however, reports of small movements in North Dublin, Wexford and Galway; the British Navy was intact; and the Pope was apparently neutral. The centre of the city was, however, still in the hands of the Volunteers, and their outposts were evidently holding their own, for the sullen firing in the distance had approached no nearer. It was, however, getting more and more continuous. Monday's sporadic bursts were replaced by a long, seldom-interrupted roar,

which by midday was sustained almost without a lull, showing that hard fighting was in progress. Then all of a sudden came an explosion of firing from a quarter quite close to the centre of the city, and this time it was mingled with the rattle of machine guns.

"Can they be attacking the Castle again?" said Hektor.

"More likely the enemy have broken through and are attacking the City Hall," replied Stephen.

The sounds of battle were certainly coming from Cork Hill, where, as Stephen surmised, the military were attacking in force. Volley followed volley of rifle fire until volleys could no longer be distinguished, and howling them down came the relentless grinding *dud-dud-dud* of the machine guns. Two long hours it lasted without intermission, while Bernard listened tense with excitement and anxiety. Then there was silence. What did it indicate? Bernard and his friends could only guess, but it meant that soldiers and Volunteers — Irishmen both as it happened — were fighting desperately hand-to-hand up and down the staircases and in and out of the rooms and corridors of the City Hall and the *Daily Express* offices. No quarter was asked or given in that ferocious mêlée, and when the blood-stained buildings finally remained in the hands of the military a deathly silence settled down over the city.

"What does it mean?" asked Bernard.

"Hard to say," replied Hektor. "Probably they've found infantry assaults too costly and they're going to bombard us."

"Poor old Dublin!" said Bernard. He was filled with dismay. The destruction of the dear old city was a melancholy prospect enough, but the possible fate of its three hundred thousand inhabitants was too terrible to contemplate.

"They couldn't do it," he said.

"Couldn't they!" said Hektor, ominously.

"It doesn't make much odds either way," said Stephen. "Another few days like this and we'll all be starving."

4

Dublin has reason to be proud of Easter Week, for the gay, shabby, majestic old city bore herself bravely during her six days' agony. While her young Volunteers, sleepless, hungry, and bewildered, fought heroically against overwhelming odds, her citizens faced the horrors which had so suddenly and unexpectedly fallen upon them with calmness and fortitude. Indeed, their principal feeling throughout was one of curiosity, and they were foolhardy in the extreme in their desire to satisfy it. Tradesmen went about their humdrum and necessary business with matter-of-fact courage in face of every danger. So long as there was milk to deliver the milkmen delivered it; so long as there was bread it did not remain undistributed; and it was the same with all the providers of necessities. When the fires began to add a new horror to the situation the fire brigade crossed bullet-swept zones to fulfil their duty and so saved the city from certain destruction. Of panic there was no sign anywhere.

On Wednesday the bombardment began. In the morning the gunboat *Helga* steamed up the Liffey, pounded Liberty Hall into ruins, and proceeded to drop shells into Sackville Street. Rifle-fire at the same time began afresh and the machine-guns recommenced their infernal racket. To those who listened it seemed that the whole city must inevitably be destroyed, for what buildings could possibly survive the fearful tornado that smote upon their ears? As soon as the din slackened in one quarter it burst forth even more vigorously in another. Thus, when the dwellers on the south side noticed a slight diminution in the distant roar from Sackville Street, with shattering suddenness crashed forth a violent fusillade close at hand: where troops newly arrived from England and on the march from Kingstown had fallen upon the Volunteer outposts in the Pembroke area and been repulsed with heavy loss. And even as the sounds of this conflict died away, from the southeast with redoubled intensity burst out the cannonade which the *Helga*

was directing against the stronghold of Boland's Mill. Then it too gave place to the sounds of a fresh attack from the north. So all day long the thunder of battle rolled unceasingly; it went on muttering even after dark; and there were vicious bursts at intervals during the night . . .

Thursday brought hunger and the fires. There was no milk that day, and no bread: people counted themselves lucky to scrape together a meal of black tea, stale crusts, and scraps of meat. The sun shone brilliantly as it did all through the week. The battle roar boomed forth again, more heavily than ever, but it had ceased to terrify. It had become monotonous. All count of time had been lost; people felt almost as if the rebellion had always been, and came to accept it as a thing of custom and part of the natural order of the day. On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, people had asked each other incessantly: "How long is it going to last?" On Thursday they asked it no more.

About midday came the first of the fires. Following the fall of a succession of shells a thin wisp of smoke rose up from a shattered house in Abbey Street. Almost simultaneously a second appeared further on. There was no pause in the shooting. Flames began to leap out of the windows of some of the houses, and still shell after shell dropped in the area. A dense column of flame-reddened smoke came billowing up out of the wrecked buildings, and with a crackle and roar and the thunderous fall of beams and masonry the fire began to spread in every direction. Soon the whole block of buildings bounded by Abbey Street, Sackville Street, and Eden Quay was ablaze. Great black-and-ruddy pillars of smoke rose up into the sultry air, eddying and bulging and spreading themselves into a vast canopy aloft. As night fell the terrified inhabitants saw the sky lit by a lurid glare, and so immense was the conflagration that even in the outlying districts the spectators received the impression that it was close at hand. It was generally believed that the whole city was doomed, and that night nobody slept.

5

"Our boys are the stuff," said Hektor to Stephen. "They sure are making some stand."

"And all for nothing," replied Stephen. "What waste of courage and material."

It was the evening of the fourth day of the insurrection. The sounds of battle were continuous; the smell of burning tainted all the atmosphere; the glow from the flames of Sackville Street leaping skyward grotesquely illuminated the smoking-room of the Neptune, paling the light of the single candle that burned on the mantelpiece.

"I don't like the look in Bernard's eye," said Stephen. "He's been over-wrought during this last month and this catastrophe seems to have upset him completely. He's in the mood for any kind of folly, I'm afraid. Where is he now?"

"Out on the roof," said Hektor. "He's like a young soldier under fire for the first time. There are two kinds of men and they each act differently in that situation: one sort gets panicky and wants to run away; the other sort gets nervy and wants to get near the firing. That's Bernard's sort. I hope he's not going to do anything silly."

Abruptly, the cannonade stopped and they could hear faintly the hiss and crackle of the Sackville Street furnace.

Out on the roof stood Bernard gazing fascinated at the blaze. Great tongues of flame licked at the purple sky and playing on the smoke-columns gave them a sanguine hue. Black and red was the canopy that obscured the face of the moon, who, just past her full, glanced down once through a rent in its texture and straight was veiled again. Jets and cascades of sparks spurted up and were blotted out or tumbled back to earth. Sooty and flaming particles drifted about close at hand and fell around him. The acrid smell of burning tickled his nostrils. The rims of his eyes and the back of his throat smarted. After the cessation of the cannonade the random rifle-shooting of the night was resumed.

"Poor old Dublin," he muttered.

The last two days he had passed in a state of hardly suppressed nervous excitement. With the music of the guns stirring the battle-lust of the warrior latent within him he had found it increasingly difficult to restrain himself from rushing out headlong into the fight, and the impassivity of his friends had been a source of constant irritation. As the fight progressed the actual circumstances of its bringing about became less and less important to him; and more and more clamant came the call of Ireland and his comrades. Swamping all ratiocination rose the feeling that Ireland was fighting for her life and that he was standing aside and looking on. As the battle raged fiercer and fiercer he fancied that the Bocanachs and Bananachs and Witches of the Valley, that had danced on the spear points of the warriors of the *Táin*, were riding the shells and rushing behind the bullets, shrieking over the carnage and destruction of the fray, and mocking at him in his safety and seclusion.

"Keep cool," Hektor had said to him. "There'll be another fight after this. When they come to conscript the country who will there be to lead the people unless we survive?"

But now he was in no mood to think. He beheld his city devoured by flames; he foresaw the downfall of his country and the destruction of the movement that had been his pride; he had heard in the streets the curses of the people against the insurrection, its leaders, and all who had act or part in it. He was weary of life, too: he had borne more sorrow in a month than comes to many in years; and he asked himself whether existence would be endurable in the beaten and enslaved Ireland of the future.

"What is there left to live for?" he cried. "What is life without hope? What more poisonous than vain regrets?"

With that he gave one more look at the leaping fury in the

southern sky, rushed down from the roof, and, hatless and unarmed as he was, went out into the night.

Stephen and Hektor heard the hall-door slam, and half-suspecting what had occurred they started up and made one for the door, the other for the roof. Stephen opened the door and looked out, but no one was in sight. Hektor came down and announced that Bernard was gone.

"I expected it," said Stephen.

"Oughtn't we to go and look for him?" said Hektor, but Stephen shook his head.

"No use," he said. "We'd never find him now, and even if we did we couldn't bring him back."

Meanwhile, Bernard was seeking the way to the Post Office. It would have been impossible to reach it by Sackville Street, bullet-swept as it was and lit up by the glare of the burning buildings, so he went hunting for a way round to the west hoping to strike on Mary Street and so slip in by the rear. But this part of the town being unfamiliar to him he lost himself. Wandering vaguely on he got entangled in a labyrinth of bye streets and finally lost all sense of his direction until, happening on a wider street, he got a glimpse of the Pole Star, by whose guidance he set forward once more on a southeasterly course.

And then he encountered the sentry. Right at the end of the street he stood, an unmistakable figure in his trench helmet and with the moonlight glinting on his fixed bayonet. Bernard was astonished to see him, and dismayed, too, for he was himself unarmed. He guessed, however, that in the bye street he had got through the cordon which the military were drawing round the centre of the city, and he realized that to reach the Post Office he must break his way back through it. So he went on. Slinking slowly along the shadowy side of the street he got to within twenty yards of the sentry, whose back was towards him, without being heard. Then, bracing himself, he made a rush. The sentry turned at the sound of running feet, but Bernard was upon

him before he could bring his rifle to the present. They grappled, but not for long. The soldier was a degenerate little factory hand and Bernard flung him easily. Down he went, his rifle underneath him, and Bernard on top. The soldier attempted to shout, but Bernard gripped his throat with his left hand, half strangling him, and looked about for a weapon. The bayonet caught his eye. Throwing his whole weight on top of the enemy and holding on tight to his throat, with his free hand he unfixed the bayonet from the rifle. There was fear and horror in the soldier's eyes, which made Bernard pause a moment. Then "It's my life or yours," he muttered, and with some difficulty forced the steel home. The soldier gave a gasp and a shudder and then became limp.

At that a cold reaction came upon Bernard. Rising to his feet and dropping the bayonet he stood gazing down on the corpse.

"Poor devil!" he muttered.

All the fire had gone out of him, leaving him weak and hesitating. He remained standing there, gazing stupidly at his victim. The dead eyes were starting from their sockets; the throat was bruised; there was a great dark stain on the breast of the tunic.

"My God! I've killed a man!" he told himself in ghastly realization.

He thought of those to whom that poor body might be dear . . .

He had no desire to get to the Post Office now, and even as he thought of making for home he heard footsteps approaching. He turned and fled back the way he had come. There were sounds of pursuit for a while, but he soon left them behind. He slackened his pace and wandered on. He was lost once more in the dark deserted streets, but still he blundered forward. He knew not what he was doing nor where he was going. In his condition of physical and mental exhaustion everything about him seemed unreal, and he felt as if he were in a nightmare.

It was in this condition that he fell into the hands of a military patrol. The meeting was a surprise to both parties, for they were simultaneously approaching a street corner at a moment when a prolonged spell of firing obscured all other sounds. Bernard was seized before he had time to realize what had happened, and in his state of carelessness and stupefaction he made no attempt to answer the questions put to him.

"There's blood on 'is 'ands, sergeant," observed one of his captors.

"—— me," ejaculated the sergeant. "Then w'd best lock 'im up."

Bernard was put in charge of a corporal and three men who marched him off forthwith.

"If you're one of these 'ere Sin Finers," observed the corporal, "you've no call to be ashimed of it. They can fight orlright. As I said to Bill 'ere this morning, standing as you might say on the edge o' the grive, with the bullets whizzing orl rahnd us, '—— me, Bill,' I says, 'these fellows are the stuff.'"

Bernard remained silent, and in another minute they reached the gloomy sprawling bulk of a military barracks. A lamp flashed through the gate which was immediately opened.

"Taken in arms?" asked the sergeant of the guard when Bernard was handed over.

"Unharmed," replied the corporal.

"Lucky for him," said the sergeant.

A tall man in civilian clothes came forward out of the guard-room and after a careful scrutiny by the light of a lamp which he carried seemed to recognize Bernard.

"Important prisoner," he grunted.

Bernard's original captors marched away. He was placed in the custody of a fresh corporal's guard and conducted across the gravelled barrack yard to a door in one corner; then down a flight of steps, along a flagged corridor, dimly illuminated and dismally echoing, down another flight of

steps, and into another corridor dark and damp and cold. The corporal switched on an electric torch, took a key from his pocket, and pulled open a heavy iron door, revealing a cavity blacker than night.

Bernard was thrust inside and the door was slammed and locked. He was in utter darkness. The sound of the receding feet of his captors died away in the distance, and he felt that the last link connecting him with the living world was gone. He was entombed.

He stood for a few moments absolutely still, stunned by a feeling of overwhelming despair. Then gradually his senses became again perceptive. No ray of light penetrated the obscurity. The atmosphere was cold yet oppressive, and stank abominably. Walking round the cell he found that it was very small, which seemed to add to its horror; and he was seized by a fierce despairing impulse to kick and batter at the door. He restrained it, however, though the sensation of being buried and forgotten was chillingly real.

His body ached with bruises. One of his nails had been torn off in the struggle with the sentry but in the march of events the wound had gone unheeded. Now that he had time to think he became painfully conscious of its burning agony. He tried to assuage it by sucking, but this only made it worse. He tried leaving it alone, but still it tortured him. He put it in his mouth again and by the counter-irritation of gnawing the finger low down near the knuckled gained some relief.

He wandered about aimlessly. He was tired and longed for sleep, but the notion of sleep in that tomb appalled him: it would be too like death. Moreover, he shrank from touching any part of the cell, imagining the walls to be slimy and filthy and dreading to think of what might not be on the floor. So he stood in the dark for an hour or more, wondering, grieving, thinking, despairing. Nature, however, proved too strong for him. His frame was exhausted, his eyelids weighted. He sat down in a corner of the cell, leaning his head against the wall. His hand, dropping to

the floor, came in contact with some nameless shapeless filth, the touch of which made him shudder. And after that he fell asleep . . .

He was awakened by the arrival of a soldier with food. There was a dim grey light in the cell coming from a narrow slit very high up in the wall. Very faint and far away he could hear the muffled rumble of war.

6

"Things are quieter this morning," observed Hugo McGurk on Friday.

He and his section held a house commanding one of the canal bridges. Every windowpane in the building had been smashed and the embrasures were fortified with sand bags, mattresses and articles of furniture. These ramparts had been riddled and splintered by bullets, and the front of the house was chipped and spotted and scarred all over, for the position had been under fire most of the previous day. The garrison had originally numbered eight, but two had been slain, and three of the survivors wore bandages. Smoke-grimed, hungry, and exhausted they had scarcely left their posts at the windows for close on eighteen hours, but their spirits were still undaunted. No heart could fail under McGurk's cheery command.

Grimmest and most fearless of all the garrison was the grizzled recruit, John Malone. Firing with deadly speed and accuracy he had done more to repel yesterday's assaults than all the rest of his companions put together. Towards the end of the day a bullet had pierced his right forearm but he had barely given time to allow it to be bandaged before he was back at his post dealing out death once more. It was to him that McGurk's remark had been addressed.

"I guess things will be all the hotter when they come," he replied. "I tell you, sergeant, this has been some fight. Well worth living for, my son."

The sentry from the roof entered the room just then and saluted McGurk.

"Troops massing at the end of the road," he reported. McGurk made the round of his defences.

"Hold your fire till you're sure to hit, boys," he said. "Mulligan, keep your head down. We can't afford any more casualties. . . . Kelly, don't waste your ammunition. . . . If any Red Cross waggons come along fire on them. We've been done in the eye that way once too often. . . . Now, boys, they're coming . . . "

A tornado of firing burst forth as he spoke. Bullets came through the windows and pattered on the opposite walls. The rooms were filled with smoke and dust. A Red Cross waggon came down the street and on to the bridge. Then there was an explosion and it came to a standstill. Malone had emptied his magazine into the bonnet. Soldiers poured out from it and made a rush for the house. Down went three of them: a few ran back: half a dozen came storming at the garden gate. The man at the window over the hall door dropped his empty rifle and fired both barrels of a shot gun loaded with buckshot into the midst of them. Four fell and the remainder ran away screaming with pain. More soldiers came pouring over the bridge. Malone, hurrying not at all, but still firing with the same monotonous regularity, picked off man after man and drove the survivors behind the waggon for shelter. Some of them began shooting from this piece of cover, and Mulligan fell dead with a bullet in his brain.

"Steady, boys!" cried McGurk. "Heads down! Shoot slow."

There was a lull in the combat. A bandaged warrior stepped up to McGurk.

"Ammunition nearly gone," he said.

"Well, well," said McGurk. "We'll have to retreat, I suppose." He thought a moment. "Have you any ammunition left, Malone?" he shouted.

"Plenty," called back Malone.

"Well, the rest of you fall back over the roofs," said McGurk. "You take command of them, Mick. Me and

Malone will hold the rear for a bit. Carry on now."

The man saluted and marched off with his three comrades.

"Here they are again," cried Malone and re-opened fire. McGurk dropped behind a sand-bag and did the same. His shooting was wilder than Malone's and not so accurate, but he did some damage all the same. It was, however, hopeless for these two to stop the enemy's rush. Over the bridge it came and into the garden. A terrible explosion told of bombs flung at the door, and at that moment Malone gave a cry of pain and rolled over. McGurk rushed to his side.

"I'm done," said Malone. "You'd better git." And he died.

It was too late to retreat. Down went the door with a crash and the enemy surged into the hall and up the stairs. McGurk rushed out on to the landing. *Bang!* went his last cartridge and the foremost soldier dropped. On came the others, a tall man and a little man at their head. McGurk at the stair-head crossed bayonets with the tall man, and the little man tried to run in under his guard. McGurk knocked up the tall man's rifle and dealt the little man a kick in stomach that sent him reeling. Back and forward went McGurk's bayonet like the tongue of a snake, jabbing the tall man in the chest. Before he could withdraw it another man leapt over the body of the little man and stabbed McGurk in the side. McGurk uttered a curse and went back a step. Another man thrust at him, wounding his thigh. With a roar of anger McGurk clubbed his rifle and smashed in his assailant's head, but at the same moment he was wounded again by another foe. Then at last he fell and the whole band swarmed up and over him, trampling the life out of him . . .

Once more the tumult of war crashed over the city. With redoubled intensity the big guns boomed and the machine guns rattled, and gallantly the diminishing rifles of the Volunteers answered back. The Post Office, heart and brain of the insurrection, was being shelled. After twenty

minutes of intense bombardment those who watched saw the Republican Flag become obscured by a cloud of smoke. Up from the roof rushed a swirling black column, and soon afterwards a long flame curled up out of one of the windows and licked at the foot of the flag staff. Little figures could be discerned running about on the roof desperately fighting the flames amid a hail of bullets. Their efforts were useless. Out of the windows and through the roof leaped the red blaze. Soon the whole interior was irretrievably involved and the building had become a vast raging furnace. With a crash the whole internal structure fell in and a gigantic pillar of smoke and flame and sparks and incandescent fragments shot up into the sky. Down came the sparks again in a glittering cascade; up rushed another fury of flames; down rolled the smoke in coiling fuming billows, spreading themselves abroad or dissipating themselves in filmy clouds. Soon nothing was left of the building but the four bare walls, from one corner of which the flag still flew. It was still flying over the red glowing embers when night fell. For an hour after dark it still fluttered feebly in the breeze. Then suddenly the staff lurched forward and went down.

7

Loneliness intolerable; darkness impenetrable; despair unfathomable: another long night stretched before Bernard in his subterranean dungeon. The day had been long and tedious enough. After the man who had brought him food in the morning had departed, not a soul had come near him, not a sound had been heard in the corridor outside. He began to fear that he had been forgotten. As the weary hours dragged themselves along he waited and hoped, hoped and waited for another visit however brief: anything to break the appalling silence and monotony. But the grey light faded, the night began, and he knew that he was abandoned. What had happened? Was Dublin destroyed? Had the barracks been taken and the garrison slain? Was he to be left here down in the depths of the earth, to smother

and starve? Horrifying thought, that sent him to batter at the iron door until he was exhausted. All his strength was gone now, and he was sick with hunger. He tottered and fell, bruising his head on the stone floor; then, painfully, he crawled into a corner and sat still.

He was destitute of hope now and his only wish was that death would come quickly and mercifully. He closed his eyes, thinking of death as a pleasant restful sinking into a warm velvet-like oblivion. He imagined that he felt it coming to him and resigned himself to it joyfully. But he was only falling asleep. In a short time he was awake again, shivering with cold, and with a throbbing pain in his head that made the pain in his finger seem mild by contrast. He groaned in anguish to find himself still alive. "Buried alive," a voice seemed to say to him. "Buried alive! Buried alive"; the terrible words, beating rhythmically in his brain, made him want to make another dash for freedom, but he found himself too weak to rise. How his head ached! He slept again; slept and woke alternately through several shivering hours. While he slept he dreamed, and while he lay awake his brain worked feverishly and automatically. He could no more control his thoughts than his dreams: both took possession of him and made him their plaything. Soon he was unable to distinguish between the dreams of his sleeping and those of his waking, which became intermingled and continuous like the strands of a thread or the threads of a tangle.

He lived over again the events of the past month. He saw Eugene fighting desperately for his life amid fire and darkness: heard him calling for help: saw him go down before a dozen bayonets and turn reproachful eyes on himself standing by inactive. He saw scenes from their life as boys: saw himself treating Eugene always with scornful neglect: saw Eugene vainly attempting to propitiate him and make friends: saw again that reproachful look in his eyes. He felt himself base, with a baseness of which he had never been conscious before. . . . In the red fire-glow from his

own hearth he saw Willoughby as he had seen him their last evening together. Then the hearth vanished and the glow seemed to come from a burning village. He found himself standing beside a grave in Picardy feeling once more the flood of grief burst over him with all the keenness of first realization.

He saw his early days of courtship with Mabel, but they were no longer days of undiluted happiness. Always they were strolling along a dark cedar-bordered avenue and frequently quarrelling over some trifling difference. Then they would come round a curve and beyond it Janet would be standing, and she would say: "*I wouldn't quarrel with you. Why did you hurt me?*" Then he would start forward to go to her, but Mabel would hold him back, and Janet would disappear in the shadows. Afterwards he and Mabel would be walking together in the Dublin streets, and Musgrave's bestial face would appear out of a cloud of dust. Mabel would say: "You like dust and all sorts of horrid things: so you can keep them," and she would leave him and go over to Musgrave. Another time she was remonstrating with him for sacrificing their marriage to politics, and he was replying that politics was a sacred duty. Then appeared Austin Mallow saying: "Do you think we'll let ourselves be held back by you? Our minds are made up, and if you interfere we'll crush you without a thought. And at that Mabel burst out laughing and said: "So there's your lovely politics: and you'd sacrifice me for that." Thereupon he showed her a picture of the island of his childish imagination, and opening his soul to her as he had never done in life unfolded to her all his hopes and projects; but at these she only laughed and said: "That's not politics. It's only a dream." "Only a dream!" he replied. "No, the world is a dream if you like, or rather a nightmare. These are the only realities." But she merely laughed again, and in the midst of her laughter he awoke to the dark silence of the dungeon.

In this waking interval his thoughts reverted to the in-

surrection. What would be its results, he asked himself. What would be the fate of the rebels? Of his friends? Of himself? Death, he felt certain, would be meted out to the rebel leaders, and perhaps to the rank and file as well. He and his friends would be less fortunate: long sentences of penal servitude would be their fate: a dreary desolate prospect of wasted life sickening to contemplate. At that he gave way to a recrudescence of violent anger against the authors of the calamity and the things they had done to enforce their will. What had they achieved? In one mad week they had shattered work of years: dead were some of the bravest hearts in Ireland: broken was the orderly, constructive, enthusiastic movement that was to have been built up until it had become the Irish nation. He gave himself up to vain regrets over his vanished hopes. And what of the future? Stephen's prophecy came back vividly to his memory. He saw the Irish people, helpless and leaderless, tortured and dragooned, and conscripted into the armies of the oppressor. He saw Ireland, plundered of wealth and manhood, lose sight at last of the light of freedom which till then had never been eclipsed. For if the things that were done on Easter Eve can be repeated or defended, then there can be no more trust amongst Irishmen; and the country whose sons cannot trust one another can never be freed. So a despair blacker than his dungeon settled on Bernard's soul: despair for his country, despair for his friends, despair for himself. And out of his despair rose a hatred such as he had never felt before for the prime author of all these disasters: the great soulless enemy that had seized and tortured and wrecked his country and left it a wasted island of thwarted desire and lost endeavour. Over and over again, sleeping and waking, the same hatred, the same anger, the same regret, bitterness, and disillusionment turn and turn about haunted and racked his brain; over and over again the same dreams and visions flickered before his imagination, wove themselves into one vast pantomimic nightmare and left his mind a bewildered incoherent turbulence. Grin-

ning faces made mock of him, harpies snatched feasts from him, policemen tore him from the altar just as he was about to place the wedding ring on Mabel's finger. He argued interminably with hosts of people that he knew about the same perpetual subject — Ireland and the war — tormented as much by his own fiery logic as by the stupidity of his opponents, and could never prevail. He stooped gigantically out of the clouds and watched fantastic battles raging in the island of his childish dreams. He saw the right and wrong in their quarrels with a god-like dispassionateness, and sought to intervene: vainly, for he was invisible to his pigmy creation and it was impalpable to him. Then the ten nations sprang out of the map as ten ugly little figures that came quarrelling to his feet and demanding judgment from him, which, when he gave it, they laughed to scorn and went on quarrelling. He saw Europe spread out before him like a map, with little grey lines of smoke, like the fume of a blown-out match, where the battles were: no sound, no sign of the conflict but this; but a vast and woeful wailing arose on all sides that assailed his ears in his ethereal altitude. He saw the whole world handed over to three demons wearing the faces of Sherringham, Tracy-Sidbotham, and Musgrave. He saw the malevolent glee with which they took the sphere and rent it asunder and tossed it into a great fire. The fire leaped up all round him and he found himself standing in the witches' cauldron of Sackville Street; saw the city ringed round by hosts of demons led by the same infernal three. He stood in the middle of the street shouting denunciations at them, at which they shrieked with laughter. He argued and expostulated with them, and the demon whose face was Sherringham's cried: "Of course you're right. That's why you're going to be crushed." At that a perfect storm of hatred swept over him and he rushed headlong at the ring of ghastly faces, but even as he did so they vanished, and he found himself in a dark street gazing down on the corpse of the soldier he had killed. His eyes were fixed in a hideous stare, and even as Bernard looked into them the flame of life

leaped in their depths. At that such terror came upon him as he had never experienced in life: a cold transfixing terror that paralysed every muscle in his body, glued his feet to the ground, and set every molecule in his brain in furious vibration: a freezing devastating terror from which death itself would seem a safe and kindly refuge. He awoke with a shriek, only to plunge back again into a repetition, more tangled and fantastical than before, of the whole hideous delirium. In a few hours he went through an eternity of torment. He had lost all sense of time, all feeling of reality. Existence had become phantasmagorical.

His head ached excruciatingly and seemed ready to burst.

And then: *pitter-pitter-patter*: the scurrying of little feet. Rats? . . . Instantly he was frozen with horror. His heart stood still. A cold sweat broke forth on his brow. He felt his hair rising on his scalp. *Pitter-pitter-patter*. It was somewhere in the room, looking at him. It could see in the dark. *Pitter-pitter-patter*. Another? How many? . . . Frantically he realized his position, buried underground with this loathsome pattering horror. Shudder after shudder shook his frame. He remembered that he was weaponless, and tearing off one boot he staggered to his feet. The rats, frightened by the noise, scudded away, but he fancied they were assailing him. Their numbers sounded legion. . . . He shrieked with terror and fell . . .

In his debilitated condition the revival of a childish fear was enough to turn his mental balance, already weighted against sanity by sorrow, disillusionment, darkness and solitude. It was a madman that they found in the cell on Sunday morning — a piteous, terror-distorted figure that cowered in a corner, beating the air with a boot.

8

All Hell seemed loose in Dublin on Saturday. One after another the Volunteer outposts had been swamped or driven in, and now the main positions were isolated one from another, while the cordon was closing tighter and tighter on

the centre of the city, where somewhere in the mean streets behind the Post Office the chief command had sought fresh quarters. On this position the enemy's artillery was now concentrated. From ten o'clock in the morning till four in the afternoon the bombardment went on relentlessly, still answered feebly by the rifles of the defenders, until the west side of Sackville Street, Henry Street, and part of Moore Street was made fuel for a conflagration which rivalled that of Thursday. Once more the unfortunate people of Dublin saw imminent destruction lowering over their city. Despair at last took possession of them.

"Is this going on for *ever*?" they asked each other, and even as they waited for an answer, the boom of the big guns ceased and the rifle-fire diminished in volume and was no longer continuous. The rebel commanders had surrendered.

Then those who watched from a distance saw a strange sight. A little band of men, not quite a hundred in number, weary, tattered, and grimy, came marching down Sackville Street under a fluttering white flag. They were met at the bridge-head by a party of military, and there at the foot of O'Connell's statue, with the flaming buildings forming a lurid background to the scene, they laid down their arms. The insurrection was over.

Amongst those who surrendered was Fergus Moore. Throughout the fighting this man had performed deeds which would have been heroic had they not been inspired by suicidal determination. When the flag was shot away it was he who had fixed it up again amid a hail of bullets; when the Post Office was in flames it was he who was foremost in the futile attempts to extinguish them; when volunteers had been called for to storm a British barricade he had been the first to offer himself and the only one to return unscathed. He had sought for death and it had been denied him, and now he handed in his arms and equipment with the same bitter smile still hovering on his war-stained countenance.

9

Next morning Hektor was arrested in bed, but Stephen, who was already up and nearly dressed, made his escape by the roof. By bluff and good fortune he succeeded in passing the cordon; got away westward out of the city; swam the Liffey in the neighbourhood of Lucan; and struck out for his home in the mountains. There was a hiding place in Glencoole which he had discovered as a boy and which he now intended to make use of, relying on his father to supply him with provisions.

In the evening he reached the top of the glen and turned round to look back on the city from the spot whence he had so often gazed as a boy. In the darkness he could dimly discern the great plain which, stretching from sea to sea and dividing the northern mountains from the southern, had rendered possible the conquest of Ireland. Very black to the east lay the sea with a thousand twinkling lights girdling its shore, and the great ray of the Bailey sweeping in a magnificent circle over the cliffs of Howth and the waters of the bay. On the edge of the blackness a dull red spot like a cooling cinder marked the site of the city, and in the sky above it was a delicate glow. The wind sighed in the valley behind him.

He stood for a moment wrapped in melancholy contemplation, but shook the mood off abruptly.

"Regrets are waste of time," he said. "What's done is done. What of the future? Is conscription coming? Can we repel it by diplomacy, or shall we have to fight? . . . And what shall be the national policy now? . . . Will constitutionalism revive? What will the war bring? . . . Is the Revolution coming? . . . What shall be our next step?"

His thoughts were far away in the future as he turned and walked down the valley.

10

When everything was over the people of Dublin came forth in their thousands to look at the wreckage; and mothers and wives went searching the barracks and prisons and hospitals and morgues for those who had fought, or for those who had ventured out foraging or sight-seeing and had never returned. Among these went Lady Lascelles seeking her son, whom she found at last by the aid of Mr. George Molloy, the rising young solicitor (who afterwards took charge of the lunacy proceedings).

"What news?" asked Sandy, anxiously, from his couch when she returned home after her heart-rending discovery.

Lady Lascelles threw herself down on her knees beside her youngest son and burst into tears on his shoulder.

"Is he dead?" asked Sandy.

"Worse," sobbed the mother. "O, my three boys!" she cried. "My broken wasted boys!"

11

In his refuge in Glencoe, Stephen read of the collapse of the rebellion; of the minor skirmishes in Galway, Wexford and Fingall, where evidently the countermanding orders had gone astray or been disobeyed; and of the quiescence of the rest of the country. It was quite clear that Ireland was both puzzled and annoyed by the whole affair; she repudiated the insurrection and its authors with anger and disdain; and contemplated their possible punishment with indifference. It seemed for a time as if militant nationalism had slain and discredited itself.

And then came the shootings. . . . Pearse and the leaders undid by their death much of the harm which the insurrection had done to their cause, for Ireland roused herself in rage when her sons were slain by the foreigner.

News came in slowly to Stephen, for his father dared not visit him too often. First the lists of the executed trickled in; then he heard of the death in action of The O'Rahilly, McGurk, Malone, and others; then of the arrest of Case-

ment; and finally, of the rounding up of the Volunteers all over the country. Crowley and Umpleby and Moore were amongst those deported and interned at Frongoch; Brian Mallow and Hektor O'Flaherty received sentences of twenty and ten years' penal servitude. Saddest fate of all was that of Bernard Lascelles.

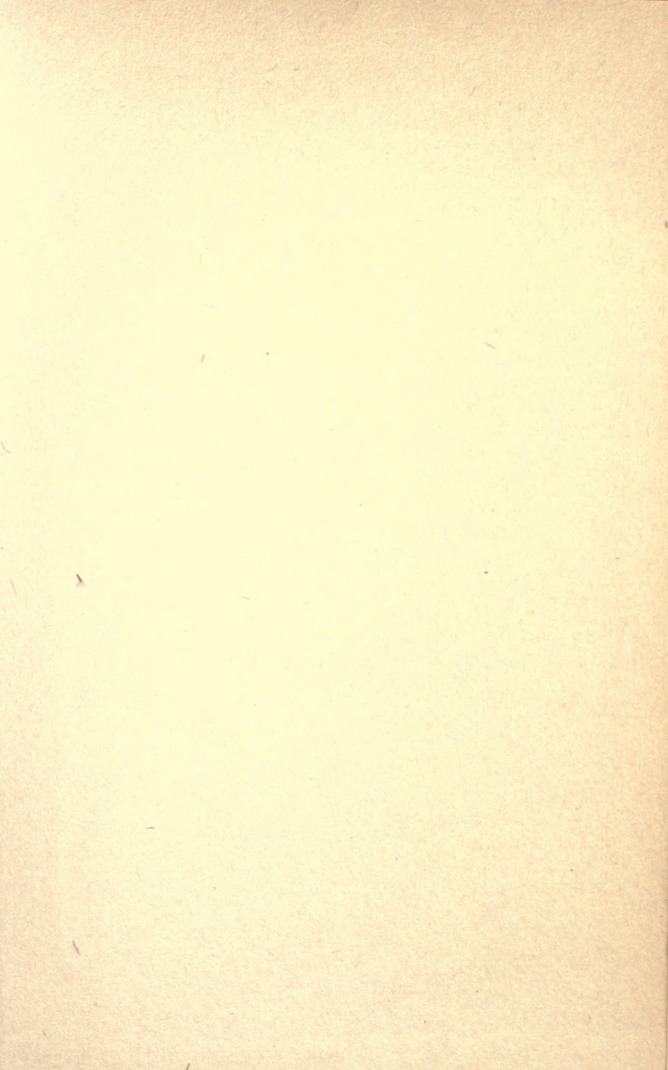
"What a catalogue of wasted material!" he muttered.

There was no news of O'Dwyer. Presumably he had escaped arrest. One vaguely familiar name hovered hither and thither through the newspapers. Mr. Molloy, the rising young solicitor, rose higher and higher on the wreckage . . .

"And now," said Michael Ward to his son, "now that everything has turned out as I told you it would, what do you mean to do?"

"I suppose," replied Stephen, "we must begin all over again."

THE END



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