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Twenty-five Years:
Reminiscences



MISS KATHARINE TYNAN

From the portrait by J B Yeats, RHA
in the Dublin Municipal Art Gallery

Twenty-five Years: Reminiscences

BY KATHARINE TYNAN
(MRS. H. A. HINKSON)

WITH A PORTRAIT

LONDON
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You were a part of the green country,
Of the grey hills and the quiet places,
They are not the same, the fields and the mountains,
Without the lost and beloved faces,
And you were a part of the sweet country.

There's a road that winds by the foot of the mountains
Where I run in my dreams and you come to meet me,
With your blue eyes and your cheeks' old roses,
The old fond smile that was quick to greet me.
They are not the same, the fields and mountains.

There is something lost, there is something lonely.
The birds are singing, the streams are calling,
The sun's the same and the wind in the meadows ;
But o'er your grave are the shadows falling,
The soul is missing, and all is lonely.

It is what they said : you were part of the country;
You were never afraid of the wind and weather.
I can hear in dreams the feet of your pony,
You and your pony coming together:
You will drive no more through the pleasant country.

You were a part of the fields and mountains.
Everyone knew you, everyone loved you ;
All the world was your friend and neighbour,
The women smiled and the men approved you.
They are not the same, the fields and the mountains.

I sigh no more for the pleasant places,
The longer I've lost you the more I miss you.
My heart seeks you in dreams and shadows,
In dreams I find you, in dreams I kiss you,
And wake, alas ! to the lonely places.

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TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

CHAPTER I

MY FATHER

OF my father I desire to speak without a word of mourning. It is now seven years since he died, and I no longer feel it a profane thing to think of him or to speak of him as he was. His was so strong a personality, so living, that the note of mourning seems out of place. Somewhere he goes on living still, intensely human, simple, robust, great-hearted, kind.

In whatever position of life he might have been born, he would always have been unlike his fellows. He was born to the country pursuits. Although the actual place of his birth was an old Dublin street under the shadow of Dublin Castle walls, practically from the beginning his business and his place were with flocks and herds, in the rich fields lying south-westward of Dublin, under the beautiful mild hills.

He said he went to school in Hoey's Court, off Werburgh Street, the very school which boasted of Dean Swift as a scholar. Round about the spot where he was born the streets are storied : the very stones cry the names and the fates of Irish patriots. In St. Werburgh's Church, close to where he was born, the brothers Sheares were buried. Practically the whole bloody history of Ireland under the English occupation has Dublin Castle for its centre. As one goes up and down those dark streets—they are lighter now than they were in my girlhood or his boyhood—what shades elbow each other! Tragical shades! If you are interested in the social side of Dublin life, you will look for your ghosts about the old Parliament Houses and Trinity College. In College Green was Daly's

Club-House, where all the wits and beaux and swashbucklers and fine gentlemen of every sort congregated in the brilliant years of the eighteenth century that led up to the *dabacle* of the Rebellion. About Dublin Castle the memories are mostly sombre. There is an aura, the environing light of patriots and martyrs, in those streets. Impossible, one would say, for a child of imagination to grow up there anything but a patriot.

His mind in later years was an epitome of old Dublin. You could scarcely talk of any famous person or happening that it would not set him off on a reminiscence. He was brought up by his grandfather and grandmother, and fortunately for him his youth was spent mainly on his grandfather's farm at Cheeverstown, Co. Dublin, rather than in the dark streets. His feeling towards his grandparents was more than filial. He was always quoting them in later life. If you grumbled at the weather, he would say: "Ah, well, as my poor grandfather used to say: 'Every day that God sends is good.'" Or, when it was a question of ghosts: "I remember my poor grandmother, when I said I did not believe in ghosts, because I hadn't seen them; she would say: 'You don't see them, child, because you're not good enough to see them.'"

His grandparents were Wicklow people, and he had an extraordinary love of Wicklow. Nothing pleased him so much in his later life as to go driving his pony over the mountains to the Seven Churches, where his grandfather and grandmother lie buried. Younger people would make the expedition following on bicycles, and would come up with him sitting on his grandfather's grave, the eternal pipe in his mouth, the pony grazing near by, a picture of quietness. Cheeverstown came to be entirely his in later life, and he would spend hours sitting behind his little pony at the head of a field, smoking and gazing away over the browsing cattle to the beautiful mountains. He used to live in the past in those moments. He was very strenuous, and no doubt he needed his dreams to set against his violent activities. "There's no air in the world like the air of Cheeverstown," he would say, as he turned the pony about regretfully to go home to his house in the valley.

He had all sorts of memories of the Dublin of his youth.

One curious link with the past was that he remembered how Major Sirr—hated in Ireland as the man who captured and mortally wounded Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the bright, the beautiful, the immortally young—had patted his curly locks as a child. His evidence about Major Sirr was rather in the direction of rehabilitating him. He was never one for conventional beliefs; and while he yielded to none in his love for Lord Edward, he was not the less impartial as regards him whom many people would have called Lord Edward's murderer.

"When I was a flaxen-haired child," he said, "I used to play about the Castle Yard. One day we had been playing marbles on the steps of a house, when the door opened, and a man whom I took to be a tall man hurriedly came out. My companions scattered, but I remained. He took me by the chin, and lifting it up looked down into my eyes. 'Well, little boy, do you often play marbles on my steps?' he asked. 'Very often,' I said fearlessly. 'And hop-scotch, and spinning tops, and all your other games?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Well, you can go on playing them then, and don't be afraid.' After he had gone, the others, running back, cried out: 'Did you know it was Major Sirr?' I had no idea indeed that it was he whose name was something of a bugaboo to frighten children in the dark.

"Hated as he was, however, he had the reputation, as a magistrate, of being fair and impartial. There was a friend of my grandfather's, Edward Byrne, like himself a Wicklow man, settled in Dublin. One night he was walking home after enjoying an evening with some friends. He was three sheets in the wind, and as he was going down George's Street he struck up a good old croppy song—'Billy Byrne of Ballymanus'—in a most loud and stentorian voice. He was suddenly confronted by a tall man, who walked up to him, and, without speaking a word, struck him a blow on the side of the face which, Byrne not being very steady, knocked him into the gutter. Byrne, who was a very powerful and athletic man, belonging to a very pugilistic family, and being own uncle to Simon Byrne who never met a man that he could not beat boxing, leaped to his feet, rushed on his assailant with all the

force and power in him, and knowing he had a foe of both courage and science to contend with he rained a shower of terrific blows on him which felled him to the ground. 'Get up,' said Byrne, 'I strike *no* man when he is down,'¹ at the same time receding some paces. In an instant the man leaped to his feet, but, instead of advancing to the fray, he emitted a piercing whistle, and in a minute there rushed up ten or twelve of the most powerful men of the Dublin Watch. After a prolonged struggle they succeeded in felling Byrne, bound him, and carried him off to the old Werburgh Street lock-up or watch-house.

"Now Byrne was well known to the watchmen; and one of them summoned my grandfather to stand by his friend in his trouble. The next morning the two appeared before Major Sirr, in whom Byrne, to his alarm, recognised his opponent of last night.

"The major looked steadfastly at him.

"Your name is Edward Byrne, I see, but you are not a Dublin man."

"No, indeed, sir. I belong to Wick low."

"Ha ! so you are one of the Wick low Byrnes. Mr. Byrne, what right had you to be disturbing the peace of the citizens of Dublin after midnight, when I was fortunate enough to meet with you ?"

"No right, sir. I didn't know where I was. I didn't know it was Dublin at all. I thought myself back on the Wicklow hills."

"Mr. Byrne, are you as good a man to-day as you were last night ?"

"I am not, sir. It wasn't me was in it last night: it was the drink I had taken."

"Mr. Byrne, will you promise me that I shall not find you brawling in the streets of Dublin again ?"

"Indeed I will, sir."

"Well, then, you may go with your friend."

"Of Major Sirr's personal courage there was no doubt. He went the rounds of the city every night alone, though there were watchmen within sound of his whistle. Yet he

knew that three-fourths of the citizens of Dublin would rejoice in his death.

"My grandfather had a case before him once. He had bought a horse from one of two brothers, and it having been in his possession some days the other brother claimed it, saying his brother had no right to dispose of it. He had brought a number of his friends with him and, my grandfather disputing his claim, they made an attempt to seize the horse by force. My grandfather's neighbours rallied round him and after a pitched battle he was able to retain the horse. He then summoned the man before Major Sirr for assault and attempting to seize the horse by force.

" 'How much did you pay for the horse?' the major asked my grandfather.

" 'Twenty pounds, sir.'

" 'Are you prepared to hand over the twenty pounds and take your horse?' he asked the other.

" 'No, sir.'

" 'In that case,' said the Major, 'the horse is the property of this man who purchased him. All I can do for you is, if you bring your brother before me, I will transport him.'¹"

He would talk of Fishamble Street Theatre, and I believe he had memories of Smock Alley, but I am not sure. He said he knew a hundred jig-steps in his young manhood, and it is quite possible he did. I can remember him dancing, and it was dramatic dancing, the dancing of the Celt and the Latin rather than the Teuton. His dancing expressed all that could be said of compliment and love-making.

He will recur constantly in this book of mine. I owe him so much and I am so eager to pay my debt, that I should not mind being called Katharine the Daughter, but not in derision, as a Stuart's daughter was called. I remember him as a young, gay, joyous father, before too many cares fell upon him. There was a period when I hardly see him. He recedes in the picture. He was perhaps somewhat overwhelmed by the cares of providing for a big family. Again he comes forward, and he **and** I are the tenderest of comrades and friends. I think he was born out of his due place. There is no one in Ireland so

unromantic as "the strong farmers," to which class he belonged. He had a deal of the poet, the dreamer, the imaginative man in him, despite his strenuous personality. Doubtless his fellows smiled at his novelties in farming. He adored his land with a passion. I believe he was glad to take up scientific farming, so that he might spill money into it like water. His passion wanted the land to be more rich, more beautiful, more fruitful than any one else's land. He made it that—spilling gold into it. In the days of my girlhood there was grass to your knees on that land. I believe it was over-rich for the cattle. I am sure the gold spilt into it did not fetch a ten pound note more for the land when it was sold to the Government to be split up into farms for evicted tenants, though doubtless it lightened the labours of the evicted. His neighbour with the thistly land across the road probably fared better. The land took the gold and kept it.

Yet who shall say he did not get money's worth out of his joy in it, and more than money's worth?

There are some people who when they die leave a gap in the world, even for those who have only seen them at a distance. When he died a whole countryside felt it so. Something had gone from the green glens and the purple mountain-sides, from the long, sweet, winding roads where one might never again hear the feet of his little pony trotting and see him coming along with his kind old rosy face and his eyes bluer than a child's. People said: "There is no one like him left. The country is not the same without him. He was part of the country." And it was so. He had become a part of the country. He was one of the immortals whose place in the serried ranks of the ages of men will never be filled by another made quite after his likeness.

He was of so dominant and energetic a character that the weakness of old age in him had a poignant sense of pain for one who remembered his prime. In the readjustment of things that is always happening day by day for our dead, the memory of him as a quiet old man in the chimney-corner, dreading the sound of a rough word, becomes dimmer and dimmer. Already one remembers him only in his prime. He

was an oak of the forest: and rightly one thinks of him in his strength that stood, a four-square battlement, to all the winds of heaven.

If one were asked straight off, without thinking, to name his strongest characteristic, one would say, I think, his fearlessness. He feared nothing. Under his wholesome health he had nerves and imagination not known among his fellows; but his nerves had nothing to do with nervousness. I have driven with him in a thunderstorm along miles of tree-hung roads when the blue lightning leaped in chains within a foot of us and his voice talking to and soothing his pony kept the little creature from wild panic as his absolute courage put courage into my quaking heart. With him it was impossible to be afraid.

He had his stories of Cheeverstown, of those fields the very names of which—"Larry's Field,"¹¹ "The Cuckoo's Field,"¹¹ and so on—had magic for him. There was a little, ancient castle or watch-tower of the early Irish somewhere midway of those dream-haunted fields, which had its rath, its ghosts and fairies. Under the shadow of the tower was a thatched cabin of two rooms. He was so fearless that any story of the supernatural coming from him had a curious impressiveness. Once, as a boy, having been up from daydawn with his grandfather's men when they went out milking, he fell asleep on a heap of straw in the inner room. In the outer they were playing cards by the light of a tallow candle. He could make you see it all, as he saw it through the doorless aperture between the two rooms. He could make you see and smell the night outside, the dews, the white moon of May, and the intoxicating airs of the hawthorn as they call it in Ireland. Within, the rough heads bent over the filthy cards, the dirty walls of the cabin, furnitureless but for the table and a few makeshift seats, the black thatch showing through the rafters, the shadows of the players¹ heads on the wall, their clutching fingers and bowed shoulders. He had the literary sense to make you realise all those things.

Suddenly he was awakened from his sleep by the loud voices of the players. One, ill-famed for the foulness of his speech, was in bad luck, and uttering blasphemy after blasphemy,

growing worse as his anger increased. Even his rough companions murmured and shrank away from him, and the lad, lying on the straw, felt appalled. There was a viler blasphemy than any that had preceded it, and suddenly a great wind forced open the door of the cabin, flung the players on their faces, threw over the table and the light, and drove through the place, dying away as suddenly as it had come and leaving the undisturbed beauty of the night as it had been.

Of his fearlessness I must tell one or two stories.

He had a friend who suddenly developed a homicidal or suicidal mania. Word came to him that the man had escaped to a loft above his stables where, naked as the hour he was born, he held at bay those who would seize him, for he was armed with a razor.

My father never hesitated for a second. The entrance to the loft was by a square aperture above the heads of the horses in the stable. One had to climb by the manger and the rack and to pull one's self up to the floor above. That ascent into the loft, occupied by the naked madman with the razor, was, I think, a feat few would have cared for: the person ascending was so absolutely defenceless.

But he——so fearless was he that he was not conscious of any bravery in the act! He simply could not be afraid. He heaved himself into the loft as though it held nothing but the hay.

"Isn't it a shame for you, John," he said, "to be sitting there without your clothes? Here, I've brought them to you. Put them on for goodness' sake, and then we can talk."

He sat down on "a lock of hay," as he would have called it himself, and proceeded to empty his pipe of the ashes and fill it again. I can see him so well with the empty pipe on his knee while he mixed the tobacco in the palm of his hand and talked in an even flow as soothing as the fall of waters. Meanwhile the naked madman in the corner had begun to clothe himself.

"Surely to goodness, John," went on the quiet voice, "you wouldn't be hurting yourself or anyone else with that razor. What on earth are you doing with it open like that? Why,

you might cut yourself, so you might. If it was shaving you wanted, the barber would do it for you. Put it down, man, before you cut yourself with it."

The madman put down the razor quietly and allowed his friend to take possession of it. More, when he was clad he allowed himself to be driven to the big lunatic asylum by the man he trusted. That was a part of the adventure which hurt *him*.

"I shall never forget," he used to say, "poor John's face as he looked out from between the big keepers. 'If I'd known you'd have done the like on me,' he said, 'I'd have cut your throat with the razor.' Poor John, sure it had to be, for his good."

Another time it was a wicked cow, which had nearly killed a man. She was loose in a field and no one would approach her. They were talking of shooting her. Anything that he did not know about cattle was not worth knowing. He walked into the field, despite the efforts of those who would restrain him. The cow came at him, her head down to charge. He waited, and at the moment of the charge he received her with a kick in the nose. She lifted her head and looked at him in amazement: then trotted quietly away and began grazing. He kept her for a considerable time after that and she was quite harmless. Oddly enough, too, she evinced a particular affection for him. "She'd let me handle her calf when no one else dare go near her," he said. It would have been a serious matter for him if he had missed that kick, for she had been an ill beast from the hour of her calving, and her latest victim was only one of a long line. He was not young then, and he had ceased to be agile. We used to reproach him, saying: "What would have happened if you had missed?" "I didn't miss," he would answer, "and I knew I wasn't going to miss. And look at her now. A kinder cow you wouldn't meet with in a day's walk."

Another time it was a dangerous bull, delivered to him in a frenzied state by a pack of yokels, half of them hanging on by ropes fastened to the ring in the bull's nose and to his horns, the other half belabouring the poor splendid beast with black-

thorns. He swept them away with one of his tempestuous bursts of anger; and they scattered like chaff before the wind when they discovered that his purpose was to set the bull free. "Hold on to him! Hold on to him!" they kept shouting from a safe distance. He opened the gate of a field where a herd of young cows was grazing and turned the bull in. There was no further trouble with the bull after that.

I have known him to drive through a field of his own into which a neighbour's wicked bull had escaped, to cross the field with the brute roaring and pawing the ground in most unpleasant proximity to himself and his pony, he flicking his whip gently about the bull's head as he went. Arrived at the gate through which he must pass to enter the next field, he clambered out of the pony-cart, opened the gate, and led the pony through, closing the gate behind him in the face of the astonished bull.

His fearlessness occasionally led him to do things alarming to his neighbours. Once he bought and sent home thirty Spanish bulls. The panic of the men who went to the boat to receive the cattle and were met by the wilderness of wide tossing horns, and the terror of the quiet country through which they were driven, may be imagined. After all, they proved to be gentle beasts and no evil results followed.

Animals always loved him despite his tempestuousness. In anger he was tempestuous, splendid, like the storm-wind. I can remember a big Irish kitchen with an enormous rosy fire that sent its glow far out into the night. A "half-door" gave entrance from the farm-yard into the kitchen. Before the fire would be basking half-a-dozen dogs in perfect content. Presently, in the yard outside, would be heard a tumult. Something had happened: a man come home drunk in charge of a horse and cart, cattle overdriven—some such malfeasance or neglect of duty. The master's voice would be heard in a mighty shouting; and the dogs, getting stealthily to their feet, would steal one by one into the shelter of a huge kitchen-table, below which they would lie with their noses on their paws, sighing because the master was angry and someone in trouble.

The odd thing was that no one resented those violent outbursts; not even those who had had a violent handling, well

earned, from him. His men were to a man devoted to him. Women always loved him; and an insolent domestic, whom he had discovered brow-beating his young daughters and turned out, declared always that it was the aforesaid young daughters, who trembled before the termagant, that were to blame and not he.

He had in a most extraordinary way the spirit of the country. He was a wonderful talker, and as you sat listening to him by the fire he made live again for you the days that were over. Always he was filling his pipe or smoking it, interrupting the narrative to ask for a straw—he called it a *thraneen*—to clean the stem of it, or a match to light it, or it might be a wad of soft paper to put in the bowl of it, to absorb the nicotine. He was an intemperate smoker; the only one I have ever known who kept pipe and tobacco by his bedside and woke up at intervals during the night to smoke. He smoked very strong tobacco, enough to make the head of a younger man reel. He used to amuse himself by calculations as to how much richer a man he would have been if he had not been a smoker. As it was, his splendid personality, his abounding health, the clear rose of his cheek, the unsullied blue of his eye, were a counter-blast to the haters of tobacco.

He loved to talk of the Ireland which was out of our memories, the Ireland of the dances at the cross-roads, and all the old customs, when he was young, before the Famine brought the death into the hearts of the people and the emigrant-ships had carried them away. He had much to tell. Re-constructing the old life in the Glens of Wickiow, he would tell the history of this one or that one, branching off from the main narrative to tell what befell the other characters in the story—"like a Saga," said an Oxford professor who listened to him, entranced, for the length of a day, and would have gone on listening for many days if he might.

I pick up a book published in the late 'eighties by an American who visited Ireland and sifted patiently all the evidence that came before him from men of opposite creeds and classes and politics and points of view regarding the Irish question. The American took down what he heard verbatim.

Here is a bit which recalls the days that are no more, in which my father's utterances have the Saga-like quality noted by the Oxford professor. "A massive man," the American describes him, "dressed in thick blue serge made of the wool of his own sheep, with a magnificent Landor-like forehead towering over a face that was one large smile." I can see him and hear him as he talks, driving his guest through the mountainous country, flicking his pony gently with the whip as he talked.

"We took a delightful drive," wrote the American, who was a gentleman, a scholar and a man of literary taste and performance—an American indeed who bore the name of an English noble house and called cousins with a dozen English families of the aristocracy. "We took a delightful drive through the valley and back along the Wicklow hills. Here and there the lofty walls of some gentleman's demesne cut off the view: again we clattered along the ill-paved streets of a little village; and near every village were the ruins of deserted mills and melancholy rows of cottages with broken window-panes of long-forgotten mill-hands. 'There were fourteen or fifteen paper-mills here in my boyhood,' he murmured: 'now they are all obliterated, simply because the great thinkers of the Empire decided that there should be no tax on knowledge, and so newspapers were sold for a penny instead of sixpence. All this looks well, but it doesn't work. There were even up to three years ago ten or twelve flour-mills at work in this neighbourhood. They are all gone, ruined by American competition.' In the good old times things were very different. I forgot the jolting of the car as he slowly recalled the past and some of its beloved figures. 'My great-grandfather Cullen was a farmer with plenty of land. He supplemented his farm-work by dealing in timber. He would buy twenty or thirty acres of oakwood, strip the bark, dry it, and sell it in Dublin. Of the timber he would select what was good enough for ship-building, and the debris he made into charcoal. He had two sons and five daughters. He and his two sons were weavers and all his daughters carders, and the family wove and carded the wool of their own sheep and sold the flannel, and dressed themselves in it: coats, jackets, and trousers

were all home-made. They had plenty of money to spare for everything. Now there is not a weaver in the County of Wicklow. My great-grandfather Kelly was also a farmer in Wicklow with a hundred acres, but he was a hatter besides and kept fifty men at work supplying hat-frames for the English army. I remember him well, and he remembered when the O'Tooles held Wicklow.' "

There was hardly a Sunday of the years when I was a girl, those good years of perfect companionship, when he did not drive off after breakfast to pick up a couple of visiting English or Americans or Colonials at the light railway station, and to take them a drive through the country before bringing them home. He was always ready to entertain those visitors in the first place to his writing daughter. He had such a wonderful interest in things and people. Sometimes he had no clue and she had no clue as to what the visitors might look like. He was always ready to discover them and receive them in a way that filled them with pleasure. He would pay an innocent, audacious compliment to a woman which was irresistible. Once he met an American mother and daughter.

"My daughter told me," he said, "to look out for two ladies who were mother and daughter. She did not tell me that I should find two so young and so pretty that they might pass for twin sisters."¹¹

He delighted all manner of men, but still more all manner of women. Being of that dominant nature that he would sometimes roar down a man in argument, he was invariably gentle with women, and he had peculiarly the gift of pleasing them.

Once or twice in these later years he went travelling—twice to America, and to London and Paris. He used to make many friends on these expeditions, priests, parsons, professional men, sometimes a young army man, or a sprig of the aristocracy. He seldom or never forgathered with men of his own business, nor indeed business men at all. The scholar, the artist, the politician, men of higher affairs, delighted in him. He used to come home with tales of the conquests he had made and the friends he had taken by storm; delightful, innocent, witty tales. Once he was the darling of the ladies on a Transatlantic

voyage, because of a slightly broad repartee made to a millionaire who was less simple than millionaires usually are. It was a very innocent repartee, but it was told with slight shyness. He had to tell it for the sympathy, yet he was oddly, unexpectedly prim with a daughter. "The ladies," he said, "used to whisper to each other and laugh as I went by, and they were kinder than ever. As for him he kept to his state-room for the rest of the voyage."

I have spoken of his fearlessness. Side by side with it was his disregard of rank and dignities, real or imaginary, if he ran his head up against them. His attitude towards the great or the pseudo-great happily escaped snobbishness on the one hand, ill-manners on the other. He had beautiful manners when good-manners were required. He had the feeling for rank and title—the pageantry of life—which all imaginative people—at least among the Irish Celts, have. He liked to tell of the civility shown him by a Duke when he gave evidence before a Royal Commission. On the other hand, he stopped the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland when he would have crossed his lands following the hounds, I remember how he used to tell the story. It was Earl Spencer in the days of his good Viceroyalty, long before the sad days when he was Foxy Jack and rode through the streets of Dublin in the midst of an armed escort. My father would tell how he found a couple of horsemen endeavouring to knock the padlock off a gate. In the field were a score or two of sheep and it was the lambing season. His rages were fine to see. He hurled himself upon the horsemen in a towering passion. I can vouch for it that he had the gift of language.

"The tall gentleman with the red beard," he said, "never spoke a word, but the young one asked me if I knew that it was the Lord-Lieutenant I was speaking to. I said that I didn't care if it was the King: he should not cross my land in the lambing season, with a pack of dashed hounds yelping and screaming among the sheep, and a lot of idlers and wastrels following them. I don't know what else I might **have** said, if the Lord-Lieutenant himself hadn't spoken.

He said: ' Sir, I very much regret the thoughtlessness of the act I was about to perform.¹' My father always reproduced a conversation with a certain old-fashioned stiltedness. "' I have only to assure you, sir, that I would not have done so if I had been aware of the harm to your flock that might ensue. If you will kindly allow us to ride very quietly down by the headland, so as to reach the road, I shall be extremely obliged.'" "His courtesy completely took the wind out of my sails," my father would add humorously. "I not only allowed him and the other gentlemen to ride down the headland, but I went with them to show them the way across country by which they could come up with the pack. His Excellency thanked me very courteously as he rode away.¹"

Being cap in hand to no man he yet regretted the decline of manners which followed the Land League. He used to comment humorously on his discovery that where he was called "Tynan" or "Ould Andy" by his men in hours of ease, they had taken to referring to each other as Mr. So-and-So. I can see him now of a grey winter afternoon where he had sat down on a wayside heap of stones to light his pipe—he would sit down in Piccadilly to do the same if it suited him—looking up at me with an eye half-humorous while he told me how he had asked the road-mender about certain figures seen against the sky-line. "It's L—— and his woman," the road-mender had replied. "I seen them going by a while ago." L——was a young baronet of a historic name, and his wife was a charming, brown-faced girl in whose veins ran some of the proudest blood in England. "' L——and his woman,' to be sure," my father repeated half ruefully. "I think the penny that used to be paid for manners has got other uses."

Once, I remember, he entertained three public men who had a greater sense of their own dignity than he altogether approved. It was a raw winter Sunday and they were enjoying themselves by a roaring fire with pipes and glasses, telling fine stories of their doings in those days of the Union of Hearts. Some imp of malice stirred in his breast. He discovered that the fireside was no place on

a fine cold winter day. He invited them to a tramp over the fields and they agreed unwillingly. It was a long tramp from which they returned muddy, with stains of travel on their broadcloth and their top hats dishevelled. Hardly were they in when my father arrived with a rush. "Did you ever see medicine administered to a sick cow, gentlemen?" he asked. "If not, come and see me do it. You may find it useful some time or other." The poor politicians followed him sadly. They not only saw the medicine administered, but they had to assist in its administration. I draw a veil over the picture. Mr father admitted afterwards that he had not been altogether kind, but apparently he had enjoyed his joke very much.

Any picture of him which did not present his broad and humane humour must be incomplete. Seven years after his death I feel able to laugh as we laughed long ago. I doubt that he was ever popular with his own class. With the people and with a higher social class he was very much beloved and admired. The peasants, servants, tramping people, beggars, and the like, had an appreciation of him as he had of them. They never resented it when he was violent with them.

Once it was a brawny beggar to whom he offered a shilling if he would take a fork and clean out an outhouse. The beggar spat reflectively, not to say contemptuously.

"Look here, my man," said he. "Do you see that city over there in the smoke? Well, that city has, I suppose, at last a hundred streets in it, an' every street has at last fifty houses to it. Now, every wan o' them streets is worth at last tuppence to me, maybe more. Now, why would I be afther spendin' my time doing *your* dirty work for a shillin.' To——wid your shillin'."

My father was subject to sudden bursts of temper. On this occasion he was too amused to be angry.

"The philosophy of the fellow so took me," he said, "that I gave him a couple of coppers to start him on the road to **Dublin.**"

He was equally amused when a man who had been in his

employment, a wild, gipsy-like fellow, was prosecuted for annoying people still in the employment. He was fined five shillings; and since he had not five farthings, he looked helplessly round the court. "Bedad, I don't know who'll pay it for me," he said, "unless, maybe, Mr. Tynan might." And he did.

The same fellow was prosecuted over and over. The wife of a ploughman in my father's employment said that Shepherd's language was so "laborious" that she could not sleep at night, afraid the roof would fall in on him: he was her next-door neighbour. Shortly after one of these prosecutions I, being purblind, became suddenly aware on a long straight road without habitations, of Shepherd coming along roaring drunk, his old mother behind him waving her arms like the sails of a mill in anguished entreaty to me to disappear. I stood rooted to the ground, paralysed. I really thought my last hour had come. The old mother dropped on her knees in the road, as Shepherd became aware of me and made a rush like an unsteady bull in my direction. But instead of the annihilation I expected, he simply laid his head on my shoulder and wept. "Your father's after destroy in' me, Miss," he said, "for the sake of them that's good nayther for God nor the Divil. And, oh, how I loved that man!" I consoled him as best I could, being in a great hurry to depart, and left amid a shower of blessings with hands mangled in a grimy grasp.

I had an almost equally dangerous adventure with Joe Geraghty the tinker. When Geraghty was drunk everybody went into their houses and barricaded themselves within. Fortunately he gave warning of his coming from a long way off, for he shouted like a bull of Bashan. I had, in his more sober moments, urged him to take the pledge, and he had promised me ironically to abstain from strong liquors between the drink he "was afther havin' and the next drink he met with."

Again I walked into the enemy's arms, and discovered that Geraghty was armed with the formidable tool known as "a graipe" in Ireland, and was evidently out for murder. Becoming aware of me, he laid down the "graipe" very gently

and began spitting on his hands and polishing them on his corduroys. I quaked, not knowing what this might portend, and stared helplessly in Joe Geraghty's face. "Lay it there," he said in a tone of great tenderness, extending his grimy tinker's palm for my hand. "Lay it there. You've got the best man in the country for your father."

Once it was an impudent pair of tramps who, having told a tale of starvation, refused to eat the good bread and meat he himself had cut for them. He did not say much, but he took up a fork that lay "handy" as they say in Ireland when they don't say "adjacent." A couple of visitors met the tramps fleeing, too terrified to realise that his pursuit had ceased. 'That's a terrible man up there,' they said. "It was be the blessin' of God we got off with our lives."

Another time, when he was absent at a fair and the men all away at the harvest, the women in the house were terrified by a huge red-headed tramp, who took the wag-by-the-wall clock, which had not gone for years, down from its place, and insisted on setting it in order as he called it. Having manipulated the clock he demanded thirteen-and-six for repairs, reducing his demands by slow degrees until they had arrived at sixpence. For some reason or other, no one in the house had any money, else, I believe, we would have paid him any money to get rid of him. At last we hit on the happy idea of asking him to call at a later hour, when we expected that my father would have returned.

By the time he came back my father was home and had heard the tale. He was making up his accounts in the parlour of the farm-house, painfully. He was never much of a penman. He was not a big man, although he was broadly built; and the tramp was a son of Anak. Suddenly the parlour door opened, and instead of a trembling woman, my father hurled himself forth on the big tramp, who was standing menacingly in the kitchen, the door of which opened on to the farmyard. "Are you the ruffian that has been terrorising my little girls?" shouted my father, in a most Jove-like rage. The tramp turned and fled, and we never saw him again.

I used to remonstrate with him on those gusty tempers,

especially after a doctor had diagnosed some weakness of the heart. He would reply with an argument on the beneficial effects on the heart, liver, brain, and digestion of a good, honest fit of rage, illustrating it by a tale of how he was roused out of a lethargy which threatened his health and reason, after the death of a favourite child, by the rage he got into when some member of a snow-balling crowd struck him with a snowball in which a stone was concealed. He could not endure any hitting below the belt. He was shaking the youth who had flung the missile as a terrier shakes a rat, when a policeman rescued him. "After that," he would say, telling the tale, "I was my own man."

Oddly enough, his violence never got him into any trouble. No one ever bore him malice. I remember how annoyed he was when, as defendant in some litigation, he expressed himself freely concerning the plaintiff before he could be stopped—and one of the Judges, peering at him over his glasses, remarked gently: "I'm afraid you are a rather hasty-tempered man, Mr. Tynan." He used to ask us and others if they had ever heard a more uncalled-for remark.

In his latter days he expressed a wish to be buried in the little churchyard at Tallaght, just behind the village street "Fd like to think," he said, "that the beggars passing by would come in and say, 'God rest you, Andy!'" Years afterwards I heard someone say that there was nearly always a beggar praying by his grave.

CHAPTER II

MISTS AND SHADOWS

OUT of the dim mists and shadows of early childhood there stand out clearly certain memories. One is pertinent to this time and the future, for it is a memory of hearing Irish peasant servants talk in horror of certain riots in Belfast in which the women's ear-rings were pulled through the lobes of their ears. Let the historian of Belfast rioting say what year that was. It would have been some time in the late Sixties: and I have an idea that there were some bad riots in connection with the Disestablishment of the Irish Church. If my idea has a foundation in fact, that would fix the date as about 1868. Another memory is of the wonderful aurora which was seen in the summer before the Franco-Prussian war. I was carried out wrapped up in shawls to see the great flames shooting up the sky. There was certainly talk then of armies seen fighting in the sky: and the blood-red aurora had its omens and portents well fulfilled in Metz and Saarbruck, Gravelotte and Sedan.

I have another odd association with Imperial Paris of that day. My very earliest school was run by a spinster lady named Miss M'Cabe. She occupied a floor—the topmost floor of one of those toppling Dublin houses which are a survival of the English occupation. This house—it would be Queen Anne, I think—was at the end of a long garden. In course of time shops had sprung up in front of it, and it was approached only by means of a long, flagged, covered-in passage. The house stood up, dark and dreaming, at the end of the garden, which had long lost its garden-beds and possessed only a few stunted lilacs and a sycamore.

I spoke of the English occupation, but, after all, there was something foreign about it—like old Paris rather than old

London. There was a curious devil of a knocker on the blistered hall door, which impressed my babyish imagination. The house had its ancient dignity, its air of being "reduced," as they say in Ireland. You looked from its upper windows on to another house of the same size and build—its twin in fact—and you saw that it was caught into a roaring slum. Washing hung on poles from its windows, the broken panes of which were stuffed with rags. Its garden was a huge mud or dust pie, with innumerable ragged children industriously rooting in it. Slatterns shouted from the windows to slatterns below, or lounged in the doorway under the beautiful fan-light set in the elaborate screens common to old Dublin houses, which were built with a lavish disregard of economy.

Both houses were probably at one time country-houses, for they were in the outskirts of Dublin. The brass grates survived in Miss M'Cabe's apartments. I suppose all has long since passed to the limbo of forgotten things, but I have never taken the trouble to see for myself. The Dublin of my childhood was full of such quaint nooks and corners: and a good many of them doubtless still survive, for Dublin does not change. There is a restfulness coining back to it, in finding how little it has changed. That is one reason why it is so beautiful, why it carries its Imperial air so nobly—beautiful and venerable. There are worlds and time enough in Dublin to live and love. Life is not for ever shifting beneath your feet, slipping through your fingers like the sands of the hour-glass, as it is in busy centres. That is why Dublin is good "to make your soul" in. She has time for the eternities.

But to my link with the Imperial Court. Miss M'Cabe had a sister who was employed in some capacity, English nurse, English governess—something or other at the brilliant Court of the Second Empire. She was the purple patch in Miss M'Cabe's life, and a fairy to the child with whom fairies were too much a matter of every day to make a fuss over. I think she must have been a governess—a person of consideration certainly: for her finery, discarded rapidly, travelled over to her sister. Perhaps the situation is more explicable in the light of Miss M'Cabe and her sister being—Verts if you will—to the

Catholic faith. She had suffered for conscience' sake, being cast out by an uncompromising Irish Protestant family. Years later, when I visited a Dublin home for old ladies ruined by the Land League, I saw duplicates of Miss M'Cabe around me on every side.

I was so very small at this time, that I remember an occasion I was allowed to put on my own coat to go home, putting it on back to front, and making the very tiny journey that was between school and home in tears, because of the derision of the street-boys, who hailed me as "Paddy from Cork with his coat buttoned behind him."¹

A *'piquant* connection it was between the French Imperial Court and 17A——Street. Little as I was—I could hardly have been more than five—I must have been at least a contemporary in mental age of Miss M'Cabe; for although I used to tumble off to sleep from my stool and be put to bed in Miss M'Cabe's own bed and be regaled when I woke up with buttered toast and tea, I was the one to be taken into counsel when it was a question of what Miss M'Cabe should wear at a picnic—a rare event in her drab life, I should think. But perhaps, after all, she was not so very old. Five-years-old is apt to be hazy about the ages of its elders. It is quite possible that the lady whom I think of now as a spinster in the 'fifties may have been twenty years younger and quite a suitable person for a picnic.

I was taken into counsel, and Miss M'Cabe's bed-sitting-room, with the brass grate, where the kettle boiled always on a brass tripod ready for the joyful cup of tea, was littered with finery very much out of its due place. Out of it all there remain with me three dresses—a pink silk covered with black lace, a blue silk covered with white lace, and the one which I had the discretion to select for Miss M'Cabe in view of her enormous age. That was a black and white silk, a hair-stripe as they called it then, trimmed with black lace. A black lace shawl was to be worn with it, and there was an elegant sunshade with a handle which folded in the middle. The hat or bonnet I have forgotten, as well as the petticoats. I assisted in the choice of all—and I believe that Miss M'Cabe was rather

grieved at my choice of the hair-stripe, and fingered the blue silk and the pink silk lingeringly. Perhaps she wore one of them instead of my sober choice for her. I was not there to see. But as a result of my early introduction to Parisian dresses, I had an ideal all through my childhood of a pink silk covered with black lace and a blue silk covered with white lace, and clad all the heroines of whom I read in them; while to the present day I have an extreme partiality for the thought of a hair-stripe black and white silk with a black lace fichu caught by a rose.

I suppose I must have been sent to Miss M'Cabe's to keep me out of the way—for baby succeeded baby rapidly in the home of my childhood till we were eleven living—and not to study chiffons. But I must have been a promising pupil as well as dear to my mistress, for I had a faculty for spelling arrived at by my early reading, and she used to delight in placing me at the foot of a class and seeing me steadily mount to the head.

A quaint school and school-marm. The seats and desks were so rickety that a kick from an ungovernable infant would send the whole edifice tumbling down with the pupils buried beneath the ruins. I believe we were only taught spelling—and needlework of a sort. We acquired the art of hemming by having the hem cut off our garments, after which we made a new hem. This theory of teaching did not commend itself to mothers and nurses, who saw our garments shortening day by day.

Mists and shadows. Out of them emerges a little girl wearing a hoop—myself. I remember dropping it one day in the street, stepping out of it and carrying it home in my hand. This is not to be remembered against me as a proof of my antiquity. All little girls outside babyhood wore hoops in those days. I remember a game of hide-and-seek with very small children. There was someone fair and gracious and laughing—somebody's young aunt or elder sister—under whose enormous hoops we hid. I remember a discussion on the inconvenience of hoops in a crowd, which was certainly not meant for my ears. Also I remember quite well the dreadful

flatness of the first appearance without hoops. The lady looked as though she had sustained the *peine forte et dure* of the barbarous Middle Ages.

There are high lights in the mists and shadows, and all else between is lost. I was brought up on the dreadful churchyard stories of the Irish peasant imagination. We used to creep up the dark stairs to bed in a shivering string, each child trying to be in the middle and not first or last. Of course, I was taken to a wake. I saw more dead people in my childhood than ever I saw in youth or maturity. The nurse took us to a wake right at the top of one of those old Dublin houses such as I have tried to describe. I can recall even now the yellow sharpened face of the dead man. There was a plate of salt on his breast, pennies on his eyelids to keep them closed, pipes, tobacco, and snuff on a table at the bed's foot.

I suppose there must have been wake-games going on, although it was daylight; for the nurse, a wild, harum-scarum girl, who played many pranks on her nurselings, must have played a prank then, for the memory closes in a wild flight down many stairs, two small children gripped fast by the nurse being carried down helter-skelter without any reference to solid steps—a sort of flight in mid-air it seemed—till we were back in the friendly street.

Again, where there was no levity—we were brought to wakes by our nurses, and led to kiss the dead. I have a vivid memory of one such experience in an upstairs room of an old house in the country—the warm quietness of the summer day outside, the candle-light yellow against the white-washed walls, the tiny figure in the bed, an old man praying at the bed-foot, beating his breast and groaning out his *Paters* and *Aves*—and myself being lifted up to kiss the clay-cold cheek.

It did not tend to a freedom from nerves. Most girl-children at all events, with these experiences, suffered from nerves and a terror of death in later life, even after they had passed the terrors of childhood which are beyond telling.

Among my gruesome experiences I recall seeing the drop at Kilmainham Jail, a door high in the wall which belonged to the days of public executions. It must have been in the

days of Fenianism, for my elders talked about it with a kind of intimate horror. Also I remember a lane, not far from my home, looking down which one could see a stable-like building which was the morgue of a hospital. That building coloured unpleasantly some of my childish dreams, especially as I heard the servants tell how the nurses of that hospital—it must have been the dark ages indeed—left the sick and dying to the mercy of some dissolute ruffian, while they took their nights off. It was a peculiarly dreadful hospital, for its sick people were mainly suffering from delirium tremens; but that, of course, was knowledge of my later years. One of the ruffians happened to be in my father's employment. Oddly enough, I remember his name. It was Jack Reid. His dissoluteness, I imagine, was mainly drunkenness. But he was hardly one to soothe a dying pillow, though I daresay he was equal to handling efficiently, if not gently, an insane patient.

We had not travelled so far in those days from the brutalities of the eighteenth century. Being a little pitcher, I had hints and glimpses in the conversation of my elders of cruelties out of sight. I remember to have heard my father say that the warders of the mad-houses were selected because of a certain hard coarseness of fibre which enabled them to bear a strain that would have broken down anything finer. The patients did not seem to be considered in the matter. My father added that most of the warders in the lunatic asylums died mad.

One of the people who move through the mists and shadows is a prison-matron: tall, vigorous, almost brawny, with a handsome, highly-coloured face, made expressionless to conceal the fires of temper and other things that raged underneath. I believe she was an excellent matron, very highly esteemed in the service, and an image of black-silk clad dignity. For eleven months of the year she was unimpeachable. The twelfth month being her holiday, having made all her arrangements, she disappeared decorously, drank herself nearly mad for three weeks, at the end of the third week began a drastic course of medicine which was to restore her to her right mind, and was ready to return to the post

of duty at the appointed time, wan and worn but clear-eyed, for another eleven strenuous months.

An odd thing for a small child to be aware of. But, when the small child, in a house steadily growing fuller and fuller of children, was prepared to give no trouble at all if she was left with a book; and if the small child, escaping from other small children who would interrupt her reading, selected for her studious hours the floor behind the window-curtains, or the floor under the round centre-table with a long table-cloth falling over and making an ideal place of concealment, that small child is apt to overhear what her elders say. Great was my silent indignation when, in the midst of some conversation I was discovered and packed upstairs. I thought I heard nothing, being so absorbed in my story-book—but I must have heard.

I have been touching on rather gloomy topics: but there were lovely times too. When one was not in one's secret reading-place there was the space under the sideboard, where a child could sit quite in the open, yet not in the way of the elders. There were two beautiful large pink-lipped shells with which you could spend hours—it might have been only minutes—listening to the roar of the sea inside. I remember retiring to the shells on a day the evening of which was to take us to the pantomime. I *knew* that if I jumped up and down outside I should be banished, and I had to do some jumping, so I jumped quietly under the sideboard, very carefully lest I should strike my head, and then I sat down with a shell to my ears and kept quiet.

The pantomime used to be in the old Theatre Royal, which was burnt down, I think, in February 1880. It was a huge place, or so we thought it, with a great stage and the whole floor pit—none of your stalls and parterres. My father once brought eleven children to the pantomime in three cabs, and used to say afterwards that more looked at him than at the stage.

Pantomime was pantomime in those days. Fairies were fairies, in exquisite frilly frocks of pink and green and blue, disappearing down long forest aisles, for which the modern

skipped stage would afford no room. The horrible vulgarisation which has fallen upon the fairy classics in our unhappy days was yet far away. There were no suggestive tights and fleshings : no public-house humour; no music-hall songs. The pantomime made Fairyland just a little more realisable to the children, since they saw with their bodily eyes what they knew to exist.

My father was the big, beneficent fairy godfather of my very little days. My mother was a large, placid, fair woman, who became an invalid at an early age and influenced my life scarcely at all. While I was still very little, before the family had grown, before there was an invalid mother, I have beautiful memories of my father. There *were* the summer Sundays when we drove away up to the Dublin mountains or to spend the day at some farmhouse. One such I remember covered outside with creepers, with roses over a trellised porch and white-washed walls under a thatched roof. There was a river close by with a waterfall, and someone took us to the yard to see the chickens fed. There were stacks of straw, and the sound of the waterfall. Every room was a little up or a little down, with steps: there was a long, narrow corridor, lit from above: and in the bedrooms of the buxom girls there were some delightful things. They allowed us to turn out a work-box which had mother o' pearl reels and all manner of quaint things.

I think there must have been only two little girls of an age for these excursions. There are no boys in the picture and no elder sisters. No mother either. She would probably stay at home to look after her brood. She was the mid-Victorian woman and found an engrossing occupation in being the mother of eleven. My father was "clubable," and eager for such pleasures as came his way. So off we would go of a Sunday morning, in a high dog-cart behind a good horse, my father driving and the two small girls up beside him : and presently we would be in sight of the mountains and amid the fields. Once we must have been out-at-toes. It was the day of the hoops and smart boots with shiny leather let in at the toes, and the shiny leather did not wear well. I re-

member his knocking up an obliging bootmaker and fitting us out with new boots. I can recall the very feel of the foot-measure as my foot was put into it and smell the leather in the dim room at the back of the shut-up shop.

These special delights belong to early childhood. The eleven were too much for him later. He it was who was responsible for the children's parties, the Christmas Trees, the magic-lanterns. He used to come home laden with Christmas toys and the things for the Tree. My mother used to rebuke him for extravagance. I accompanied him once on a Christmas expedition to a Cave of Aladdin in South Great George's Street, under the shadow of Pin's drapery shop, which was always referred to in those days as "a Monster House." I was in fear and trembling lest it should fall upon me.

The toy of that year represented a parson with an ass's head; a hollow body for sweets and the head to screw off. It must have been the time of Disestablishment, and I suppose there was friction at the time and wild parsons. It must have been a very popular toy, for my father was no bigot. Yet several of those semi-ecclesiastical figures hung on our Christmas Tree that year.

CHAPTER III

LIFE AND DEATH

FROM '67 to '69—approximately—there was darkness instead of the mists and shadows. My father used to tell an entirely conventional story of my reading a newspaper to the family doctor at so early an age that my speech was understood by my contemporaries only. Discovering that I was really reading, or attempting to read, he rebuked my father severely, warning him that because of those early exercises I should probably end as an idiot.

I apologise for telling anything so banal. Whether the doctor's gloomy prediction would have been fulfilled if I had gone on reading newspapers I know not, but some time in the later "sixties I suddenly passed into darkness. I had ulcers on the eyes, and my only memory of that time is of a child sitting on a stool, her face buried in a chair—to avoid the light doubtless. A long dream of pain and shrinking from light were those days or months or years. I think I have heard that my eye trouble lasted nearly two years, during which time my father carried me from doctor to doctor.

I believe the eye trouble was the result of a chill caught after measles, which at that time was considered a negligible complaint. Measles and scarlet fever were then accepted as the common lot. In our own days I have heard a highly intelligent Irishman, a man of affairs, political and literary, say that if one of his children had measles he would turn all the others into the same room, so as to get it all over at once. The Irish are a conservative people. I remember nothing about the measles proper, but only the result. I do remember having a sister ill with scarlet fever and there being no attempt at isolation beyond the fact that she was removed from the upper nursery floor to the floor beneath, where we passed her open

door twenty times a day. On one occasion, having been sent downstairs with a message and catching a glimpse through the door ajar of sponge cakes and oranges—or was it saffron-cakes ? saffron-cakes were esteemed in those days as highly efficacious for the sick—I peeped within. The sick nurse was absent from the room and the patient seemed to be asleep. I crept a little further, laid my hand upon a cake. Suddenly the patient bounced out of bed and dragged the delicacy from me, pushing me forcibly out of the room. I did *not* contract the scarlet-fever.

My father, despite the eleven, was always the one to rise to an emergency. He carried me from doctor to doctor. My sight was despaired of. He was told it was no use. At last he found the right man, Dr. Biggar of Harcourt Street. I keep his name in grateful memory. I remember the double hall doors of the house that opened to receive us. I remember the wire blinds in the windows of the consulting-room, where the doctor's finger and thumb lifted the eyelids that it was a torture to keep open. Nothing more than that; but presently I was reading again and the darkness was a family tradition.

I do not know what time my birthday was lost. I suppose eleven birthdays were too many to keep. I was always told my birthday was February the 3rd. I was glad it was February the 3rd. I love February with its changing lights and dappled skies, its first song of the thrush, its pushing of green spear-heads above earth. February suited me in every way. The amethyst is its stone and I adore amethysts and the amethyst colours. The other portents agreed excellently with me. The 3rd of February was held in honour by a small and increasing circle. Imagine, then, my amazement when a birth-certificate being required some few years ago, I read in black and white that I was born on the 23rd of January. January has only one thing to be said for it: it is followed by February. Nothing so well becomes it as its passing. It was an outrage to be offered a January birthday. I prefer to believe or to think I believe, that registers were ill-kept in those days when they were still a novelty in Ireland, and that the £3rd of January was meant for the 3rd of February.

I think it must have been because of the darkness that I remember so little about those stirring years in Ireland. Of '67, the year of the Fenian rising, I remember very little, though it would have been much talked of in my home. I remember my mother telling my father that a neighbour had been in to say that "Bernard" had got home. Bernard had been out on the Dublin mountains that bitter night of March 1867, when the abortive rising of the Fenians was quenched in the snow. The poor boys—they were mostly very young—were creeping back to their homes in Dublin for weeks afterwards. In later years I have heard a County Dublin magistrate and churchwarden, an English settler, and more beloved by the Irish than the Irish, tell how on that night of March he guided a party of Fenians from the fields where the snow had blotted out the hedgerows, to the high road. I remember in later years speaking to Michael Davitt of the Fenian movement, my impressions being coloured by the memory of those poor boys creeping back, sick and exhausted. "It was not at all a forlorn hope," he said. "We had 14,000 Fenians in the army alone, and they were picked men."

It would have been some time later. Among summer fields, parched white with a summer heat good to think upon in this desolate summer, I can see a young farmer with a sunburnt face sitting on the side of a ditch. I can hear him cursing Massey and Corydon, the informers—whose treachery had set the people in a blaze of fury.

Up to this time we had been living in Dublin. Somewhere about 1868 my father acquired the lands and house of Whitehall, Clondalkin, where my later childhood and youth were to be spent. The house had once belonged to Curran, the great Irish lawyer and patriot, whose daughter, Sarah, should have married Robert Emmet. It was a small cottage building with little windows under immense overhanging eaves of thatch and a hall door within a porch of green trellis. There was a very quaint little lawn in front in which grew an immense tree-peony, a fuchsia as big, and a great many Portugal laurels and laurestinus. The cottage was flanked by a building of two stories. The lower story was

the kitchen of the cottage. Its green door opened on a long strip of courtyard. There was a stone bench by the door, useful for many things.

Our first summer there was 1869; when we children were there in charge of a nurse. The house had not yet been altered to accommodate a family. Of the two-story edifice only one-fourth belonged to us. My father's steward and his wife lived in half the lower story and the upper floor. What had been a door of communication was boarded up and filled in with a row of shelves.

Our kitchen was a true toy-kitchen. It was whitewashed and floored with red tiles. One little window with a deep sill looked down the strip of courtyard: another, exactly alike, looked into an orchard which, I think now, must have been a fairyland. There was a settle under one window on which a child could stand and read by the hour, her book laid open on the deep sill which propped her elbows when she would lean with her hands in her curls.

My mother had pantries full of china, beautiful old china for the most part, and that sent down for our use was a delicate embossed china with a pattern in greyish brown of all manner of sea-shells. The pieces stood on the little rows of shelves and they seem to me a part of the enchantment of the place. From the kitchen a door opened into a dining-room. Beyond that was a hall, from which three little bedrooms opened: beyond that a drawing-room, with a glass door leading into an old walled garden full of flowers and fruit. Close by the end gable of the house, a green paling a-top of a low white wall overlooked the orchard, and there was a wicket gate to the orchard round the corner just out of sight.

It must have been one of the few great summers that come to Ireland. The cottage was wrapped up in monthly roses and woodbine—honeysuckle is the clover blossom in Ireland—fuchsias, jessamine, and the hardy yellow Scotch rose. These put out tendrils and climbed the thatch. In one room a tendril had come through the window and boldly climbed a wall and spread, and no one had detached it.

In the orchard and the garden the low fruit-trees stood thick. They were mainly apple-trees. Three sorts I keep in my memory. One was the Irish peach, of which there were several. A little low, gnarled one which had planted itself among the flower-beds at some prehistoric period is in my mind as though it had life. Its fruit ripened first and it bore well. The apples, though they were small, were of a delicious flavour. Long after the peach-apples were done there was a tree hanging over our summer-house, the fruit of which yellowed with the autumn leaves and were so many honey morsels. There was a third tree with apples of a pale green, the sides broadly ribbed and mottled with spots. I have no name for these delights, and a tragedy befell—for in the autumn following that summer the trees were thinned, and the most beautiful were cut down. No one thought of consulting the children, who had the best knowledge of good and bad fruit after all.

Fortunately the little tree in the flower-beds survived and, so far as I know, still survives. Spanish iris clustered about its feet, with forget-me-nots and wallflowers and narcissi, with masses of pansies. The beds with their box borders made a most intricate pattern, all the tiny walks leading towards the summer-house. There was a deal of greenery, as there always is in an Irish garden: and when the lilies sprang up every July they looked like rows of young angels.

Was it in '68 or was it in '69? Whatever year it was it was the great summer. Think of a pack of children who had lived in the town and only had the country by snatches turned loose a whole summer in this place packed with old-fashioned delights.

The little rooms were very flowery. Because we were on the ground floor perhaps, with only a nurse in charge, we had our windows shuttered of nights. A long slit of light used to come between the shutters in the golden mornings, suffusing the room with a green and golden light.

For a time we had a perilous delight, for a bull grazed in the orchard and would sometimes lift his head to roar quite at the window-pane. You can imagine the delighted terror of

the child who lay a-bed, the formidable beast only separated from her by a thin sheet of glass: and what a joy it was to peep through the slit in the shutters at the immense head with its splendid curls, knowing one's self unseen, but not unapprehended, for the bull would occasionally paw the earth as though scenting an enemy, and utter a roar like thunder.

That summer we learned all the country delights, having only known them before by snatches. There was a big farm-yard and a hay-yard or rick-yard. The rick-yard is always associated in my mind with Hans Andersen's Ugly Duckling, which I must have read at the time. I always imagined the Ugly Duckling's mother sitting hatching her eggs under the « great docks in the rick-yard. Side by side with it ran the very pond where the Ugly Duckling met with one of his most terrifying adventures. The pond was much overgrown and deep enough to make it an adventure to reach the islet in the midst, on which a water-hen lived and reared her brood. On a summer day when all was still you would see the little ones taking to the water, just emerged from the *egg*, their brothers and sisters yet perhaps in the eggs only chipping beneath the mother's breast.

There too was a well, clear and cool, which had the reputation of never drying up even in the hottest summer. It was cool and dark under its hood of stone over which wet lichens and water-weeds had grown. It smelt of streams and freshness, a mirage for London in the hot days. We used to dip in a jug or pail and bring up little silvery minnows—"pinkeens" we called them—swimming round and round in the cool pure water. The well was fed from the mountains and the water chattered over beds of jewels in all the ditches. It was always summer there in my thoughts of it. The snail in his shell hanging on the thorn had a most wonderful house of opal iridescence. There were little blue moths, which I have never seen in England, flying about among the flowers, and black or brown butterflies with blotches of crimson on their wings. There must have been autumn though, for I remember the crab-apples in the hedgerows a fairy fruit for beauty, and the quickes-berries hanging like drops of blood. I remember the loneliness of

autumnal fields after the reaping was over, the gathering of blackberries and mushrooms, the pleasant terror of the Moat which was a fairy rath, in the heart of it a dry quarry where the biggest and juiciest blackberries grew. Gathering them one never liked to be far from one's companions, lest harm befell. In the evening when it was dark it was pleasant to steal out and see the darkness of the Moat at a distance: and when the misted harvest moon rose above it we thought it was a fairy fire and it afforded us a marvel for many days to come. Then there were the ripe apples, so to be sure it must have been autumn sometime.

Every Sunday morning our excellent nurse trailed the whole family off to Mass. We used to take a short cut, being always rather pressed for time, across a field in which grazed the bull—his name was Young Leviathan, and he deserved it—that bellowed at our ears. There must have been seven or eight children for the intrepid woman to convey unhurt. We were happy when the bull grazed in a remote corner far from the pathway. What a scurry it used to be! There was a gate leading from the field on to the road, which was padlocked: and the gap by which we emerged had a steep descent. The bull usually discovered us before we were clear. I have a vivid memory of his charge as I tumbled down the steep ditch. That was the occasion, I think, on which another child lost her shoe, leaving it to the tender mercies of the bull. We used to return by a safe detour, which was slower and less exciting. I have often wondered since at the hardihood of that nurse.

The village "innocent" used sometimes to put in his foolish head terrifying us at our games. He looked like Smike in the Hablot K. Browne illustrations to *Nicholas Nickby* and he had a mordant wit. He made remarks about your personal appearance unless you were very civil. He and his kind have for the greater part disappeared or been gathered into asylums. Not all. Back again in Ireland I meet a God's fool from time to time as I walk the country lanes, a ruddy-faced, weather-beaten man who talks incessantly with a running laugh between the speech. Sometimes his talk is unintelligible—but again it is of the immortality of the soul. "The Kingdom of Heaven's

within you. The soul's its own place and can make Heaven or Hell. The soul or the mind: it's all the same. But where does the soul go when it's out of the body—tell me that."

He sums up Irish intolerance of disagreement in a pregnant phrase. "Over there," he says, waving his hand across the Irish Sea, "you can say what you like. But here they'd knock the gob off you."

That autumn after the golden summer I had my first intimate experience of death. We had gone back to town and then hurriedly returned to the country because of the illness of the elder sister just home from the convent school and only awaiting impatiently the time when she might return to its novitiate. It was October then and the country was in ruins—only a few late apples on the trees and the wind and the rain bringing down the last leaves. That eldest sister was my first love. I thought her the most wonderful creature. Something of the innocence and fragrance of the convent hung about her, making her elusive, saint-like. She had brought home her sheaves, among them a glass-topped table painted with flowers behind which silver foil gave depths of light to the colours. I hung over that table entranced. She had her drawings—and I was not critical. Various triumphs of needlework in the shape of cushions, antimacassars, tea-cosies, and the like, dazzled me. She sang "The Bridge," words by Longfellow, and my heart wept tears as I listened. I am not sure that it does not weep now. I had to hide behind window curtains to conceal my agitation when she sang.

She was just a brief lovely vision. I have no memory of her at all before that vacation. She knew I adored her and she petted me. She let me see just a glimpse of her supernatural secret. It made me determined to be a nun, and the determination lasted for a good dozen of years afterwards. There was something Heavenly in the vision, something of long convent corridors, dazzlingly clean, flooded with light and air, sweet with the smell of lilies and a thought of incense, of little convent cells naked and pure, of convent gardens, places where

"The Brides of Christ
Lie hid, emparadised."

I was allowed to wait on her the first day of her illness, and she must have been a little delirious, for she talked of strange things and then apologised gently. How I loved to be her servant, her slave!

Then we were back in the country again and it was sad. I lived with my nose in a book. Sometimes my father came with a disturbed face. There was a talk of a crisis. "Next Tuesday about will be the crisis. Till after that we cannot hope for good tidings."¹

I read and read incessantly. The nurse, who was a somewhat harassing person, let me be. I suppose she was glad that one of us should be off her hands. I was reading *Picciola, the Prison Flower*, in my favourite place for reading now that the wet autumn had come, kneeling on a table in front of one of the deep set little windows of the cottage, on the sill of which rested my open book and my elbows. Below the window was the stone bench upon which the beggars used to take a seat, or the tinker when he mended our pots and pans. There I had sat and shelled peas for a summer's day dinner, and had eaten the peas as I shelled them, giving up only a basket of empty pods to my justly enraged nurse.

There came a father, with a more disturbed face than ever working as we looked at him, his voice tangled in his throat. After a while he spoke. "Mary is dead," he said, and rushed away into the rain. Desolation swept my soul for a space. I do not know how long. Presently, with a sensation of guilt, I returned to the reading of *Picciola, the Prison Flower*. Even for death a book did not fail of comfortable distraction in those days when Heaven was a vision of story-books to be read incessantly without any troublesome elder intervening.

CHAPTER IV

CHILDHOOD

IN the late sixties and early seventies an extraordinary wave of Puritanism passed over the Catholic Church in Ireland. The Catholic Archbishop of Dublin was Paul, Cardinal Cullen, a great Churchman but, one imagines, lacking in the human qualities. It must have been about that time that the priests began to wage war on the cross-road dances and other gaieties of Irish rural life. One is persuaded of their excellent intentions. Perhaps the cross-road dances and their incidents were not always decorous or desirable. The priest was doubtless eaten up by the desire for the moral good of his flock. Morality in the narrowest application of the word has always been high in Ireland: and its opposite, in the narrowest sense *the enemy*, beyond all other sins, to a celibate priesthood.

The trouble was that these foregathering of young people being swept away there was nothing to replace them. Rural life in Ireland became dreadfully dull. Among an imaginative and emotional people I he *marlage de convenance* became shamefully and shamelessly the rule. The people drifted away to America where they could do what they liked without the intervention of the priests. The *mariage de convenance*, it was discovered too late, was not altogether for the good of the race. Some thoughtful priests have discovered this for themselves now that Ireland is becoming depopulated in a tragical degree.

I will give my impressions of the Irish priests elsewhere, only saying here, lest I should be misunderstood, that I have the greatest admiration for their devotion, self-sacrifice, and nobility of character. Whatever they did in the direction of sweeping away rural gaieties was done, one is sure, with the highest motives. My own personal knowledge of that Puritan wave was chiefly concerned with the limitation of

my reading. I remember when my mother took away from me *Aurora Floyd* and locked it in a perpetually locked book-case, leaving only an impression which lasts to this day of a golden-haired lady in whose fortunes I had so passionate an interest that it was a cruel fate indeed to have my following of them cut short.

I was forbidden all but good-book reading that Lent, and very little of the good-book reading, since my mother, no sooner did she see me looking upon printed matter, cried out that the child would destroy her eyes. This argument against my reading went side by side with the other, *e.g.* that all novel-reading was a thing to be abhorred by good Catholics.

I look back on those years as a series of encounters in which I fought for reading and my mother, at times, frustrated me. She thought my prayers should be a satisfactory substitute for my reading. I did not think so, even though the convent glimmered like a pale star before me. And I resorted to subterfuges in order to gratify what was a vital necessity.

It was a time when dancing was prohibited to Irish Catholics—at least what was called "fast dancing" at that time. I have heard a Catholic lady of unimpeachable piety and orthodoxy attribute in later life something of her ill health to the prohibition of dancing in her youth. It was the one exercise in which she delighted. I believe that absolution was withheld from those who danced "fast dances": and since a ball cannot be limited to quadrilles it may be imagined what a blight fell upon social life in Catholic Ireland.

A third prohibition was the theatre. Except in so far as regarded the pantomime I was not concerned with the theatre in those days any more than I was with "fast dancing." It was the prohibition of the novel which affected me; and I found my way to wriggle out of that.

Perhaps it was only the very orthodox who accepted these hard counsels of perfection. But then Catholic Ireland was unquestioningly orthodox in those days. The martyrdom

of the priest in penal days, when, as you went through the country you might come at any moment on a brown-frocked Franciscan or a Seminary priest in his vestments hanging on the bough of a tree—when a priest's head bore the same price as a wolf's—those days had borne fruit. The priest was sacrosanct. There was no criticism of his actions any more than there might be of the will of Heaven.

Still there were murmurs. Cardinal Cullen and the Irish bishops generally had been stern enemies of Fenianism. It was whispered with horror that Dr. Moriarty, Bishop of Kerry, in other respects a man in advance of his age—he was for flooding Trinity College with Catholics at a time when there was the sternest prohibition against a Catholic's entering the college of Queen Elizabeth—had said that Hell was not bad enough nor eternity long enough to punish the Fenians. In my own home the Fenians were looked upon as stainless heroes of a lost cause, martyrs for Ireland, and doubtless it was so in thousands of homes—so that there were murmurings. The Fenians or those privy to their plans and purposes were practically excommunicated. Only the Orders admitted them to the Sacraments where the secular priesthood were forbidden to do it. Ellen O'Leary, John O'Leary's sister, told me long years after how an old Jesuit priest at Gardiner Street received and absolved the Fenians; and doubtless there was plenty of sympathy with them outside the Bishop's palaces. But many an old Fenian railed upon the Church till the day he died, always excepting this or that member of an Order who had not felt himself bound by the Bishop's commands and should be the means of reconciling him with the Church at last.

Again—who shall blame the Bishops? To them the Fenians were insidious foes who cajoled the trusting and innocent boys into the secret societies which were so often the tool and the instrument of the British domination in Ireland. Who shall blame them?

But to the matter of my reading. It was always *my* mother who cried "Don't," and my father who said "Let her be." To be sure my father was often abroad and the

rule of my mother was more intimate, more compelling. It was my father who brought books into the house, miscellaneous lots picked up at auctions, of the most varied kind. He had no belief in a censorship. I cannot recall that he ever told me not to read any book, although I must have read some curious ones under his eyes. If he gave my reading any direction it was towards poetry—Irish National poetry for the most part and often turgid stuff, though of an unimpeachable loftiness of tone. He had belonged to a Mitchel Club in his boyhood. In the Mitchel Clubs, named after John Mitchel, were enrolled the youthful adherents of the Young Ireland Party. He adored the men of '48. The ringing rhetoric of their poetry had its passionate appeal for him. I think poetry perhaps came easier to him than prose, for I might have read Mitchel's *Jail Journal* with advantage and I did not. I read Davis, Duffy's *Spirit of the Nation*, D'Arcy Magee and Meagher of the Sword. A good deal of it was indifferent reading from an artistic point of view.

Lady Wilde had been one of his great admirations. It had been a shock to him when he first beheld her fighting her way, like any man, he said, into some banquet or other. He was too masculine not to demand extreme femininity in his heroines. He still loved her verse though she had disappointed him.

There was a long row, in dull chocolate covers, of Miss Edge worth's books on the top shelf of the Georgian bookcase which now holds my most treasured volumes. I really believe *Castle Rackrent* was missing, and what a loss that was! My memory of Maria is of a faded fashionable eighteenth-century atmosphere. I know I read *Belinda* over and over and many others of Belinda's sort. Perhaps they gave my mind a distinct bent towards the eighteenth century of which I am certainly an amateur. In that miscellaneous reading there was Eugene Sue's *Mysteries of Paris*, with thousands of pictures. Horrible it always seemed to me, but I read it nevertheless. There were some early volumes of the *Cornhill*, of the *Family Friend*, and *Once a Week*. I am

tolerably certain that I did not read the *Mysteries of Paris* while I was under my mother's eye. That must have come later with James Grant and Dumas and G. W. M. Reynolds—a finely assorted lot. I had almost forgotten the Parlour Library in shiny green boards. In that I must have read *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*: but I remember better *Sidonia the Sorceress* and some of Mrs. Gore's and Mrs. Trollope's stories. The great Jane was wasted on my tender age.

When the supply of books gave out I fell back on papers. Penny story-papers were even worse than novels in my mother's sight. I acquired them all the same—*The London Reader*, *The London Journal*, *The Family Herald*. I deplore my duplicity, but I must acknowledge it. I used to pass under my mother's unsuspecting gaze, stiff with papers which I had pushed up between my frock and my stays. My mother was then, I suppose, tending towards her long illness. She did not climb to the very top of the house where I sat reading myself blind by twilight. There was another surer refuge—the loft over the stables at the end of a narrow town garden. There was generally a horse in the stable, but he was too much accustomed to the sight of a small girl ascending and descending by the square aperture above his head to take much notice. There were two long oval windows, criss-crossed by a trellis, each side of the loft. There was a heap of hay to lie on. The ovals on the house-side looked into a sycamore. From that day to this I can recall the hay-smelling, dusty darkness with the most delightful sense of escape, of freedom.

It must have been in the holidays that I made friends with a pair of country sisters who kept a more delicious shop than I have ever found in the pages of any book—a shop of pure romance. There were two windows. On one side of the shop they sold butter, eggs, bread, and sugar-sticks. The butter and eggs used to come up from their parental farm in the Queen's County, and my impression of them is that they were real country delights. With the other side of the shop I was more immediately concerned. The glass cases on the counter had a miscellaneous assortment of stationery, scented pink paper,

violet ink, and all the other guilelessnesses of the seventies. They were flanked by newspapers and magazines. The window was full of story-books—the lurid harmless stories in which boys rejoiced, and others. But the crowning delight to me was the circulating library which sat round about the shelves at that side of the shop. What a heaven it was! Even now I can feel the ecstasy of touching those green and scarlet and blue backs of books and knowing that I might read what I would.

The owners of this delightful shop made much of me. They also made use of me, for when they would have their mid-day sleep they turned me on to mind the shop. I think my dream of reading was practically uninterrupted. I cannot remember anyone buying the eggs or butter, although they were so good. My mother waited long for her sealing-wax or whatever it was that first day. I sucked "lemon plait" and I read and would not have changed places with an angel.

After that I think this delightful experience must have been repeated from time to time. I remember a day when I sold a coloured picture from a Christmas number which had adorned the shop for some months, to an old lady for a shilling. It was the audacity of ignorance to ask such a sum, but the old lady paid it, remarking that it was just the picture she required for her grandchild's nursery. I remember the delight of the two sisters when they emerged, rosy from their sleep, to discover the *coup* I had made.

That must have been in the early seventies, and in a vacation, for I am sure it was a brief delight. But while it lasted I sucked up enough stories to keep myself and others going when the bookless desert was upon me of schooldays in a convent: or at least it was a bookless desert as far as stories were concerned.

I remember the consternation in Dublin over the rout of the French in the great war. I was then going to what was called a young ladies' school. I think it was one of those places of genteel inefficiency to which in Victorian days they sent children to keep them out of the way of their elders. I am sure I never learnt anything there, although an elder sister

achieved a pair of hand-screens in berlin-wool and bead work, designed to shade the face from the fire. Everyone in time achieved a similar pair of screens if they stayed long enough. The preparation for the screens was a kettle-holder in berlin-wool-work with the inscription "Polly put the Kettle on." The word kettle was represented by the thing itself with a curl of steam coming from the spout. The summit of my desires at one time was to achieve such a kettle-holder, but I don't think I ever realised it.

It was however a sign of the times that as we went home from school we came upon schoolboys fighting the battles over again; but since no one could be found to take the part of the Prussians the attacking armies advanced upon the gables of unoccupied houses and the like, and riddled them with volley** of stones, shouting battle cries as they charged.

Dublin was a sleepy place in those days, before the introduction of the trams. There is a Dutch feeling about bits of it, to my memory. There was a canal by which stacks of turf came into Dublin, the boats tugged along slowly by leisurely horses. A little earlier there was passenger traffic on the canals. The nurse who had charge of us in the country used to boast genteelly that her father was captain of a fly-boat—i.e. the boats for passenger traffic on the canal. The canal was bordered by beautiful trees and there were fine houses behind high walls, and a rope-walk, and the quaint low dwellings which seem to grow naturally by the waterside. There was a Spa in the grounds of the house on the canal-banks which belonged to Henry Grattan, and at that time to his daughter. The Spa was walled away from the grounds so that the public could approach it. The water trickled from a little pipe in the rocks. In early days it had its neat white-aproned custodian who gave you the water in a clean glass for a penny. Later there was no custodian and the public or a bad section of it made the Spa impossible. I don't know if the Spa has disappeared, but Henry Grattan's park is now cut up into little squares and streets of red-brick houses.

Do I remember or did I only hear the tales of it afterwards? If I remember I could have been no more than three years old

when there was a shouting and a crying that an omnibus full of people had been driven into the canal on a dark, foggy night. I know my father was there, trying to rescue the people.

The 'bus had fallen into the lock. Someone—was it the lock-keeper or the driver?—in a moment of panic opened the lock gates, with an idea of floating the "bus, with the result that every creature was drowned.

CHAPTER V

SCHOOL DAYS

ABOUT 1872, on a suggestion of an old friend of my father's that I was running wild, it was decided that I should go to a convent school, and the one chosen for me was the Siena Convent, Drogheda. The matter apparently was urgent, for I was sent there in mid-vacation and came to a green garden-place of quiet restfulness with no work doing and no pupils remaining except a few whose parents were at the ends of the earth.

It was a good August, and we sat about the grounds with the nuns, doing such things as pleased us, talking or reading if we would. Or we would walk about the convent garden—a nun in our midst, the privileged ones hanging on to an arm, the less fortunate at a greater distance. The established pupils had their strips of fine embroidery, their needlework of various kinds. I came to the convent school with the reputation of being a great reader and I was asked many questions about the books I had read. It was a far cry from the novelists of the day and earlier to the reading of the only light literature the school library contained. These were the guileless novels of Lady Georgina Fullerton, the *Heir of Redelyffe*, the *Fabiola* of Cardinal Wiseman, the *Callista* of Cardinal Newman, Adelaide Proctor's poems, and a little volume of verse which had a great vogue in mid-Victorian days. It was, as well as I remember, by the author of "Ezekiel," "Ezekiel" being, I presume, an earlier volume. It will be seen that the nuns were not illiberal, since there are two Protestant authors to four Catholic in this little list.

Whatever honey was to be got out of the convent library I sucked and sucked dry, and began over again. These "worldly" volumes were, by the way, reserved for holidays

and feasts. On ordinary days if we had a book it was of the spiritual kind. One sucked what honey one could out of a prettily written History of England and out of the hour or half-hour's reading of a story-book at night before prayers. A nun read aloud and we clustered about her with our fancy work to listen. We had the *Heir of Redclyffe* in this way and the other romances. I don't think they were ever added to, so when the list was exhausted it began all over again.

When the nun came to a passage of love-making—there were several in the *Heir of Redclyffe*—she would turn very red, and laugh, or she would say with contempt that what followed was great nonsense. The result was the same, for the love-making passages were huddled away out of sight to our extreme disgust and disappointment.

For other reading, well, we had the *Lives of the Saints* read aloud to us at meals, we taking it in turn to perform that duty. I don't think I derived much enjoyment from that reading—the Lives were drily told—except when I myself was the reader. I enjoyed thoroughly "taking the flure" as we call it in Ireland, and thought I read much better than other people.

But some one must have written the legends of the Saints not drily, for from these convent schooldays I carried away a store of beautiful legends, and I don't think I digged them out of Alban Butler.

I daresay, after all, the strict convent regimen as regarded reading matter was a clarifying process for me. I was reading too much that was not literature, although I had my Dickens and Thackeray. I had a deal to get rid of. I had read everything I could lay my hands on in my own home, except the Family Bible. We had a very handsome one, a Catholic Bible—was it Dr. Challoner's? It was a translation which was published for the use of Catholics late in the eighteenth or early in the nineteenth century. I am pretty sure no Irish Catholic ever thought of reading it.

I imagine that if it was the Authorised Version I should have been compelled to read it. The magic of its great style would have reached me through the embossed and tooled

covers. Anyone so eager as I was for poetry would have leapt to it. As it was my version was an excellent, pure version, I am told, and much more accurate than the great English rendering. I never discovered it for myself.

A very much more rigid piety prevailed at that time among Irish Catholics than at a later date. Please note that I say "rigid,"¹ for the earnest piety which is very general and is a part of the life of the people is particularly manifest to one coming from England, where religion keeps its last stronghold in the great middle-class. My father used to tell me that in his boyhood the labouring men in the fields, for the whole forty days of Lent, did not break their fast by so much as a drink of water till noon. At noon they had a meal of potatoes and buttermilk. I think he said they abstained from meat all during Lent, which was not so difficult, since it seldom came their way. After the noonday meal they had nothing but a collation, *i.e.* four ounces of dry bread and a drink of water, between that and the next day's meal. I do not remember a time in my own home when, however tender our age, we did not keep the black fasts of Lent on "red" tea and dry bread. They were a hardier race in Ireland then than they are to-day.

Which brings me back to my Bible. Even in my young days the Old Testament at least was regarded by the majority of Catholics as a Protestant book. I daresay a good many people, Protestant as well as Catholic, thought that the Bible was written by a Protestant for Protestants. The Irish Protestants had laid violent hands on the Book and made it their own. They had wrought evil deeds upon the peasantry in the Rebellion of '98, Bible in hand, finding full justification for their doings in the pages of the Old Testament. To myself its pages were smeared with blood and something more terrible than blood. No one ever taught me this feeling. I think the average well-to-do Irish Catholic simply regarded the Book as excellent for Protestants and went back to his or her *Key of Heaven* and *Catholic Piety*. It was amongst the *bibbla abiblia*.

It would be quite wrong to suppose that the Irish Catholic could not have read the Scriptures if he would. In my memory

of Catholic Ireland the Family Bible was in every house of a modest prosperity. It was a handsome piece of furniture, and the births of the children were recorded in the front page as they might be in a Protestant household. Or, at least, they were in our Family Bible. I remember that at about the age of fourteen I engraved those dates elegantly on a sheet of laced paper and placed it in front of the family album. I was rather pleased with my work till an elder sister removed it.

At the convent school we got the Bible in the shape of a dreadfully dull Bible history. No honey to be extracted from that at all. I believe the real honey of those days came by my observations of the life around me.

The convent was old as such things go in Ireland. It had probably been originally a country house of the eighteenth century, although of course it had been much added to and extended. Somehow or other the nuns had crept back to it in the penal days, when they had passed for a congregation of teaching ladies and had lain low. Probably some person of influence had protected them and they must have had good Protestant neighbours, else they would never have lived along till the days of tolerance.

Everything about the convent was very old-fashioned. The nuns entered the convent usually from the schoolroom—or but a little later. No newspapers were allowed to disturb the convent atmosphere, no magazines; nothing of what was happening outside in the world unless it came by word of mouth. The nuns talked, as doubtless they do to-day, of "out in the world," as though it was the other side of the world. The aloofness was never more justified. There was something mediaeval about that convent. The nuns were excellent musicians and linguists. They taught the ordinary subjects with ordinary success I imagine. But the progress of the world had stopped for them some ten or twenty or thirty or forty years before. Their books were old-fashioned. I well remember the intense indignation of the most capable of all the teachers, when, on her telling her class that the source of the Nile had never been discovered, Ten Years' Old, fresh from the newspapers of her vacation, cut in with: "Oh yes, Dr.

Livingstone discovered its source in Lake Victoria Nyanza." "And pray who is Dr. Livingstone?" Mother Alphonsus asked, shaking her veil and in contemptuous indignation moving on to something else.

A very simple curriculum indeed! But what was it they did teach that was better than much learning? What was it that brought the gentlest, tenderest, loveliest of their pupils flying back to that white peace of the Convent from a rough and coarse world? What was it that made the most unworthy of their pupils, one with a keen eye for their simplicities, resolve that a girl of hers should go nowhere else but to a convent school?

It was the heavenliness of the convent atmosphere. I can find no other word.

I do not intend to convey that all the nuns were saints, although the very choice of the convent life carries with it, to my mind, a great measure of sanctity. One nun in my time, Mother Imelda, was such a saint I believe in the supernatural order as the Church loves to honour and set the seal of sainthood upon. Many of the nuns had their human defects, their weaknesses. Impossible to conceal them from the sharp eyes of school-girls. But if one laughs, one laughs tenderly. There were exquisite women among the nuns—beautiful women often. I used to think there never was such beauty as Sister Teresa's with her delicate classic profile, her face as finely moulded, as purely coloured as a Madonna lily, or Mother Joseph's with her opulent golden colouring, the magnificent intense blue of her eyes. Perhaps the white coif and habit and the black veil made the fittest frame for beauty. We might laugh at their simplicities, their innocencies. We might even discuss their little jealousies and preferences. But we left school in floods of tears: and doubtless a good many of those who left not to return found the change a hard one.

Many outsiders have remarked on the grace, the beauty, the refinement of Irish girls of the shop-keeping and farming classes, qualities not always shared by their brothers. Something of course is explained by the ups and downs of Irish history which have reduced the descendants of the old families

to the cabins and placed the sons of the freebooters in the castles. But the convent schools afford the fullest explanation needed. Whatever of ladyhood is in a girl the convent school fosters and brings to perfection.

The convent school remains in my mind as a place of large and lofty rooms, snow-white, spotless, full of garden airs: of long corridors lit by deep windows, with little altars here and there—statues of Our Lord or the Blessed Virgin or the Saints, each with its flowers. A blue lamp burned at Our Lady's feet. The Sacred Heart had its twinkling red lamp. The corridors seem always in my thoughts of them full of quietness. The rustling of the nun's habit as she came only added to the sense of quietness.

The floors were polished and beeswaxed as you see it in convents of to-day but seldom anywhere else. I imagine that housecraft was rarer among Irish women of all classes then than it is to-day. But house-craft is seen in its perfection in a convent. What was it that made the girls who would have been slovenly at home fit in with the life so exquisitely neat and feat? Perhaps those of them who went back leavened the lump of indifference and unthrift. Certainly, coming back to Ireland after twenty years absence I find in the Irish houses holds an order, an efficiency, which were rare in my young days. The ramshackle, the topsy-turvey, seem to be gone out of fashion.

At the convent school we slept in dormitories which contained long lines of little iron beds curtained in blue and white check. The curtains went completely round the beds, and when they were drawn at night there was a sense of isolation which had its charm for one of an overflowing family who could appreciate dimly how many ills come from not being sufficiently alone.

The long dormitory, with its thirty or forty beds, was lit and aired by a lunette at either end. That these were open at night I very much doubt. We had not yet got away from the superstition that night air was deadly. "You ought not to be out in the night air" was always said if you had a cold or weakness. Florence Nightingale had swept it away in the Crimea some fifteen years earlier by her simple reply to a doctor's

expostulation upon her admitting the enemy—" But the only air you can get at night is night-air." That reply had not yet reached Ireland. But—stay—I have a memory of revolving ventilators in the lunette above my head. They were highly scientific and advanced in those days, however our age might despise them.

I can remember no lack of air as I lay between my check curtains with a feeling akin to George Herbert's when he made his thanksgiving—

" Lord, Thou hast given me a little cell
Wherein to dwell."

I remember summer evenings there when we went to bed at 8.30 with the sun hardly yet below the horizon, or he had left his pinks and primroses and faint greens in the sky. At 9 everyone was in bed and quiet. At 9.30 a bell rang "Profound Silence" in the convent. Except for urgent reasons the silence must not be broken till 4 in the morning, when a lay-sister entered the nun's cell, offering the holy water from a dripping finger with the wake-word—" Praise be to Jesus!" to which the other would respond " Amen !"

They sang the Divine Office every day in that convent, an obligation laid only upon a limited number of orders of women. What is the order? Matins, Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline. It necessitated a very early rising. The nuns used the Gregorian Chant, and at the hours of Office you might meet them hurrying through the corridors, chanting as they went.

It was not always so easy to fall asleep in the summer evenings when you could hear, lying between the check curtains, the shouting from a distance which showed that the world was yet up and living and doing. I remember standing up in bed and peeping through the window. The thing in view was the graveyard of the nuns, an enclosed walled space with a wicket gate. From the high dormitory window you could see over the walls to the white marble slab at the head of the cemetery, on which was a list of the dead nuns. Of winter nights it used to glimmer whitely in the dark. There is always a chill feeling

about the memory which makes me imagine that the beautifully-coloured evening must have been May's and a cold May's.

There was only one looking-glass in the dormitory. Perhaps that fact began in me the habit of never looking in a glass, which was confirmed by sharing a bedroom with one sister or another, of a more determined will perhaps, or a more pressing vanity than I possessed. Of course the modesty of the convent was extreme. When we washed our feet we looped our curtains in such a way that no eye could be upon us.

We used to get up early in the morning—6.30 in summer, 7 in winter, and hurry downstairs through the long kitchen corridor to the chapel for Mass. We always wore a black veil over our heads for Mass and a white veil for Communion days, so that we were like a little flock of nuns. We used to go down through one of the "bows." A section of the house was bow-shaped through its four stories. In each bow was the glass-screened and curtained door from floor to ceiling which was the enclosure of the convent. The mystery of those doors which the world never passed had its irresistible appeal for me. Through the veils of the door you could see the shadowy figures of the nuns moving along the corridor beyond. That door shut off eternally the world from the cloister.

In the chief one of the bows there was kept in a shrine of ebony, ivory and silver the head of Oliver Plunkett, Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, the martyr of the Titus Oates conspiracy. After he had been beheaded his body was thrown into the fire, but a pious woman rescued the skull from the flames, hiding it in her apron. Visitors often came to the convent to see the relic, and were allowed to look upon the blackened and half-consumed skull. It was shown to us school-children as a sacred ceremony; but being very purblind I had to take the word of others as to how it looked.

Another relic of the convent was of St. Edward the Confessor. I do not remember what the relic was, but linen touched by it had an efficacy in cases of the King's Evil. I have certainly known the discharge to cease and the wound to close at the touch of linen which had touched the relic. The son of a blacksmith, named Whelan, in my father's employment,

who had scrofula, was at least healed for the time being by the application of the linen ; and I remember writing to the nuns to procure it for other cases long after I had left school. Whether the trouble came back I cannot say. That it closed the wound I am certain, and you may explain the happening as you will.

Once and once only I crossed the enclosure by the upper bow. It was to take a last glimpse of a dead school-fellow, who had had a somewhat lingering illness and had been taken into the convent for better nursing. It was July and hot July—just before the holidays it must have been, for the white lilies were standing up in the garden, and the dead girl lay between sheafs of lilies. From the garden where the cherries hung red in the nets we could see through the open window of her room the candles burning about the bed whereon she lay. They believed in familiarity with death in those days in Ireland, else it was a somewhat cruel ordeal to be brought to gaze on our dead school-fellow; and it gave some of us nervous terrors. Perhaps the nuns thought it was good for us.

I have said that the convent cemetery stood up right in the midst of the garden where we walked and played. It was a dismal little place, being enclosed by high walls, the small iron crosses, bearing only initials, sinking deeper and deeper in the rank grass. Once we were terrified by the sight of a rusty black garment—just a piece of it, issuing from the ground. It was whispered among us that it was the habit of a nun who had died in an outbreak of smallpox some years before. Whether we only imagined that, or whether it had any foundation in fact, I do not know.

We accepted the dreary little graveyard in the midst of our playground as something we were too used to to mind. In front of the house was the nuns' garden, to which we only went as a special treat. That was a delightful garden, with fruit trees among the flower-beds, winding walks, grottoes, little shrines hollowed out of the trees containing a statue and flowers—all the innumerable ingenuities of a convent garden. There in recreation hours the young nuns, like a flock of doves, used to gather about the elder ones, and for

an hour the garden was as noisy as a grove of starlings. The nuns had made pets of the birds, and had tamed them so completely that you might see any day a bird perched prettily on a nun's head, feeding from her hands—even taking a crumb from her tongue. There was a convent dog, an Irish terrier, belonging to Sister Jane, the outdoor lay sister who presided over the fowls and the pigs and the kitchen garden, who could do all manner of clever things even to cobbling the nuns¹ shoes.

On the whole I think we were extremely happy, healthy, and sane in the convent school. The graveyard did not daunt us. Neither did an old nun, Sister Catherine, who was mad, but harmlessly so. They said it was the terror of an occasion when burglars broke into the convent that scared her out of her wits. She did pretty well what she liked, and it seems to me now that she must have been a fearsome apparition, for she went about bent almost double, her habit and veil, green with age, huddled upon her, as she leant on her stick, so that you caught a bare glimpse of a yellowed ivory face. I do not remember that she inspired any terror in us.

The nuns were very simple. They certainly interviewed papas and brothers of the pupils in the convent parlour, or perhaps it was only selected ones who did. But when a plain British working-man came to set the convent clocks he was preceded through the corridors by a lay sister with her veil down to her eyes ringing a bell. The shamefaced humour of the excellent man's expression was something to be remembered over many years. This particular simplicity very much amused the wicked little convent schoolgirls, who were so much more grown up than the nuns in many ways.

Another thing that used to amuse us was the small organ which stood just outside the school oratory. It was very old and decrepit, and it had once been painted with a design of Pan playing upon his pipes. Some good nun had clad the goat-footed god in a scarlet mantle, had placed a crown of gold upon his head, had changed the Pan-pipes to a harp. She had dressed him in the garments of King David; but oh! she had not changed his eyes or his expression. From his dark corner the goat-foot laughed at these innocencies.

At the convent, man, unless he happened to be an ecclesiastic, was put in his proper place. It would have delighted the suffragettes. At Christmas we had plays, and male costume was represented by a short petticoat, red for preference, and a jacket. You added a burnt-cork moustache. With a rose in your coat and a bit of swagger you might make-believe yourself a pretty fellow, and not unlikely excite some thrills in school-girl breasts. The closer the impersonation was to the male sex the less the nuns liked it. I have known the rose in the coat to be rebuked, and the swagger to be sharply snubbed. Indeed in one case a somewhat daring swagger caused the greatest distress to the Reverend Mother, and made a little scandal in the school.

One does not grow old in the convent. Nuns are very often capable in worldly affairs quite beyond the ordinary. Every convent has its genius in the way of a business woman. Convent efficiency in the affairs of everyday life reaches a high standard. The convents are exquisitely clean. The nuns cook with a French daintiness. Their needlework is a dream. They make good nurses. There are many convents in Ireland where they do not sing the Divine Office; and one rather wonders how the nuns find occupation for their hours. Beyond the convent walls there are the cabins of the poor. The poor Irish house-mother cannot cook, cannot sew, cannot wash, cannot clean. She has not an idea of simple domestic remedies. She would accept teaching at the hands of the nuns as she would not at the hands of the laity. What a waste of energy, one thinks! What amelioration the nuns might bring to the cottagers' lot! What a standard they might set up and lift the people to. Alas, the nuns are enclosed as they were in the Middle Ages, when enclosure was necessary, and the poor go untaught. We want a new Catherine of Siena, a new Teresa, to set the helper free to come to the aid of the one who needs help.

Perhaps the things I have told give no idea of the serene peace which was the convent atmosphere. It fostered all that was poetical in a child's mind. Of course I had my preferences among the nuns, but, as a whole, they were a galaxy

of wonderful and beautiful creatures to me. The beauty, the mystery, the sanctity survive over my school years. If I laugh it is as one laughs at those one loves most dearly.

We had our little passions, sometimes for a nun, sometimes for each other. The nuns had a convention of discouraging these special adorations. I am sure they really delighted in them. Mine was a passion for an elder girl about to become a nun. She was going to the convent at Lisbon, which gave my passion the poignancy of impending separation. She was a rosy-cheeked, dark-eyed girl, with burnished black hair, which at one temple showed a strand of white. As her departure was close at hand she was not exactly in the school life and she came and went a good deal, as she was preparing her convent trousseau. I used to cry a great deal at night because she was going away, and she used to come and comfort me. I knew her footstep in the corridor and I used to feel faint with love when she came. Once, on a dark winter morning, washing in cold water as was our ascetic custom, and groping my way by candle-light, I was told she had come back the night before. At first I thought it was too good to be true and suspected a trick. When I was persuaded of its truth, what was it that turned the January morning to June and made the chilly dark rose-coloured and shining? In the dark corridor on the way to Mass, as we passed the warm kitchen, delightful on a cold winter morning, she came behind me and kissed me. Oh, rapture! oh, delight! oh, ecstasy! Was there anything in more mature passions quite as good?

The passion was the victim of a mischance. In the summer vacation the beloved asked, as I thought, an impossible thing. It was a blunder. Writing home and to me in the same hour, she asked for a number of things to be sent her in a postscript added by mistake to my letter instead of to that to her mother. She never knew what accident had occurred till I presented her with something of what she had asked for. If I could have procured her the things she asked my passion might have survived. As it was, my anguish of helplessness was so great—I had striven to get her some of the things without letting anyone know that she had asked me, for I dreaded cold

eyes on what i felt to be my late idol's imperfection—that it shook down my passion altogether. Even when I discovered the mistake it was too late to put it back in its place. She complained after the vacation that, whereas I used to cry perpetually, I now laughed as perpetually. The passion was quite gone; I do not believe I shed a tear the day she went.

Other departures there were for the Lisbon convent. Some of the nuns who had been twenty or thirty years in the convent embarked on that perilous voyage like babes going out to sea. The Portuguese Government even then did not permit religious to enter its territory, in religious garments at all events. The nuns used to be very busy concocting such garments as nuns might wear without getting too far from a conventional garb. They had to wear little black close-fitting caps to conceal their cropped heads, and the silk hoods trimmed with lace were very pretty, but must have been sufficiently unlike other things then worn to attract the attention they wished to avoid. I think the nuns must have been very quaint figures indeed on the voyage.

From the Lisbon convent came home delicious preserved fruits and sweet waters, which were distributed to us on feast-days. But my once-beloved came back no more.

I had now entered upon the long period of indolence which marked my childhood and girlhood, so that the stigma of laziness was affixed to me by industrious elders. At the convent I learnt only what came easy to me. I wept when I was asked to learn other things, and at the prize-giving I received a prize for General Improvement, which was equivalent to a booby prize. I had been sent to school with a charge against my eyes being overworked, which saved me from doing many things I did not like. I had only to cover my eyes with my hand and sigh, to be set free from work. Even my mending was done for me by unwilling school-fellows, and I fear that the lowering looks directed at me when some one had to mend my stockings instead of fancy-working, pleased my mischievous spirit not a little. Once retribution befell me, for the nuns got alarmed at the repetition of the hand over the eyes and all the rest of it. I spent three days in a darkened

room, while people came in at intervals and asked tenderly after me as if I were dying. A poignant feature of the situation was that the music-room in which I was a prisoner contained quite a number of books. But I was in the dark, and the books were a Tantalus cup. On the fourth day my eyes were suddenly mysteriously well, and I never had a recurrence of the distressing symptoms.

I left school at the mature age of fourteen. I could have gone back if I liked, but no one troubled to make me go. Before I left I signed the convent pledge, which had nothing to do with strong drink. I do not mean that I signed a document, but all the nuns' pupils were willing to undertake that in the perilous world they would not dance "fast dances"; they would not go to a theatre; they would not read novels. They did not ask a pledge against writing them.

The nuns added a counsel which was surely mediaeval. It was that we should not look male creatures in the face when we encountered them.

CHAPTER VI

THE GOOD YEARS

I WAS reminded of how much water had flowed under the bridges since my schooldays when the other day I was present at a meeting of a girls' debating society attached to a Hostel run by nuns for the girl students of the National University.

The paper was on Coventry Patmore. A number of ladies and a few priests were among the audience. The paper was read with the utmost aplomb. Even when the essayist lost her place and had to hunt for several minutes through the pages before she could proceed she was not at all embarrassed. On the conclusion of the paper the other girl students discussed it with great spirit. The discussion was mainly on Love, and Patmore's occasionally odd theories of it. It was conducted with the fearlessness of innocence, and it was the most piquant thing to hear the fresh country girls discussing things which in my convent schooldays would have made the nuns faint if they were even remotely alluded to. One of us said to the delightful nun who had us in charge: "They seem to know a deal about Love." "Ah sure, they don't," she said, her face twinkling; "they only think they do."

Dear me! I thought of the paper pasted over the page of our history-books where a king's indiscretion, or it might be a queen's, was mentioned. How much ingenuity we devoted to discovering what was on that printed page under the slip! I remembered the reading nun's blush and the excision in the plays. I remembered how at an earlier convent school still we sang: "Come where my Love lies Dreaming," as "Come where my Child lies Dreaming," and I marvelled at the change which had come upon things.

When the country was presented with the Intermediate

Education, that evil gift which would seem to have been designed to make the Irish stupid as well as to make them money-grabbing, my nuns flatly refused to have anything to do with it. What! send their young ladies into the rough-and-tumble of the Examination Halls, to get their names in the papers? Perish the thought! I heard afterwards that after all they had been dragged into the horrid thing much against their wills. I am quite sure they were not in it with the up-to-date establishments, which in the scramble for result fees sucked the pupils of brains and health as one might suck an orange, and left something as worthless often as the sucked orange behind. If Ireland of to-day is not stupid it says a deal for its recuperative powers.

My poor nuns have had many things to bear since the gentle days of the seventies. Hard upon the Intermediate, or perhaps before it, there came the Land League. The noise of it from afar off troubled the convent, the more so when women took part in the turmoil, adding to it a good deal, as the sex is apt to do when it is among the combatants. Nuns are very conservative, even when they are patriotic—with a refined, high-minded patriotism which is quite compatible with Unionist convictions. Fathers and mothers, uncles and cousins, to say nothing of the female relatives, might be in the rough and tumble, but the nuns were disturbed and disapproving. Small blame to them! The Land League was not at all an inspiring movement.

But all that is far ahead of the days when one left the convent school, fortified by those innocent pledges against the snares of the world.

What of public interest stands out in those days for a little girl in the early teens? I can remember the illness of the Prince of Wales, as he then was, and the hushed expectation which found its way even through the convent walls while the result was still in doubt. There was in those days something of the fascination about the Prince which King Edward had to the end for his Irish subjects. I suppose it was due to his being a good sportsman. It was certainly something the solid virtues would not have awakened. He was a more romantic

figure in those days to little school girls in one Irish convent than he could have guessed at.

I remember also what must have been an eclipse of the sun—a much more complete one than the much heralded eclipse of April 1912, which fizzled out in a light shadow and a cool wind. Of course we thought it was the end of the world. Indeed in those days we were always anticipating the end of the world, because St. Columcille or someone else had predicted it. I cannot recall that we made special preparations for it.

I returned home from school to find the family living in the house, Whitehall, Clondalkin, co. Dublin, which I have described before, and there I lived till my marriage.

Those middle years of the seventies, before the wet summers brought the potato-blight and the famine and the Land League in their train, were very quiet and good years. There were a number of good summers in which things prospered amazingly. The cattle-trade, in which my father was engaged, was then at its greatest prosperity. People thought that the bad times would never come again, basking in the sunshine of those fine summers and mild winters.

Although my education had come to an end it was but beginning. For three or four years after I left the convent school I was endlessly idle and endlessly busy. I led as free a life as was compatible with sleeping indoors. Alone, except for the company of a dog, I roamed the fields from morning till night. The one duty laid upon me was to fetch the letters, which had to be done by someone every day. The letters seldom arrived before late afternoon. I read the day's paper in the fields, and I called at neighbouring houses and borrowed their books and periodicals, which I also read in the fields. I don't remember that I ever thought of food. To be sure I ate sugar-stick and shared it with my Irish terrier, Snow, with whom also I shared the blackberries I picked from the hedgerows. I gathered all the wild harvests of the fields and hedgerows. I went blackberi'ying and mushrooming in the autumn. I picked and ate crab-apples and haws and sloes. Even the berries of the mountain ash I sampled; and once I ate the berries of the arbutus, but did not repeat the experi-

ment. I knew all the mysteries of the fields. Every field had a friend's face for me, though I loved some better than others. I knew the loneliness of autumn fields, where only a grasshopper chirps or a late bird sings. The Spirit of Place in Ireland is very lonesome. Quite different is the Spirit of Place which whispers its stories at night in such a heart of England as the fields below the Malvern Hills. That Spirit of Place tells of lives flowing by to the great sea as easily as flow the rivers, of natural griefs and joys, of birth and death; there is no desolation of great wars in the pensive tale, nothing of uprooting, of destruction.

Whereas the Spirit of Place in Irish fields is the loneliest thing you can imagine. It breathes of wars and famine and emigration. Someone is always going away—

" 'Tis very lonesome in the quiet house
Where nobody is ever coming home."

The Spirit of Place in Ireland is a banshee. She sits with her head bowed to her knees, the long veils of her hair swathing her, and she keens; very quietly she cries her cry of lamentation. There is only one sound of grief we miss in it; that is bitter remorse for sin, for something done that can never be undone, no matter how one breaks one's heart; for the Spirit of Place in Ireland is desolate, but she is innocent.

For years I roamed in those fields with my dog and I was never molested in any way. No one was ever rude to me or frightened me. Prudent ladies used to remonstrate with my father upon my hours of absence from the parental roof-tree. A Martha of an elder sister whom my later years revealed as very dear and kind used to grieve over what she called my idleness. As it had been at school so now at home it was conceded to me that I was beyond all comparison quite the laziest and most worthless little girl in the experience of my elders. "I went my way immovably, and my father, the one person whose authority I respected, said once again "let her be," and was wisely sure of the safety of the fields.

Of course I read, and re-read all I could beg, borrow, or

steal, always excepting the Family Bible. At the back of orchard was a tall row of elm-trees. Their feet were set in a double hedge a-top of a high bank. The double hedge made the most delightful reading-place imaginable. My diligent sister did not know the mysteries of the fields as I knew them, and did not discover me in the double hedge. Perhaps she may have suspected my presence there, but she was little likely to follow me, as the hedge was overgrown with briars and thorns. Part of my general fecklessness was that I did not care if I went ragged. Anyhow there I lay *perdu*, with my novel, while at intervals my sister called, till the moon swung up between the orchard boughs and the light grew dim for reading, when I would go indoors. She must have known I was somewhere about, else she would not have called. I remember times when the futility of her calling would oppress her suddenly even to tears. I never lifted my head when she went off sobbing. I was too absorbed in making up for the starved years when I only read by stealth and had my novel confiscated if it were discovered, to be affected by an elder sister's tears.

My poor dear sister had addressed herself to the hopeless task of making a housewife of me. She herself was one of those who delight in work for work's sake, but the happiness was not sufficient unless others were working too. She used to pei-form prodigies in the way of "making up" fine things her own or someone else's, and, as she was not very strong, these excursions usually ended in a faint a-top of a hot iron. She used to make cakes with a prodigious expenditure of eggs and butter. "For the dint of the richness," as our old cook used to say, the cakes never would hold together, but crumbled at a touch. The crumbs were very delicious, I am bound to say.

She performed prodigies of doing, always with the maximum of discomfort to the idle. When she was in a whirlwind of doing it was an unpardonable offence for anyone else to sit down or even to lean against a wall or stand on one foot. There was a Christmas when she not only made the Christmas pudding but insisted on sitting up to see it boiled. The pudding was of such huge dimensions that there was only one

pot capable of holding it. That pot was cracked. The old cook retired to bed at midnight with the caustic remark that there was no use in everybody's being worn out for Christmas Day, adding that the pudding might as well have been boiled by daylight, which was quite true. My sister was contemptuous of these unsportsmanlike remarks. To her a feast was not a feast unless it was kept strenuously. All that Christmas Eve night my sister watched the pot a-boiling, while two worn-out little girls dozed in their hard chairs. Dozed uneasily too, for the last warning of the cook had been as to the probability of the pot bursting and as like as not killing everyone of us with the splinters of iron, let alone the danger of our being scalded to death. For hours the pot threatened explosion, waking us from our uneasy slumbers. About five o'clock the pudding was considered safe, and there was only to push the pot a little to one side. My sister's behaviour to us was what that of the Wise Virgins might have been to the Foolish with their lamps out. She was quite cheerful, and she pitied us as we groped our way to bed. She had suggested going to six o'clock Mass, but that was quite beyond us.

One of her ambitions was to make me a competent bed-maker. I suppose it must have been on wet days that she captured me for this purpose. I used to begin immediately after breakfast to make my own bed. It was a feather-bed, and it required a good deal of thumping before it satisfied my artistic conscience. Beside my bed was a window hung with the most delightful curtains. They were French, of a material called challis; I do not know if it is made now. It was a soft woollen texture, ivory coloured, and covered with a profusion of roses—lovely fat roses of all the shades between palest pink and deepest crimson, flung together in a delicious madness. The curtain was held up by a band of ribbon. Where it was looped there was room for a book to hide.

Well, as I have said, I began thumping my bed about nine o'clock in the morning. The curtain always held a book. My sister who had swept all else readable out of the room before she left me was satisfied that I had no reading-matter available. From time to time she dropped in to see how I was getting on

She always found me thumping in exactly the same spot. She would rush round the room in a whirlwind searching for the contraband. She never discovered its hiding-place. I believe I was grown to woman's estate and she was married before I revealed to her the secret of my amazing dilatoriness over that bed-making.

Doubtless if I had lived among writing-people I too should have written in those years. It did not occur to me to write, although I read much poetry. I still delighted in Longfellow; and I had Mrs. Browning, or a great part of her, by heart. Everyone read Tennyson in those days, but it was not until some years later that I possessed a Tennyson of my own. I had not yet begun to form a bookshelf, and I read from the books which were common property.

I used to work myself up into an ecstasy as I walked the country roads repeating poetry to myself. When I grew excited I shouted it, and ran for sheer delight. I used to think myself unobserved, till I discovered some round-eyed boy sitting in a ditch tending cattle, and observing me with amazement. I daresay I had the reputation of being mad in those days.

That was the time when the close and tender friendship between my father and myself made roots and grew. He loved society, and his going to live in the country had cut him off from many of his old friends and amusements. There had been a time when he played Unlimited Loo every Wednesday for ten or eleven months of the year. He was a great theatre-goer too, and could tell you tales of the great plays and players for thirty years back.

He still clung to the theatre, and perhaps a couple of nights a week he and I went together. We used to drive to Dublin in his little pony-trap, put up our steed at a livery-stable, spend the evening at the theatre, and get out just in time to enjoy the oyster supper which he dearly loved. We used to arrive home in the small hours, when everyone else was gone to bed.

He could not endure to go without my companionship. If I kept my bed with a cold he would rout me out, assuring me that the winter drive would do me nothing but good; and I am

sure he was right. I remember sitting through the play with watering eyes and an inflamed nose, and making another expedition next day to the Turkish baths for a cure. Dublin was ever a great place for Turkish baths, and claims to be the place where they were first introduced. The Turkish bath was followed by the usual oyster supper, and home; and I cannot remember that I was the worse for the drive home in the open air.

He certainly shielded me tenderly from the weather, for I was clad in sealskin. My sisters bought their own dresses, or my elder sister bought for the younger ones. It was not half so delightful as my father's taking me into one of the best shops Dublin afforded and fitting me out with a sealskin coat which cost twenty-five pounds then, and would cost at least fifty now—and a Gainsborough hat; it was the year the Gainsborough Duchess was stolen, about 1877, I think. I believe my elder sisters had their sealskins before I had mine; but I am sure theirs were purchased after a much duller fashion.

Those must have been the good years when it was so easy to make money. Then came the couple of dreadful summers before the Land League. My father had contracted with the Government for the supply of cattle to the army, and he lost money. He had taken on more than any one man could accomplish, and I don't think he had anyone helping him who cared very much for his interests. One year he had the army contracts of Ireland and England—Aldershot, Portsmouth, Chatham, the Curragh, and Dublin. He lived in the trains, travelling up and down to fairs and markets, buying cattle. Everything was against him.

In those days the old happy companionship was at an end for the time being. He was worn out with incessant travelling—although he managed to sleep in the trains as in his bed—and disheartened by the knowledge that he was playing a losing game. There were times and seasons when I and an elder sister—not *the* elder sister—kept house together with only the one old servant. The younger children were at school, the elder married or away. It was a time of extra-

ordinary quietness, for we had very few visitors, and my father came home perhaps once in a week.

We read—how we read ! By this time I was growing up—seventeen or thereabouts. I had discovered a treasure of a library, the library belonging to the old Mechanics' Institute in Dublin. It had shelves of bound magazines—magazines that were magazines, and none of your modern commonnesses. *Cornhill* of the great days, and *Frazer's*, *St. Paul's* with the early poems of Meredith and other treasures in its pages. *Belgravia*, with all the tales of Miss Braddon running through it, and dear, delightful *Temple Bar*. A novel would have been exhausted in an evening. Not so the splendid magazine volumes. There was an accommodating librarian who let me roam the shelves at will and take away all I could carry. I was so greedy of carrying, indeed, that my arm sometimes shook for days after my book-getting expeditions because of the weight. There were treasures on those shelves, unsuspected treasures. I knew that the early Ruskins were valuable even then. Probably there were many other things sought for by the collector. I am glad to say that my honesty stood the test.

One would think the house had been rather eerie, with only a couple of girls in their teens and an old woman, but though we were solitary we were never eerie. We sat over a big fire into the small hours, reading and sipping weak lemonade. We got up at any hour that pleased us, and I don't think we troubled much about meals. Tea was so much better than anything more troublesome to prepare. Only when my father was at home did we have regular meals, so far as regarded ourselves. We were at that age when meat is detestable to girls; or perhaps there is no such age. Perhaps it was the incessant reading, the tea-meals, the never going abroad for exercise, that made us loathe meat.

The time came when one woke up to neuralgia, had neuralgia for close companion all day, when one read with a throbbing head and aching eyes, and wept with sheer despair that pain could be so persistent, through the dark hours of the night.

Neuralgia was an extremely common complaint among

girls then. I imagine that most of our contemporaries shared our overweening preference for the tea breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The Irish Celt had not begun to eat nor learnt to cook. The Anglo-Irish sometimes rivalled the English in their excessive meat-eating. At that time, and perhaps even yet, it was a cause of spiritual pride with the Irish Celt that he was not even as the gluttonous Saxon.

CHAPTER VII

THE LAND LEAGUE

SOMEWHERE about 1878 I wrote my first poem. Doubtless I should have made many essays long before that date—my own little daughter was writing poems at seven years old—if I had been brought up in a literary atmosphere. That I was not doubtless was to my benefit, for my critical faculty had more time to grow. I had plenty of poor and weak influences to shed. If I had written earlier I should not perhaps have begun to discover that they were poor and weak.

Poetry—of the minor order; I knew very little else had affected me from an early age. I can't imagine what stage of babyhood I was at when some verses, called "The Gambler's Wife," read aloud, woke me up in my bed, and sent me asleep, my pillow saturated with tears. Since that early date a good deal of water had flowed under the bridges. I had been reading, but I had not written.

I may as well confess now that my first impulse towards authorship was because of a slight. Someone had been preferred before me, and I wanted to show that I was that other one's superior. In Celtic Ireland, although they may not buy books, there is always a certain respect for literary achievement.

That bit of fluent verse, not worth reprinting here, appeared in a Dublin penny paper, and I was proud of it, and so was my father. A little later I had several poems in the *Graphic*, of which Mr. Arthur Locker was then editor. I was paid half a guinea each for these. My father was so pleased that he wanted to frame my first cheque. Perhaps he did not offer me the equivalent, which would have been very unlike him. Anyhow, the cheque was not framed. Another elder sister drove it in upon me—I was always receptive—that it

was my duty to buy wearing apparel with it. I did buy the material for a dress, and very shoddy stuff it was, not worth the cost of making up.

The next cheque I received I turned a deaf ear to practical suggestions. I went straight off to Hodges & Figgis, the Grafton Street booksellers, and bought Rossetti's Poems. I can remember the joy with which I carried it home, hugging it to my breast like a baby. I believe it was the first book, which was a book, that I possessed of my very own.

Since writing this I have looked up the Poems, and find that it could not have been the next cheque by any means that bought them, for they bear the date April 14, 1885. In the September of the same year my father gave me *Ballads and Sonnets*; but by that time I was an author myself, my first book, *Louise de la Valliere*, having been published in the summer of 1885. I never saw Rossetti's Poems before 1884, when I was visiting in England, and as most of the poems gathered into *Louise de la Valliere* were written in the early eighties, the influence from Rossetti which the reviewers found in the little book must have travelled to me somehow on the air. Perhaps there is more of a real influence from him in later verses. I certainly did write some very Rossettian verses after I had read him, but I don't think they got into print.

However, all that is far away from the last of the seventies and the early eighties. My wildest imaginations did not then run so far ahead as a book. Mr. Locker was my first English friend, and not so long after the *Spectator* printed a sonnet, the very first thing I sent there. That was in Mr. Hutton's time. I suppose I must have written a good deal of poetry that did not get published. I certainly remember writing poems during those midnight seances while I was racked with neuralgia.

However, some time following the eighties I was taken up with a new interest in the shape of active politics. At least they became active after the arrest of the Irish leaders towards the end of 1881, with the formation of the Ladies' Land League. I may as well confess that the Land League in itself did not greatly interest me. Nor did it interest my father, who belonged to the, old '48 party, and was more in sympathy with

Isaac Butt's movement than with anything agrarian. To be sure he owned his land for the greater part, and so the shoe did not pinch him as it pinched the tenant-farmers. But I think, in any case, the movement would not have attracted him, nor did it attract me, in itself. It brought for the first time a certain Americanism into Irish politics which was altogether opposed to sentiment and romance, unless one finds romantic the enormous sums poured week by week from Irish America into the Land League coffers; and that, I think, belonged more to the realm of the fairy-story than to anything of actual life.

The romantic force that did attract one, beyond an agitation which had largely a material aspect, was the personality of the leaders. In 1874 Mr. Parnell had made his first appearance in Irish public life when he contested County Dublin as a Home Ruler. In Mr. Barry O'Brien's *Life of Parnell* you will read about the impression he created. Handsome, refined, distinguished, he was painfully shy, and broke down after a single sentence in his first speech. None of the experienced politicians who listened to him saw anything in him but a gentle, well-mannered young man. No one imagined his greatness or forecasted his fortune, except perhaps the car-driver who drove him from Rathdrum station to Avondale, after the declaration of the poll which left him a badly defeated candidate. "That's a regular devil," he said. "He talked about nothing all the way from the station but fighting again and smashing them all, and he looked wild and fierce."

I can remember a day in 1874 when Mr. A. M. Sullivan, for whom my father had a great admiration and respect, who was occasionally our honoured guest, told us about that appearance of Mr. Parnell's. I was quite a little girl then, but I think an intelligent one. We must have been sitting about the fire in the dining-room of my old home, where afterwards many politicians and interesting people of all sorts were to sit, for I remember the cold glimmer of a white marble mantel-piece while A. M., as we called him, talked of the gentle brown eyes of the young Wicklow squire, and his shyness in face of a crowd.

And that brings me to another reminiscence in what must be a very discursive narrative. It is again A. M. Sullivan, and the year is 1880, the year of the great Tory *debacle*. He is telling of Lord Beaconsfield's remark when he realised the ruin of his party. It is not, "This year I shall see the roses blow at Hughenden"; but, "There has been nothing like it since Overend and Gurney," referring to the great bank smash of some years earlier.

Mr. Parnell was a romantic personality, and so was Michael Davitt. There were a number of interesting personalities among the younger men. One was able to see them more clearly because at the time there was no towering personality. We did not yet know what Mr. Parnell was. And that brings me to the thought of how he was, and is, and shall be Mr. Parnell. There are certain men to whom the "Mr." belongs—Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Parnell. The "Mr." in these cases is prouder than any title. Occasionally you will hear a former colleague of Mr. Parnell's refer to him as "Parnell"—even as "poor Pam-ell." At which one is repelled, as though by an irreverence.

Michael Davitt had urged the formation of the Ladies' Land League, foreseeing the time when the men would be in prison and there would be need for someone to look after the evicted tenants. I was present at the first meeting, when Mr. Davitt and Mr. Andrew Kettle saw us started. I stood and talked with them afterwards by the fire. It was on a later Sunday that we met in an upper room of the Land League Offices at 89 Upper Sackville Street. I cannot remember that any men were present, nor indeed anything of the proceedings, except an inflammatory speech from a woman organiser, which rather frightened some of us who were not extremists.

I believe Mr. Parnell disliked the women's organisation from the beginning, as he certainly detested it in the end. It was carried forward by the compelling force of the sister who in every way so strongly resembled him, who had his mystery, his strangeness, his aloofness, his extraordinary charm in great measure.

I cannot remember Miss Anna Parnell at those early meetings, which have a somewhat dull, somewhat crude feeling in my memory of them. I think if she had been there she must have illumined them. I remember so strongly the extraordinarily compelling force of her personality, so that later on, when the Ladies' Land League was in full work—everyone as busy as bees—that one always knew, without seeing or hearing her, when she had entered the room. Crowds of people, mostly interesting for one reason or another, came to those offices. You might not lift your eyes from your letter-writing for Members of Parliament, country priests, released suspects, American journalists, revolutionary leaders, but you would certainly lift them and turn about when the little lady, whose very atmosphere was quietness, glided gently into her place.

I had been leading a singularly dull life for some years previous to the Ladies' Land League. My little poems had as yet brought me no friends—excepting always my father. Two or three intellectuals, or men of taste, whom his personality had attracted, were pleasantly interested in my beginnings. But they moved in other orbits than mine. Others, farmers like himself, yet very unlike, whose children did not write poetry, suggested to him that he should discourage me. "Make her mend the stockings," said one; and some twenty years later, when I had discovered writing as a profession and a paying one, an Irish Dominican father found the same formula for my case.

These people were confuted when even the half-guineas and guineas for a poem began to come in. But those were early days; and suggestions were even made to my father that these literary pursuits might endanger my prospects of making a good marriage.

To be sure he did not listen to them. From the first he was inordinately proud and pleased at any little success I made, just as when I was a child the writing of an "essay" as I called it, mostly cribbed, I imagine, from my miscellaneous reading, would make him well-disposed to all the world, and prepared to grant some request on my own behalf or on behalf of the others.

But so far my writing had not very much affected my life. It was too small in volume and too desultory. We were leading

the lonesome life I have tried to depict in an earlier chapter. It was a great change for me to be a member of the Ladies' Land League, and to spend three or four days of the week at the League offices. If I had not the cause very much at heart, at least I had enough inspiration from the leaders to keep me going.

I do not know who was responsible for the alliterative title. If it was Miss Parnell, it was a part of the simplicity which marked both her and Mr. Parnell. Perhaps she allowed someone else to make the title for her. Perhaps it was Michael Davitt's choice. At one of the first meetings I said: "Why not Women's Land League?" and was told that I was too democratic.

It was such a title as gives the scoffer his opportunity, and no doubt he took it. But, looking back and recalling the big room with its desks and tables, I see a group of singularly interesting women. Of course there were a number of rustics, but these were of the rank and file, the ones who wrote dictated letters; it was not yet the day of the typewriter. Miss Parnell, having the elements of greatness, had attracted to her a group of women and girls who fitted easily into her *entourage*. Ireland is the place for the unexpected. Few fashionable gatherings could furnish forth such a group of faces as I remember—not merely pretty, but faces with soul and intelligence bright in them. There was a group of girls, cousins. I recall a small ivory-pale face amid sweeping masses of autumn-leaf hair; the lifted eyes full of poetry: Bee Walshe. In her brother's house at Balla, County Mayo, the Land League was born. There was a beautiful dark face, the face of a Muse—her sister, Margaret. There was her cousin May Nally, a little piquant French face. Constantly one sees those French faces in Ireland. She reproduced exactly the face of one of the actresses of the Comedie Francaise. Which? I cannot remember. Not Rejane, not Jeanne Granier. Who was the other great person with Sarah Bernhardt thirty years ago? I cannot remember.

I dare not say that this family group of girls—there were others, younger sisters, younger cousins, all beautiful and young—I dare not say it was typical. That would be too much.

But I think there are many family groups as remarkable to be found in Ireland.

I never visited, as I might have done, the Walshes' home at Balla, but I can reconstruct the life there as it had been with all those beautiful girls growing up—romantic, high-minded, full of poetry and ideals. They had lived amid the making of history, their own men, and the men who were their friends and lovers, already engaged in the making. It had been an idyllic life there in many ways. I remember one of the girls bursting into tears one day because some one sang the Kerry Dance, reminding her of the old days. They had a singular refinement, even elegance. I cannot imagine that the hard times had pinched them very severely. If they had known poverty, it had left no dreary traces upon them.

The one I knew best, Bee Walshe, was steeped to the lips in an ideal patriotism, which had very little to do with a movement *a servir*, such as the Land League was. She had read much poetry. I can remember her, in the dusk, reading English ballad-poetry to me with an ecstasy which forgot the flight of time. She was very religious, yet she had endured what was to happen to many Parnellite women later—the denunciations of the priests. The old parish priests, at least, Conservatives at heart and friends with the gentry, being men who had received a continental education and naturally gravitated towards the gentlefolk, were as bitter in denunciation of the Land League at the start as later priests were of Parnellism. It was some time before the priests were compelled to come into line, or to seem to acquiesce if they did not. At that time the difference between the priest who had been educated abroad and the Maynooth priest was very marked. There has been very much more of a levelling up in our own days.

In the Ladies' Land League I found a whole new world of interests. For one thing, I found there my first real touch with literature. There was another group of sisters as remarkable in their way as the Walshes and Nallys. In their house I really entered the literary atmosphere. One of them was Hannah Lynch, whose novels appealed to the discriminating. She was one of the few people I have known who eat,

drink and dream books, and not many can have given to literature a more passionate delight and devotion. They were all literary in so far as a devotion to literature goes; and the well-packed bookcases of the house filled with the great things were a wonder-world to me after my miscellaneous and very odd reading.

These sisters, with their mother, were quite at home amid the alarms and excursions of the Land League. Their father had been a Fenian, one of those useful ones who stood a little outside the danger zone, so to speak, and were in the counsels and confidence of the leaders. John C. Leary used to say of the Fenians: "We are not a transacting party." Still, a party, even of Fenians, must transact sometimes; and there are men still living in Dublin who, I think, were the safe depositories of Fenian transactions, and were free to transact, standing just outside the fighting line. This may or may not have been true of the father of my early friends. I do not remember that in their conversations they ever spoke of him as having been imprisoned; but he may have been. It was a commonplace at the time.

These girls grew up among the writers, thinkers, orators, politicians, conspirators of their day. The names that dropped from their tongues with an easy intimacy opened the doors of a wonder-world for me. They had grown up in the midst of affairs. Not only the men of the Irish movements were familiar to them from babyhood, but men of another reputation. Edmond O'Donovan, who had not so long before ridden to Merv, had grown up with them like a brother. They knew the whole brilliant Irish group of war-correspondents of those days. One feels now that there must have been a certain Parisian atmosphere in the Dublin of that time, so brilliant was its Bohemia. In Dublin the *Vie de Boheme* was quite in its place. In Fleet Street it could never have been so much at home, although John Augustus O'Shea and other Irish journalists kept the traditions of it there. One has to go back to the Elizabethans for the English *Vie de Boheme*. But in our own day and an earlier one, the influence of the ever-growing and expanding middle-class has made the Bohemian

spirit outcast even from Fleet Street, into which frock-coated, top-hatted respectability has overflowed from the City.

This family opened to me its hospitable doors. I learnt much from them. The mother was a woman of spirit and cleverness. She was very bookish: full of personality, and a perfect mine of stories about the men of the Forty-Eight, of the Fifties and Sixties. She used to drop words of wisdom into my receptive ears. From her I heard for the first time of the magnificences of the Old Testament in the Authorised Version. I heard from her that the translation was made by some great group of poets and scholars, whose names are unknown to us; that Shakespeare might have had a hand in it; that we Catholics were at a sad loss in not having been nourished on those Noble Numbers. She pointed out to me how much the great English writers derived from the Bible. All trite and commonplace, perhaps, to people concerned with literature; but to me it was a light. Not that it set me to reading the Bible; that was reserved for my maturer years. I believe I made one or two excursions into the Family Bible about this period, and was driven back by the terrible plain-speaking I chanced upon.

Somehow or somewhere—perhaps from my mother, perhaps from the convent school—I had derived more than a streak of Puritanism about my reading. My new friends had a catholic taste in reading. They were musicians, and they had languages. They had seen, were seeing a world far beyond my ken, for they had all gone to convent schools abroad, and after their schooldays they had gone to Spain and Austria and France and Italy as English governesses to the children of noble families. The noble families had treated their governesses with the most tender courtesy. Proud names—the Princess of this, the Marquis of that—prouder still even, came in the course of ordinary conversation. Imagine an inexperienced person like myself listening to sad tales or otherwise about lives or deaths of kings, from those who had actually spoken with a king. It was certainly bewildering and delightful.

Of the books I was introduced to by these early friends two or three stand out. Two were the *Anatomy of Melan-*

choly and the *Religio Medici*. I envied them reading George Sand in the French as easily as I could in the English. I had just enough French dimly to apprehend something I thought evil in a book by Michelet—*La Femme*, was it? I had taken it to bed with me one night, and coming upon a passage I did not like I got up very quietly, opened the door gently, and deposited the book in the passage. I had an idea that there was not room for my angel and Michelet in the little chamber where I slept. I told my hosts the next day, and I remember how they laughed at me.

In that same little narrow room in the kind hospitable house over against the Jesuits¹ Church in Upper Gardiner Street, Dublin, I lay the night before the execution of Myles Joyce for a murder of which the popular opinion of the day acquitted him, and heard in the darkness the short strokes of a spade all night as though someone dug a grave. It was not likely that anyone should be digging all night in Upper Gardiner Street, Dublin. But there it was all the same.

In the daytime at the League offices I was of those who addressed envelopes and wrote letters. After the "No Rent Manifesto" had been issued, grants were made to evicted tenants. I think they were sometimes allowed to pay and not be evicted if they paid "at the point of the bayonet"—that was the phrase: the Irish love a military phrase. In saying this I am ready to be corrected. I was only one of the rank and file, and a frivolous one. After thirty years my memory is not very sure.

I was present that winter at the trial of the men who were accused of murdering the Huddys, Lord Ardilaun's bailiffs, who were found in Lough Corrib, tied up in sacks. An Irish Judge has told me since that the elder Huddy was the bailiff. He was feared of delivering his notices to quit to the wild people and took his young grandson of twelve with him to soften their hearts. Both were murdered. An anonymous letter came to the police telling the exact spot where the bodies would be found. He described for me the strange wildness of the scene when the police-boats went out at night dragging the Lough **for** the dead bodies. We went to the

trial. I wonder now how I endured it. For some reason or other while we waited we were put in the waiting-room with the wives and families of the accused men, Irish-speaking peasants of the Western seaboard—dark,, tragic, handsome, the whole sorrow of the world in their desolate faces.

I don't think anyone wanted to be jurymen in those wild times, more especially when the outrages began in Dublin—the work of the Invincibles. So well was the secret of the Invincibles kept that at that time no one suspected the existence of a secret society in Dublin—other than the Fenianism which was always going on; but Fenianism was a high-minded, clean-handed Quixotism, very unlike the conspiracy hatched by James Carey. Indeed, the Fenians more than looked askance at the Land League. They looked on it as a demoralising, debasing agitation; and doubtless in many ways it did not make for high-mindedness. I cannot imagine that Mr. Parnell was ever much in love with it, except as a weapon to his hand—the matter that must be settled before the country could set out on a higher adventure. No one, at least no one I knew at the time, suspected the Invincibles. Indeed, I had been assured by these who ought to know—it was a commonplace of the time—that the Land League had killed the secret societies, the evil having come to the surface healthily. Therefore when the outrages began in Dublin, when a man was murdered under the railway arch in Seville Place, when there was another murder or attempted murder at the corner of Abbey Street at the busiest hour of the winter afternoon, when Mr. Field, a jurymen, was stabbed as he went home to his house in North Frederick Street, peaceful citizens might well begin to be afraid. There was a horrible series of murders and hangings in that first year of the eighties. There were many winter mornings when one awoke to the horrible thought that there was a hanging at Kilmainham Jail. Once I had the misfortune on the night before a hanging to sleep at a friend's house, and being insufficiently provided with bed-clothes and the night cold as it seldom is in Ireland, to lie awake all night shivering before the thought of the dawn and the condemned wretch in his cell.

I saw more than one murder trial in Green Street. I suppose it was the psychology of the crowd that carried me thither and kept me there. I remember those Irish-speaking prisoners who stood in the dock, their arms outstretched in the form of a cross, while the sentence was passed in a tongue of which they did not understand a word, after a trial in the same strange speech.

Once I met my father on the stairs of Green Street Courthouse. He had escaped serving as a juryman by urging a conscientious objection to hanging. "It seems to me, my Lord," he said, "that you could not make a worse use of a man than to hang him." He was triumphant as he went down the stairs. Another time he was not so fortunate. Someone was being tried for murder, and he was on the jury. The conscientious man's mind was unsettled in those days by the rumours that flew about of the innocence of prisoners who seemed to have so little chance for their lives, seeing that only through an interpreter could they know the evidence against them or realise the sentence of death except by the judge's black cap. On this second occasion the trial fell through because of the disinclination of a humane Conservative to hang a man, which was so violent that he fell in a dead faint. There was a new jury to try the case, on which my father was not empanelled.

How glad I was on that first occasion to see him going out to his little pony and trap from the courthouse, back to his country life and pursuits. I was dreadfully afraid of danger for him: and he had nothing to do with the air of the shambles which rested upon Green Street at the time.

The Land League in those days was the expression of the Nationalist spirit in Ireland. I think a good many of us felt the uninspiringness of it, but there it was! And there was always Mr. Parnell and the other leaders to inspire us. Had not Mr. Parnell said in one of his public speeches that if it was only the land he would never have taken off his coat for this. I imagine a good many people besides my father and myself looked beyond the Land League to that for which Mr. Parnell had taken off his coat,

CHAPTER VIII

THE TROUBLED TIMES

TALKING of our presence at those murder trials it sounds as though we were a pack of *tricoteuses*, which shows the difficulty of getting inside the lives and environments of others.

As a matter of fact there were no furies in the Ladies¹ Land League. I am reminded of a very young Jesuit who once said with an alluring stutter, "We're supposed to be very d—d—dreadful fellows, but I assure you we're only a h—h—harmless pack of b—b—blithering idiots."

The psychology of the crowd might carry us to be present at murder trials. Within the League offices we were a harmless pack of very harmless girls and women. I fancy the compliments we sometimes received on our heroism must have been embarrassing to us. Certainly Miss Farnell was of the stuff of which heroines are made: perhaps she alone of us. And what soft, gentle stuff it was! This indomitable little woman used to come into the offices of a morning with gifts of cakes and sweets—sometimes delicately perfumed soap, eau-de-Cologne; something or other which had caught her attention as she passed the shops as being calculated to please the feminine mind.

She used to distribute her gifts with a shy beneficence, putting something down quickly on the table and turning away. She apparently found nothing amiss with her helpers. She had a generous, innocent delight in their good looks when they possessed them, and was quick to discover beauty where perhaps no one else would have found it.

One would have said she was masculine if she had not been so feminine. The small pale face, strangely attractive, was very sensitive, somewhat nervous. Varying expressions flitted

over it, troubling it a second before passing. Her hair was very soft and fine, a sure index to a sensitive nature. She had something of Mr. Parnell's charming voice: I use the adjective in its particular application: and she had his refined, deliberate pronunciation.

I remember one winter morning, the streets full of a frosty mist, when I was at the League early, so I must have stayed with my friends overnight. We always kept roaring fires at the offices, and it was pleasant to come into the rooms from the street.

In came Miss Parnell. She used to walk down from Hume Street every morning. She lived then at No. 7 Hume Street. She came in with her curiously gentle, gliding pace, in her neat dress, the very embodiment, one would have said, of a delicate austere lady just verging on spinsterhood.

We hardly looked up as she came in. She did not expect much notice to be taken of her.

On this occasion she spoke very quietly, but there was a subdued excitement in her face and manner.

"I met Lord Spencer in Westmoreland Street," she said. "He was riding with his escort. I went out into the roadway and stopped his horse. 'What do you mean, Lord Spencer,' I said, 'by interfering with the houses I am building for evicted tenants?' He only stared at me and muttered something, lifting his hat. I held his horse by the head-piece till he heard me. Then I went back to the pavement."¹¹

We were thunderstruck at the danger she had run. One who could speak very freely to her said: "But, Miss Parnell, they might have cut you down! Their duty was to protect Lord Spencer. It was a mad thing to do."

"I had to tell him," she said, "that he ought not to interfere with the housing of the evicted tenants."

Lord Spencer riding through Dublin streets at that time in the midst of an armed guard, was a familiar and melancholy sight. The sad thing was that in his first Viceroyalty he and his beautiful Countess, "Spencer's Fairy Queen" as the Irish loved to call her, had been very popular. Now he was no longer the Red Earl to the Dublin populace. He was "Foxy

Jack." He was received in the streets for the most part with a sullen silence, broken by an occasional hiss. When someone saluted him his weary face lifted and he returned the salute with effusiveness. He was not the first nor the last amiable and high-minded English gentleman to have his heart broken by the hatred of the Irish.

To me the memory of the League rooms in those days has something of the effect of an agreeable picnic. Unless someone took me home to lunch I did not bother about the meal. Very few girls of that day in Ireland bothered about solid meals. There was something much more delightful. There was a bounteous tea with abundant hot tea-cakes, bread and butter, and such contributions as anyone was minded to make. The contributions usually took the form of jam puffs. As I gave my services, such as they were, free, I was the guest of the League. I used to do very comfortably on hot tea-cakes and tea, much preferring them to anything more substantial. Occasionally some conscientious person would give me a solid lunch, or at least something more solid than tea-cakes and tea; but I never wished for it.

The hot tea-cakes were the contribution of a member of the League whose father was the owner of a Dublin bakery. The tea was contributed by another member, whose husband was a partner in a big wholesale grocery business. It used to be a bright spot in the day that saw the preparation for tea in an upstairs room with cupboards around the walls.

Occasionally those of us who were not of the regular staff went off on our own business or pleasure. I and one of the younger ones of the bookish family used to go occasionally to the Royal Dublin Society's library in Leinster House, get out volumes of poems, chiefly modern, and devour them.

That was before the library and reading-room were housed in their present building. Except for the books on the shelves around the walls, the rooms were much the same as when the Leinster family had lived there. In the old brown dim rooms one might look up at any moment and see a ghost—the radiant beloved ghost of Lord Edward himself perhaps; or Pamela, beautiful and young; or the Duchess, Lord Edward's mother;

or Lady Sarah Lennox—any one of the fine spirits by whom the old house must be haunted.

No fine modern building will ever replace the strange delightful homeliness of that reading-room. There were two reading-rooms, properly speaking, for ladies. You entered the old house through the courtyard, which you might imagine crowded by ghostly coaches and sedans: link-boys running in the winter darkness with their trail of light: chairmen shouting: the big house flaming with lights: the coaches and chairs driving up and depositing their burdens.

You passed under the very porch which had received the beauty, the wit, the greatness of the eighteenth century, and leaving the general reading-room on the left—as far as one could see through the half-glass door it was always crowded—you went up a stair, under a ceiling, by walls, stuccoed and gilt in the manner of the Irish Renaissance of the great years before the Rebellion and the Union.

Whatever the men might do in the way of reading—a large proportion of them might have been only looking at the sporting-tips or the cricket, but I think not, since the Royal Dublin Society rooms were used by a more serious class—feminine Dublin read as little then as it does to-day. You passed along a high, twisting, narrow corridor, lined to the dim richness of the ceiling with books, and you came to the door of the ladies' reading-room. There was always a roaring fire in the outer room. The chairs were comfortable. The foot, coming in from Dublin's dreadfully muddy winter streets, sank in old rich carpets. The rooms were lit by deep eighteenth-century windows from floor to ceiling. A few portraits hung above the fireplace, among the books. There you were coming in from the wind-swept, rain-swept streets a guest in the house of a great family, in that delightful manner of being so completely at home that you might do exactly as you liked in the absence of your hosts. For hours you might be absolutely alone, except for the ghosts in that delightful library. Feminine Dublin nowadays might perhaps come in and ask for the last tenth-rate London success. No one came novel-hunting in those days. Perhaps *the* austere beautiful air of the place forbade it.

Perhaps the trumpery of a day was not to be found on those shelves. Certainly it was not on the shelves of those two rooms. I never took a book from their shelves. I wish I had now. They were such books as might have belonged to the Leinster family, old calf-bound, vellum-bound stately volumes.

Now and again there was a serious reader. There were always one or two old ladies who lived and dozed away their days there. They did their simple cooking over the beautiful brass-lined fireplaces, no one gainsaying them. I don't think they ever read. They slept between their meals. Sometimes they woke up and knitted for a while before sleeping again. They disturbed one no more than the ghosts.

When you wanted a book you went out and touched an electric bell in the corridor. Presently a gentlemanly young man who looked as though he were a perfectly trained servant to the Muses would come soft-foot along the corridor, take your behests in a whisper and go his way. When he brought your book he knocked softly at the half-glass door, his eyes a miracle of discretion. That reading-room had a convent-like air of enclosure. Rarely, rarely came a librarian, and then with the deepest air of apology, an air that assured you he saw nothing—climbing a high library ladder to get a book from the upper shelves.

Is there anywhere now such a refuge as this from the wind-swept, rain-swept winter streets? A fig for your great rotundas with their promiscuity of reading and readers! In those dim, lovely old rooms there was the very *vie intime* of the immortals who had lived there. You felt their exquisite influences in the air, all around you. You met them in the corridors: empty chairs creaked as they sat down and rose up. What a place to escape to from things that galled and fretted!

It must have been there that I learnt to adore Lord Edward Fitzgerald. He must have leant over me in some dim afternoon of shadows and made me his liege-woman so long as I should live.

How much I owe to the bookish family who led me there! In the ordinary course of things I should never have found my way there alone. The Royal Dublin Society was at that time

very much the appanage of the Ascendancy in Dublin. The bookish family, being travelled and adventurous, had no hesitation in entering there and taking me with them. Oh indeed, I thank them with all my heart. What subtle processes of education went on in my mind and heart in that lost paradise I cannot say.

I read all the modern poetry I could lay my hands upon. I read Swinburne from end to end, and was at once alarmed and fascinated by him. It was hardly in the picture that I should have been reading Swinburne in those old rooms. I ought to have gone to the shelves and taken down some book which Lord Edward's own hand might have touched and consecrated. But I was starved for poetry. The fascination of Swinburne, Morris, Rossetti, was yet about us. Poetry was being read by anybody who had pretensions to taste. The young men at Oxford and Cambridge were reading poetry, as were their sisters in parsonages and the houses of the professional classes. No such deadly blight lay upon poetry then as has fallen upon it after the South African War. Even in non-reading Dublin—in the most unexpected places, you would find a Tennyson.

In those rooms I suppose the puritanical conscience was quiet since I read my Swinburne. Outside it reasserted itself. Once, with the proceeds of a poem, I bought the latest Swinburne, "*Tristram of Lyonesse*," but afterwards found it a burden to my conscience. Dr. Joseph Kenny, one of the kindest, dearest men Ireland ever produced, discovering my scruple, took the book from me, sending me to a bookseller's to select what I liked in its place. I do not know what I selected. I daresay it was not half as good, for I was still in a very undeveloped state as regards my reading.

The member of the bookish family who was my special friend gave me in those days a Tennyson, which, I think, must have been among the very beginnings of my book-shelf.

Other expeditions we made besides those reading ones. We visited political prisoners at Kilmainham Jail. Once I accompanied one of the practical people to see Mr. Parnell. It was the first time I had come face to face with him. We interviewed him, he standing in a sort of cage between two warders.

Everything that was said was listened to by them. I stood in the background. I remember his direct sweeping glance towards me. It said he recognised you once and for all. He had an extraordinary gift of prescience. I wonder whether in those days he had an instinctive knowledge of those who were to stand by him in the days of his fall and of his greatness.

I had no part in the conversation. I merely stood aside. Only one bit of the conversation remains in my memory. Hugh Gaffhey, the son of the housekeeper at Avondale, a singularly gentle youth whose precision used to amuse us at the League where he acted as a sort of confidential messenger, had been arrested that morning as a suspect.

"Poor boy!" said Mr. Parnell with his delicate deliberateness, "his mother will have chills and fever."

Those Gaffheys, by the way, had had their part in shaping the life and character of Mr. Parnell. How many Irish rebels have been made by the tales of their nurses! Old Gaffhey at the gate-lodge at Avondale was old enough to remember the Rebellion. He used to tell how a rebel named Byrne was flogged from the mill to the old sentry-box in Rathdrum by the orders of a savage named Colonel Yeo. How this gallant gentleman ordered the lashes to be inflicted on the front part of the body instead of the back; how the bowels protruded as the man ran stumbling and shrieking, "For the love of God have mercy on me, Colonel Yeo"; how the savagery was not abated till he died.

In this story told by old Gaffhey, the gatekeeper at Avondale, to the grooving boy—Mr. Parnell used to tell it without apparent emotion—lay the genesis of a great Irish rebel.

It was certainly not dull in those days at the League offices. All manner of visitors used to come in. Now it would be a crowd of released suspects from the west or south, wild as mountain ponies, at once friendly and abashed. Such Members of Parliament as were not in jail or in London visited us from time to time. Mr. Edmund Leamy, one of the most delightful personalities of the movement—I am not sure that he was in Parliament at that time—used to come in, ruddy, blue-eyed, black-haired, and sit, his glass in his eye, talking, occa-

sionally letting the glass rest absently on some particularly pretty girl. Mr. John Redmond was a frequent visitor, and very pleasant and courteous he was, as he is, and very good to look at. There too came Mr. James Carew, debonair, fair, charming. I should not like to say that these visits did not make a purple patch for some of us.

Another visitor I remember was a Russian princess. She had been Molly Kelly, or something equally Irish, from Cork or Waterford, before she went as English governess to the children of a widowed Prince Paul or Dmitri, who fell in love with her blue Irish eyes and soft Irish ways and gave her the incredible promotion of making her his princess. There was nothing at all of the haughty aristocrat about her as she talked to the girls whose lives had up to a point followed the same course as her own. Indeed I have an idea that she enjoyed being just Molly again.

When Mr. Parnell was not in Kilmainham he too visited the League rooms. There was an electrical quality in the air when he was in the room. You might sit like a mouse and looking up suddenly his eyes would seem to be upon you, which was most disconcerting. But he really was not aware at the moment of your insignificance. He was looking inward, somewhere where you could not follow him.

I remember once that an energetic lady, who was our honorary treasurer, rebuked him because he came in like a conspirator wrapped in an old coat with capes, and a cap drawn down over his eyes. She told him it was no proper attire for the Uncrowned King of Ireland to wear. I think he only smiled with a grim amusement.

I remember to have been present in the Court of Queen's Bench at the State trial of Mr. Parnell, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Biggar, and others for conspiracy. It was a trial that lasted twenty days and ended in a disagreement of the jury. That was in 1880.

It must have been after Mr. Parnell's release from Kilmainham that the situation became difficult between himself and Miss Parnell as President of the Ladies' Land League. It may be conceded, now frankly that he detested the organisation,

that in the hands of the sister as like him as a woman can be like a man it had taken a course of its own and one in many ways opposed to his wishes and policy. I think he froze the organisation out of existence by refusing further supplies. He simply would not answer letters, sign cheques, or do anything else demanded of him. At this time he had entered on his phase of a strange and somewhat eccentric behaviour, partly due to ill-health, partly doubtless because of his relations with the lady who was afterwards his wife. This does not pretend to be a history, but a thing of shreds and patches. Perhaps it was much later that I was aware of a letter written by him to a lady whom he considered instrumental in spreading the scandal about him and Mrs. O'Shea. I heard the letter read, and it was such that I shivered as though the lash had fallen on my own back instead of that of the unfortunate recipient. It was a masterpiece of dignified and terrible rebuke.

Other things I remember before he had quarrelled with his sister over the Ladies¹ Land League—a piteous thing, for they were devoted to each other—before he had entered on those years in which he was or seemed a *roi faineant*, when it became possible for people to say that his lieutenants were greater than he and that his power was tottering to its fall.

A new friend of those days, one of the friends whom my poetry had begun to make for me, told me about this time that at her sister's house in London she had heard Sir Charles Dilke prophesy the downfall of Parnell and that he would be replaced by Timothy Healy. "I detested him," she said, "sitting there in a chair and looking like a malevolent monkey as he sat and rubbed his hands together saying that Mr. Parnell was nothing at all and that Healy was the man."

This was probably some years later, but there was as yet no hint of Mr. Parnell and the Divorce Court. Sir Charles Dilke's overwhelming disgrace was over and done with long before there was a thought of the Parnell disaster.

CHAPTER IX

1882-83

MY father was still engaged in coming and going between Ireland and the cattle markets of Great Britain when, on a lovely May Sunday of 1882, he arrived home with a white face and news of a terrible calamity. His little pony and trap had gone to meet him as usual at the North Wall boat which came in then at six o'clock in the morning. Driving home through the Phoenix Park he had come upon the cordon of police drawn about the blood-stained spot where Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke had been murdered on the previous evening.

We had all been rejoicing over the Kilmainham Treaty, the release of the political prisoners, and the good times that were coming. That was Black Sunday in Dublin. White faces everywhere: men talking in whispers: a black pall over the town. Nine years later we were to have another Black Sunday: but, oh, that was lifted by our tears. Love, even love in ruins and weeping, anger and the passion for revenge upheld us. Once again the stars in their courses had fought against Ireland. From an unknown source, out of the void, had come the hand with the knife that had slain the *new* hope in Ireland as surely and ruthlessly as it had hacked Lord Frederick Cavendish to death. Dublin was stunned.

Our first thought was of the other Irish in England. England had grown accustomed to wild doings in Ireland. It was not now a question of an out-at-elbows, scarecrow, Irish landlord, not even of an Irish official. It was not now a matter of Irishmen settling a bloody account with each other. Oh, no; it was now the fine flower of English aristocracy, a man humane, gentle, high-minded, come to Ireland as a friend with a message

of peace, in a moment of forgiveness, of undoing of old evil. The good days had just about to begin. And there was the ambassador of peace lying hacked to death within a few hours of his arrival in Dublin.

I think the most anti-English of us had a sick sense of guilt in those first hours. We felt the blood was on our hands. The murders followed hard on a newspaper article which talked about the extermination of the Castle rats. Never were curses brought home to roost so suddenly and dramatically.

I remember mooning about the hedgerows feeling the very sunlight sick. All the innocent delights of the fields had blood upon them. I must have returned to the house white-faced, for a sympathetic peasant woman said to me: "Don't take it so much to heart, avourneen. Sure it isn't the dead that's most to be pitied, God help them!"

"God help the Irish in England!"

We said that to each other often in the days that followed when the air seemed full of blood and the brotherliness and sympathy were changed to sullenness and hatred and desire for revenge. For once again Ireland was thrown back into the melting-pot; there was to be another more drastic Crimes Act, and the atmosphere was charged with pessimism and despair.

One element in the feeling of that day was that the Irish sense of hospitality was outraged by the death of Lord Frederick Cavendish. How many laments I heard during those days from simple people over the misfortune that it should have been he—just he—the English gentleman, and that he should have fought with his one drab weapon, his umbrella, against the knives that were meant not for him but for the Irish Under-Secretary.

Michael Davitt had just been released from Portland. Mr. Parnell had gone to meet him and they were together at the Westminster Palace Hotel when the news reached them. Michael Davitt said to me afterwards that the hardest thing that fell to him to do in his life was to walk into the dining-room of the hotel for breakfast and meet the swift flaming

hatred of the English eyes. He and Mr. Parneli went in together. He said that the ordeal was as hard for one as the other. "I had a revolver in my pocket," he added, "and if I had been attacked I should have defended myself."

One remembers the search for the weapons, for the murderers, and how the hue and cry was at fault for many days. Now on that fatal evening of the 6th of May a young brother and sister of mine were walking home from Dublin to our house at Clondalkin. They came by quiet winding lanes. In one of the lanes they were pushed back to the wall by a car-load of men driven furiously and presenting a wild and disordered aspect. As a matter of fact they were all but run down by the car. After they had recovered their fright they proceeded on their way. Coming upon a little river which crossed the road, the Cool fan River, between Red Cow village and Ballymount Lane, they were aware of the same party. The car was pulled up and some of the men were down washing something in the stream. They held back until the car had gone on its way. They were afraid. They said afterwards that the clear water had been lightly tinged with blood. They had seen the washing of the knives.

On the morning of Sunday, May the 7th, there was found in the letter-box of a Dublin newspaper a letter containing the full details of the crime by one of the murderers—unsigned, of course. At the time it was thrown aside, being taken for a piece of spoof. It did not disappear, however, and later on its genuineness was discovered and the document given up to Dublin Castle. What spirit of bravado was it, what impulse to confession, prompted the writing of that letter, at such length, with such circumstance, within a few hours of the crime being committed?

None of us associated with the murders James Carey, a red-bearded man who was something of a demagogue in the Dublin Corporation of those days. I do not think he belonged to the Land League. He was a sort of socialist person. But he certainly attended the Conventions of those days, and at a very crowded one in the Ancient Concert rooms I, sitting in the gallery, had James Carey leaning over

my chair, his breath on the back of my neck, for a whole sitting.

He was the worst type of conspirator. I know nothing of his motives, so I shall say nothing: but he used the cloak of religion to cover his schemes. Or—who knows?—his religion may have been genuine enough of its kind, although in his case it must have been a debased kind. He was president of the Sodality—*Le.* a religious guild or body of men attached to his parish church—and he was ostensibly deeply attached to religion while he was seducing the men he afterwards betrayed.

That was a horrible time when the trials of the Invincibles began. There was something of a terror in Dublin. I remember someone sharply rebuking me when, passing by James Mulletts shop in Dorset Street, I pointed it out as belonging to an Invincible. "Do you want to get a knife in you?" she asked.

One remembers the terrible dramatic scene when James Carey appeared on the witness-table to swear away the lives of his dupes. He was closely guarded. The dock was surrounded by armed warders and police. Nevertheless he might have been torn to pieces by the prisoners in the dock, who fought furiously to reach him through the cordon of warders and police, for Joe Brady was at his throat before he was overpowered. If Joe Brady's lingers had been in time (VDonnell need not have swung.

That was indeed a terrible summer in Ireland. Once I was in the Inchicore tram, which runs through the poorest part of Dublin and is much, almost entirely, used by the people, when I had this adventure:

The tram was crowded as it usually was. It pulled up somewhere about Thomas Street, that most consecrated street of Dublin where Emmet was captured and died, within sight of which Lord Edward was taken and received the wounds from which he died. A woman with a coarse red face, a child hanging to her skirts, got in. A hubbub broke out in the tram. There were demands for her expulsion. The bewildered conductor pleaded that he could not expel anyone

who behaved properly and paid his or her fare. The tram went on again. The woman, scowling, retreated into her corner, from which the other people held aloof. The most violent of the objectors had left the tram to wait for another. I sat opposite the woman and could ask no questions. She alighted at one of a little red-brick row of houses, just under the shadow of Kilmainham Jail. It was a dreadful little house with a dirty curtain pulled askew over the uncleaned window. Some women cursed as she went out: one or two spat after her. It was James Carey's wretched wife.

Poor creature! An old lady, the daughter of an Irish judge long dead, gave me this reminiscence a couple of years ago: Mrs. Carey was a friend of a nurse in the employment of the family. Following the condemnation of the Invincibles, Mrs. Carey came to her by stealth. "For God's sake," she said, "if you have anything good about you give it to me, for we sail to-night."¹¹ The nurse gave her a rosary beads and some religious medals and she went away with them. Poor creature, indeed !

I remember, when the news came of James Carey's having been shot by O'Donnell on the steamer going out to Cape Town, that everyone thought it a most righteous deed. We all hoped and prayed that O'Donnell would not suffer for his act. We thought of him as a sort of male Charlotte Corday. I think he was something of a popular hero for the moment. Years later, before the demolition of Old Newgate Prison, when I stood in the grim alley called Birdcage Walk, which was the cemetery of the hanged, I saw "O'D." scratched on the wall.

Somewhere Mr. Timothy Healy has spoken of Earl Spencer's three years' agony in Ireland. Looking back, I doubt if the Irish ever really hated Lord Spencer. They hated Mr. Forster; but somehow the solitary red-bearded man who rode so sadly through the streets of Dublin, guarded like an enemy, made an appeal to their imaginations. The Irish have their strange compunctions and sensitivenesses. I don't think an ugly man, or an ugly woman, for the matter of that, is gilded for them by any circumstances. They remembered Lord

Spencer in the gaiety and brilliance of his former Viceroyalty—young, splendid, and acclaimed, with his beautiful wife by his side; and while they called him "Foxy Jack," they were sorry for him. There was nothing middle-class about Lord Spencer. I think, when the day came for him to forgive the three years' agony, and with a great generosity to range himself on the side of the Irish, they were very glad to go back to calling him the Red Earl, enjoying the picturesqueness of the title. Mr. William O'Brien's characteristically exuberant remark, in the day of the Union of Hearts, about blacking Lord Spencer's boots, represented a real repentance in the hearts of the Irish. I was through the troubled days in Ireland, and I can honestly say that, while the politicians and the newspapers raved against Lord Spencer, I never heard anyone of those in the movement say a single word against him in private.

When was it in those troubled years that King Edward and Queen Alexandra came to Ireland, and there was trouble at Mallow Station while their train was held up. What I have said about Lord Spencer recalls this to me. The populace were very disaffected just then, but not towards the Prince and Princess of Wales, as they then were. I stood in Castle Street, caught accidentally in a crowd, while their carriage passed, and I heard the people bless the Princess's lovely face, because beauty always has its strong personal appeal for the Irish. I remember a rather violent Nationalist stating at that time that the Princess of Wales always looked frightened, and was afraid of the Irish. "A pity," he said, "for there is no one in Ireland who would hurt a hair of her head."

Perhaps the breach between Mr. Parnell and his sister over the Ladies' Land League was never completely healed on this side the grave. She was one of the few women of her day who had the heart of a revolutionary; and yet how simple, how kind, how gentle, how noble were all her ways and thoughts. The result of the breach with her brother was to make her more than ever a solitary. Probably she was a solitary by nature, but during those strenuous years

she came out of her hermitage and made friends. She had a delightful laugh, clear, ringing, soft, as she had a voice delicate and distinguished, like her brother's. A gentle, shy-looking, little lady, with a delicately pretty face and an air of extreme quietness, she had the heart of a Joan of Arc. She was capable of all that makes for heroism. She had a very delightful sense of humour, and people used to tell her stories for the pleasure of capturing her laughter. Once in my presence something rather coarse was told her. She seemed as though she did not hear. Too great-minded in a way to utter a rebuke, her silence was the most perfect rebuke, and one really felt sorry for the culprit.

In 1882 her sister Fanny died suddenly. I cannot say if religion influenced her at all, or if she was anything but a gentle Stoic. She took the death of her sister badly, with a fierce grief. I heard of her walking up and down, up and down, her rooms at Hume Street, with a swift impatient anguish, now and again turning to the one she allowed to be with her and demanding comfort. "Do you believe that the dead live somewhere? Do you believe that we see them again?" The one who was with her, a clever erratic girl, sought to comfort her with the belief of all times and all peoples in some sort of resurrection of the dead. Perhaps it was not enough: perhaps she wanted more than that, the strong, personal belief to warm her cold heart by.

She was my visitor some time that year, or the year afterwards, at my old home. I remember that we walked in the fields, early summer fields, and that there was a mackerel sky, for she pointed it out, and we wondered if rain was coming. Just as she delighted in the personal beauty of the girls she had drawn about her she delighted in gifts. She was interested in the mental as well as the physical gifts, and I remember that she talked about my poetry, and suggested to me that I should write novels like Kingsley's, into which poetry came. At this time my novel-writing was far away. She dressed very simply herself, yet with a certain elegance; and she had a most feminine interest in the garments of her friends. She was generous in her

9 8 *Twenty-five Tears*

admirations as she was in all else; and one girl who had a humble opinion of her own attractiveness was touched to sheer sharp pleasure by a speech of Miss Parnell's repeated to her which was too kind.

One thinks of her fading further and further away from the actual world. She glided through life as someone who had very little to do with the hard facts of it; and yet she was exquisitely human. Her life ought to have been written, for she was a great woman, and yet I think she herself would have preferred that her name be writ in water.

One little thing about her that was very characteristic was the way she came and went alone. In Dublin at that day it was a convention that no lady unaccompanied should walk through at least the centre of the town after certain hours. Grafton Street especially was a street in which it would be a scandal for a lady to appear unaccompanied after the shops were closed. But Grafton Street lay in the direct path between the League Offices in Upper Sackville Street and Hume Street. So she took it. Perhaps she was unaware of the convention, or despised it. Anyhow, you might have come upon her quite late in the evening—when even accompanied one did not care very much for Grafton Street; for the convention left it largely to undesirables, of one sex at all events—gliding like a swift shadow on her way, apart in the hustling and rowdy crowd, quite alone, remote, wrapt away in her own thoughts. She was a fiery-hearted vestal. Under her delicate, shy coldness, she hid passion and gentleness.

The last time I ever saw her was in 1889. She had a gift of painting, and found much solace in it. Visiting the New Gallery in Regent Street in the summer of that year, in company with W. B. Yeats, I came upon her, rapt in contemplation of a picture. We stood and talked for a few minutes. She told me that she had come from Cornwall, where she had been painting. I suppose she was short-sighted, for she took my companion to be Mr. John Dillon, a most unlikely thing. She was very much interested in finding who it was.

Before I finish with the Ladies' Land League, I must make a reference to some of its activities which used to awake my deepest admiration. On the suppression of United Ireland, or perhaps on the arrest of its staff, the Ladies' Land League undertook to bring out the paper, which it did for some two or three weeks. When it was no longer possible, Hannah Lynch carried over the type to Paris, and the paper was issued from there. I remember going in and out of the offices in Lower Abbey Street, where the women, girls rather, were in command both in the editorial rooms and the counting house. Those were the days when a ragged urchin would dart round a street corner, and slip a *Suppressed United Ireland* into your hand, and fly before the approach of a policeman. The ballad-singers used to sing a street song, of which I remember only a bit of the chorus:—

" He loved his country well,
And now he's in Kilmainham Jail,
Brave Charles Stewart Parnell."

This ballad was sung spasmodically between rushes from the police.

One night I was staying with the Walshe sisters, Margaret already being in bed, I preparing to go to mine, talking over the fire in Margaret's room, when Bee entered. " Miss Parnell wants you to go to Paris," she said to her sister. " When?" " Now, to-night: this minute. Hurry, hurry, hurry!" A minute later: " What are you fumbling over? You'll miss the boat." Margaret, pathetically: " Do light a candle, Bee-eeen. I can't find my stockings by this light." " Go without your stockings then," said Bee.

As I have said, I was a most unserious member of the League. I was in its friendships and affections, but not in its counsels. Hence the desultoriness and unimportance of these scraps of memories.

In that year of 1883—was it the winter of 1882-83?—Michael Davitt was sent to Kilmainham for six months. My father and I used to visit him weekly. He always said that his first visit after his release should be to us. I think it must

have been an afternoon of summer when he came, for I remember that one of my sisters was working in the garden, wearing a sun-bonnet and tried not to be seen, but he insisted on seeing her and being introduced to her. She was a very pretty girl, and he was much taken with her. He wrote after his visit that one of his great pleasures had been to draw out of her shyness a charming and modest little gardener. They were rather susceptible, the political Irishmen of those days. I envied my sister his obvious admiration: but she did not care about it. It is not to every girl that a one-armed man is transfigured because he is a hero.

Another of my memories of 1883 is of the banquet following the Parnell Tribute. I was in the gallery with other women watching the *men* feast in the Hound Room of the Rotunda. What barbarous days! I rather imagine that some refreshments were handed up by athletic males to some of their feminine belongings. I believe we could get tea. But I was at an age, of a people, to which food is a very secondary matter.

Mr. Barry O'Brien tells us that the £40,000 Tribute was presented at Morrison's Hotel, Dublin, a couple of days before the banquet, else I should have been sure that I saw the cheque presented at the banquet. Was it the illuminated address of which I have a photographic reproduction, or does memory play me a trick? I certainly think I saw something presented. The £40,000, which was to clear away Mr. Parnell's financial embarrassments, was presented by a Lord Mayor who had not only literary gifts, but a pretty taste in the Classics. It was reported of him that he said he read a page of Sappho every morning before breakfast; but that doubtless was a lively invention of the capital that vies with Paris and Athens in its carrying of the news, and cares little for accuracy so long as it may laugh. Mr. Parnell interrupted him, just as the oration began to roll from his lips, with: "Is this cheque for me?" "Yes, Mr. Parnell." "Ah, is it made payable to bearer?" Mr. Barry O'Brien tells this story solemnly. I have always heard it told as an example of saturnine humour on Mr. Parnell's part.

There was a song of the dramatic arrest of Mr. Parnell which used to be sung in Dublin at many social gatherings before the time came when it would have been a profanation to sing it—adapted, I believe, from Mr. A. D. Godley. I give it here as a curiosity, since none had the heart to sing it after 1891:

" Come all thrue-hearted pathriots who Ireland's wrongs deplore,
I'll tell yez of the cruellest wrong that ever was done before;
Before this wrong all other wrongs of Ireland do grow pale,
For they've locked the Pride of Erian's Isle into dark Kilmainham
jail.

It was the tyrant Gladstone, an' he said unto himself,
I never will be aisy till Parnell is on the shelf;
Make haste and get the warrant out and take it be the mail,
For we'll lock the Pride of Erian's Isle into dark Kilmainham
jail.

So Buckshot made the warrant out, and buttoned up his coat ;
He took the train at London town to catch the Kingstown boat.
The weather it was rather rough, and he was feelin' queer,
When Mallon and the polis came to meet him on the pier.

But calmly slept the pathriot, for he was kilt wid work,
Haranguin' of the multitude in limerick and Cork;
When Mallon an' the polis came and rang the front-door bell,
Disturbin' of his slumbers in bould Morrison's Hotel.

Then up and spoke bould Morrison—' Get up your sowl an' run,
An' bright shall shine in history's page the name of Morrison.
There's Mallon waitin' at the door wid fifty min an' more,
Get up your sowl, put on your shirt, out be the kitchen door.'

But proudly flashed the pathriot's eye as he sternly answered
'No.'

'Twill never be said that Parnell turned his back upon the foe.
Parnell aboo for liberty! 'Tis all the same, says he,
For Mallon has locked the kitchen dure and taken away the
key.

They took him and they bound him then, those minions of the
law,

'Twas Pat the Boots was lookin' on, an' he tould me all he saw;
But divil a foot the Pathriot would stir from there until
They granted him a ten per cent, reduction on his bill.

Had I been there with odds behind of forty or more to one,
It makes my blood run cowld to think o' the deeds I might have
done;

It isn't here to-night I'd be a-tellin' a dismal tale,
How they locked the Pride of Erian's Isle into dark Kilmaiiihaiu
jail."

CHAPTER X

EARLY FRIENDS

I WILL now hark back to the beginnings of my own literary career, in which at least I had a prominence not afforded me by politics. My first important literary event was the beginning of my friendship with Father Matthew Russell, S.J., the brother of the man who afterwards became Lord Chief Justice of England, a friendship happily unbroken for some two-and-thirty years, till this day when Father Russell, at the age of 78, is lying dangerously ill—with just the thinnest of divisions, as transparent as a sheet of white paper, between him and Heaven.¹

I had already gathered some few sheaves—a few poems in the *Graphic*, the sonnet in the *Spectator*, verses here and there in Dublin newspapers, when I had the happy thought, for me, of sending a poem to the *Irish Monthly*. It was a legend of a Dominican, Blessed James of Ulm, one of the stock of stories which I had gathered greedily during those bookless Convent school days, and the manner of it was founded on Longfellow's *Legend Beautiful*. I was then in the Longfellow stage. Indeed I remained in it for a long time, which shows that I retained my youthfulness for a long time. It must have been some time in the later eighties that, pointing out my books to W. B. Yeats, I remarked joyfully on my possession of Longfellow and Shelley—actually speaking the two names in the same breath. "Shelley, of course," said W. B. Yeats, "but why Longfellow?" I replied with some heat that I liked Longfellow, which was quite true. I belonged to a very unexacting set of young writers in Ireland to whom W. B. Yeats had not yet shown the way.

¹ Father Russell died on September 12, 1912.

However, fluent-feeble as my narrative poem was, there was something in it that pleased Father Russell. He published it in the *Irish Monthly*, and it was the precursor of several things of the same kind, which pleased my little circle very much. I think it must have been such things that engaged me as I sat, my head throbbing with neuralgia, in company with many volumes of magazines and a flowing bowl of watery lemonade. My father, of course, was particularly pleased, and somewhat amazed at these productions. I was rather offended when it was repeated to me that he had said to someone of a thing called "The Legend of the Sorrowful Mother," "Just think of Kate writing all that about babies—why, I never knew her to take any notice of a baby in her life." Which was quite true, but none the less unpalatable, since it pricked a hole in my sentiment.

Before I met Father Russell, I had visited, while in London in the autumn of 1880, Mr. Arthur Locker, my kind editor of the *Graphic*. I happened on a somewhat fortunate hour. The editor was free to see me and in a very good temper. He sent me away walking on air, for he had promised to send me pictures to write verses to and various other things. He spoke to me of the state of affairs in Ireland. English feeling was very much excited just then over murders and outrages in Ireland. He spoke of a landlord who had recently been shot, one of those strange people who, I think, existed nowhere outside Ireland. A man with a title, he led a most tatterdemalion existence. He was very poor and very eccentric. He drank hard and there were strange tales of his carousals with the police, and of how he and the police together would awake the village in the small hours, battering at the publican's door for more drink. He had an ancient barouche, in which the fowl lived unless his Lordship required it, when they would be evicted; and with very little trouble of cleaning-up, his Lordship would drive off to a fair, returning with the barouche full of his purchases—more fowl, a calf or two, perhaps a little pig. It was still Anglo-Ireland of the eighteenth century, of the Castle Rackrent period, that strange time of a wildness which was dull and an unhumorous humour, except

for the looker on, a racketing which was irresponsible yet never lighthearted. The Anglo-Irish squire of the eighteenth century lived in his cups, and his frolics were solemn-drunk.

The poor scarecrow lord ! I do not know what he had done to be shot. Yet, shot he was. Mr. Locker talked of him as though he were an English peer, a person of broad acres and great responsibilities. I said nothing. I had not the courage to avow that I was a member of the Land League, lest the whole fabric of our friendship, glistening-new, should tumble down.

Through Father Russell I made other literary friends. There was Miss Rosa Mulholland, his kinswoman, whom coming to know I worshipped whole-heartedly. I have often thought what a gain it was to me that I was brought up amid unliterary surroundings, since I came to the new life so freshly. Everybody who wrote was a wonder to me : an editor, even a Dublin one, was of the Olympians; as for a London editor he was unapproachable as a King. Miss Mulholland had contributed poems as a very young girl to the *Cornhill* of the great days about which yet the association of Thackeray lay as a veil of light. She had been most highly approved by Charles Dickens and had written more than one serial and many short stories for *All the Year Round*. She had studied art as a girl student, and Millais had been interested in her, in the first place because she had selected Ruth Millais as her pen-name, and had volunteered to illustrate her in the *Cornhill*. She had touched with high gods and goddesses. She had visited George Eliot. All this was so dazzling to me that I could scarcely bear the light which flowed upon me. I could scarcely believe in my own good fortune when I was admitted to Miss Mulholland's friendship. For her re-awoke the idealising passion which in my school-days I had given to my first love. I have had few things in my life more exquisite than those afternoons I used to spend with her, when, after a country walk, we would come back to tea to a room at the top of a house high up on the Northern outskirts of Dublin, *The* window had a screen of narcissi and green grass blown by the wind. Or

at least that is my memory of it. I suppose I must have been there in full summer, in winter. My memory is of a virginal April, young and a little cold, and the narcissi in the window boxes in bloom.

That I had those distractions accounts perhaps for my not being absorbed into the political life I touched with. That high room on the Northern outskirts of Dublin had a view of the country. We used to sit and talk of books and ourselves, discovering with amazement thoughts and feelings in common. Sometimes we had tea first and walked afterwards in the country through the Green Lanes of Clontarf, out by Glasnevin village with its memories of Mary Delany and her friends, Dean Swift, Lord Orrery, Sheridan: all the beaux and wits and scholars of the Dublin of the eighteenth century. On those occasions we used to come back to a tall red house on Drumcondra Hill, from the upper windows of which you saw the Bay of Dublin and Dublin in its smoke lying below your feet.

Some of the most beautiful memories of my girlhood, of my life, centre about that house, and about Mrs. Atkinson, who lived there and was my friend's dearest friend. We used to come home from our country walks to that high house, which was built upon a sort of causeway ascended by many steps from the sunken roadway. The steps up to the house were also steep, so that one had the impression of a house built high in air. Certainly they were high pure winds that blew about it. It was one of the old comfortable roomy houses of the latter end of the eighteenth century, probably built soon after the Renaissance under the Rutland Viceroyalty, which set the Irish Lords and Commons and Dublin generally to building and decorating like kings and princes.

My friend used to give three little sharp raps with her knuckles at her friend's door, and look at me with an eager air of expectancy. The signal was recognised: the door opened : we passed into an atmosphere which had something heavenly about it.

Sarah Atkinson was one of those saints of everyday life

whose sanctity manifests or develops itself in the ordinary human duties and ministrations. She was a woman of large intellect, and she had a grave, beautiful, sweetly-coloured face, with eyes which were homes of tranquillity. One could never imagine her being irritable or vexed by small things, any more than one could imagine her trivial or rancorous. She wrote a good deal, chiefly on the social and economical history of Ireland, and she did many good works. If she had been able to give herself to writing, she might have written us the history of Ireland we stand in need of. Mr. Lecky paid a warm tribute to her historical work. Her temperament, calm, dispassionate, was the ideal temperament for a historian.

That was a house in which one found the bookish atmosphere at its best, rarefied and sweetened by lofty spiritual faith and ideals. There were books everywhere, in the hall, around the rooms, in niches on the staircase. There were pictures and busts—many relics of foreign travel. I remember a colour print of the beautiful Visitation—of Luini, is it?—which met you when you entered the house. The meeting of the two Holy Women at their mysterious hour in that setting of a white loggia, with the ultramarine sky of Italy beyond the pillars, seemed to give a keynote to the feeling within those doors.

Mrs. Atkinson, when I went in the mornings, as I sometimes did, would be at her writing-table. I used to come in about twelve o'clock after a journey from the other side of the County Dublin, happy to be there and very hungry. Perhaps she knew how very happy I was to be there, for there was always a warm welcome, though now in my working years I feel that my coming must sometimes have been inopportune. I could stay as long as I would, but close on my appearance would follow a tray with my simple lunch, bread with a pat of butter, a dish of excellent jam, and a glass jug of milk. She knew that I must be hungry after my journey and an early breakfast, and the first thing she did was to feed me. Being fed—and the simple meal as I look back to it seems to have been a delicious one—she would talk and let me talk as long as I liked. If I was a bore I never suspected it; yet I was very thin-skinned, although I was as sure of the friendship of my world—so long

as it was friendly—as a puppy. With a puppy's adventurousness, too, I believe I had the sublime audacity to call on Mrs. Atkinson in the first place without introduction, although she had heard of me from Father Russell. I remember with what a beating heart I made the expedition, and the warm kindness which I found at its end. Ah, well! It is one of the terrible sadnesses of the world that such things and people must pass.

Mrs. Atkinson was married to a delightful old Dr. Atkinson, a good many years older than herself. He too was a great reader. He had been part proprietor of a Dublin daily paper, and had taken a certain dignified part in politics with O'Connell. He and Mrs. Atkinson represented the old-fashioned, dignified, high-minded Catholic party, the party which had flocked in later years round Isaac Butt's Home Rule movement. Turbulent Nationalist Ireland of the eighties called them Whigs. They were a sort of Girondists to the Reds of those days.

It was characteristic of them that when "respectable" Dublin, Catholic perhaps even more than Protestant, held aloof from the League and its doings, Dr. and Mrs. Atkinson, she with her impartial historical mind, had no word of condemnation. It was not vulgar to be a Leaguer in that house where an atmosphere of high-thinking shut out all that was sordid.

Indeed, I remember a little later accompanying Mrs. Atkinson to visit a prisoner at Kilmainham Jail—one Thomas Moroney, a farmer from the County Limerick, who was imprisoned for taking forcible possession of his farm after he had been evicted from it. I think he was there alone in his glory. Perhaps it was in '86 for I have an impression of the movement on a wave of prosperity, and poor Thomas Moroney forgotten, left behind.

I had no note-books at that time, and I have to trust entirely to memory, which has such a disconcerting way of discarding and retaining, apparently after no plan. I don't think there was any of the tiresome paraphernalia of the cage and the listening warder, such as I remember in the

days when I visited Mr. Parnell and Michael Davitt. My impression is of a large, rather light room, and no limitation or witness of the interview. We did not do much talking. Thomas Moroney was very ready to do the talking. He was a simple, rosy-faced old farmer. I remember him talking about Mr. Willie Redmond in the suspect days when they were together in Kilmainham. Mr. Willie Redmond is one of the fortunate ones who win affection all their days. Some simple pranks of his were a pleasant memory with Thomas Moroney. There had been a time when the devoted female sympathisers with Mr. Parnell and his men rained on them green smoking-caps—that incredible mid-Victorian adornment—embroidered or braided in silk, and slippers to match, with many other things. I remember when a demand came to the Ladies' Land League from some wild suspects of the southern or western seaboard for a supply of night-caps. The suspects had a way of becoming spoilt and demanding impossible luxuries.

Mr. Parnell would never wear any of the green smoking-caps, nor indeed anything else green. It was one of his several superstitions to hold the green unlucky. To every suspect there must have been a smoking-cap, or two or three. Apparently Mr. Willie Redmond had perched the smallest of the caps on the top of his red curls—"Och, that was the play-boy!" said Thomas Moroney, with an air of happy reminiscence. Thomas Moroney talked a great deal. I remember Mrs. Atkinson's slight look of embarrassment at me as a young girl when he dropped into a plain statement. We were more squeamish then than we are now.

Mrs. Atkinson was really responsible for setting me up with a bookshelf of my own. She gave me, among other books, Coventry Patmore's *Odes*, which she declared beyond her, Keats, her own big biography, *Mary Aikenhead: her Life, her Work, and her Friends*, which contained incidentally a deal of history. I think it was the Introduction to *Mary Aikenhead* that Mr. Lecky found worthy of high praise. She gave me some score books in all; and a little later these were supplemented by a gift of books from Count Plunkett, who is now Director of the Dublin National

Museum. About 1883-84 he was publishing for the love of literature a real review, *Hibemia*. There was a deal of taste and scholarship in it. There Miss Jane Barlow made her first appearance. But of course it did not last long: it was too bookish for Dublin. One or two of my poems appeared in it, and the kind editor gave me a delightful addition to my bookshelf. It included the *Horoc Subsecivce* of Dr. John Brown, one or two volumes of Stevenson, a couple of anthologies, and a very rare and precious little book of poems by Aubrey de Vere, *Inisfail*. A very little supplementing from the long list of his volumes of verse, and Aubrey de Vere would be more worthily represented by *Inisfail* than by all the heavy volumes which have swamped his really distinguished and beautiful poetry.

I must say a few words more about Mrs. Atkinson and her husband and all that their friendship meant to me. It is the dearer to look back upon that it included my father. On my morning visits I did not see Dr. Atkinson. He used to go off into town every morning to see *The Times* and the English reviews at his club; but in the afternoon one might always find him sitting by a table in the dining-room, which opened by folding doors from his wife's workroom, cutting and reading one of the monthly reviews. He was already well on in the seventies, and he had a pride in his age. He was one of those delightful, hale, hearty old men, as cheerful as a robin, in whom old age is frosty but kindly. He had a most cheerful humour, and he brought a brisk masculine air into an atmosphere which otherwise might have been for some people too austere. I loved to hear him state an opinion with a definiteness which would make his wife say under her breath, "Oh, George!" He worshipped his wife and honoured all women for her sake, and he had that masculine youthfulness about him that one could never think of him as old.

These two loved to bring intellectual society about them. They had several friendships at the English universities as well as the Irish. The dinner-parties they gave were very quiet, but the few guests were always distinguished in one way or another. There used to be very good music in the drawing-

room after those dinners, and the conversation was worth listening to. Mrs. Atkinson was well fitted to be the leader of a *salon*, an institution which we have never had in Dublin, where there has long been a felt want of such a thing. If a young writer or artist of promise appears in Dublin there is no one to take him or her by the hand, until the outside world—that is to say, the world of England—has accepted the writer or artist, and so made recognition at home superfluous and without grace.

Among those I used to meet at Mrs. Atkinson's table was Dr. Shaw, the brilliant Fellow of T.C.D., who was also editor of the *Dublin Evening Mail*. His daughter, Mrs. R. Y. Tyrrell, and her family are now among my closest and dearest friends. He was exceedingly witty, and his cousin, Mr. George Bernard Shaw, resembles him in that he has a sparkling and even biting wit, with a humane personality which makes the wit clean and unpoisoned. The *Evening Mail* of those days used to be something to be read for its wit. Under Dr. Shaw it had such a sparkling existence as had the *Pall Mall* during the never-to-be-forgotten days when it was edited by Mr. Henry Cust, with the assistance of All the Talents.

In the ordinary course of things, I would hardly have met Dr. Shaw at that time. The cleavage between Catholic and Protestant in Ireland—as complete now as it was in those days, and more embittered by the fact that the Protestants no longer control all place and patronage—prevented their meeting, unless the circumstances were exceptional. In this case they were exceptional.

I was usually the youngest guest at that board, and I was very well content with the society of my elders. I used to sit by my host, and he made something of a pet of me. I remember at quiet dinners there, when there were no guests beside myself and Miss Mulholland, that he had a special dish of hot lobster, which he used to share with me. Perhaps no one else would venture upon it, coming as it did at the end of a meal. He always had a certain kind of biscuits with his wine which I never saw elsewhere. They had been manufactured for some seventy years by a very old-fashioned

firm of pastry-cooks in Dublin. The first time I dined with him he told me that in the year 1815 he used to buy those biscuits at the very same shop where he now bought them. Long afterwards I said suddenly: "You used to buy these biscuits in the year 1815 at Edwards' in Cavendish Row." "God bless my soul!" he said, staring at me, "I did indeed. But how could you know?"

His friendship for my dear father was something, if more was needed, to make me hold his memory in everlasting love and gratitude.

Dr. Atkinson conceived a very warm affection and admiration for my father. He used to come and see us on spring and summer days, coming out by the tram to Inchicore, where my father met him with his little pony-trap and drove him away over his farms and through the country before bringing him back to the house for lunch. There were many such visits before the day when Mrs. Atkinson said to me: "Don't ask him any more: he is too old;" and she said it as a mother might have said "He is too young."

Beautiful days and beautiful memories. I daresay there were vexations and frets then, but I do not remember them. As I look back, all those days lie under a golden haze. I don't think any guest received as much consideration from Dr. Atkinson as my dear father. Mrs. Atkinson was equally kind: but Dr. Atkinson used to single him out for honour, and for that I do dearly love him.

I remember once that Mrs. Atkinson showed me the picture of a beautiful young cousin or niece, mentioning that she was at that moment on a visit to Lady Russell in London. Dr. Atkinson looked up from his review.

"Sir Charles was here yesterday," he said. "He had never seen——and we showed him the photograph. He said: 'Good Lord! Is that the girl that's loose among my boys? Where's my hat?'"

I like this anecdote of Lord Russell, who, some people would have us believe, never unbent. He was too big a man for that cold view of him.

There was a time when I visited hospitals with Mrs.

Atkinson, as I used sometimes come to her early in the afternoon and go to an exquisite little church just round the corner from Drumcondra Terrace for benediction, before the happy social afternoon to follow. Perhaps I ought to say "hospital," for it was the Richmond Hospital I visited, and it was characteristic of Mrs. Atkinson that the Richmond was not one of the Catholic hospitals of Dublin. In the same way she gave much kind hospitality to the young matron of a distinctly Protestant convalescent home close by her house, the lady being English as well as Protestant, and so somewhat lonely.

The immediate occasion of my accompanying Mrs. Atkinson on that visit was that a certain Miss Cassie O'Hara, who wrote poetry, was a patient there.

Mrs. Atkinson dressed as nearly like the Sisters of Charity, who were her great friends, as possible. The long black cloak, the black bonnet and veil were very nun-like. She left me with Cassie O'Hara while she went round the beds. She knew all the patients, and she had a little gift for each, something much desired, in the capacious black bag she carried. The patients watched her approach with something of the look which the soldiers in the Crimea, who used to kiss Florence Nightingale's shadow when it fell on their beds as she went round the wards with a light, might have sent to greet her.

Cassie O'Hara, who had been a very beautiful girl, had lupus in the face. The terrible disease was sufficiently rare to make her case very interesting to the medical profession in Dublin, and doubtless her youth and beauty gave the thing an added poignancy. Anyhow, the good surgeons of the Richmond Hospital had set their hearts on making a cure of the case, though they could not save the beauty. There were no Finsen Lamps or anything of that sort then. The treatment must have been much more simple and radical.

As I saw Cassie O'Hara when she lay in bed, she was piteous but not terrible. The disfigurement was covered with lint, which lay in a broad bandage across the nose. Above the bandage were beautiful grey eyes, dark-lashed, a broad

white forehead and golden hair, rippling and curling. Below the bandage was a sweet mouth, a firm white chin, and the traces of a wild-rose colouring.

She had no regrets. Indeed, she said to me that because her heart had been so hard and she had been so worldly, she felt that God took this hard way, the only way to save her soul.

They did eradicate the lupus at the Richmond Hospital. They did all science and devotion could do, but the disfigurement remained. Everyone was fretted to think of how she would face the world terribly disfigured, and she but in the early twenties. God opened a door. There was a tercentenary or some such occasion of St. Teresa. The Spanish Carmelites, among other celebrations, offered a large sum of money for a prize poem on St. Teresa. Cassie O'Hara's poem was adjudged the best. Through this they offered her admission to the Order. Because of the terrible disfigurement she was ineligible for the convents of nuns which touch with the world in any way. With the Carmelites it was different. Perpetual enclosure, perpetual silence, a perpetual veil. As Sister Teresa of Jesus, Cassie O'Hara disappeared most happily into the life where she need never meet the eyes, the shrinking of her fellow-creatures.

CHAPTER XI

DISCURSIVE

AT Mrs. Atkinson's house I met from time to time English visitors as well as the best Dublin could afford in a literary and intellectual way. There were a couple of Cambridge dons and their wives. There was a tall, beautiful girl, an heiress and the ward of an English Catholic peer, who had the peculiar exotic beauty of the old English Catholic families. There was Madame Belloc, who was Mrs. Atkinson's great friend, through whom she was a friend of Madame Bodichon and knew George Eliot. Several years later I met Marie Belloc there. She was then a girl of about twenty, and very much interested in the things she was going to do. I think she foresaw fiction rather than journalism, though she was to arrive at fiction after a success in journalism. I remember how she added to the pleasure of the evening by singing gay French *chansons* to her banjo, and very charming she looked with the blue ribbon about her neck and her pretty head bent above the banjo. Another of Mrs. Atkinson's guests was Mr. Charles O'Connor, now the Irish Master of the Rolls. Our musician on those occasions was Mr. MacDermott, who played for his delight and ours equally.

Through Father Russell I came to pay a visit to Professor Dowden one summer afternoon. That was in very early days, and I rather wonder now at my temerity in going. I found Mr. Dowden very kind, and ready to show me pictures and books and autographs that interested me immensely. I only saw him once. He had a gentle refinement of look and manner which remains in my memory. I dare say I made a visitation instead of a visit, and I am sure that if my visit

afforded little pleasure to those who received it, it afforded a very great deal to me.

I was now fairly launched, out of my placid stream of life. In 1882, when the Irish Exhibition was held in the Rotunda Gardens, Dublin, I had met accidentally one day in the Exhibition, about which I wandered as though I owned it, the Rev. Henry Stuart Fagan, a Norfolk parson of Irish birth, with a passion for Ireland which survived bad days and good days alike. We talked, and the talk led to a correspondence. He was very keen on developing the industrial resources of Ireland, which at that time as now were indeed badly in need of developing. He wrote to me from the Wick low rectory where he was taking temporary duty, the incumbent of which was my husband's brother, although a good deal of water was to flow under the bridges before I became aware of any particular interest for me in that rectory or its inhabitants.

Mr. Fagan was distressed at the waste of blackberries in the Wicklow hedges, as, indeed, well he might be. There was a time when the blackberry was disdained because it was common. The Department of Agriculture has taught the Irish something since those days, and a good deal of money comes to Ireland yearly now for the blackberry harvest, though not so much as might come.

My friendship with Mr. Fagan led to a visit to England in 1884. I stayed some time at his Norfolk rectory, Great Cressingham, and spent a couple of months in London. It was my first teal London visit, my first peep into the big world, for when I had visited England before, I had stayed at Aldershot with a relative and had only visited London for the theatres and shopping.

I remember the very eve of my departure for London, when I had been in Dublin and Miss Mulholland had come to the Kingsbridge station with me on my way home. She told me what pictures to see. The Winter Exhibition at one of the Galleries that year was a Rossetti Exhibition. Going down to Norfolk for some weeks, I missed the Winter Exhibitions, but I got to know my London pretty thoroughly, and I met various interesting people, although, since I had only just

begun to write I had not the key to the charmed circles which I held later.

I was still very political at that time, and coming and going between Great Cressingham and London I managed to spend a good deal of time at the House of Commons. I became quite at home in the Ladies' Gallery, and heard many debates.

English feeling against the Irish Nationalists was then very much inflamed by the dynamite outrages. I remember wearing shamrock on St. Patrick's Day of that year in a London 'bus, and being eyed by the occupants with positive hatred. Of course it stirred up all one's patriotic feeling, and at first the hostile atmosphere, the strangeness too, perhaps, had the effect of making me very homesick. I had travelled to London with Bee and Margaret Walshe on their way to join their brother John in Sydney. They stayed a few days in London, and I remember my loneliness when I lost them. We had parted at Euston, having arranged for a meeting next day. I spent all next day, which happened to be Saturday, looking for their hotel in Liverpool Street. There were six Liverpool Streets, and I visited live before I gave it up, and also tried various Liverpool Roads, Crescents, &c. The next day, Sunday, I was violently homesick. I went to see the baritone, William Ludwig, who was an old friend of my father's, and his singing of Irish melodies plunged me into an acute state of loneliness, in which I dropped tears into my coffee cup. I wonder I did not go home the next day.

However, next day the Walshes discovered me. They had mislaid my address, and, discovering it, they sent a messenger for me. How good the reunion with my friends was! I stayed at their hotel with them and accompanied them to Tilbury. I never saw Bee Walshe again. One rainy morning at Ealing, some time in the first year of this century, I awoke, and, doing my hair at the glass, I began to talk of Bee Walshe. I had not talked of her, or, perhaps, thought of her, for a long time, for our correspondence had dropped years before. I talked of her all the time I was

dressing. On the breakfast table I found a letter saying she was dead. She was a charming woman, with her autumn leaf hair and her little ivory-coloured face, like a crescent moon amid the masses of her hair; and a truly heroic soul.

I was not long left to loneliness in the English circle in which I found myself. I went almost immediately to Great Cressingham Rectory, where I found warm friendship and affection awaiting me. I stayed there several weeks. There was a large family of young people. They were all steeped in poetry. They had the artistic instinct. They painted and drew, and did all manner of things in a happy, effortless way that produced beautiful things with the greatest ease. Mr. Fagan was a Fellow of his College, Pembroke, Oxford. He was a fine classical scholar. Full of ancient learning, imaginative, poetic, he was wasted on the yokels. His frantic Irishism did not recommend him. It flavoured all he said and did. I remember when we drove behind his Irish mare—all he could possibly procure from Ireland came from Ireland—he used to shout Scottish ballads—"Sir Patrick Spens," "The Bonny House o' Airlie," and such immortalities as he drove. I rather wonder they were Scottish. He would sometimes decline on a ballad of Davis, but I think his artistic conscience was too strong for his wild Irishism. He could not pretend that "Emmeline Talbot" was as good as "Sir Patrick Spens." He was one of that extreme type of Irish patriot that if he had been less lovable in himself he must have turned all about him rabidly anti-Irish. As it was, his children adored him, and were nearly always ready to accept his views of Ireland. I must sometimes have disappointed him, for his idealisation of Ireland was complete. I was an Irish idyllist at that time, but even I could not go the length of believing that everything Irish was snow-white. To use the slang of the day before yesterday, one was **apt** to be "fed up" with Ireland at Great Cressingham Rectory.

It was a very delightful experience to me to be absorbed into this **life full** of artistic feeling and energy. **The** *Æsthetic*

Movement, as to the mere follies of it, was on the wane, though it was but an outward symbol of the real renaissance of art that was to transform England out of its Victorian hideousness. All the young people of the gentler classes were caught in the wave of it. Poetry was in high repute. Everyone was wearing aesthetic garments and colours, adorning their houses with artistic draperies, with pictures and beaten copper and brass, all manner of things, according to their means, taste, and knowledge, that consorted with the movement. Everywhere about Great Cressingham Rectory were bits of painting and embroidery, angular damsels playing on musical instruments, maids in gardens, Botticelli angels. They may have been out of drawing—I do not know: but they were always right in colour and feeling, and they made the house beautiful.

Mr. Fagan was a literary man as well as a parson, more literary man than parson, and the house was full of books. Books overflowed out of all the living-rooms on to the halls and staircases. I read a deal of poetry there and was made much of for my own small achievement.

A delightful family! All good to look upon, sweet-natured, sweet-voiced, full of ideals and artistic impulses—absolutely unconventional.

Clerical Norfolk was, I think, in those days of Bishop Pelham's old age, very unconventional, but not in the direction of the Fagans' unconventionality. A Fagan boy was in the Navy and quite unlike the rest of the family. He complained bitterly that a Phoenix Park murderer had borne the name of Fagan. It required a considerable amount of courage to proclaim one's self Irish in such a backwater as Norfolk was in those days. Indeed one breathed a hostile air outside certain artistic circles in London. Mr. Fagan shouted his Irishism from the housetops. He was writing it and putting his name to it everywhere he could get a hearing in England. The one other literary parson in Norfolk, Dr. Jessop, was at Seaming, some considerable distance away—and is there still happily. Mr. Fagan must have suffered from an isolation of the soul among his brother parsons in Norfolk, though

I remember that he had a friendliness with a clerical McCarthy somewhere in the neighbourhood, who was a perpetual curate or something of the sort. To have an Irish name even was a passport to his affections. When the Liberal Government adopted a Home Rule policy Mr. Fagan took the Liberal Government to his heart, entertained Joseph Arch at Great Cressingham Rectory, and embarrassed his wife at least by his friendship with anybody and everybody who was a Home Ruler. Politics levelled everything with him. He could be as haughty as anybody where politics did not come in: but he was apt to discover a natural, 'gentleness in say the sweep, or the sweep's family, if they happened to be Home Rulers, still more if they happened to be Irish. Such enthusiasms for humanity or a cause are apt to be embarrassing. I remember to have heard a sad tale of how Mr. Fagan when he was Vicar of a Cornish parish, gave all the blankets in the house for a shipwrecked crew leaving his family to face a cold winter blanketless. I used to pity his family—his wife and daughters especially, to whom all chifcons were closed that were not Irish in their origin. This limitation bound them to linens and Irish homespuns—in which I am bound to say they looked charming.

In 1882 Mr. Fagan had contributed to the *Graphic* a series of interesting articles on his Irish experiences. I remember one especially—"A Voluntary *Corvee*" which described the Wicklow farmers cutting Mr. Parnell's hay for him. This was an excellent piece of neighbourliness and quite as it should be: but *a propos* I am reminded of Mr. Parnell when he was asked if the Plan of Campaign was being generally followed. "I only know," he replied, "that my own tenants are obeying it faithfully."

Later on in 1886, I think, Mr. Fagan was in the row at Woodford with Mr. Wilfrid Blunt. He was in Ireland with a commission from the *Graphic* to write descriptive letterpress to the drawings of one of their artists. Mr. Fagan got caught into the excitement, as the *Graphic* people thought he had no right to be seeing that he was their commissioner. Mr. Blunt was arrested and sentenced to three months imprison-

ment in Galway Jail. I have a picture of him in his prison garb. Mr. Fagan was dragged off the Land League platform by the police and sustained an injury to his knee which caused him to limp a little till the day he died.

It was certainly very embarrassing for everyone, especially for poor Mr. Locker of the *Graphic*; and Mr. Fagan's parishioners of the superior class—there were not many—looked at him more askance than ever, while the trend of his humbler parishioners towards the chapel on the hill became more marked than before. As for the reception of the news at Great Cressingham Rectory—I am rejoiced I was not there to see.

Through this friendship with Mr. Fagan I got an insight I never should have had otherwise, into the tragedy of the country parson. Here was a man, a fellow of his Oxford College, a scholar, a poet, an artist, sensitive, impressionable, ardent. Imagine his getting up in the pulpit every Sunday to address a few yokels from the Bceotia of England! He was not understood nor beloved of his flock nor did he love it. Often he used to sigh for the Cornish Celts, with whom he had been happy.

I remember when he came to Dublin on a visit and I made social engagements for him, that I could never be sure of him if he got into conversation with anyone who had the Irish cause at heart in any way. Well do I remember the dreadfully long pauses when on our way to dine somewhere or other Mr. Fagan would discover that he wanted a new white tie or a pair of gloves or something of the sort. There was a dreadful occasion when we were to dine at the house of Dr. Kenny, who was then a Member of Parliament. Mr. Fagan was leaving by the night boat and Mrs. Kenny had most kindly fixed the hour of dinner earlier on that account. Of course Mr. Fagan had to get a white tie at Pirn's in South Great George's Street. I waited in the brougham at the door. Time passed and he did not return. I grew impatient and went in search of him. He was not to be found anywhere. An obliging head of a department had taken him into the cellars or up to the attics. Absorbed

in the passion for Irish manufacture, Mr. Fagan never remembered his dinner engagement till we were already an hour late. Being in Ireland it mattered less, but as I have a curious English prejudice in favour of punctuality—something of a throwback—I had a bad quarter of an hour. Mr. Fagan had just time, after making his apologies, to eat his soup and depart for his boat. He was very penitent; but he would do just the same thing the next time.

By the way—perhaps there need be no throwback to account for my predisposition in favour of punctuality. Mr. Fagan, I believe, gave me my first and abiding lesson, and it was during that very first visit to London in 1884 that I learnt and never forgot it. I may say that though I have possessed several watches I have never possessed one which kept time, so that I have learnt to depend on my neighbour's watches—or the public clocks if I were in town: in the country at home I had the Angel us bell or the hooter from the Saggart Mills or the garden dial or the house clocks or something else. Moreover, I was twenty before I really "knew the clock."¹¹ I only guessed at the minute hands. I had somehow grown up in this inexplicable ignorance, and as I would not reveal it to anyone I seemed like enough at one time to go through life without "knowing the clock."¹¹ Similarly, before I knew my London I was always getting into the wrong trains. I used to wonder at the simplicity of other people in like case, who would shriek out that they were in the wrong train and set a whole carriage full of friendly and helpful people in the black night of the Underground to advising them on the best way of repairing their mistake. I, on the contrary, discovering that I was in the wrong train, would get out with an air of knowing my way thoroughly, and take a hansom perhaps half-way across London in order to get somewhere in time. Above all things I dreaded the discovery that I had blundered. I had the self-consciousness and suspicion of the Celt in contradistinction to the Anglo-Saxon effusiveness and confidence in its kind.

On one May evening in 1884 we were on our way to dine with Dr. and Mrs. Rae at Kensington. Dr. Rae was the man

who went in search of Franklin and brought home his relics. He was a charming old man, not unlike my dear Dr. Atkinson, married to a wife a great deal younger than himself, who, with her brilliant contrast of bright eyes and rose and white colour against beautiful white hair, looked the most charming picture of a lady in powder imaginable. Mrs. Rae was a grand-daughter of John Foster, the last Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, and she and her sister, Miss Skeffington Thompson, were ardent Irish patriots. At that time they were watching over and tending a little Society at Southwark which had begun to teach the London Irish children Irish history, Irish poems, Irish songs and dances—the seed of the Irish Literary Society, and of a bigger growth, the Gaelic League.

I left the time entirely to Mr. Fagan on that occasion, not having learnt his disregard for such trifles. Of course we were late for dinner, a fact of which I was happily unaware till after dinner, when I was enlightened by Mrs. A. M. Sullivan in the drawing-room. Apparently the host had been excessively impatient, and no wonder, and had shown his impatience. There was a rather large dinner-party. Mr. John Redmond was there with his Australian bride and Mr. Willie Redmond. Fortunately I was able to enjoy the dinner unaware of the dreadful thing that had happened. So far as I could ensure it, I was never again late for dinner.

I had known Mr. John Redmond a little in the days of the Ladies' Land League. He was a very attractive young man in those days, and he had the gift of pleasant manners and a charming voice. He was very young, with still much of the charm of the boy about him, although he has not his brother's charm of an evergreen boyishness, which makes him so much beloved, and in the House of Commons used to excuse any indiscretion. The night of that dinner-party Mr. John Redmond recited after dinner and the recitation was "The Wreck of the Hesperus." At that time there was a good deal of the well-bred and agreeable schoolboy about him. Then and always the Redmonds held a high place in the public esteem. The feeling that a man is a gentleman goes a long way in Ireland. I cannot remember a single occasion on which either

of the Redmonds has departed for a second from that lofty ideal. Even when Mr. Willie Redmond was rowdy in the House, the House loved him none the less, but rather the more.

I leave Mr. Fagan for the present with the sin of unpunctuality to his account. It is a harmless though inconvenient foible, and while it is looked on askance in England where even Irish people become punctual unless they live in an Irish colony, it is generic to the whole of Ireland.

I remember a luncheon-party at the house of a very much beloved Irish M.P., to which Dora Sigerson (Mrs. Clement Shorter) and I were bidden. It was a somewhat important luncheon-party and the card said 1.30. To ensure a punctual arrival, we drove on an outside car across the town. The maid who opened the door to us at 1.25 eyed us reproachfully and mentioned that the mistress was lying clown with the toothache. We were shown into the drawing-room where a circle of friendly dogs jumped on chairs and shook hands with us as though they were accustomed to act as deputy hosts. In a few minutes another maid came in and proceeded to light the fire. We had time to ask ourselves if we had not come on the wrong day before the lady of the house arrived at 2.30. The first guest after ourselves appeared at 2.45, and at 3 o'clock lunch began.

I mentioned this afterwards to an Irish friend who had also learned the English punctuality.

"That's nothing," she said, "I was asked to dinner at 7.45 the other night at a Judge's house in——Square. As I went up the steps at 7.40 I met my hostess on the doorstep. She had a parcel under her arm. She greeted me cordially. 'I just ran round to the butcher,' she said; '*the piece de resistance* was not to my liking, so I changed it. Here it is going in under my arm.'"

In those days—I will not say it is so now, for Ireland is much changed—a meal was never at any hour. It was always "when it is ready."

A Cork friend told us once with pride that a certain Cork boat or train was the most punctual in Ireland or England.

"It is so punctual," he said, "that it is often in ten minutes before its time and goes out ten minutes earlier than the scheduled time," which reminds me of a travelling friend of mine who arrived, depending on the train's lateness, only to see it steaming out. "The train's very punctual, Mick," he said to the porter. "She is," said Mick. "She's the puric-tuallest train in Ireland, an' a great inconvaynience to the travellin' public."

CHAPTER XII

FRIENDS OLD AND NEW

THE friendship formed in that first visit to London which was to remain as one of the permanent things of my life, was that with the Meynells, to whom dear Father Russell, dying as I write this, commended me.

My first introduction to the Meynells was an odd one. Father Russell had written to me that I was to write to them and ask when I might come. I wrote my letter very carefully, and not approving it for some reason or other, when I had done three-fourths of it, cast it on one side. I wrote another letter, which I found several days later in my blotter: I had sent the unfinished, unsigned letter, much to the bewilderment of the recipients.

Of course, that little error was soon set right, and I was welcomed to the kind and hospitable house in Phillimore Terrace, Kensington—the terrace which George III used to call Dishclout Terrace, because of the scroll above the doors.

Of that first meeting with Wilfred Meynell I retain the impression of something young, brisk, and kind. Alice Meynell bewildered me with the fulfilment of my dreams of what a poet should look like.

I have an impression of Mrs. Meynell—she was not very strong then, and she lay on a sofa—as a beautiful pale face, ivory as the crescent moon and lit by the most wonderful eyes, in masses of dark hair. I am sure there were peacocks' feathers about. The wall-paper, perhaps, had a design of peacocks' feathers—perhaps not, for I think I see it a dull red, in that day of March twenty-eight years ago when I had tea with the Meynells for the first time.

I saw them several times during that visit. There was a day when I sat with a feverish little boy on my lap, very

flattered that he would come to me, when Cardinal Manning's little brougham stopped at the gate, and that wonderful old man came in, wrapped in an overcoat with quilted facings against the weather. I suppose it must have been March weather, for we sat by the fire, Mrs. Mcynell on her sofa, Wilfred talking and doing the *Weekly Register*, which he then edited, in between. The Cardinal did no more than speak to me, for the conversation seemed like to be confidential, and so I went away.

One Saturday Miss Skeffington Thompson took me to see Lady Wilde, who at that time used to hold Saturday receptions at her house in Park Street, W. I remember that it amazed me to find a little house wedged in between another little house and a big public-house at the corner. I did not understand that Park Street, Grosvenor Square, W., was a place to live, even if one could not swing a cat in the rooms and the public-house was cheek by jowl with one. The first day I went there, there was a beauty of the hour present, Miss Craigie Halkett; and there was Miss Fortescue the actress, just fresh from her breach of promise case against Lord Garmoyle, and very much the fashion of the moment.

Lady Wilde, in a white dress like a Druid priestess, her grey hair hanging down her back, received us in a couple of narrow London rooms, with open folding doors, in a gloom illumined only by a few red-shaded candles. All the blinds were down; and, coming in from the strong sun outside, the gloom was the more impenetrable. Lady Wilde shook hands with me and motioned me to a seat. I went in the direction she had indicated to me blindly. A soft hand took mine, and a soft voice spoke. "So fortunate," said the voice, "that no one could suspect dear Lady Wilde of being a practical joker! There really is a chair." The soft hand drew me to it. I sat down by two sisters who have remained with me all these years as soft voices, a rustle, a perfume, a low talk of poetry, a glimmer of charming faces in the dark. I never even knew who they were. They were passionately, intensely Irish. They had anticipated the Union of Hearts at its full tide. I cannot be sure of their names even: but ever afterwards when I received

from some English parsonage, some English country-house, one of those letters which are amongst the compensations of life, letters full of the love of poetry and art, gentle, refined, sensitive, dreamy, I have given the writer the face and the voice of one or other of those two girls who murmured in the darkness at Lady Wilde's twenty-eight years ago. Of me they knew nothing, but they were prepared to take me to their hearts. They talked of Mary Robinson—still Mary Robinson—whose first slender volume of poems had just been published. One quoted—I quote from memory over all those years and may well misquote—

" Across the gold-green heaven drifted
Pale wandering souls that shun the light,"

and ended on a sigh of rapture. " It has *entrain*" she said in her silken voice.

These girls represented for me a lovely type of English girlhood. Perhaps it belonged to the *Æsthetic Movement* and departed with it. I have not met just the same type in the twenty years of my English life. To be sure a good many of the twenty years belonged to the dark period in spiritual and intellectual things which spread over England like a pall, and seems to be breaking up now into a general unrest, with one knows not what of calamity behind.

The few shaded candles at Lady Wilde's afternoons were arranged so as to cast the limelight on the prominent people, leaving the spectators in darkness. Lady Wilde did not forget the spectators. She discovered one in the darkness to draw attention in a loud voice to the points of the exhibits. " Such a beautiful long neck ! " she would say : or " Do you see the glint on her hair as she turns ? I wish Oscar were here to see it. "

Presently came Oscar, and growing accustomed to the darkness one could see how like he was to the photographs of him which were all about the room, full-face, half-face, three-quarter face; full-length, half-length, three-quarter length; head only: in a fur coat; in a college gown; in ordinary clothes. He came and stood under the lime-light

so to speak, in the centre of the room. There was some sort of divan or ottoman there on which Miss Fortescue and he sat for a while in conversation. The shaded light had been arranged so as to fall upon them.

With him had come in the girl who was afterwards to have the irreparable misfortune to be his wife, poor picturesque pretty Constance Lloyd, dressed all in brown, a long brown cloak, a wide brown velvet hat with a plume. How charming it is in one's memory now that feminine fashions have reached the nadir of hideousness. She was a delicate charming creature, little fitted to endure the terrible fate that was to be hers. At the time, doubtless many people thought her fate enviable.

One was brought up to Oscar and introduced. Then and always I found him pleasant, kind and interested. My impression of his looks was of an immense fat face, somewhat pendulous cheeks, and a shock of dark hair, a little like the poet Bunthorne perhaps—a little also like Marat or Robespierre. I found nothing in him of the witty impertinence other people record him. I remember that Hannah Lynch's introduction to him was in this way. Lady Wilde said: "This is Miss Hannah Lynch, Oscar: a young Irish genius." Oscar: "Are not young Irish geniuses as plentiful as blackberries?"

Then, or perhaps on a later occasion, for I visited at Lady Wilde's up to the year 1889—my last visit to London before my marriage took me to live there—one of the visitors was Mrs. Frank Leslie, the rich American whom Willie Wilde afterwards married. Willie was eclipsed by Oscar at that time; but he was as amusing, and quite as brilliant as Oscar, say the old family friends. He came out on the steps with us that first day and stood a while chaffing Dublin. He talked about Rathmines, which in his day was a more fashionable suburb of Dublin than it is now, asking if Dublin was still Dublin *and* Rathmines.

An old friend of the Wildes told me the other day of an occasion on which Willie was asked to play the banjo. "Of course, I refused." "But why?" "Why not? I can't

play the banjo." "Oh!" said the old friend, "but I expected you to say you could."

Willie Wilde married his rich American. She divorced him in a few years. His explanation was that she wanted him to work, and that he had said there were too many people working and too much work done in America already.

I heard long afterwards that he had married a good little woman who nursed him in poverty and illness, and made his last years happy, or as happy as they could be.

A girl who was present that first day at Lady Wilde's struck me dumb with admiration. She was a Miss Mary Pottle, who afterwards was a public reciter under the name of Jiomola Tynte. She was very beautiful, and her straight, falling cloak of black plush, her wide black hat with a rose in it, seemed to me a garb for an aesthetic princess. She talked, not to say chattered, a great deal; and I can hear Lady Wilde saying: "My dear Miss Pottle, you must not talk so much. Not with that face. You should be still—still and grave."

Poor Wildes! My memory of them is entirely grateful. They were very kind to an obscure Irish versifier. Later on I contributed a series of articles to a magazine which Oscar edited for a time. It was, I think, the *Woman's World*, which did not last very long. It is one of the kindnesses I owe to Oscar Wilde that he should have remembered and enrolled me among his contributors.

I have been told that in the bitter days following his downfall, Oscar Wilde said that if his father had not forbidden his becoming a Catholic while still in his teens, he would never have fallen as he did. It is interesting to remember in this connection that his early poems when he was at Oxford were distributed between the *Oxford Magazine* and *The Irish Monthly*. I have the volumes of the latter containing the poems, strongly influenced by Tennyson, which he was writing at that time. And after all, with all his sins behind him, the old Mother Church, who can forgive all sins in the name of her Head, took him and cradled him in peace.

Other visits I paid at that time were to Sir Charles

Russell's house in Harley Street, by kind favour of Father Russell and Miss Mulholland. I have memories of a very happy household, with boys and girls growing up, all willing and able to express their opinions about things in general, else they would not have been Russells. There was a refreshingly Irish air in that house, at a time when the atmosphere outside was very hostile. I do not think I met Sir Charles Russell that first time. My visits were at lunch or tea-time and he was tremendously busy just then. Lady Russell was engaged in fitting up his chambers in the Temple comfortably, so that he could have what rest he could take there when he was unable to get home. Mrs. A. M. Sullivan had kindly given a day to showing me about London. We ended up at A. M. Sullivan's chambers in the Temple, where Mr. Barry O'Brien came in, and I heard him talk of Sir Charles's rugs and comfortable chairs.

Apropos of the hostile atmosphere in London just then owing to the dynamite explosions, I will tell a little bit of secret history as I have heard it. A certain American Fenian, whom I shall call Colonel G., met with and fascinated an old friend of my father's, one Peter Devey, a very quaint and interesting personality. Peter Devey had a great admiration for Colonel G. as one of the heroes of the Fenian days. And here I must differentiate between Fenian and Fenian—for the Clan-na-Gael in America, which was a sort of off-shoot of Fenianisin, had altogether departed from the ways of legitimate Fenianism. I shall speak presently about John O'Leary, the old Fenian chief, and I will only say here that he was almost fanatically high-minded and clean-handed. He would have made war, but he would have abhorred murder: and expediency was to him only another name for lying and dishonesty. Colonel G. had departed a good way from the old Fenian counsels and belonged to the revolutionary American party, but he was still apparently the man he had been when Peter Devey encountered him on a visit to America and came home charged with a commission to buy old books largely for Colonel G., who was about to open a second-hand bookshop in St. Louis or Detroit—I forget which. Now Peter Devey

was a somewhat weird choice as a book-buyer. He had a great taste for books and they were by the walls and all over the floors of the old house under the shadow of Dublin Castle, where he pursued his calling. He was a member of a Temperance Working Man's Club and was a great man at debates. Himself a brand snatched from the burning, he had swept into the temperance net various poetic cobblers and tailors who had found relief from the drabness of their calling in strong drink. It fell to my own lot to have my boots made by a cobbler, for no other reason than that he was a contributor to the Poets' Corner of the *Nation*. Both my father and Peter Devey could repeat the poetic effusions of these gentlemen by the yard, and at the age I was then it was somewhat thrilling to me to have my foot measured by a son of the Muses, even though the poetry—patriotic and temperate—made no strong appeal to me.

Peter Devey was highly flattered by the commission from Colonel G. He went from one book-auction to another, my father occasionally lending a hand. From time to time the books were despatched. I know I had a fine time snatching a reading of as many as I could before they were sent away. A great many books were bought and despatched before any doubts rose in Peter Devey's mind. I do not know how far the doubts had gone when Colonel G. disappeared mysteriously, leaving his debt still unpaid. After a time it was whispered that he had been blown up, hoist with his own petard, in the London Bridge explosion.

By the way, in its proper place I should have spoken of Johnny Doyle and the debt my childhood owed him in the way of reading. Johnny Doyle was a "dairy-boy" in my father's employment for bodily sustenance, and a collector for spiritual; as a Lord Mayor of Dublin may earn his living by being assistant-clerk to the Sub-Sheriff—boss to his boss. Johnny lived with his old wife and one daughter—a fair, shadowy, slip of a girl, like a very faint sweet-pea, who might somehow have sprung from one of the old romances Johnny loved—in a roadside cottage which, as fortune would have it, seemed especially suited to a book-collector. It was

a cottage designed to have a second floor, but it had only the one, so there was a great expanse of smoke-browned walls reaching to the thatch, which were lined with Johnny's bookshelves.

Mrs. Doyle used to say, when Johnny spent every penny he could lay hands upon on books, that men must always have their foolishness, and that his form of folly was better than the drink. As Johnny never drank, except at the well of literature undefiled, the home was a happy one. As a little girl of nine or ten, and later, Johnny Doyle's library was my delight. I owe to it my acquaintance with *The Man of Feeling*; *Henry, Earl of Moreland*; Miss Burney's *Cecilia*; *The Arabian Nights*; and various other delights. There was one dreadful book in which there was a deal about the sufferings of the children who worked in the mines in the spacious early days of Victoria. That and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Nicholas Nickleby* because of Smike, left an abiding impression of misery on my mind. There was one special Oriental romance which Johnny always promised to me as a reward for good behaviour. It was called *A String of Pearls*. Perhaps I never was good, or perhaps the *String of Pearls* was lost in the sooty gloom of Johnny's highest shelf, for I never read it. *Fatherless Fanny* was another of these delusive delights. Johnny was one of the collectors who buy for the sake of handling the volume, for he did not read himself, although I think he probably possessed a couple of thousand volumes.

When I was at my Convent school the sweet-pea daughter died, and Johnny and her mother were so lonely that they drifted back to Dublin, taking the library with them.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ADVENTURE OF THE LADY IN BLACK

BEFORE I returned home from that visit to England, which lasted three months, I had a curious experience. What it meant, what its origin, I shall not venture to guess. I tell the thing as it happened to me.

I was very young, very simple, very enthusiastic, crammed to the lips with patriotic ardours, but just as much in sympathy with dynamite as any English person. However, the very charming lady in black silk, who sat by my side in the Ladies' Gallery of the House of Commons, and to whom I lent my opera glasses, on a certain sunny April afternoon of that year, 1884, pricked up her ears when I chattered enthusiastically about the Irish members—the more that they were in somewhat doubtful odour at the time—pointing out to her this and that hero of my youthful imagination. I knew most of the members of the Irish party at that time, just well enough to be able to preserve the proper amount of admiration. The black silk lady was at least as enthusiastically Irish as I. Her mother was an Irishwoman. Oddly enough she had never visited the adorable country. She had only just returned from India. But she was on the eve of visiting it: she only wanted a congenial companion and guide. Her husband and boy were English of the English. Her meeting with myself was providential. The Irish members were her heroes. She craned her neck to see even the most obscure member. Her meeting with me was professedly the event of her life.

My English hostess of those days had been sitting listening, with a rather mystified expression, to our rhapsodies. Presently the black silk lady directed the battery of her fascinations that way. She was a very charming black silk lady—*petite*, with small, regular features, brown eyes, crisply waving brown hair,

just slightly flecked with grey, little white teeth like a child's. Not more than thirty-five certainly. Beautifully dressed. The manner vivacious. My English hostess succumbed to the charmer as well as I. I had to leave early and my new friend was short-sighted, so short-sighted that she could not even *hear* without the aid of glasses. I besought her to keep mine through the sitting, and to return them to me at my hostess's house in North London.

She came, and pleased equally on the second occasion. She was staying at the Grand Hotel in Trafalgar Square. She invited us to dine and a theatre. The friendship grew. Presently my hostess dropped out of it and it was only me. The lady in black silk had conceived such an affection for me that existence was hardly possible without me. I was seized upon, taken possession of. I was incessantly lunching, dining, theatre-going, driving, with my new friend. I could hardly be out of her sight for a few hours without letters and telegrams following on my track. She was very generous and showered small gifts on me : would have showered bigger ones, I think, if she had not been afraid of frightening me. She wore beautiful jewels. As though they were credentials she showed me her jewel-case one day—dazzling as a Bond Street jeweller's window. There was a name under the sunk handle of the jewel-case. She kept it turned carefully away from me, but somehow I saw it. I remember it to this day. It was a name in full: and it was not the name by which she was known to me.

Oddly enough—for I am a grateful person—all these favours did not the least bit in the world win my heart. Truth to tell, the lady protested too much: she was in too great a hurry : she frightened me. As I sat by her side in hansoms or in stalls at the theatre, or feasted with her on the finest fare the Grand Hotel afforded, I was alarmed to the depths of a nature fundamentally timid and conventional, at all this intimacy with a stranger. I suspected no more than that she was an adventuress. The idea of a spy never remotely entered my mind. Why on earth should a spy be interested in me? I might just as well have asked why an adventuress should be, but I did not. Anyhow, the fear effectually prevented my intro

ducing her to the Irish members and to various Irish friends of mine in London. If she had had patience she might have arrived at these things naturally. But she had not: and so she defeated her own ends so far as I was concerned.

She was not a good actress by any manner of means. She was always contradicting herself, professing at one moment not to know London because of her long absence in India, at the next showing her knowledge of it. Once she displayed to my amazed eyes a copy of the dynamite organ which was at that time being published in America—an infamous, ill-printed rag. She showed it to me as though on the edge of a confidence—that she belonged to the revolutionary party probably—and snatched it from my hands just when my first glance at it had revealed the loathsomeness of its contents. She was disappointed when I expressed my abhorrence of the dynamite propaganda; and after a pretended justification of it she dropped the matter.

I had a glorious three weeks of it which I did not enjoy in the least. There were all sorts of mysterious things, sudden absences, telegrams arriving when we were at meals. Once after a theatre I stayed the night at the Grand Hotel, and she came in about breakfast time in out-door things to my room to suggest breakfast in bed for me and a leisurely getting up, as she had to go out for a few hours. Once when I would have thanked her for some gift with a kiss she avoided the kiss. I really think she was only an amateur detective and spy after all, and very bad even for an amateur. Anyhow, she alarmed me so thoroughly that I flew back to Ireland from her gifts and entertainments some time before I need have gone—my ostensible reason that I had spoilt my best hat in the rain and must go home to get another. She tried to make me accept a hat from her, but I would not. Nor had I introduced her to a single one of those she desired to meet in London, although I took her to the houses of some of my non-Irish friends.

I was hardly home before a telegram followed me. She was coming to Ireland, in the ardent expectation that I would be her guide and friend. She came, with her whole wardrobe of beautiful clothes, her jewels, her photographs of her husband

and son and other little belongings with which she was wont to make a hotel-room home-like, also with her apparently limitless supply of money. Before I could answer her she came flying out to my country home on an outside car, claiming me as her own. She laid herself out to captivate my family. My father, who was at once the simplest and the most astute of men, refused to be captivated. She had a thin hard mouth, which was a blemish in her otherwise soft, round face. He was interested in her, but he refused to trust a woman with that mouth.

I did not see very much of her after that. She had squeezed her orange and found nothing in it. I was but a means to an end. I lunched with her—one of my sisters being her guest also—at the Shelbourne Hotel, but she was prostrated with some ailment as a result of the Indian life and lay for a day or two with hot-water bottles to her back on a sofa. Then there was the mysterious recall. She had to go and come between London and Dublin: again she had to attend a christening in Scotland. I was to expect her and be ready to come to her the minute she was free.

One of those days when she was in Dublin and well there happened to be what was a great social function in the Dublin of that time—the College Kaces—*i.e.* the athletic sports of Dublin University. I had tickets and she came with me. In the College Park we ran up against the very man she wanted—an ex-Fenian Dublin journalist, who had served his time after '67 and died the other day a Member of Parliament. With my father's warning ringing in my ears, "Don't introduce her to any one," I tried in vain to avoid him. He simply would not be avoided. He admired the lady. He forced himself upon us; and the introduction was made.

Meanwhile, after I had left her in London, she had called at the House of Commons, on a distinguished member of the Irish party, a somewhat difficult and unapproachable person. Representing herself as a great lover of Ireland, and using my name as an introduction, she succeeded in

making friends with Mr.—, but it did not go very far, though I believe he dined with her at her hotel and accepted a seat in her opera box. Probably she discovered that he had nothing to give her, as in my own case. I am bound to say that I believe she was perfectly discreet in her behaviour. She used her fine clothes, her jewels, her bright eyes and snowy shoulders, as so many weapons in her armoury, but I imagine she used them with reluctance, with something of disgust that she must so use them. I can quite well believe that at the back of her adventure there may have been some real honest hatred of us all, as enemies or potential enemies of her country.

However, with the achievement of making the ex-Fenian's acquaintance I had served her purpose and was incontinently dropped. He walked home with her to her hotel, received her the next day in the dingy newspaper office where she must have been a dazzling little presence. Henceforth the dinners, the lunches, the entertainments generally, were for him. She hurled her friendship at his head as eagerly as she had hurled it at mine. He was a soft-hearted Irishman, susceptible to beauty and charm, though irreproachable in the domestic relations. Doubtless she dazzled him. I had warned him that I knew nothing whatever about her. She put out all her pretty wiles to dazzle him and perhaps she succeeded for a time. But she made the running too fast, as she had done with me. His suspicions were excited. Waiting for her one day in the sitting-room of her Dublin hotel, while she hatted and cloaked for some expedition or other, he picked up from under the grate a handful or two of minutely torn papers. At his leisure, later, he was able to construct out of some of them a telegram—I shall not say from whom, but it was from a very well-known public man—a cypher telegram, only the name of the sender not in cypher.

As a result, he and some other frolicsome persons whom he had introduced to her as dynamitards, planned her reception into a secret society, where she was to be sworn in on

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a sod of turf which she was to be told was dynamite. She was prepared to swallow anything or almost anything: and they were prepared to supply her with all she could swallow. However, a prudent friend intervened before the great occasion came off. It was time to be done with her. A paragraph in a Dublin newspaper sent her flying in the wildest haste and that was the end of it.

CHAPTER XIV

ANNUS MIRABILIS

IN 1885 some of my most important happenings came about. I published my first book, *Louise de la Vattiere*, and I made some friendships of great worth to me in one way or another.

Wilfred Meynell was the intermediary with Messrs. Kegan, Paul & Co., who were then the poets' publishers, with regard to my first publication. The publishers dealt with me handsomely, considering that I was a young unknown person. For the sum of £20 they agreed to publish me. I remember clearly the day I received this proposal. I suppose it would be some time in the spring of that year, for the book came out in the summer. My father had come into the kitchen as he used to from the farmyard on which it opened. He had sat down a little wearily in front of the roaring fire of coke, which used to send out a furnace-like heat. There I sought and found him, the dogs lying about his feet, with my fateful letter.

I was not certain how he would take it. He had been hard hit by his army-contracts and there had been bad years. His answer was, when he had heard the letter read, to put his hand to his pocket for his cheque book, ask for a pen and ink and write the cheque for the £20. He was always royally generous. No wonder people thought him a rich man, when he was no such thing.

The little book came out in June of that year. It must have been a very propitious moment, for it had such a reception as, I believe, no little book of the same worth could hope to have to-day. It was reviewed quite respectfully by the London literary papers, by the London dailies, and the big provincial newspapers. Sometimes I was helped. Sometimes I was not. People will always help a young writer in

Ireland. It is when you begin to grow independent that they have doubts.

I believe that before the book made its appearance I had met Willie Yeats. Some time in the spring of 1885 I had a letter from Mr. Charles Hubert Oldham, a young Trinity College man, who was about to start the *Dublin University Review*, asking me to help him. Such a request gave me great pleasure in those days. I contributed a poem to an early number, after which Mr. Oldham came to see me and told me about Willie Yeats and his father, showing me the *Island of Statues*, Willie Yeats's first considerable poem, which he had acquired for the new magazine. Presently Mr. Oldham came to see me accompanied by Willie Yeats. I can remember very well coming into the drawing-room at my old home, which was always filled with a dim green light from the creepers about the windows and the little half-glass door which led into the garden under an arch of boughs—and finding the two young men sitting in the bow window.

Two more unlike could hardly be imagined. Mr. Oldham, now Professor Oldham of the National University, would probably at that time have placed practicality first of the virtues. He had a very brusque, downright manner, not at all Irish. I remember his greeting of me on our first meeting after a little correspondence had passed. "Well, Miss Tynan, I'm starting this new magazine and I've come to see you because I think you may be of use to me." I don't think that very bald statement represented his real feelings at all: nevertheless it took me aback. Very honest, very direct, he would have said he had no time to cultivate the graces; yet I think there must have been more than a streak of the idealist in the Trinity student who as long ago as 1885 found the way to the National idea. Many Englishmen and women of note will remember Mr. Oldham as the presiding genius of the Contemporary Club, which had its meeting-place in his rooms at the corner of Grafton Street and College Green. The Contemporary Club has received notable visitors to Dublin for many years now. There used to be a Ladies¹ Night on

Saturdays. The habitués in the days I remember included many men of diverse shades of opinion, in religion, politics, and all else. There used to be John O'Leary the old Fenian Chief, Dr. Sigerson, Mr.——, now the Right Honourable——, W. F. Bailey, Mr.——, now the Right Honourable——, "Tommy" O'Shaughnessy, Recorder of Dublin, Mr. W. F. Crook, the Rev. H. S. Lunn, Douglas Hyde, Standish O'Grady, T. W. Rolleston, and others.

All celebrities who came to Dublin were caught into Mr. Oldham's net and entertained at the Contemporary Club. Once it was Mrs. Humphry Ward, and Mr. Oldham startled the gathering by taking his place on the hearthrug and opening the discussion with: "Will you give us your views on religion, Mrs. Ward? I understand you are something of an agnostic." I do not think Mrs. Humphry Ward gave her views; but other people did and very sorely troubled the minds of some orthodox Catholics who were present.

I occasionally went to a Ladies' Night at the Contemporary Club and found the proceedings dull. I doubt that your true Irish ever take kindly to the debating society unless he or she is taking a hand. The Englishman likes to sit still and have his mind improved. The Irish want to improve other people's minds.

They discussed dull subjects to my mind. The energy of their secretary carried them with it and Mr. Oldham's subject was economics. I was not the only young woman who was bored. Once I won the heartfelt gratitude of the others by looking so obviously bored that Mr. Oldham, who was truly good-natured, swooped down on me and asked me if I would not like to play billiards upstairs. What a joyful trooping upstairs there was of those boys and girls who were unworthy of the profundities of the Contemporary Club.

Few men can have accomplished as much as Mr. Oldham. It is only when one gets down to the frozen facts of writing that one discovers it. To create the Contemporary Club and keep it going for nearly thirty years, to found the Protestant Home Rule Association, which certainly served

its purpose, to found and keep going a magazine which reached a very high standard. These are no small achievements: and one might say that Mr. Oldham did the things alone. He certainly had no help from Trinity College for the magazine to which he gave its name. The University who has been a stony step-mother to her greatest sons when their achievements were other than academic, looked askance at a magazine which appealed to a general audience, while calling itself the *Dublin University Review* and moreover had a distinct taint of Nationalism. Trinity College, which has produced great scholars, has discouraged the imaginative energy in her students, though it has broken out in spite of discouragement. A few volumes of thin Tennysonian verse is all that has come from Trinity in modern times, in the way of imaginative work. When she has unwillingly mothered some one whose work is to count outside the domain of scholarship, that person is usually to be found in rebellion.

Trinity College, looking askance at Mr. Oldham across College Green, had her revenge. The magazine, most creditably produced and brilliantly written, had, I suppose, no monetary success. It was, of course, too good to be popular. Oddly enough it fell in doing something a don might have approved of. A too free translation of a pastoral of Anacreon by Dr. Keningale Cook, set Dublin to hiding its face in horror. Ireland of that day was very prudish. I admit that Dr. Keningale Cook's translation was not for the home. Perhaps Mr. Oldham published it as a sort of suicide. Perhaps it was Mr. Rolleston, who, I think, acted as editor at the time, who was responsible for the indiscretion. In any case, the *Review* perished, and Dublin University was once again plunged into its academic seclusion, free of an association to the casual mind with a world it hated.

Willie Yeats was at that time of our first meeting twenty years old. He was tall and lanky, and his face was as you see it in that boyish portrait of him by his father in the Municipal Art Gallery. At that time he was all dreams and all gentleness. The combative tendencies came to him later: such

things are apt to develop in Ireland if one is a maker, as they used to call the creative artist long ago. The Irish are quaintly Conservative. There are many shibboleths. Dublin, at least, has not many admirations, or it bestows them wrongly. Willie Yeats has had to fight his corner and fight it hard since those days. If he has learnt to hit back who shall blame him?

He must have suffered all through his youth from being unlike his fellows: a white blackbird among the others, a genius among the commonplace. Probably the Anglo-Irish milieu in which he grew up was the least sympathetic he could have found. The Anglo-Irishman, although he achieves great things at times, is, in the rank and file of him, somewhat harsh. He has the John Bullish attitude towards sentimentality without the real sentiment which John Bull is unaware of possessing, although it jumps to the eye of everyone else. He has somewhat of the Celt's irritability and jealousy: in fact, these things grafted upon him make for an intolerance which is far from being Celtic.

Being so unlike his fellows, Willie Yeats was bound to suffer at school and afterwards. It is not in the ordinary schoolboy to take off his hat to a poet—even to one who is to help to make his age illustrious. He had a schoolmaster in his Dublin days who wrote very bad and very pretentious verse himself. It had received the suffrages of the critics of that day who acclaimed Lewis Morris as a great poet. He liked to ridicule the young poet because of wh&m he may one day be remembered. The schoolboys grinned at the poet's halting translations. If ragging, in its material sense, had been the fashion at Irish schools, it would have been harder for him. As it was—well, I daresay he had some consciousness of genius; and he had his dreams to interpose between him and the rough schoolboy world.

Certainly he had not a trace of bitterness when I first knew him, nor for long afterwards. He was beautiful to look at with his dark face, its touch of vivid colouring, the night-black hair, the eager dark eyes. He wore a queer little beard in those days—it was just a little later than his

father's portrait of him—and he lived, breathed, ate, drank, and slept poetry.

I have been scolding the schoolboys; but I must acknowledge that in those days we all bullied Willie Yeats, I myself not excepted. I believe it was because we did not want to live, breathe, eat, drink, and sleep poetry: and he would have you do all those things if you allowed him. But then and always I knew that he was that precious thing to the race and the world, a genius. Driving Willie Yeats to and fro, I used to say to myself:

"And did you once see Shelley plain?"

All this, however, comes somewhat later. *Louise de la Valliere* appeared in June 1885. It was made a commercial success by my friends immediately. Since the book belonged to me a great many of them dealt with me for it. Count Plunkett sent me £5 for copies, and Father Russell also sent me a cheque. I very soon got back the £20 and more: but my father never asked for a red cent of it. He derived such an immense pleasure from my success that I am sure he thought it cheap at the price.

The fruits of that little first volume came rapidly. One of the first fruits was a friendship, which sweetened and brightened my life for twenty years, with Mary Gill, who died in 1905—a dark year for me, since that year also took from me my beloved father.

Father Russell sent the little book to Cardinal Newman, who wrote me a characteristic blessing on "compositions which he has found as pleasant to read as excellent in spirit and tone."

I take up a little black-covered note-book into which I pasted some of my memorable letters—a quite unworthy habitation for them—and I look at those letters, mostly from dead hands, alas. In those days all young poets used to send their volumes to Tennyson, with a touching confidence which might have allayed, but did not, the poet's bitterness. Now I, with my London experience, was wiser. I sent my book only to such of the illustrious and remarkable people as I had some reason to believe would be interested in me and my doings: and I was more than justified.

Here is Cardinal Manning's letter, and the date of it tells me that the poems were published in May, not in June. Indeed a letter from Mrs. Meynell bears date May 7th, so that the book must have come early in May, or perhaps late in April:

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE, WESTMINSTER, S.W.,
May 29, 1885.

DEAR MISS TYNAN,--Your volume of Poems reached me last night, and I at once read many of them with very great interest and pleasure. The least excellence in them is their very pure diction. I am no critic, but I am very quick to feel words without meaning or colour or fitness. I have seldom read so much and met with so few words I did not think well chosen.

The next excellence seems to be the beauty of conception, natural and moral.

But the last and highest is the sacredness of the subjects and the piety of their treatment. It is not therefore so much as poems, but as sacred strains of which the Passion of our Lord is the centre, that I value them.

I hope, if you come again to London, that I may see you. I hope that all blessings may be with you.—Believe me always, yours faithfully in J. C.

HENRY E., CARD. ARCHBISHOP.

A letter from Sir Samuel Ferguson may be interesting to others than myself because of the political touch in it. Sir Samuel had been in sympathy with the '48 men. His "Lament for Thomas Davis" is one of the finest poems in Anglo-Irish literature. Like a good many others he was repelled by the Land League, not only by its doings but by its methods, which were American rather than Irish.

20 NORTH GREAT GEORGE'S STREET,
June 6, 1885

DEAR MISS TYNAN,—The poems are full of feeling and refinement. I have read them with emotion and pleasure. They are of a higher mood than any I have hitherto seen having the same aims, and ought to make your voice influential among the better spirits of that section of our countrymen with

whom you sympathise. You will, I think, be stronger in proportion as you are more direct, and avoid the using of what may be called pet words.—I am, yours sincerely.

SAMUEL FERGUSON.

P.S.—I am greatly taken with your bird in the frosty branch. You are very happy in your bird imagery and sympathies.

Years afterwards, Lady Ferguson, writing to me about a newspaper article of mine on her husband, returned again to his liking for that little poem about the bird on the frosty branch.

I turn over my book of letters and I come upon a long letter from Mr. T. M. Healy in the bad typescript of those early days of type-writing. A very kind and pleasant letter it is, full of helpful suggestions. It is odd enough to read that he wished to write to me about my poem on A. M. Sullivan, only that, being a stranger, he feared that a letter would be intrusive, not to say impertinent. He suggests sending slips of my reviews which he may show to Mr. Labouchere, to secure a good notice in *Truth*, and promises to speak to Justin Huntley McCarthy, so that the *Daily News* may give a helping hand. He helped me in many other places besides. Through him Sir Edward Russell wrote a very kind review of me in the *Liverpool Post*. We used to say in those days that Tim Healy was a good friend and a bad enemy. I remember when his face, with its bright brown eyes, its odd whiteness of skin and blackness of hair and beard, was a very pleasant thing in my sight—a friend's face, warm and kind. Some years later I was obliged to hate him, when he, more than any other, embittered the last months of the leader I adored. But what is done is done: and I am glad to record here Mr. Tim Healy's great kindness to me. Somewhere I have a little book he gave me, *A Plea for Ireland*, which was dear to me in its time.

This friend log-rolled for me cheerfully and unashamed. But I don't think that a great deal of log-rolling went to the

making of those excellent reviews, incredibly good it seems to me looking back on the very-much-derived little volume.

Sometime in that summer I had the idea of sending the book to William Rossetti, for no better reason than that I had a passion for D. G. Rossetti's poetry and could now never hope to tell him so in this world.

I remember perfectly the August Sunday on which the acknowledgment came. It was a beautiful bright summer Sunday. My memory of Sundays in my old home is of an incessant brightness. We used to rise early for the early Mass, and after breakfast there was a whirlwind of preparation for the visitors who came to the big mid-day meal, the other visitors who came in the afternoon and evening. I believe my own occupation on those summer Sunday forenoons must have consisted largely in picking peas and shelling them. I can see the cool brightness of the cottage under its thatch, as I went through its rooms set in Indian file, with a tiny hall like an oblong box dropped in the middle of the rooms, to the garden. At the other end the garden was enclosed by an old privet hedge seven or eight feet high and some three or four feet thick. There was a stone seat which went back into the hedge. There I sat and shelled peas, the scent of the privet all about me—looking away through the twisted apple boughs to the white gable of the house, the sound of distant church-bells and the moan of the wood-doves in my ears. In the Irish summer country you have always the wood-doves, as it might be the lamenting voice of the Spirit of Ireland.

On such a summer morning William Rossetti's letter came. I remember how I could hardly take in its contents fast enough, and how I looked for my father to read the letter to him: I don't think anyone else was particularly interested in these triumphs of mine—of my own family, I mean.

The letter ran:

5 ENDSLEIGH GARDENS, LONDON, N.W.,
9th of August 1885.

DEAR MADAM,—I received your letter of 5th of August and read it, needless to say, with very great interest and

pleasure. The volume of poems came about the same time. I opened it, I confess, with some trepidation, fearing lest it might turn out that the poems were not of such calibre as to enhance or sustain the interest excited by the letter. The first poem which I read was the "Flight of the Wild Geese," followed by several others, say a good third of the volume.

Here follow some compliments which my readers will take as read. The letter proceeds:

The volume appears to me on the whole to be more indicative of an influence from my sister's work than my brother's. . . . I mentioned the matter to my sister yesterday, reading her your letter, and assured her that if she were to receive a copy of the book from you she would heartily like some things in it. This she is quite prepared to assume, and if you are still inclined to send her a copy, pray do so. Her address is 30 Torrington Square, London, W.C. We, and also our aged mother, still with us at the age of eighty-five, are very much interested in your feeling for Gabriel and grateful for it.

I should like you, my dear Miss Tynan, to select from the enclosed list of photographs of my brother's pictures any half-dozen that you would particularly like to possess, and I shall then do myself the pleasure of ordering them for you. I have put an ink-mark against those which would, I fancy, on one ground or another, more specially merit your liking, but this is, of course, mere guesswork and you will choose as you prefer. I also enclose autographs of my brother and sister on the chance of your caring for such relics.—Please to believe me, very sincerely yours.

W. M. ROSSETTI.

It can be believed how I tossed my cap in the air over this letter, and how I went "touchin' the ground in an odd place," as the apple-woman said of the old parson who was about to be married.

The Hollier photographs of the pictures which I selected were: "Dante's Dream," "Proserpine,"¹ "The Girlhood of

Mary," " Mary Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee," the two heads of Mrs. Rossetti and Christina, and a photograph of Gabriel, as his own family always called him.

A little later I heard from Christina:

30 TORRINGTON SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.,
19th of August 1885.

MY DEAR Miss TYNAN,—I think you will forgive the delay which has preceded my grateful acknowledgment of *Louise de la Valliere* when I tell you it was occasioned by my wish to read it before writing to you. Now, having done so, I can express my sincere admiration for your poetic gift. But beyond all gifts I account *graces*', and therefore the piety of your work fills me with hopes far beyond any to be raised by music of diction. If you have honoured my form by thinking it worth imitating, much more may I your spirit.

I think you would have been charmed by our dear Gabriel had you known him: so many were charmed and so many still remember him. My brother William, I know, is sending you his photograph, and I am sending you my last little book, *Time Flies*. Please accept it as a small response to your kind overtures. I have ventured to write in it your name without the formality of "Miss," an omission I like towards myself often, so I hope you will not dislike it.—Believe me to remain, very truly yours.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

Turning the letters over again I come upon a letter from Michael Davitt telling me that John C.T. Leary, whom I did not then know, had praised the little book—too generously—adding from himself with other kind things: "I have had the extraordinary pleasure of saying when I heard the poems praised, 'And she is a friend of mine.'"

Again, I find a letter from Miss Parnell, which I quote because of the personality of this mysterious and fascinating woman rather than for anything it says. I make no apology for the opinion it expresses, nor do I feel any lack of modesty in quoting it. It only means that Miss Parnell had a personal preference, probably largely generous, for my very minor

muse over that of Mrs. Browning. Irish people have a trick of over-statement, at which one ceases to wince as one grows older.

7 HUME STREET, DUBLIN,
August 9.

MY DEAR MISS TYNAN,—As I have not yet thanked you for your kind present of your poems, allow me to do so now and at the same time to congratulate you on your last in the *Dublin University Review*, all the more for the subject being so threadbare, as that makes your great success in dealing with it more conspicuous. I lent your book to a lady who is a great student of poetry but is too poor to buy it (I notice that it is the poor generally who like poetry best), and she agreed with my opinion that it was as good as Mrs. Browning. Hoping that you may continue to succeed and throw a reflected glory on your country and friends.—I remain, yours very truly.

A. PARNELL.

I quote these letters from a great number of others; and turning over my black book I marvel at the kindness which so encouraged a young writer. It was a time when we were much nearer to poetry than in these days, when a hook of the kind would have met with a much chillier reception. I hold all those kind friends, living and dead, and in especial Mr. William liossetti, in warm and grateful memory.

CHAPTER XV

THE ROSSETTIS AND OTHERS

I RECEIVED William Rossetti's letter, one of the happiest things of my life, on the morning of the 9th of August, and my joy was unclouded by any warning that on the previous day, a dear friend of mine, a son of Mr. Fagan's, had died in India.

I do not know how long it took for the news to reach me. I believe it was September before I knew, and that month of August, with my sheaves coming in to me, was a happy one.

Charles Gregory Fagan was a strange and interesting personality. In his sensitive face his eyes burned like blue fire. He was full of poetry and all manner of artistic impulses. At Oxford he had accomplished much less than was hoped for, because of some unrest and trouble in him that forbade his ever being prosperous or comfortable. He had his knot of admirers at Oxford. The Universities at that time still read poetry, and were under the influence of the glorious days when Morris and Rossetti and Burne-Jones influenced Oxford life. Walter Pater was yet a living force in Oxford, and the City of Lost Causes yet saw the world through the flame and the glory of poetry and imagination, when Oxford loomed to her lovers "like a ceremonial chapel filled with music." Instead of taking a Double-First as was prophesied of him, he took a very ordinary degree, and coming down from Oxford he went into the Post Office as a first division clerk, while waiting for something more congenial to turn up. Of a life which might have been tranquil, he made storm and stress. He was over-wrought and too much unlike the pushing thronging world to be at his ease in it. He was always drawing or painting or writing poems or sketches or playing the piano or worshipping at the shrine

of beauty. The blue fire of his eyes looked at you and looked away. He was like the Pre-Destined in Maeterlinck's lovely and solemn essay. He carried about with him the secret that he was to die young.

I remember him in an old room in Clifford's Inn, oak-panelled, dim, with low windows looking on green branches in a far-away spring. The room was beautiful, not only by reason of its age, but for the colours that glowed in it. Panels of beautiful Morris blue, a portiere of the same, silver cups and vases everywhere, for unexpectedly he had been a great athlete at Oxford. Pictures on the walls; daffodils and wall-flowers in silver cups. Books on the floor, on the chairs, in the window-seats: a beautiful girl's head with straight, unsmiling lips, and a swan-like neck—the same face over and over looking out of shadowy corners. He had foreseen that face before he caught sight of it living at a London railway station. Strangely enough one finds it in his boyish water-colours, in the minute pen-and-ink drawings of his Oxford days, years before he knew the owner of the face. He was possessed by a passion for beauty, more perhaps than a passion for any mortal woman: and one is tolerably certain that he could not have lived and been happy and striving and fretted in the common human way. He was of the Pre-Destined.

I came to know him well, and to be in his secrets during that visit of mine to London in 1884. Sometime in that autumn he went out to take over the head-mastership of the Kerala Vidya Sala College for native students at Calicut Malabar. He went out with all sorts of prepossessions in favour of the natives, with fine Quixote ideas of treating them as men and brothers. He threw himself into the work of the College with passionate ardour. Whether he would have discarded those ideals in time, as many Europeans have done before him, none can say. He died nine months after going out with all his ideals yet in him, at the age of twenty-five.

Not much of what he had done and promised to do remains. There were some books of his manuscript poetry, written under the shadow of early death. His pictures were all over the Great Cressingham Rectory, and his mother had a collection

of his drawings of birds, while he was yet a baby, minutely and delicately observed. Somewhere I have a drawing of a missel-thrush signed by his mother, "Charlie, Aged Six": and I have a couple of his pen-and-ink sketches and a little water-colour. One or two of his poems appeared in the *Dublin University Review*, and I find in his copy of Shelley a poem which appeared in the *Academy*. The Pagans had all been born and brought up in Cornwall, and Cornwall was very dear to them. I do not think any of them ever took to Norfolk. This poem has its Cornish inspiration :

CARN GLUZE (THE GREY ROCK)

Grey stones and there be many such hereby,
Only a mouldering wall of granite grey;
Yet once we came here, sweetheart, you and I,
In an old world, it seems so far away.

In some old world so far away it seems,
I scarce can think it was the same, so far
The memory of half-forgotten dreams
Is not so faint as those lost summers are.

Yet not a single stone has changed his face,
The tinkling rivulet has the self-same tune;
And the old shadow fills the self-same place,
Here in this dreamy golden afternoon.

And on the summer days the hushed uproar
Of the wave's wash comes faint and far away.
The white sea-fowl are wheeling by the shore,
The same that we saw once upon a day.

Well, you are dead, and I am here alone.
Time bringeth change to us as years roll on ;
There is no pity in this hard grey stone,
He will be just the same when I am gone.

He was a type belonging to the Oxford **of** that day. **I remember** his father saying once that he reminded him of the young men in Turgeniei!', full of ideals and aspirations never

to be realised. A curious type—feminine on the one side, on the other masculine in his love for sport, his achievements in all manner of games, some of them an Oxford tale, a country tale perhaps. I read the naive tributes of his native masters and pupils: "A gallant rider, an expert cricketer, a master of tennis, badminton, football, and every other sort of outdoor exercise, he was besides the fleetest of foot, the clearer of the highest point in the high jump, the largest space in the long jump."

What he might have done if he had lived none can say. He flung away *Kits* life carelessly, playing cricket in tropic heat, and then lying on the ground as the damps of evening began to fall. Like Keats, whom he loved,—I can always hear him reciting in his singing way—

" Fade far away, dissolve and quite forget
What thou amongst the leaves hast never known—
The weariness, the fever and the fret
Here where men sit and hear each other groan.
Where palsy shakes a few sad last grey hairs,
Where youth grows pale and spectre-thin and dies,
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Nor new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow."

his name is writ in water.

His death brought me to England unexpectedly, in the autumn of that year, for I went on a visit to his parents to comfort them in what must have been the winter of their discontent. I went in October and stayed with them till late in November, when I went up to London and paid various visits to London friends, and to some in the country.

I must have spent my Christmas in London that year, although I remember nothing at all about the Festival. Miss Mulholland was in London in mourning because she had lost a brother. While she stayed I spent at least one afternoon of every week with her at the Russells' house in Harley Street, sometimes lunching, sometimes coming in after lunch

and spending the greater part of the afternoon with Miss Mulholland in her own room.

She had somewhat nun-like ideas of what a girl might or might not do in London, and she would not hear of my travelling back to North London, where I was staying, at a late hour and unaccompanied. So I always left before the afternoon was too far advanced, and she used to come with me for a portion of the way, and put me into my final 'bus. She had no idea of how independent and daring I really was.

I recall this because of my first meeting with the future Lord Chief Justice of England. I was coming downstairs one afternoon, cloaked and hatted, when the great man appeared. He was dining out. He very often was dining out in those days, and he used to get home to dress and to see his family. He was a devoted husband and father, a pattern of the domesticities. While he dressed the whole family clustered round him in his dressing-room. One could feel in the house the atmosphere of love and admiration that surrounded him.

He came bustling out and we met in the hall and were introduced. "But you're going to stay for dinner?" he said. "Surely you're going to stay for dinner!" He said it with the air of a command. I should have liked to stay, but my friend's carefulness for me intervened. I don't think she said I would not stay. I imagine that in his own house his will was law. We waited till he had disappeared before going off.

He was the kindest and warmest of hosts, and had the old-fashioned way of heaping hospitality on his guests. Indeed a truly Irish hospitality was the rule of the house. It was his custom when he had a dinner-party to brew a wonderful punch after the ladies had departed. A man with whom punch did not agree told me that he dreaded that moment when Sir Charles ladled him out his tumbler of punch and sent it down to him. He might have dispensed a total abstainer; but my friend was not one and was expected to drink the host's punch. Once he was at Sir Charles's elbow so that the eagle eye was only obliquely upon him. His punch was forgotten. The bowl was empty and he began

to rejoice, not daring to rejoice too much. He was not out of the wood. Suddenly Sir Charles discovered the omission. "Take mine," he said, planting his own untouched tumbler before the guest, who had to drink every drop of it.

From Mr. Barry O'Brien's *Life of Lord Russell of Killowen* I carry away one charming impression. It is his daughter who speaks. "My first memory of my father is of a curly head on the nursery floor." He was the most fortunate of great men. Fearless, strenuous, dominating, he might make enemies without while all honest men praised him : his home was his strong and sure fortress within which there was nothing but peace and love.

I have an impression during those November days that the Crawford Divorce Case, in which Sir Charles Russell was engaged, was proceeding. I remember the news coming in of the day's result, hearing it whispered by someone or other. It reminds me of what I have stated in an earlier part of this book about Sir Charles Dilke's belittling of Mr. Parnell. Since that was written I have told it to someone in Irish public life, who said: "That is perfectly explicable. Early in the eighties there was a cabal to get rid of Gladstone and put Chamberlain in his place. Dilke was working the Irishmen, but Parnell got wind of it and squelched the whole thing." I do not vouch for the truth of the story, but give it as it was given to me.

Another memory connecting Mr. Parnell and Sir Charles Dilke is of Mr. Parnell's walking into a Dublin newspaper office some time before his death, and saying quietly: "I see that Sir Charles Dilke has been selected as Liberal candidate for the Forest of Dean," and walking out again.

Other visits I made that autumn were to the Rossettis. I paid an afternoon visit to Mr. William Rossetti, whose wife was wintering abroad for her health. He showed me a good many relics of Dante Gabriel, many sketches and pictures; and I was allowed to handle the volumes of the *Germ*, all a matter of untold delight to me. I saw Christina a few days later for the first time. I also had the good fortune to meet the mother of the Rossettis, who died in the following April.

William Rossetti, who had and has a painstaking way of explaining everything, had told me that Christina lived with her mother and her aunts—two old Misses Polidori—and looked after them. "We are a household of old ladies," said Christina, in the drawing-room at Torrington Square. The Rossettis were true Bloomsbury people. One would have expected to find Christina and her charges somewhere among gardens, within easy reach of the country, if not in the country itself.

She explained to me that she stayed in Bloomsbury to be near her brother William, first of all, and other friends. "We are a very attached family," she said. "Alas! there used to be Gabriel." I think, too, she stayed because of her favourite church in Munster Square, but I do not remember that she said anything about that.

I had been prepared to meet her as a saint. I remember that the Meynells envied me going to visit her, saying "You will have the privilege of seeing a saint." I was somewhat taken aback when she entered the room, wearing short serviceable skirts of an iron grey tweed and stout boots. It did not at all consort with her face or with her poetry. One knew of her even then as somewhat of an invalid. I should have expected to find her in trailing robes of soft, beautifully-coloured material like all the writing and painting world of that day. Her dress did not at all go with her spiritual face and the heavily-lidded wide-apart eyes which one only finds in a highly-gifted woman. The heavy lids were less of a beauty than they had been when her brother delighted to paint them.

I certainly believe that she made the worst of herself, perhaps as a species of mortification. She even affected a short, matter of fact way of speaking which took me somewhat aback at our first meeting. She put one off sitting at her feet completely. "I wrote such melancholy things when I was young," she said, "that I am obliged to be unusually cheerful, not to say robust, in my old age."

At a later date I told her how taken aback I had been by the dress and the boots, and I remember how she laughed.

As that impression disappeared completely on further acquaintance, I have sometimes imagined that she set herself deliberately to undo my expectations of her.

I must have paid quite a long visit. A little time after my arrival she went out of the room and came back leading her mother, whom she established in an easy chair by the fire. The dusk of the winter day was closing in. I can see the noble old face glimmering in the shadows of the room.

Christina encouraged me to talk. I know I said a great many things about my feeling for Dante Gabriel to which the old mother listened with a hand over her ear, the better to hear, and a well-pleased smile. When she failed to catch what I said, Christina repeated it to her, bending down to her ear. She had to hear everything. The two heads side by side were exactly as D. G. Rossetti had painted them. I remember how Mrs. Rossetti patted her daughter's hand for something I had said, murmuring "My affectionate Christina."

After tea the old lady went away, but Christina would not hear of my going. She lit three or four candles. Outside it was wet, the rain glittering on the wet gas-lit pavements, and the leaves of the shabby evergreens in Torrington Square. The fire was low, scarcely more than a handful. My memory of the room is that it was gloomy. One felt the shadow of old age and death within the house, the home which Christina Rossetti had chosen for herself where she must often have desired the beauty of fields and hills and the sea. Not the merest excuse for a garden. In front of the house the dreary London garden—an oblong, not a square, full of stunted and shabby trees. All very well for a Winter afternoon visit as though to a shrine, but to live there! And the town had nothing to give her; she was not of those for whom the great city has its delights and fascinations. I believe she received all who desired to see her. She told me that many Americans came. But she never went out except to her own people. Beyond her visitors—and I think she must have suffered them gladly—she had no social life. I have had letters from her from Brighton and Torquay.

She always said that she had been sent to those places for health's sake. She never expressed any pleasure in being there rather than in Torrington Square.

As we sat by the low fire in the somewhat dreary room that wet winter afternoon with the dusk closing in, we talked among other things of Coventry Patmore. She told me, extenuating the second and third marriages, of how a visitor going in to see him after the death of "the Anger¹" found him sitting in the dark, by a dying fire, weeping alone. He was not fit to live without a woman's love and care.

She showed me various relics, some Rossetti pictures: a sketch of "poor Lizzie," Gabriel's wife, asleep in her arm-chair wonderfully graceful. "Poor little Lizzie!" she said, and in reply to my asking if she was so beautiful: "She and Mrs. Morris were the brides of one year and no one could say which was the most beautiful."—"Poor little Lizzie!" she said again. "Poor little wife and mother! Poor little baby!"

She let me talk about her poems, now and again telling me something that bore on them. There was one poem, "Maggie: A Lady," I think, of which she said: "Gabriel said when I read it to him: 'You've been thinking of Lady Geraldine's Courtship,' and," she added, "I had."¹¹

She also talked about her little god-child, Dr. Gordon Hake's grand-daughter, Ursula, to whom she had given her own string of corals. I had had the pleasure of nursing that young lady, who displayed a most friendly spirit on our first acquaintanceship, and I had handled the corals, with much envy of so precious a possession, which had been worn by Gabriel in babyhood as well as by Christina.

William Rossetti had told me at that or some other time of Christina's love affairs. The last and deepest was that with C. B. Cayley who translated *Petrarch* and the *Iliad* of Homer. She had refused James Collinson because he was a Catholic. She refused C. B. Cayley because he was an agnostic. Reading her love-poems, one sees that she was not really at all nun-like. Romantic love must have stayed with her to the end. Later on, when I was collecting autograph-books for a

Boston bazaar, she sent me with some books from herself several volumes by C. B. Cayley. Whether she was stripping herself of precious possessions, or whether she had bought up a number of his books, I do not know.

On some visit or other, for I paid her many, she told me that she always picked up a piece of printed paper when she found it, lest it should bear the Holy Name and be trodden upon.

Christina's life has never been written—there was a very inadequate attempt at a biography by Mr. Mackenzie Bell, published in the years succeeding her death. But he seems to have had few documents of intimate memories to draw upon. Perhaps one of these days—unless Christina wished her life not to be written, which is possible—one of her nieces may repair the omission. Mr. William Rossetti, so careful, so painstaking, so devoted, must have a deal of intimate matter to draw from respecting his illustrious sister and brother beyond the Introduction to Christina in the Oxford Poets and memorial articles.

CHAPTER XVI

MR. ELWIN AND LORD LYTTON

AFTER my winter in London that year I went down to Norfolk to pay a farewell visit to the Fagans before returning home. During the winter I had seen something of Mrs. Fagan in town, where she stayed with her old friend Mrs. Rickett, at whose house I met Mr., now Sir Joseph Compton Rickett, who had written a volume of good religious poetry, *St. Christopher and Other Poemj*) and was to write a memorable volume of prose, *The Christ That is to Be*. Both these books were so good that it makes one regret that Sir Compton should have become absorbed in politics and other things to the exclusion of literature. He was a serious, gentle, and handsome man, who looked his poetry.

That winter I stayed some time with Miss Evelyn Noble, who, under the name of Evelyn Pyne, had published two or three volumes of poems, which were much praised at the time. I remember the beginning of a sonnet of hers on Richborough Castle, which seems to me to have something of the authentic touch:

" It stands amid its cornfields haughtily,
Those wonderful wind-waved cornfields, cool and green,
Whose phantom waters sunlit and opaline
Comfort the castle which hath lost the sea."

She was one of those who are passionately devoted to poetry in their youth, but let it go with their youth. She did not follow up her first successes and I lost sight of her, though I remember coming upon some of her articles in the reviews in later years, and she corresponded with my dear Father Russell, to whom I had introduced her, long after her correspondence with me had dropped.

I do not remember anything special about my second visit

to the Fagans, but, leaving them on my journey homeward, which took me by way of King's Lynn and Peterborough to Rugby, I had a very interesting adventure.

I remember it as a bleak, snowy day. I had joined the train at Thetford, and in the carriage with me was an elderly parson. I wanted a footwarmer and was unable to procure one, so I settled down as comfortably as might be in my corner, extracting from my bag a note-book and proceeding to write a poem or get one into shape as a solace for my journey. He had heard me ask for a footwarmer, and a little while after the train started he asked me if I would share his. This necessitated a move to his end of the carriage. I had had the good fortune to strike a distinguished literary man, the Rev. Whitwell Elwin, Rector of Booton, Norfolk, editor of the great edition of Pope, and a former editor of the *Quarterly Review*.

I believe the conversation began by his offering me papers to read. The *cause celebre* of the moment was Mrs. Weldon's action against Dr. Forbes Winslow, for giving a false certificate of lunacy. We talked first of that subject. Nothing could have been milder and gentler of aspect than my old parson. I could not have imagined him as an ex-editor of the *Quarterly Review* and the one who had picked the great little man of Twickenham to pieces, fixing him for all time.

After a while he asked me what I had been writing. I suppose he had noticed and been amused by my pondering air, my poised pencil. I told him that it was verse and he was greatly interested. He asked me if I knew anything of the poetry of Owen Meredith. Did I indeed? Had I not grown up with it?

In my small library, while I was yet a growing child, there were a couple of early volumes of the *Comhill* in its great days—the days of Thackeray's editorship. I read and re-read those volumes avidly and had the poetry off by heart. *What a magazine!* There were Thackeray's *Four Georges* and *The Story of Philip*, There was Trollope's *Framley Parsonage*. There was George MacDonald's *The Portent*. For poetry there was Mrs. Browning's *Great God Pan* and *Little Mottle*, Ruskin was of the contributors with *Unto This Last*. Millais

was among the artists. Those volumes must have been a delight to many an imaginative child in those days; for I have discovered several of my contemporary writers who were brought up on them as I was.

As soon as I was asked if I knew Owen Meredith, I reeled off from my precious *Cornhill*:

" Will, are you sitting and watching there yet ? for I know
by a certain skill
That grows out of utter wakefulness the night must be
far spent, Will.
For, lying awake for many a night, I have learnt at last
to catch
FYom the crowing cock and the clanging clocks and the
tick of the beating watch,
A misty sense of the measureless march of Time as he
passes here,
Leaving my life behind him, and I know that the dawn
is near."

Did I know Owen Meredith? He must have been a poet of the young, of the romantic boys at the Universities, who adored *Maud* and knew Arthur O'Shaughnessy and Philip Bourke Marston, and such like minor bards by heart, to say nothing of Morris, Swinburne, and Rossetti. And talking of Marston reminds me how he used to be led into Lady Wilde's receptions, and how one sat beside him and took his hand and talked to the sightless eyes.

Lord Lytton would have liked to be the poet of the young: so he was fortunate in that as in all else. His poetry was a wonder-world to me, just as *Mated* was. My clever family of girls of the Land League days and I used to go about ranting bits from *Maud*: "Birds in the high Hall-garden," and "I have led her home, my love, my only dear," and "Ah, that 'twere possible"—finding in them the expression of our own romantic hearts. So, too, we had a passionate pleasure in Owen Meredith. They had *Lucille and other Poems*, and we used to pore over:

" My little love, do you remember,
Ere we were grown so sadly wise,
Those evenings in the bleak December,
Curtained warm from the snowy weather,
When you and I played chess together
Checkmated by each other's eyes ?"

And that very Morrisian poem which I am quite sure influenced me in my early verse:

" Sometimes 'neath dripping white rose-leaves
I ride, and under gilded eaves
Of scarlet bowers, where plucking flowers
With scarlet skirts and stiff gold sleeves
Betwixt green walls, and two by two
Kings' daughters walk while just a few
Faint harps make music mild that falls
Like mist from off the ivied walls
Along the sultry corn, and stirs
The hearts of far-off harvesters."

Again I reeled off the poem in which Owen Meredith was most himself, the poem in which I still find the magic, the air of glamour which attached to it when I was young. It is called *Ana,' Italiens*. The lover at the Opera amid the glories of the Second Empire, when Napoleon III and Eugenie are present in state, with the proud beauty by his side **whom** he is to marry, remembers his little lost love:

" Meanwhile I was thinking of my first love
As I had not been thinking of her for years,
Till over my eyes there began to move
Something that hurt like tears.

I thought of the dress she wore last time
We stood 'neath the cypress trees together,
In that lost land, in that soft clime,
In the crimson evening weather.

Of her muslin dress, for the eve was hot,
Of her warm young neck in its golden chain,
And her full soft hair just tied in a knot
And falling loose again.

And the jasmine flower in her fair young breast
Oh, the faint sweet smell of the jasmine flower !
And the one bird winging alone to his nest
And the one star over the tower.

I thought of our little quarrels and strife
And the letter that brought me back my ring,
And it all seemed then in the waste of life
Such a very little thing.

I thought of her grave below the hill
Which the sentinel cypress tree stands over,
And I thought if but she were living still
How I could forgive and love her.

And I swear as I thought of her in that hour,
And how so often old things are best,
I smelt the smell of the jasmine flower
She used to wear in her breast.

And I turned and looked. She was sitting there
In a dim box over the stage and drest
In the muslin dress that she used to wear
And the jasmine flower in her breast.

She is not dead and she is not wed,
But she loves me now and she loved me then,
And the very first words her sweet lips said
My heart grew young again.

The Marchteness there of Carabas,
Is wealthy and young and handsome still,
And but for her—well, we'll let that pass,
She can marry who ever she will.

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But I will marry my own old love
With the primrose face, for old things are best;
And the flower in her bosom I prize it above
The gems on my lady's breast.

I think in the lives of most women and men
There's a moment when all would go smooth and even
If only the dead could find out when
To come back and be forgiven.

But O the smell of the jasmine flower,
And O the music and O the way
That voice rang out from the donjon tower
Non ti scordar di me ! Non ti scordar di me ! "

Writing it out now, it seems very faulty, weak, violent, slipshod. And yet—what enchantment of lost youth, what glamour of first love is in it, making it fragrant with a sharp, bitter-sweet fragrance that brings the tears to the eyes! I cannot read it coldly: I care nothing for its imperfections. I put down my face upon it as I might on a withered bundle of verbena and lavender, wild thyme and southern-wood, and I am away, with a breaking heart, to the Land of Youth, the lost land.

Lord Lytton belonged very much to his period. In his poetry we find the exact note of girlish passion to which we sang our songs — *Ruby* by Virginia Gabriel — dearest of all — *When Sparrows Build*, the songs of *Claribel*. The little first love of the poem was mid-Victorian, the muslin frock, the loosely falling hair, the golden chain about her neck. She was before the days of strenuous womanhood. The Higher Education, the bicycle, hockey, and golf were not for her; she would have been bewildered if you offered her the Vote: she left all the business of the great world to her men-folk : she married at sixteen and produced many sons and daughters, and displayed an efficiency in rearing them and managing her house little short of miraculous considering her opportunities. Many ladies of to-day would

consider her a little fool. But oh, how sweet she was and how dearly loved ! **Man** may find his equal mate in these days and be very happy with her ; but at heart man is a mid-Victorian still. He sighs for the little girl with the primrose face and the muslin frock, the Dora of David Copperfield.

I said all I had to say or could remember of Owen Meredith, and my old parson listened with a peculiar attention which seemed no wise strange to me: I had found my world very kind. When I had finished he told me that he was on his way to stay with Lord Lytton at Knebworth, and assured me that his host would be greatly interested to hear of our meeting, which doubtless was true, for it was a very odd coincidence that his visitor should have struck such a devotee.

Having told me of the coincidence, Mr. Elwin went on to talk of other things. I suppose it was in some spirit of daring—some feeling that I must not be a coward and keep back the truth, that I told him of my connection with the Land League. To my amazement, so far from being shocked—I had been afraid he would withdraw himself from our delightful friendly intercourse—he congratulated me on my opportunities, and suggested that I should write a novel of the League.

We parted the most excellent friends at Cambridge. He said that he would get a copy of *Louise de la Vallière* and show it to Lord Lytton. I offered to send him one, but he would not hear of it, saying that young writers should not give away their books. In lieu of a visiting card he wrote on the flyleaf of my note-book: Rev. W. Elwin, Booton Rectory, Norwich. Even then I was not enlightened—I was a very ignorant little provincial person—till my better-informed friends told me that I had fallen in with an angel unaware in the shape of an ex-editor of the *Quarterly* and the great editor of Pope.

Under date March 16, 1886, Mr. Elwin wrote to me what I think must have been a second letter. I cannot find the first, nor do I remember how many letters I **had** from him

in all. I have a way of depositing precious letters in books, which gives me the' delight of many unexpected finds; but I am very well aware that there are many I shall never find. However, it keeps them clean: there is so much to be said for the practice. I will put down here as much of the correspondence as I have been able to discover. I never accepted Lord Lytton's kind invitation to Knebworth, partly out of shyness, partly because I had heard that Knebworth was haunted by the ghost of Lord Castlereagh. I was at that time, and always, very nervous. I was not exactly superstitious, but I thought it well to be on the safe side. As for my shyness—well, one would imagine, with the extraordinary good fortune that had befallen me in the making of friends, and the most extraordinary daring I showed in making them, that I need not and could not have been shy. But, as a matter of fact, I had a painful shyness and distrust of myself; and in those days a delayed letter or a lapse of correspondence caused me untold anguish lest I should have disgusted my friends with me. Perhaps it was a useful provision against my being a bore, which I might have been otherwise, since I was very enthusiastic.

For the rest of that memorable journey on which I met Mr. Elwin—how cold it was and snowy!—I fared excellently well. I was taken in charge from Cambridge to Rugby by a kind young man in gaiters, who might have been a superior sort of big farmer. He treated me with the most brotherly kindness, seeing that I was fed and warmed on my cold journey. I think of him as a true gentleman, and send him my salutations wherever he may be.

At Rugby I waited four whole hours for the Irish mail. The station was rebuilding, and the place more desolate than it need have been. I wandered about for those four hours, and even yet the sound of a railway whistle at night reminds me of that lonely vigil. I can see the rails running away in all directions, and the foggy and frosty sky with the red of the frost or some distant furnace in it. The lonely engines out in the night seemed to call to each other. I suppose it must have been late when I got the Irish mail—or the express,

perhaps—for I remember the big station as a deserted place. There was not even a fire in the waiting-room, which was warmed by hot-air pipes, and was most desolate.

In the train again I met friends—a couple of fatherly, elderly men, who made me lie down and gave me a couple of rugs, and talked in murmurs of cattle and crops under the light of a shaded lamp till the tiresome journey was over at Holyhead.

And now here are the letters in their order as far as I can trace them. When the last letter from Lord Lytton came he was on the eve of taking up his duties as Ambassador at Paris. He would seem to have been a most charming, debonair and kind person. I have always been grateful for the chance which made me the recipient of his kindness.

BOOTON RECTORY, NORWICH,
March 16, 1886.

MY DEAR MISS TYNAN,—The burnt letter was not from me, but I am glad the thought came into your head that it might be, since to this I owe the pleasure of yours, though I had no need of it to recall the delightful little journey we had from Thetford to Cambridge. The second edition of your poems was not then out, and not knowing when they would be ready, there was nothing to lead me to order them at one time rather than another. I have done it now, and shall have them in a day or two. Southey used to say that if his friends and acquaintances had only sufficient thought for his interests to buy each a volume of his poetry when he published one, he should be easy in his circumstances. It is commonly all that an individual can do for an author. Holding this to be the right principle, I told you I would prefer to buy your volume, or I should have been delighted that you should give it me. To buy a single copy is a trifle: to give many copies is not. And nothing can be better worth the money it costs than a book which contributes to the permanent stores of your mind.

I related to Lord Lytton the particulars of our meeting and conversation, and the pleasure and benefit you had derived

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from his early poems. He could not but be interested. He and his eldest daughter are coming here on Wednesday to stay a few days, and he will no doubt be with us when your book arrives, so that you may be sure of its being brought under his notice. His love of poetry increases instead of diminishing with years, and he is more a poet after his long career of diplomacy and government than he ever was in the first flush of fervid youth. You will hear from me again when I have your poems to write about.

This is a retired little village, and my tastes are those of a recluse. I have more pleasure in the pleasant tranquillity of a happy domestic life, in the simple beauties of nature, and in my functions among our country rustics, than in all the united grandeurs of the bustling world. And in this happiness literature has a big share, for it is to appropriate to oneself the best, the wisest, the most beautiful thoughts of the greatest minds that have ever existed in the tide of time. You, too, have this boon, and I hope you are enjoying it to the full.—Good-bye for to-day, and believe me always most sincerely yours.

W. ELWIN.

BOOTON RECTORY, NORWICH,
March 22, 1886.

DEAR Miss TYNAN,—Mr. Elwin, who has shown me a little volume of your poems, which I have read with interest, assures me that you would like to receive from me some statement of my impressions of them; and, as I believe implicitly in everything that Mr. Elwin tells me, my faith in this assurance is so strong that I am constrained to act upon it, in spite of the difficulty of doing so—a difficulty which you, a poetess, will understand, for it lies in the difference between writing poetry and writing *about* poetry. The impressions conveyed by poetry are necessarily indefinite, and the attempt to give them definite expression is an all but impossible one—at least to me. Interjections are the only form in which my own impressions of poetry find natural utterance, but what I think of your poems will not be made intelligible to you by "Oh"s" and "Ah's." I must try to explain it otherwise, and if I "mingle

blame with praise" it is because mere compliments to the authoress of the little book I have just been reading would not, in my sincere opinion, be adequate tribute to the merit I find in it. I am not at all familiar with the course of contemporary poetry, but let me say at once that I think there is a more genuine faculty of song, more spontaneity and sincerity of expression, in this little book than in any of the new poems that I happen to have read for many years back. Your mastery of the craft and mechanism of verse also appears to me superior to that of most of the minor modern poets, for it is effective without being affected; and indeed the excellence of your versification is so great that, had these poems been written eighty years ago, they would have made an epoch in the history of English poetry. But it is this reflection which marks in my own mind the limit of their relative value. From what I have already said of them, I hope you will understand and believe that I am very far from thinking them mere echoes. That they are not. They have an honest individuality of their own; but it is an individuality influenced by the spirit and style of recent or contemporary writers to an extent which subdues and shapes its most salient features into conformity with the prevalent pattern of a whole group of which each individual member reproduces with but slight variation the dominant collective type of the age that has produced it. To all members of such a group the source of impressions—sentiments and emotions, and the vocabulary of language—seem to be more or less common, and the one differs from the other mainly in the vividness with which he sees and feels the same things, or the felicity with which he employs the same vocabulary. For instance, to apply these observations to yourself. Your poem of the Dreamers is a very striking and beautiful poem; I like it better, and read it with more pleasure than I do most of Rossetti's poems, and by only the very best of his does it seem to me excelled in workmanship. But then the most distinctive features are those in which I most recognise a family likeness to a parental group or school of modern poets. So again, all your poems abound in beautiful expressions—suggestive images and musical cadences which

are certainly not imitated from any particular contemporary poet, but which are, I think, conceived in the spirit and employed in the manner more or less common to them all, and the merit which remains your own in that you employ them more happily than many of your contemporaries. This condition of compulsory conformity to a prevalent pattern is not peculiar, however, to the poetry of our age. In all the Elizabethan poets and in all those of the eighteenth century, we find the same family likeness and the same fidelity to a common type. The first could not be all Shakespeares, nor the second all be Popes; but the minor poets of both eras have bequeathed to us many beautiful productions that we should be sorry to lose, and each in his own day helped to beautify or refine the age that inspired him.

What I have presumed to say of your relation as a poet to the other poets of your time is not said in any spirit of discouragement. But, at any rate, it expresses exactly what I feel about all my own earlier productions in verse, whenever I look back to them. It gives me sincere pleasure to know by your letter to Mr. Elwin that some of them have given pleasure to you—but the greater number of them, which, when I wrote them, I believed to be entirely *individual*, now appear to me more or less *generic*—and I understand better than I did when I was young the truth of that saying of Schiller's that the poet (if favoured by Providence) should be stolen away in infancy—concealed by the Muses from the age to which he was born, and return to it only when full grown, as a stranger—if not as a destroyer.

I had more to say about your poems—amongst other things, that I think I see a strengthened growth of your own individuality in the poem of the "Nested Bird"—but I must end this letter; and after having read the volume of your poems which Mr. Elwin has shown me—as well as your letter to him, and having heard from him so much about you—it is not as "a stranger" that I ask you to accept congratulations on the past and good wishes for the future, from your present reader and correspondent.

LYTTON.

KNEBWOTH, *March 28, 1886.*

DEAR MISS TYNAN,—*La Valiere* has safely arrived at this hermitage, which I take to be as quiet as her French convent, and where I hope you will join her any time that you happen to be again in this part of the not yet disunited kingdom. I am just starting for Italy, but expect to be back by the end of May.

A thousand thanks for the book, and for the—too modest—description of it.—Yours very sincerely. LYTTON.

BOOTON RECTORY, NORWICH,
March 30, 1886.

MY DEAR Miss TYNAN,—You need be under no apprehension that you did not express yourself adequately to Lord Lytton. He wrote me word that he had received "a very pretty letter" from you, which he was going to answer, and he has since sent me "the very pretty letter" itself. I thought it charming, both in its feeling and language. Nothing could be happier or more appropriate.

I related to him the circumstance of our meeting the day it took place, and when he was here the other day, I put your volume into his hands. The rest you owe to yourself and your poems and him. No man has a warmer and more generous nature than he, no one a keener appreciation of what is beautiful, whether in verse or prose. I was delighted he wrote his views to you himself instead of leaving it to me to report them, because beside the pleasure to yourself, which I was sure would be great, the experience of a poet far advanced in his career must have some utility for those who are comparatively young. My summary of his oral remarks would have been a poor substitute for his very words written with his own hand. I do not doubt you know from himself by this time that he is pleased you sent him your book. The gift is to be valued. Only, when there is a choice, we must sometimes remember that we ought to pay tribute to authors for the benefit we derive from them instead of their paying tax to us.

Wherever the early pieces of great poets have been preserved, they are invariably imitations of previous poets. Art of every description—music and painting as well as literature—is acquired by studying models, and minds are so constructed that they are compelled to follow, in many respects, the manner of the teacher before they can strike out an independent manner of their own. If this has happened to you, you have only submitted to an invincible law of nature. Lord Lytton is much better read than I am in the newest race of poets. I stop for the most part with the men who were famous in my youth and early or middle manhood, and some of the imitations apparent to him are hidden from me. But I have read enough of the latest poetry to observe that there is a strong inclination towards mysticism—to a want of definiteness in the ideas and of lucidity in the expression. In the midst of your touching thoughts and sweet, melodious language, I think I sometimes remark this tendency in you. I speak doubtfully, because the fault may be in my own dull perceptions and not in your imperfect delineations. But if I were a poet myself I should not fulfil my ideal unless my conceptions were vivid, and my words their reflex. I was delighted to read in your letter to Lord Lytton that you were turning your attention to the Gaelic legends of Ireland. Here with the poetic skill you have acquired the mastery over metre and language, you can adopt a treatment of your own, making the deeds and passions, the love and hate, the sorrow and the joy, the daring and the misdoing live again by the picturesque power of an imagination which has beheld the scenes and looked into the hearts of the actors, and realised for itself their varied emotions in all their strength. Your present volume is the prelude which has prepared you for this grander performance, and I hope you will spare no pains to make it worthy of your subject and yourself.

I value exceedingly the kind words you write to me. Kindness is always delightful, however small may be our title to it. A meeting which seemed accidental at the time I now conclude had a purpose from the fruit it has borne;

and we will hope there is more to come, both personal and poetical.—Good-bye for to-day, and believe me always most sincerely yours.

W. ELWIN.

16 PORTLAND PLACE, LONDON,
June 9, 1886.

MY DEAR MISS TYNAN,—I got your delightful little letter just as I was leaving home yesterday morning. I have for weeks had the almost daily intention of answering its equally delightful predecessor. Nothing could be further from my thoughts than to drop the correspondence. But though I have not been seriously ill, the keen air of the winter and spring produced in our neighbourhood a sort of epidemic of constitutional cold, which struck into the system and laid people by for weeks. I had my turn, and being wanted by my sick parishioners I had several relapses from being enticed out too soon. This, with a variety of local occupations, which sometimes come in clusters, made me put off till to-morrow whatever I was not compelled to do to-day. And when once you begin to procrastinate, it is apt to gain force the longer it continues. I am glad your kind letter has come to put a period to further delay.

Lord Lytton has been to Italy and took Lady Betty with him for a companion. They had a delightful time, half at Florence, and half at Venice. They are now in this house for their London season, and with much difficulty I have managed to leave my local entanglements for a day or two to come and see them. They will be here till the end of July. In my hurried visit the very minutes are occupied and you must wait till I am home again for a real letter. Only, I must just say that your fears that you may disappoint the Lyttons when you go to Knebworth are entirely groundless. Your letters are the counterpart of yourself, and as they think your letters charming, they will have the same opinion of you. I will tell you more of them when next I write.—Good-bye for to-day, my dear Miss Tynan, and believe me always, most sincerely yours,

W. ELWIN.

My projected visit to Knebworth never took place. Before I visited England again Lord Lytton had gone to India as Viceroy. The correspondence continued over a year and lapsed after that. I never saw Mr. Elwin again. I was to have visited him when I came back to Norfolk. But I was not there again till 1889, when he was in failing health and the end in sight.

KNEBWORTH, *July 9, 1887.*

M Y DEAR Miss TYNAN,—You have divined the truth. I could not sooner thank you for the gift of your book, because I did not know your address.

I think that in the *Irish Legends* you have made a decided advance; and I had meant to send you my impressions of them more in detail. But unfortunately I have left the book behind me in town, and am now writing in such unavoidable haste amid so many interruptions, that I cannot attempt to do so at present.

Our dear and good friend, Mr. Elwin, is at Booton and well. He was staying with us in town a few weeks ago.—With all good wishes, yours very sincerely, LYTTON.

CHAPTER XVII

1886

THE spring of 1886 was made happy to me by something which was a recognition of my advancement, and that was that instead of receiving my friends in the ordinary reception rooms of the house I must have a pretty room of my own in which to receive them and to do my work. I had for some time enjoyed the privilege of possessing a room of my own into which I had gathered an old Georgian book-case, a table to work at, a chair or two, and my precious Rossetti pictures. The room was a dark one because of its little window high up in the thatch—the very window the bull used to roar by in those golden-misty days long ago; only that in the transmogrification of things when the little house was pulled about, the window from being the centre of a mere slit of a room had become the centre of a little square one, quite large enough for a young writer's sitting-room.

Sometime in that happy spring my father decided that the room was not good enough for me. I tell all this in detail, because it is a setting forth of his love for me, that warm love and approval which made those days so rosy.

In the first place, for the little narrow window high up, with its deep window ledge, which must have been just the same when Curran lived in the house—why, Sarah Curran may have used that room and Emmet come and gone there!—he replaced by a bow window, quite out of keeping with the house, yet beautiful for admitting air and light. My window looked south on the old orchard of long ago. I had still an old apple-tree in my view with a mossy stone seat round the base, where immortal love-makings may have happened. For the rest there was green turf with flower-

beds cut in it, and beyond a tennis lawn, and beyond that again orchard trees. The whole little cottage house was still wrapped up and embowered in monthly roses, honeysuckle, jessamine, and the Scotch rose. The Scotch rose had made its way in at the windows and had climbed the walls, unforbidden. There were also many fuchsias in great clumps, and in the orchard hedge syringa had run wild. We used to call it orange-blossom.

When the building was done the room had to be decorated. In Ireland they never do things like anyone else; there are always worlds enough and time to chew a sweet cud in. So we set about doing what was to be done with a most complete leisureliness.

My father for a very strenuous man had the greatest capacity for leisureliness I ever knew. When one drove with him to town about his business there were immensely long pauses everywhere he went. He always took a chair if he only went into a shop to buy his tobacco; and it was a matter of resignation when you saw him from the pony trap sitting down and preparing to fill his pipe. These conversations were to him what a club or a golf-links is to other and later men. His social instincts and sympathies were large, and it was indeed a sacrifice for him to have buried himself in the country far from the haunts of men.

Of course, if you will think of it, the various bank managers, brewery clerks, tradesmen of all sorts whom he visited must have had a great leisureliness too, for he was not one to stay where he was not appreciated.

He and I went to a firm of painters and decorators in Bachelor's Walk to select our paper, paints, &c. There was a very small room to be done, and I am sure we spent days over the papers, not selecting our own—that was an easy matter—but looking at the pattern-books and hearing from the principal himself all that he could tell us about the evolution of wall-papers. Meanwhile a patient pony, with a small boy at his head observing the passing show, waited for hours on our leisure. I can see my father occupying a chair in the show-room endlessly filling and emptying his pipe,

a book of wall-papers open before him, and the courteous Mr. McEntyre—I think that was his name—explaining and listening.

My father was a born story-teller. Years after Mr. J. B. Yeats made a most speaking likeness of him—a sketch rather than a finished portrait, but to the life—during a two days' sitting, in which my father talked and smoked incessantly, and the painter and Mr. York Powell listened in delight. He would not be hastened or diverted. When Mr. Yeats would ask what became of someone whose story had not been finished, my father would say irascibly, "Damn it, man, let me tell my story my own way."

From these leisurely discussions with Mr. McEntyre there resulted a pretty blue paper for my room, having a dado of lilies in vases on a darker blue, with a faint richness of gold here and there. There also resulted paint in two shades of blue, also a pattern-book of dadoes wherewith to line the cupboard in the wall, which was to have its solid door panel taken out and replaced by glass to show my china. Presently an old gentleman came along to do the job. Of course it expanded into all manner of jobs about the house. I believe that he took the summer to do the work in. It was an exquisite summer—or perhaps like the sun-dial I number only the golden hours—and the old man enjoyed a country summer, and even brought a grandchild to enjoy it with him. They slept in a loft, and all day the old man went about his work leisurely, being always ready to stand for an hour at a time discussing the various National movements, and the things that were in the public mind at the moment. He had a taste for poetry, and it gave him pleasure to turn aside from his work to re-paint a bust of Shakespeare; and that led to his reminiscences of his old theatre-going days, over which my father and he would compare notes. Meanwhile, the small urban grandchild would be engaged in mild mischief or in making himself very ill eating unripe fruit. Once, on a very hot day, I came on what might have been a still-life group, so quiet were they, of a sick turkey and

the small boy watering her from a watering-pot. He never turned a hair on being discovered in this nefarious act, but lifted up an eye as drowsy as the turkey's. "She had a great hate (*i.e.* heat) in her back," he said, " an' I was try in' to take the drouth (*i.e.* thirst) off her."

However, my room was turned out very prettily in due time. Perhaps there was a trifle too much gilding, but it was in narrow lines, and the room was very elegant. While the old painter was doing the odd jobs about the house, my father and I were engaged in making purchases in the same leisurely fashion. There was a blue carpet in an Aubusson design of faint roses: there were golden-coloured curtains. There was a little sofa, and there were various chairs which I had covered in Liberty cretonne. My father discovered a poet to do the upholstering for me. He was an odd-job upholsterer when he was not a poet, and he had a watery eye. When his upholstering was all but done I gave him a piece of beautiful yellow silk, which I had picked up at a sale somewhere, to make into a *portiere*. We never saw him again, but he wrote a letter saying that he would not have had it happen for anything. My father supposed that the poor devil had been obsessed by thirst when he parted with the silk; and there was an end of it.

I had to have a large mirror in my room, though the aesthetes had declared against the mirrors which were mirrors. My father always said that a lady's room was incomplete without a looking-glass, and the more of it the better. I compromised by having the gilt frame painted blue like the chimney piece and the woodwork of the room. The next thing was a desk, and my father went to Liffey Street and bought me a very pretty davenport of walnut wood, for which he paid quite a stiff price. Some years afterward, when I was married and that davenport followed me to London, we found a few tarnished silver coins in the packing-case. After that, whenever we shook the davenport something fell out of it. It took as many positions as a contortionist. There came out of it, besides about thirty-five shillings in various blackened coins, a beautiful little gold pencil-case, a gold

crucifix, a tiny letter-scales, a paper-knife, and various other things. For a time we looked for a secret drawer, but could find nothing; and presently its benefactions came to an end.

I suppose my books must have been increasing, for my father bought me at an auction a second book-case to flank my first. The next thing was china. We went to a collector's sale in Dublin, and I acquired a set of old Crown Derby, a gilt corner cupboard, and some books beautifully bound. There was a set of William Morris in purple morocco, tooled and gilt, for which my father paid without a squirm twelve shillings a volume. In those days I had practically all I desired, although he had only begun to recover from the pinch of the army contracts and the bad times.

I have never, except when I went shopping with my father, had the happy feeling that all things were possible in the way of acquisition. Since I am about my room, I may as well tell of further acquisitions in the following winter. A rich old woman had died intestate, the last of a family of two brothers and a sister, who were old friends of my father. He was appointed by the Courts to administer the estate. There was a delightful auction, a real country auction, for the roads were hard frozen, and no dealers could attend. The old people, like many of their sort in Ireland, had been something of collectors. The younger brother lived in books to his knees. I remember my first introduction to him, when his sister had permitted me to ransack his library, and I, up to my eyes in books, was startled by a strange hollow voice repeating—

" My eyes are dim but not with tears.

My hair is white, but not with years;

Nor grew it white

In a single night,

As men have grown through sudden fears "

—a very delicate way of introducing himself. It was as though to say: " I too have been in Arcady."

The collection included old china, old glass—some very

fine pieces of Waterford—old furniture, some bits of lace, a couple of Indian shawls, and, since everything was sold, the beaver hats and flowered waistcoats in which the old brothers had ruffled it in the Thirties, and the delicate muslins—short-waisted—in which the old woman had been adorable when George the Fourth was king.

For the duties of administering the estate, which amounted to about £60,000, my father received some six or seven hundred pounds, and this seemed to him a reason why I should buy what I would. Someone had braved the elements to buy the Waterford glass at what we thought then an incredible sum. But I came away from the auction the richer by a miscellaneous lot of china, some old Worcester in brown with a gold and purple star in the centre, a pair of Coalport vases, some Coalport cups and saucers, the two Indian shawls, and other miscellaneous things.

Once installed in my pretty room, my friends vied in giving me additions to my pretty things, so that presently my room was charming. I had a desire to put a verse of George Herbert's on the door:

" A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
Makes that and the action fine."

I mentioned the wish to one of the boys who came to the house, and I received in a few days a stencil, a book of gold-leaf, size, and a brush, followed by the giver, who was as much interested in doing the stencilling for me as I was in seeing it done.

I was so busy about my room that I think the Home Rule Bill of 1886 must have passed by me without affecting me much. Perhaps its defeat was a certainty, for I remember no anticipation regarding it among those with whom I lived. Only English friends who were tending towards the Union of Hearts, wrote to me of their excitement over the Bill and its fate.

Now that I had my room I was free to entertain my friends as I would. My verses began to attract some attention in America, an attention which, I am sorry to say, has not continued. I suppose it must have been through the verses, for I cannot remember any other way, that Mrs. Alexander Sullivan of Chicago came to see me in that summer of 1886. The tragic occurrence of some years earlier when her husband had shot dead a man who offered her some rudeness as she was leaving a carriage, was still fresh in people's minds. Sullivan was connected with the revolutionary party in America, although at that time there was no general knowledge of the fact. I think, perhaps, she came to me through John Boyle O'Reilly, of the *Boston Pilot*, for which I was then writing, or through his sub-editor, Miss Katharine Conway.

Mrs. Sullivan was the most American of Americans. I had been told that she was the greatest woman-journalist in the world, and I quite believed it. I am sure she believed it herself. She has now been dead for many years, so I can speak without danger of hurting anyone. In my memory of her she was a fresh-coloured (or would have been fresh-coloured if she had not been an American), grey-eyed, dark-haired woman with a very masterful and self-assertive manner. She talked as she wrote, ponderously, and she dealt in large figures. For instance, when she was writing a syndicate letter for a New York agency, she would say that she represented ten thousand American newspapers, or something of that sort; and she was always talking about the Tariff, and her stenographer, and other things which I knew nothing at all about, and found rather dull than awe-inspiring.

I had a boundless spirit of adventure in those days. I never paused to ask myself if the adventure was going to be dull or lively, so long as it was concerned with a person who was a personage. The Dublin newspapers of a Nationalist type had told me that Mrs. Sullivan was a personage. She had certainly a personality, but I found it a tiresome one.

She asked me to pay her a short visit at the Shelbourne Hotel, where she was staying with a couple of young American

ladies under her wing. She and I went out shopping. It was very dull shopping. She wanted a handbag or something of the sort. She had purchased it. The price was, I think, twenty shillings. On hearing who his customer was, the man, in the unpractical Irish way, beamed.

"Oh, madam," he said, "I've read about you in the *Freeman's Journal* this morning. I am honoured to have had such a distinguished customer. Please allow me to make a slight alteration in the price. Let the bag be fifteen shillings—to you."

"No, sir; no," she said, in the manner of Sarah Siddons, "that is not the way we do business in America. I insist that you shall treat me the same as any other customer. Not one penny of your price shall you abate."

I was reminded of this incident when some years later, after the closing of the Paris Exhibition at which she had again represented her American syndicate, she told that a great firm of American jewellers had sent her a jewel, and how she had refused it with lofty scorn. It was a counsel of perfection to weaker vessels, who would have argued that after all the gift was not a bribe, since all she had to say about the exhibition was done and over.

I spent just one night with her at the Shelbourne Hotel, and I remember nothing of it except that we sat in Mrs. Sullivan's bedroom and pretended (at least I pretended) to be prodigiously amused over the pronunciations in a Dutch phrase-book. That we did not sit in the lounge or even the ladies' drawing-room must have been, I think, a part of the extraordinary American prudery which exists, or existed, side by side with great freedom. I remember driving in a cab next day when we might have driven on an outside car, and my piteous assurances that ladies did now really drive on outside cars, and Mrs. Sullivan's disbelief that such a practice could obtain. Between the Dutch phrases I had to tell comic Irish stories, and as I was in that state of mind in which you feel your own smile to be a contortion of the visage, it took no light resolution to keep up the part of humorist.

The next day we went down to Lusk to see a schoolmaster

who had written some stories, and had had some correspondence with Mrs. Sullivan. On arrival at the station, Mrs. Sullivan ascertained the time of the next train returning, and announced triumphantly: "Girls, we can give five minutes to getting there, ten to Mr. H——, and five to getting back here."

I shall never forget poor Mr. H——'s face when he heard that he had ten minutes in which to show us the Round Tower, and explain the antiquities of the place. The table in the little parlour was set for a banquet: Mrs. H—— emerged from the kitchen very flushed, and with the atmosphere of a great dinner about her: the schoolmaster, a sensitive-looking young man with fair, delicate skin, coloured and blinked when this announcement was made. All the poor things¹ preparations and anticipations were in ruins. I stayed behind a second, nearly losing the train thereby, to say I was sorry, that I wished we might have stayed. I remember that he blinked again rapidly, almost as though a tear were not far away.

My friendship with the Yeats family must have begun at that time, for I brought Mrs. Sullivan to Mr. Yeats's studio in Stephen's Green, where there used to be a great foregathering in those days. Miss Fanny Gallaher, a Dublin notability who had written two or three novels, came in while we were there. I listened to her and Mrs. Sullivan talking, as though to a Battle of the Wits. Mrs. Sullivan was really a witty woman when she allowed; her wit to have play. Mr. Yeats talked about his theories of painting. He was a dear, delightful, unpractical artist. Just then he was engaged in painting all his friends for nothing, till a lady came with a business proposition, whose face he disliked. Whereupon he fled to London till the business proposition was forgotten.

He talked of art and its mission. Mrs. Sullivan said: "Sir, your patrons would tell you that you had not to consider your mission, but your commission."

There was also a Danish painter who had only one word

of English, and that was "body-colour." Mr. Yeats had no Danish naturally, but they seemed to get along very well together on that one word of communication.

A good many happy memories centre round that studio. Everybody who was anybody in Dublin, or visiting Dublin, seemed to find his or her way there at one time or another. It was a delightful place, its atmosphere permeated by the personality of Mr. J. B. Yeats, the quaintest and most charming of men.

Canvasses were stacked everywhere round the walls. They were used to conceal many things—the little kitchen and tea-table arrangement at one end, Mr. Yeats's slippers and the dressing-room of the family. I am bound to say that Mr. Yeats's slippers refused to be concealed. They would come walking out from under the canvasses, in all shades of shabbiness, as though they had feet inside them.

Some time in the summer of 1886 I began to sit to him for a portrait, and I sat one or two days a week for quite a long time. Other painters used to implore me to cut the sittings short, saying that Mr. Yeats would over-paint the picture and spoil it. However, I suppose the occasions were too delightful to me, or I had not the strength of mind to interfere with the painter's plans. Anyhow the painting went on till it was time for the picture to be exhibited at the Royal Hibernian Academy Exhibition of 1887.

It was a happy period when I had worlds enough and time; and as for the painter, he had always worlds enough and time to do the things he liked. He used to complain about my "fringe" being cut—we all went befringed at that time. "You've been cutting that fringe of yours again," he would growl. "Why can't you let it alone?" Miss Sarah Purser was present on one of these occasions, and defended me characteristically.

"Why, Mr. Yeats, if she did not have it cut it would be hanging about her feet by this time," she said.

Mr. Yeats did not spoil the portrait by over-painting. I

1 8 8 *Twenty-five Tears*

believe it ranks among his best portraits. It is now in the Dublin Municipal Art Gallery; one day to take its place in the National Portrait Gallery. Sir Hugh Lane begged it from its place among my household gods with his usual unashamed greediness where pictures are concerned. I refused at first, but after its existence had been endangered by a fire, I gave it. I believe I always wanted to give it, because I felt that my father would have been so proud if he could have lived to see it where it hangs—where it will hang.

CHAPTER XVIII

1886-87

MY friendship with the Yeats family brought a new and full interest into my life, and was the beginning of many other interests, wherefore I have always said that the best of my life was yet to be after I had passed my twenty-first year.

Let me recall those days in the studio. I used to come in about eleven or twelve o'clock in the morning and sit till lunch time. At various moments in the morning the Yeats girls and Willie would arrive, one at a time; and during the sitting there was a continuous stream of visitors. Mr. Yeats never found any visitor or any amount of talking a distraction from his work. His visitors, perhaps, were only of the right kind, or it may have been that they were made right by his extraordinary interest in his kind. He did not dislike many people. Those I have heard him express dislike of were generally the peevish, unsympathetic wives of men he was fond of, who, having out-distanced him in the race for prosperity—where indeed he never was a runner—still loved excursions into Bohemia and were held back by their women-folk.

I do not know why he did not dislike more people, for he was of the irritable race; but I think it must have been that he kept entirely aloof from those who did not interest him, so that the only chance people had of being disagreeable to him was if they happened to belong to people he did like.

While he painted he walked to and from the picture incessantly, talking or drawing on the sitter to talk. I do not know what he would have done if he had had a silent sitter. He might have had an interesting but silent one, like Miss May Sinclair or the late Katharine Cecil Thurston, or dear Lionel

Johnson; but perhaps they would not have been silent with him.

Willie Yeats was always about the studio. He had not ceased at that time to be an art student, although he was writing poetry. He used to be very quiet in a corner doing some work of his own, and ever willing to do anything he was asked to do for others. He was very gentle, simple, and generous. He asked you to be profoundly interested in his poetry. On the other hand, he was always profoundly interested in yours. He would read his poetry to you for hours, if you would allow it; on the other hand, he would listen for hours, absorbed in yours, if you chose to absorb him. He was a wonderful critic. At that time he was apt, I think, to be over-generous to the work of those whom he liked. He asked from poetry something of sincerity, of truth, of character and personality, and he would make the beauty for himself.

If you brought him a new poem he would chant it over to himself with his head on one side. Nearly always one was surprised by the generosity of his admiration.

He would be at work quietly in his corner painting, perhaps, or perhaps only cleaning his father's brushes or palette. When the time came for the midday light lunch he was always at hand to fill the kettle, to go out to buy bread or milk or anything else that was wanted. Once he was very quiet for a long time in his corner. At last his father asked, "What are you doing, Willie?" "I'm trying to get the paint off my coat with turpentine, but it won't come off," said the poet. "I've been at it for an hour, but it seems only to get worse." "Where did you find the turpentine?" "In this can." "Oh, but that is oil!"

Sometimes after lunch, in a quiet hour, Willie would read poetry for us. I heard Chapman's *Homer* in that way. Once I nodded, and would have dropped asleep if I had not laughed. After that I had my early afternoon cup of tea to keep me wakeful.

Sometimes during the sitting a knock would come to the door. Mr. Yeats would go to it, and there would be a col-

loquy, ending in the visitor's being sent away. It was usually someone who was paying for his or her portrait and wanted a sitting, who was thus rejected.

Occasionally I stayed the night at the Yeatses' house on the outskirts of Dublin. I used to be awakened in the night by a steady, monotonous sound rising and falling. It was Willie chanting poetry to himself in the watches of the night.

He never had the remotest idea of taking care of himself. He would go all day without food unless someone remembered it for him, and in the same way would go on eating unless someone checked him. That first winter, a hard one, he would come to see me, five miles from Dublin, striding along over the snow-bound roads, a gaunt young figure, mouthing poetry, swinging his arms and gesticulating as he went. George Russell complained to me the other day that Willie Yeats had said somewhere of him, and printed it, that he used to walk about the streets of Dublin swinging his arms like a flail, unconscious of the alarm and bewilderment of the passers-by. It was Willie's own case. I remember how the big Dublin policemen used to eye him in those days, as though uncertain whether to "run him in" or not. But, by and by, they used to say, "Shure, 't isn't mad he is, nor yet drink taken. 'Tis the poethry that's disturbin' his head," and leave him alone.

Once he had a very bad cough—he very often had a cough or a cold from his inability to take care of himself. I was sorry for him, and I bestowed upon him some cough lozenges which contained opium or chlorodyne or both, with instructions to suck one two or three times a day. He ate through the whole box at a sitting, and thereafter slept for some thirty hours. Fortunately he awoke none the worse, else I should have done a very ill service to the world.

There were moments when poetry ceased to charm others, but never him. He was always ready to squire me anywhere I would. I remember one very wet night, after we had been to a meeting of the Protestant Home Rule Association, when we waited in Westmoreland Street for a tram; I in my smart clothes, my high-heeled French shoes, standing in a pool of water; the wind driving the rain as it does only in

a sea-bound city; Willie holding the umbrella at an acute and absent-minded angle which could shelter nobody, pouring the while into my ears *The Sensitive Plant*. It was a moment to try any woman's temper, and mine did not stand the trial well.

One day while I was sitting, John O'Leary came into the studio. He had come back to Dublin after serving five years of his twenty years' sentence in Portland, and living in Paris under sentence of banishment for the remaining fifteen. He had come back to Ireland to spend the sunset of his life.

He had said very good things of my poetry, and I was well prepared to like him. Besides, we all knew of him as a man of stainless honour, an idealist. "We are not a transacting party," he used to say of himself and his Fenians; as though anyone could suspect transactions from men whose leader had absolutely no use for opportunism.

He had come back to Ireland with a splendid white head, who had left it black as a raven. His convictions were quite unchanged. He was as much of a revolutionary as ever, and he made no secret of it. Perhaps the English Government could afford to disregard a revolutionary whose ideals were snow-white. It is not easy to carry a revolution white-handed.

He soon gathered about him a little circle that loved him. I think, as a rule, women loved him better than men except the few, for whereas he was gentle with women, he was apt to sweep away scornfully the opinions of a man who disagreed with him. He used to tell people that they were "faultlessly ignorant of everything under the sun"; and his adjuration in argument, "Good God, man, what the devil do you know about it?" occasionally caused an aggrieved feeling.

He was a fine, splendid, heroic old man: and he had a sister as fine, splendid, and heroic as himself. Both were splendid to look at, with fine aquiline features and eyes stainless as the sun, that sent sharp radiant glances, keen as a sword.

It was perhaps natural that I had the stronger personal liking for the brother. As he kept his softnesses for women,

she kept hers, perhaps, for men. She was one of the women friends to whom I have shown only one side of my character, being a little afraid of their rigidity towards the other side. She never suspected there was another side.

I saw a good deal of the (V)Learys at that time, and often stayed a night at their house when I had some evening engagement that prevented my getting home. The relationship between brother and sister was idyllic. He was to her the incarnation of all things chivalrous and high-minded. Many of her simple and beautiful poems, true love-poems, were addressed to him :

" Home, home at last from long years of exile
He comes, my peerless and fearless knight
With a dauntless front and a stainless record,
But time and trial have bleached him white."

I feel now that my youth was privileged in my being taken into friendship and affection by souls so lofty as these. I do not believe that they had one thought ignoble or selfish.

John CVLeary was extraordinarily frank. One almost smiled at the thought of anyone so frank being a conspirator; but doubtless he was only frank with those he trusted. There was just one subject he never spoke of, and that, characteristically, was his imprisonment. He was not troubled with the "impure passion"¹¹ of self-pity; although one could well imagine what five years at Portland must have meant to such a one; and one marvels at the greatness of human nature that brought him out snow-white in heart and mind from such an experience. About his great moments he was reticent. Thus was his speech in the dock:

" I have been found guilty of treason or treason-felony. Treason is a foul crime. The poet Dante consigned traitors to, I believe, the ninth circle of hell. But what kind of traitors? Traitors against king, against country, against friends, against benefactors. England is not my country; I have betrayed no friend, no benefactor. Sidney and Emmet were legal traitors. Jeffreys was a loyal man and so was Norbury. I leave the matter at that."

There was something about brother and sister which I can best describe by the word *virginal*. I am not sure that Ellen O'Leary was not the more masculine of the two. What are illusions to other people were the simple realities of life to them. What matter that life had dealt hardly with them? that the brother, being made of the finest material God works in, served in his life five years of hell, fifteen of exile: came home at last for a brief season of happiness to the sister who, having waited for him for twenty years, welcomed him with the seeds of a mortal disease in her breast? What matter if their opinions were out of date? What matter if New Tipperary took from them the little wealth Fenianism had left them, so that they were poor in their old age? There they were, idealists through and through, believing greatly, hoping greatly, loving greatly. Again I thank God for the inestimable privilege of such friendships in my impressionable youth.

I remember a girl, who was not at all impressionable, quite outside the circle, saying at her first meeting with Ellen O'Leary, curiously: "She's a very *graraZ*-looking person." She was grand-looking. The sober lace cap of elderliness, above her richly tinted aquiline face and the abundant dark hair, became her like a crown. By the way, her large eyelids and the serene width between her brows made her so far resemble Christina Rossetti. The rest of the face was more dominant, far more robust and of the open air.

John O'Leary had had his innocent love-story. He told it to Rose Kavanagh, another beloved friend of those days, and she told it to me. In his youth he and his bosom friend had had the misfortune to fall in love with the same girl. Since she could not choose between them she escaped the hard choice by slipping from them both into a convent. "How did you feel about it?" Rose Kavanagh asked him. "For a good while," he said briefly, "I was in hell."

On the walls of their sitting-room there hung the portraits of their father and mother—he with the ruffled shirt, the green body-coat and buff waistcoat of the Thirties, a bunch of seals at his fob; high-coloured, clean-shaven, his hair

brushed up to a stiff point at the top; she in silks, with a high lace cap and lappets below the chin, obviously persons of breeding, of consideration. John O'Leary would have said probably that he sprang from the higher *bourgeoisie*; but there was blood and breeding in brother and sister as there was in the portraits.

We girls never minded when John O'Leary said to us, with a half-laugh: "Good God in Heaven, ye've no *morale*" "Morale" was a great word of his. Indeed, I am not sure that some of us did not lay ourselves out to capture that half-laugh and the sharp kind look which told that it was not in him to be untender to a woman. Once I incurred his sister's scorn; it was in the days of Nihilist outrages—by saying that if I were Czar I should clear out and have a happy life as an English country gentleman. In the same way she objected to a poem of Rosa Mulholland's which made Sarah Curran declare herself jealous of Emmet's love for his country, her rival. Perhaps Ellen CLeary had never been in love. Indeed, I rather think she had not, the passion for her brother having sufficed her. Hard counsels of perfection for another were easy and natural to her.

She was as prudish as she was tolerant. I don't think she would have smiled at a broad story, however amusing, and I remember that she was shocked when I called a tea-pot "pot-bellied," which it was. At the same time she had no more condemnation than her brother had for sinners against the moral code, that is "moral" in its narrowest sense. I have often observed in men of particular virtue an incredible tolerance for the vices of others. Indeed I have observed it particularly in two or three saints I have known. It explains, perhaps, the tolerance for the vices of persons in high places which so often obtained in the Middle Ages. I remember when the days of the Parnell Divorce case and the *debacle* came John O'Leary's fierce comment, "Good God in Heaven, you can't depose a man for gallantry," using the word in its French sense.

Neither brother nor sister had any sympathy with the Land League, and I doubt indeed that the movement satisfied any-

body who possessed ideals. But it had to come, as Mr. Parnell said when he found it the weapon to his hand, and it had to go before better things could come, which by the way is not yet. John O'Leary interviewed Mr. Parnell after he came back to Dublin, or Mr. Parnell interviewed him. They fell apart at that time, but when the split happened John O'Leary and his hillsider-men, with all that was honest in Irish Nationalism, stood at Parnell's back.

However, all that was in the hidden future. For the time John O'Leary was the centre of a little circle of poets, politicians, painters, makers of all sorts, to whom he could be mentor and critic. He was a voluminous reader, as well known among the book-shops of Paris as he was in those latter days among the old book-shops on the quays of Dublin. He had been a book-buyer and a book-reader all his life. In Paris, by the way, he had been for a time a house-mate of Whistler and Swinburne. Apparently it had not been a harmonious household. I seem to remember that John O'Leary talked in his tolerant way of Whistler's being as vain as a peacock. That was a very prudish age in Ireland. In fact before the Parnell Divorce case set everyone to talking about it there was an extraordinary reticence about matters of sex. It used to startle us, brought up in this reticence, to hear John, still more Ellen, O'Leary talking of Frenchmen of letters, with a sudden reference to So-and-So's mistress.

I don't think we ever smiled at Ellen O'Leary. I think it is an essential part of a certain tender kind of Jove that you must smile sometimes at the object of it. We often smiled—I often smile to this day—at John O'Leary. Here is a characteristic story of him. Sometime—it must have been after Mr. Parnell's death—he met with Mr. John Redmond, who had been doing something he disliked. He took him for Mr. Willie Redmond, which I think was a common mistake in those days. I know I made it myself.

"You're all right," he said; "you're all right. I've nothing against you. But, good God in Heaven, what does that brother of yours mean by making such an ass of himself?"

"Mr. CLeary, are you not mistaking me for my brother Willie?"

"Oh, I was, I was," John O'Leary returned, quite unabashed. "What the devil do you mean by being so like your brother?"

Another incident took place one evening he was in my house after my marriage. Another guest the same evening was a young Cork barrister against whom John CLeary had some grievance. He had over-looked the young Corkman's extended hand when he came in, and had ignored all the civilities offered by the same during the evening. My Corkman took a humorous view of it; he was a tricky sprite if ever there was one. We played cards, and the hour grew late. The night was very dark; in front of the house was a precipice and the sea; all about were rocks and the sea: the surroundings were much too dangerous for John O'Leary, then in his decline, to face unguarded. My Corkman took charge of him to the station; helped him down the steep steps with tender assiduity; gave him an arm, helped him up other steep steps, into the tram. Out again; took his railway ticket: put him in the train, having found him a corner seat, and waited cheerfully on the wind-swept platform to see the train depart. He came back to us with a smile which had a touch of ruefulness in its humour. "He never said one word to me," he said, "till the train was going off; and then he put his head out and called back to me, 'I hate the smooth crookedness of the Corkman!'"

John O'Leary was always snipping bits out of papers and magazines which he thought would interest his young friends, and sending them on to us. Like many people of high moral rectitude he disregarded post-office rules, and used to send whole sheaves of clippings enclosed inside newspapers. They always passed, it being Ireland. Perhaps one had a friend at the post-office. Department rules are not, or used not to be, rigid in Ireland. They used to say that letters coming to a country post-office were read first by the post-mistress, next by the parish priest, in turn by the police-sergeant, and maybe a week after the letter had arrived,

someone would say, meeting another on the road, "I hear there's a letter for you at the post-office below and a bit of an order in it from your daughter Bride, in America." Indeed, only yesterday a parson told me that in the country town where he was curate, he heard all the news of the place from the people who gathered below his window for the nightly parliament. One night he heard that the brother of a neighbouring gentleman who was shooting in Scotland had accidentally been shot in the face. He heard all the circumstances of the tale told with great dramatic effect. Next morning he went to tender his sympathy. "It is quite true, but how did you know it? We only heard it ourselves last night, late." But everyone in the village had known before that.

John O'Leary used to get more into a post-card than any other man I ever knew. I have quantities of his letters and his voluminous post-cards. I shall quote a few of his letters in another place; but indeed my correspondence of that time is so full, that it would take many volumes to give even a representation to many names which were famous, or destined to be famous. Those years onward from 1886 were very happy years for me. I had found myself. Friendships were springing up on every side. My father was inordinately pleased with me, and did all he could to make life run easily for me. I had emerged from the class to which poetry meant little or nothing—the middle class is the same everywhere—and I had formed a little circle of my own. There were always two sets of guests in those days at the Sunday parties which were a feature of my old home. There were my friends and my sisters' friends. My friends used to gather in the little room my father's love had made beautiful. We used to talk literature endlessly. There was a lull in politics with the Home Rule Bill of 1886 over and done with—the Union of Hearts an accomplished fact, and the ardour of that Union daily growing greater. Those prosperities do not appeal to poets and idealists.

My sisters' friends used to play tennis on summer Sunday afternoons and cards in the evening. The Catholic Celt having done his duty to his Creator of Sundays considers

himself privileged to amuse himself as he will, and would reply to anyone who objected to playing cards on a Sunday or dancing or anything else in the way of harmless amusement, "The better the day the better the deed."

They were very delightful Sundays all round, but the cleavage between my visitors and my sisters' visitors was complete. My sisters' visitors did things all day long, from the tennis in the afternoon to the cards and perhaps the dancing in the evening. My visitors talked incessantly—of books and art and movements. Their visitors thought my visitors dull, looking at them much as the sporting Celt looks at the dull Irish Protestant; which is not at all to say that my visitors were wholly non-Celtic or non-Catholic. Doubtless my visitors looked on my sisters' visitors as so many young barbarians enjoying themselves in their unintellectual fashion; till the Parnell Split came to link us all up, and politics were the devouring excitement of the house.

My father used to sit in the dining-room surrounded by a group of young men—perhaps an old one like Mr. Yeats or John O'Leary, his face shining as he listened to the discussions. I really believe that like myself he had come to his own in those days.

I remember Mr. Yeats saying on one occasion—or was it Mr. Richard Ashe King?—that my old home, Whitehall, could have no counterpart amongst the farmhouses of Ireland, to which John O'Leary replied, "Certainly not, so far as this room is concerned." But I think the wider application would have been true. It was unlikely that to any farmhouse came the notables of my Sunday afternoons. I smile now to think of the haphazard way those Sundays were managed. My sisters asked whom they would, and I asked whom I would. If the table in the dining-room was not large enough to contain those who came there was an overflow meeting in the parlour. We always managed to get them in somehow and to feed them. We had often twenty people to that meal, which took place at the barbarous hour of 4.30 or so in the afternoon. We were not greatly concerned as to what we ate or when we ate. The Irish priests

of to-day still eat their principal meal at 4 o'clock; and at that time, I fancy, the fixture in Irish Catholic houses was more or less influenced by the priests, who were much in the social life. I think we used to court disaster by the haphazard way in which we launched our separate invitations: but I do not remember that the disaster ever came. People sometimes stayed away by a happy chance. But Sunday night often saw the larder as bare as Mother Hubbard's cupboard. The whole thing would have given an English housekeeper or a responsible Irish one (if there was such a thing at that date) fits. It worked out extremely well. I don't think anyone went away hungry or thirsty, although we had very often an extremely scratch breakfast on Monday morning.

CHAPTER XIX

CHIEFLY ROSE KAVANAGH

1887 found me completely launched on the literary life, despising those joys which had hitherto but ill contented me. I gave up dancing from about that date, as being unsuited to my loftier way of thinking, and when I attended a ball I sat out or strolled about in the corridors feeling vastly superior. The big entertainments I went to in 1887 and the following years were mainly political, in their origin at all events. In those years the Union of Hearts was closest, and Dublin was entertaining Liberal Home Rulers with characteristic fervour. Mr. T. D. Sullivan was Lord Mayor in 1887, and we were all as Gladstonian as we could possibly be. At one of the Lord Mayor's entertainments I met Mr. Wilfred Blunt, whom I admired very much and found very handsome and romantic, with a look at once proud and shy, something of the desert grace of his own Arabs about him.

Politics in Ireland were quiet enough for the moment. Of course meetings were interfered with, and Mr. William O'Brien was thrown into prison. We had a great sensation when he was reported to be dying in jail, and the Lord Mayor sent a message to Mr. Balfour at the Chief Secretary's Lodge, late at night, demanding his release. The messenger was White, the Mansion House butler, who was always known in Dublin as the Permanent Lord Mayor. He had been handed down by generations of Conservative Lord Mayors; and he had a very poor opinion of the popular regime at the Mansion House. He was a self-constituted Master of Ceremonies to the Lady Mayoresses, and used to countermand their carriages, and deny their visitors, if they came at a time he did not approve of. "Lady So-and-So never

drove at this hour," he would say, or as he said to myself on one occasion, "The Lady Mayoress is *never* at home after six o'clock"; and when I urged that I was specially bidden for that hour, "All I can say is I've heard nothing about it," gently but firmly closing the door in my face. It must have been painful to White, who was a staunch Conservative, to go waking up the Chief Secretary's Lodge at midnight upon what he doubtless considered a very trumpery errand. He came back with a cock-and-bull story of the door being opened to him by a gentleman wearing a star on his breast, who treated the matter lightly. Everyone was in a ferment of indignation, or pretended to be; and it was supposed that Mr. Balfour himself came down wearing his decorations to scoff at the Lord Mayor's ambassador. It turned out after all to have been only Mr. Hayes Fisher wearing a blazer with the arms of his College worked on it. It was a very pretty situation for a comic opera, that visit of White to the Chief Secretary's Lodge, although I am far from saying that Mr. O'Brien's illness had anything comic about it.

However, I am not going to set down here things which are not reminiscences proper, and I ask pardon for my digression. Except for social purposes I was out of politics just then. Mr. Parnell was doing nothing that I can remember. It was the season of his lying low; and the political horizon seems in my memory of it uninteresting, being empty of him, perhaps by contrast with the glorious living of the days that were to come after the Split. To hark back I remember one night in 1884, or it may have been 1885, when, coming home late from the House of Commons with some friends, the party being in charge of Mr. Timothy Harrington, we encountered a cloaked and hooded figure that glided by us in the shadows somewhere about the top of Northumberland Avenue. "That is Mr. Parnell," said Timothy Harrington. "None of us knows where he lives, and he takes care we shall not know."

I lost my capacity for being an ardent Gladstonian by the fact that when I wrote a Home Rule poem and published it in

United Ireland, having sent it to Mr. Gladstone, I received only a formal acknowledgment from Sir Henry Primrose addressed to Katharine Tynan, Esq. I was sorry then I had written the poem.

Let me see what friendships 1887 brought me. There was Rose Kavanagh. I had known her long before 1887, but we had hardly become friends till 1886. When first I met her she was in the office of the *Irishman* acting as a sub-editor to the famous Pigott. I think I must have come to the office on literary business—for there was a story-paper attached to the *Irishman*, and afterwards to *United Ireland*, called the *Shamrock*, which, though a wretched little rag to look at, was a good commercial property and could pay its contributors. The fortunes of the *Shamrock* rose and fell with the fortunes of "Mick M'Quaid," a sort of stage Irishman, whose adventures in all sorts of positions were told by one Lynam. "Mick M'Quaid" went on endlessly. He was in that respect like *Black Bess, or the Knights of the Road*, a serial which I used to see in the servants' hands in my babyhood from which some thrilling bits were imparted to the children. That serial I understood had begun to unroll itself in the eighteenth century, not long after Turpin and the other gentlemen had expiated their sins against society on the scaffold, and was still unrolling merrily in the sixties of the nineteenth century. William O'Brien tried to stop "Mick M'Quaid" many times. He had no tolerance for the stage Irishman; but every time Mick was dropped the circulation dropped; so that long after Mick's creator was gathered to his fathers Mick had to be resuscitated and started off on new adventures which were the old.

Perhaps Rose Kavanagh was editing the *Shamrock*, and I had some business of a Christmas poem or story. She used to write poetry and stories herself, the poetry often very felicitous, as the expression of a most sincere and brave spirit.

She lived at that time under the same roof with Charles Kickham, the blind poet and novelist, a Fenian of the same ideal way of thinking and acting as John O'Leary. I remember Rose quite well talking of "Mr. Kickham," but I

cannot recall anything definite she said about him. Perhaps her North of Ireland blood gave her a curious caution and reticence. I cannot remember that I ever heard her speak of Pigott, although she must have had lots to impart if she would. But just about the time when everyone was talking of Pigott's exposure and the burst up of the conspiracy I said to her, "Wasn't Pigott like a rat in a trap?" She smiled and said, "A fine fat rat"; nothing more than that.

She came one Sunday in 1886 with Dr. Sigerson and his two daughters to see me. I believe I had met Dr. Sigerson at the O'Learys' house a few evenings before. I remember the summer Sunday quite well. Mr. Yeats and his daughters were with us the same day. I had hitherto only seen Rose Kavanagh in a dingy office and in winter. On that summer day I had a better opportunity of discovering how charming and interesting she was. She was a tall girl, with a fair skin which had a shade of brown in it. She had very fine, fearless grey eyes, white teeth, waving brown hair, and a most honest look. She was one of the very few people I have met who, being entirely an idealist, was not too bright or good for her fellows. I know I shared my follies with her for the years of our friendship as well as anything else I possessed, and I was never afraid of her judgment. I have usually known to whom I might display my follies, and have been content to show a half-life and nature to those whose judgments might not be kind.

Rose, alas, had been hampered from the beginning by a weak chest. It was a thousand pities, for she had a fine, bright spirit, and the look of boyishness about her did not belie her. She was of a beautiful peasant type, and her speech with its certain Northern burr fitted her dear face well.

It was perhaps some time in 1887 that there came what might have been a little trial to our friendship if it had not been as true as it was. Mrs. Dwyer Gray, the wife of the proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, had started a little story-paper, *The Irish Fireside*. At first she edited it herself, but presently she wanted someone to take the burden off her shoulders. A friend who was in the office wrote to me suggesting that I should see Mrs. Gray. The salary was, I think, about £150 a year,

which seemed a big sum to me at the time, and I should have delighted in the work. I rushed off to my interview with Mrs. Gray, but, entering the office, met my friend there who told me that Mrs. Gray had engaged Rose Kavanagh. I turned about and went home with a blank feeling, but I think I came out of it all right, for, having winked away my tears, I wrote a letter of congratulation to Rose, saying that I would not have thought of the position for myself if I had known she wanted it. I quite appreciate the fact now that she was a much better editor than I should have made, though she was less literary than I; for the valuable part of her work consisted in the circle for boys and girls which she made a feature of the paper, in which she taught the children a pure patriotism, courage, self-dependence, truth, mercy; the qualities of her own brave and beautiful heart.

From that time she was installed on a floor of the newspaper office in Middle Abbey Street. She had a couple of rooms, and the front room was a delightful rendezvous for her friends. I always think of the streets as swept with sleet outside, the sticky mud underfoot which is a feature of wintry Dublin. There used to be a roaring fire and a big screen. If you did not find Rose at home you simply sat at the fire and amused yourself with books or papers till she came in, her muffler swathed up about her mouth. It may not have been winter outside always, but the winter only made it more delightful inside.

I remember one day she came in and told me that under the portico of the General Post Office she had met an old man who was anxious about posting a letter and did not know which of the several slits to drop it into.

"You have a good, country face," he said, "not like them city people that do be humbuggm' an ould man. Will you tell me where to post a letter to my girsha in America?" She was greatly pleased with the little incident.

She had a great capacity for hero-worship. She had been passionately devoted to Kickham, and had learnt when deafness was added to his blindness to talk to him on his fingers. She looked at her very sweetest when she was talking the

finger alphabet, as I saw her doing for another deaf person, Miss Charlotte Grace O'Brien, sometime in 1887. Rose's head on one side, birdlike, her eyes filled with a bright interrogation as she talked on her fingers; nothing could be more expressive of a lovely intelligence.

Her devotion was to a country, to a cause, and through them to those noble and heroic ones who had served or were serving the country and the cause well. The devotion she had had for Kickham she carried on to the O'Learys. She had a great and well-deserved affection for Dr. Sigerson, who devoted himself to guarding the flame of her life, and tiding it on past the fatal twenties and early thirties, beyond which the one threatened with consumption may live and grow strong. She came and went in his house at Clare Street, as I did after a time, like his own daughters. He was always watching over her and taking care of her.

All sorts of people used to come to that warm room in Middle Abbey Street. Douglas Hyde, still in his rooms in T. C. D., used to come there. So did W. B. Yeats. So did Mr. Stephen Gwynn, newly from Oxford, unbearded, young. Once there was a deeply-bearded, handsome Irish-American, with a cordial hand-clasp and a friendly eye, Denis Downing Mulcahy, ex-Fenian. Of course Ellen O'Leary and John O'Leary were often to be found there; and the Sigersons and myself. In time a few other young T. C. D. men. One, who was an Englishman and a Protestant, Rose distinctly liked. I have been talking about her impersonal devotion to heroic people. She was anti-English. I am sure it was not a pose; she was too sincere and honest for that. She had said to me that a difference of religion would not stand in the way of her marrying a man she liked; but she would not marry an Englishman. Her ideal husband, she used to say, would be a rich American who would take her to Italy and keep her in the sun and away from the winter and east winds. I don't think she ever got more than half-way towards being in love. Her devotions satisfied her. She used to be tender in a laughing way over our love troubles. She never had any of her own. Perhaps, being of the Pre-Destined, she felt she

had no time. Still, she might have been in love with the young Protestant Englishman, who had something pathetic about his lined forehead and the wistful lift of his eyebrows. He touched her more than anyone else.

Perhaps she held a little aloof—in the spirit—from us who were to be wives and mothers of children and house-mistresses, and carry the cares of life and its joys and gather our sheaves. Of course she was always held somewhat in check by the cold touch which reminded her that however bonnie her looks she had a mortal delicacy. One could never be sure of her for an expedition or an adventure. Cold and draughts had always to be guarded against. She was often in bed. But when she was well for a time she was as gay as a bird.

There was a day when we had tea with Douglas Hyde in Trinity College. Perhaps Craobhin Aobhin (pronounced Creeveen Eeven—*i.e.* the dear little nut-branch) was at his least inspiring within the walls of his Alma Mater, which was no more motherly to the future lighter of the Gaelic torch in Ireland than she had been to any other of her great sons. I recall the event without any glow of pleasure. It seems to have been a somewhat conventional entertainment, which was not often the case with anything in which Douglas Hyde took a hand.

His was a many-sided and fascinating personality. I remember the surprise with which John O'Leary, who knew only his serious side, announced one day that "Hyde was a flirt." He had a wide scholarship beyond his knowledge of the Gaelic. He was a student and burned the midnight oil, but at his own home in the West of Ireland he would be off to a fair at four o'clock in the morning to sell or buy cattle or sheep. He was a thorough sportsman, and his birds and fish used to come to us in Dublin when he was away in the west. After tramping a bog all day after snipe and curlew he would sit down by a cabin fire, draw a small bottle of poteen from his pocket, light his pipe, and hand his pouch across to the tight-mouthed man of the house, and wait till confidence came and the seal on the lips was broken. He gathered songs, stories, traditions, which were fast passing

into the limbo of lost things—we lose things in Ireland more than elsewhere, I think—as no one else could have gathered them. He was a man and a brother when he sat by those cabin fires. Only a man and a brother could have waited in patience till the peasant let fall the precious things for him to gather up.

Douglas Hyde had always a very suave and complimentary tongue where he did not desire to offend. Years later I remember a description by a very acute observer of Hyde presiding over a Gaelic League Convention, where things were in dispute and had to be fought out. I forget the exact occasion. The Convention wanted its own way, which was not Hyde's. The sitting lasted all day, and Hyde had no time for a meal—no sustenance but the tumbler of whisky and soda on the chimney piece from which he drank now and again.

"Hyde's strength lies in a pretended weakness," said the acute observer. "He seemed to be going with them all the time, to be in cordial agreement when they were most unreasonable. His courtesy was extraordinary. Sometime in the small hours, when everyone else was worn out, Hyde suddenly carried the day." After saying so much I apologise for speaking of Dr. Hyde in the past tense. Happily he is still with us.

Another expedition on which Rose and I went together was to a house which dabbled much in spiritualism, where the hostess was nervy because of faces always floating about her by night and day, and the host, a little fair-haired gentle-looking man with spectacles, had an invincible courage and determination to see things through.

I think Rose must have gone away after tea, for I do not remember her in the later developments. The later developments took the form of a spiritualistic seance in which I participated most unwillingly. Willie Yeats was also of the party. The remaining ones were undistinguished, if occult.

In spite of my protestations my host gently but firmly made me take a part. We sat round a table in the darkness touching each other's hands. I was quite determined to be in

opposition to the whole thing, to disbelieve in it, and disapprove of it as a playing with things of life and death. Presently the table stood up slowly: the host was psychic. There were presences. The presences had communications to make and struggled to make them. Willie Yeats was banging his head on the table as though he had a fit, muttering to himself. I had a cold repulsion to the whole business. I took my hands from the table. Presently the spirits were able to speak. There was someone in the room who was hindering them. By this time I had got in a few invocations of my own. There was a tremendous deal of rapping going on. The spirits were obviously annoyed. They were asked for an indication as to who it was that was holding them back. They indicated me, and I was asked to withdraw, which I did cheerfully. The last thing I saw as the door opened to let me pass through was Willie Yeats banging his head on the table.

He explained to me afterwards that the spirits were evil. To keep them off he had been saying the nearest approach to a prayer he could remember, which was the opening lines of *Paradise Lost* :

" Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit."

I wonder if this occasion marked Willie Yeats' first induction into the occult matters with which afterwards he became so fascinated. The O'Learys, Ellen especially, were very much disturbed at the report of the proceedings, and anxious lest Willie Yeats should embark upon table-turning, spirit-rapping, and all the rest of the "foul brood of folly," to make another Miltonic quotation. However, I do not think he repeated his experience at that time. I am quite sure it jarred his nerves and senses. It was later on that he veered steadily towards magic, from which, however, he has long since got away since Lady Gregory's friendship began to throw its protecting influence over him. But of that more in its proper place.

During that year also my friendship with Dr. and Mrs. Atkinson, with Father Russell and Rosa Mulholland, sweetened and enriched my life. I also saw a great deal of the two Sigerson girls. In the summer of that year I went on a visit

to the Piatts at Queenstown, and was the means of introducing Hester, the younger girl, to Donn Piatt, whom she afterwards married, as I was the means of introducing Dora some years later to Mr. Clement Shorter, whom she married.

We were all possessed with the common impulse towards literature. We were all making our poems and stories. Dora Sigerson, who was then a strikingly handsome girl, was painting as well, making statuettes and busts, doing all sorts of things, and looking like a young Muse. Dr. Sigerson was, as he is happily doing to-day, dispensing the most delightful hospitality. His Sunday night dinners were, and are, a feature of literary life in Dublin, chiefly of the literary life which has the colour of the green. At the time there was no Irish Literary Society, as there is now, with Dr. Sigerson for its President. The best of the young intellect of Dublin was to be found at Dr. Sigerson's board. Nowadays there is not so much poetry talked there as there used to be in the old days. The personnel of the guests has somewhat changed. Nowadays one finds more an academic atmosphere, with the Fellows and Professors of the new National University. We miss many a one. But happily there is still the most gracious and genial of hosts, who seems to grow but the kinder and warmer as the years pass. Dr. Sigerson, with his fine picturesque head, has all the gracious and stately virtues of the remembered days in an age that is shifting and changing and breaking up. Poet, scholar, historian, patriot, virtuoso, physician, but above all friend, the most generous and constant of friends, Dr. Sigerson is known to the circle that loves him.

CHAPTER XX

FRANCES WYNNE

ANOTHER friend of 1887 was Frances Wynne, the young poet who died in 1893, the year after her marriage, leaving behind her an infant son and one slender but exquisite volume of poems, *Whisper*.

Her father, Mr. Alfred Wynne, was land-agent to Lord Massareene, and to various other Irish landlords. One of his agencies was for the Burnaby eslate, which belonged to the widow of Fred Burnaby of the Ride to Khiva, an Irish heiress, who is now well known as Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond. Checverstown, my father's best beloved farm, belonged to this lady, and he had always paid his rent to Mr. Wynne, without ever coming into personal touch with him. My father was the least troublesome of tenants. He had always paid his rent, and asked for no concessions. Indeed, I believe that although he was not at all an anti-landlord man, he yet held in his secret heart that all agents were ill-disposed towards all tenants. Hence his acceptance of the fact that in the many years of their business relations he and Mr. Wynne had never laid eyes on each other.

I cannot remember now what the occasion was of Mr. Wynne's paying us a visit after those years. He came, and our expectations of him were happily disappointed. Some copies of *Louise de la Valliere* had just arrived, and I gave him one. He was much delighted by the literary aspect of my little room, and the interview left us all real friends. He had a gracious and most charming personality.

A little later he came again with his daughter, who had certainly manoeuvred the second visit—a slender, brown-haired,

brown-faced girl, with an eager, vivacious expression, an animated and appealing manner, altogether a warm and glowing creature. Like other dear friends of my early days, Frances Wynne was of the Pre-Destined. It revealed itself, if we had only understood, in her extraordinary eagerness towards life, as though having so little a time to stay she must seize the cup with both hands and drink fast.

At the moment her impulse was towards literature. She had been brought up in a gentle, religious, refined, uneventful atmosphere—perhaps better fitted to those who have experienced life than to those eager to taste it. Will the mature and the old ever realise the thirst of the young for life and how little their own enclosed garden satisfies that perfectly lawful appetite? Frances Wynne had the energy to lay hold on life and drink a deep draught of it before she laid down the cup for ever in her twenty-eighth year.

Nothing could be sweeter, gentler, more high-minded than the atmosphere in which she grew up in the old-fashioned, ample house in Collon, Co. Louth, with its old garden and many beauties. But it was very claustral, and Frances Wynne, with her *rnigrienne* face, was all for human beings and a world of adventure. Thousands of daughters of the Protestant gentle-folk of the English and Irish country lead just such sheltered and love-kept lives, and are, or appear, content when they do not become suffragettes, or lady-cooks, or hospital nurses. It is not easy for the parents who have done everything, would do everything, for their children to realise the passionate clamour in the children's hearts to do something for themselves.

I think Frances Wynne's desire for adventure must have come from her father. This friend, whom we had never thought of as a friend before, proved to be a real gain. He was a cheerful, bustling, kindly gentleman, who, while he transacted his worldly business, and a great deal of it, as well as another, yet had an ever-present sense of a world out of mortal sight. I used to think that he did all his everyday actions

with an eye to how God would see them. In all the relations of life he was excellent. There was something of the Quixote in him, for he parted with Lord Massareene before the grave troubles broke out on the estate, his recommendations as to an abatement and readjusting of the rents having been disregarded. He was in the fullest sense of the word a just man. Belonging to the Evangelical Irish Protestantism which, except as regards its servants, has lived in an almost inhuman aloofness from its Catholic neighbours, he had neither timidity nor coldness towards his nor aught but charity.

Alfred Wynne was the kind of man to take literally the injunction as to loving one's neighbour as one's self. In that very Protestant household—and it was not at all an isolated case—the Catholic servants were really and truly members of the family. There were two sisters, cook and parlour-maid, who were the dear friends and lifelong servants of the family. They often come into Frances Wynne's letters to me, of which I have discovered a bundle. In those humble friends their beloved "Miss Francie" found no flaw, as she was perfect in theirs. Another old servant of her grandmother was also a close and dear friend. She had given "Miss Francie" her watch and many other gifts, splendidly generous, as it comes easy to the Irish Celt to be, and when Frances Wynne was about to be married she found pinned to her bedroom pin-cushion an envelope containing a five-pound note, "For my darling Miss Francie from Mary Anne."

In addition to his goodness Mr. Wynne had a merriment, a roguishness, which explained his daughter's qualities. He had that abundant sense of humour without which business dealings with the Irish, indeed any dealings with them, would be a constant vexation of the spirit. There was a good deal of the boy in Frances. She could no more content herself than a spirited boy in an atmosphere of high thinking, gentle pleasures, and hidden good works.

She grasped at everything that meant a fuller life. I was

an objective in that way. She found me in an atmosphere of books and papers. There was even a proof or two on the table—perhaps I put them there on purpose to be seen; I was yet young enough to be proud of them—and she was thrilled and envious.

Unlike most of my correspondents of that time she dates her letters; perhaps she inherited something of a business faculty from her father; and from her letters, the first beginning "My dear Miss Tynan," I gather that that first visit was paid in April. Hers was an apparition well in keeping with the sweet April; and I think there were primroses and pale primulas and a bowl of wallflowers in my room that day. Her first letter was written immediately after her return home, on the 8th of April 1887. She plunged into friendship and confidences at once. Her letters were literary from the beginning, in that they give glimpses of her daily life, wonderfully fresh and vivid to-day, though the grasses have been growing over all that was mortal of her sweetness for twenty years.

"I went a long drive with Papa to-day to a house with a story. It was once a beautiful place, but now the house is deserted and the rooms are damp: the wall-paper is hanging off, and the floors are full of holes. A dirty, drunken-looking man 'caretakes' in the dining-room, and the dogs sleep in the library. As for the garden, it was too heart-rending. Only the sweet-briar is coming unconcernedly into leaf as though nothing had happened."

May 1st, Sunday.

I do wish I was going to see you. But Papa says he'll take me another time. I have lots to say to you, and I'm sitting in my little window (our house is very old, and the windows are deep-set and square) all ready to begin, but, alas! it is tea-time and I must go down. However, the family will be all turning churchward in about half an hour, and I having had two Sunday schools and one church already am going to stay at home and then I shall write my letter.

5.45.—Papa and Mother have just disappeared through the church-door, which is about a stone's throw from our house, Dear darling Papa and Mother, they are so good to me!

Sunday Evening, May 29, 1887.

MY DEAR, MY POET [mark the advance!],—I've got ready to write to you. Put on my dear old velveteen dress which I wear of evenings, seen the family depart to church and—but there's been a great "Demonstration" in quiet little Collon to-day, and remnants of it are straying still in front of my open window. The last and most out-of-tune of the bands has just been murdering "The Wearing of the Green"¹ in front of the priest's house next-door. And bless me if it's not coming back again!—no, it's a good one, playing "Let Erin remember!" Oh dear, I wish Erin could! You see it's rather hard to write with all this fuss. Collon is such a well-behaved little place. They are always so good and quiet—*considering*—the people are. It is a shame that . . . should have brought all this Plan of Campaign and discontent into the village. . . . There would have been no trouble all the winter, and there would be peace now, and I could write to you collectedly. It makes me so nervish, cars rushing by, and snatches of conversation going on. And oh, I do want to thank you with my best and warmest love for your dear letter. You can't think what worlds of good it did me. I was putting on my gloves and pulling out my bonnet-strings on the drawing-room rug to-day, before going to Sunday school, and Mother said: "Darling, you're looking much better, and somehow you look *good-er* to-day. I don't know what it is." And I said: "Well, it's dreadful to have a face that tells *everything*, but if you want to know what it is, it is just Miss Tynan's letter." If only that dreadful Break (now is it Brake or Break?) would leave off, I could get on. Do you ever feel like a very old horse-hair sofa, when the ends of the hair are sticking out? That is how

I feel now. And if I go down to the drawing-room it won't be writing to you, and I'll miss the sunshine dying off" the tops of the beech-trees and the purple coming into the grey of the church wall. Dear darling, it was so good of you to write to me as you did. It was just what I wanted said to me. After I had read your letter it was "clear shining after rain." I always think that such a sweet little bit of poetry. I remember once when I was at school in London we were having a dreadfully dry lesson on the kings of Judah and Israel (be glad you don't have such things), and it came to my turn to read. I hadn't been listening much, and the governess said sharply, "Frances, the 4th verse"; and I read with a sort of thrill: "He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." That was the best lesson I ever got about the kings of Israel. . . . It was so good of you to be so kind about my little poem, and to speak so earnestly to me about writing. I love trying to write, but I feel so diffident about my attempts. Do you know I think I am a wee little bit like you, in the way of thinking the same sort of things at all events. I often wish so much to have you see a thing that comes home to me, for I know it would to you too. The other day I was in Drogheda lunching with Miss Keogh, the daughter of our Stipendiary Magistrate. She lives next to St. Mary's Convent. She took me up to their garden, terrace after terrace enclosed by high beech hedges, to the top of the hill. (They're coining out of church. How horrid!) The last little plot was enclosed by very high beech walls, and there was only a square of long grass with little black crosses in it. It was dark there. And Miss Keogh said: "This is the nuns' burial-ground. Our man keeps it in order for them. Indeed the grass wants cutting badly." There was an iron gate at the side through which blazed two long strips of bright colour from the old-fashioned borders in the convent garden. We

went in, for the nuns allow Miss Keogh to walk in their garden, and I thought of many things, of how hard I'd find it to become a nun, and of how good they must be, just visiting the poor and teaching the children, and meditating among the bright flowers. And then opening the iron gate and passing in among the graves at last. I looked at the Dominican Convent at the other side of the river, behind two great sycamore trees, and I thought of you. Miss Keogh played beautifully for me on her organ. . . . I must tell you one more thing before I go down to play hymns for the children. I'm afraid it must wait till I come up to bed, for I see it's a quarter to eight. And at eight delicate Effie and little May go up to bed, and Edie and I and Papa and Mother go to tea. I must go . . . I've peeped into the drawing-room—May is saying her Collect to Mother, and then she has a hymn to say, so I've come back. You must know we have a laundress, and her name is Biddy. She's small and quiet, with a pair of soft brown eyes that look up slowly at one, and contrast with her grey hair. Poor Biddy is not very strong in the intellect, and Kate (my Kate, you know) is very good to her. Yesterday I was writing here, and Mary brought my things up from the wash. I said, "Oh, Mary, that wretched Biddy has torn the lace off my new bodice." Mary said, "Miss Francie, was Kate tellin' you about poor Biddy's fast?" I said no. So she told me this story. It seems poor Biddy thought she escaped some dreadful danger this time last year. On Tuesday she didn't come to her dinner, and Kate sent the kitchen-maid, Mary Barron, to call her. "No thank you, Mary," she said, "I don't want any dinner. I'm fastin'." Tea-time came, and Biddy, who loves her tea, never came. She went away at six. The next day again she did not come to her dinner. Kate went and tried to persuade her, but she looked up out of her great brown eyes more pitiful than ever, and she said, "No thank you, my fast's not over yet, and nothing you could offer me would make me break it." "She bought a couple of pennyworth

of sweets in Gargan's shop," said Mary, "and she sucked one now and again when she felt the faintness comin' over her. . . . Will I put your bodice where you won't forget it, Miss Francie, love?" I was wondering if God didn't think better of Biddy's self-denial, although she is simple, than of much almsgiving and oblation.

10.30 P.M.—We've been laughing and having a good time, and every now and again Papa would frown in his tragic way, and say he'd been having a very ungodly Sunday. He is delicious when he's tragic. You don't know him well enough to know that. To-night they let me talk and make them laugh. . . . I think it better for Papa to be made laugh after his long and busy week, and his Sunday spent in good works than to have reading of good books on Sunday night. I've been reading *Marcella Grace*. I think it's a sweet book, a little ideal, but that's no harrum! Thank you so much for sending me those letters. I've taken a fancy to your friend, Maurice Ranking. I think very few men preserve such freshness as his in this old world. I was saying to Ada last night in a letter that God didn't forget me when He sent me you. Ada says she is imploring her aunt to get *Louise de la Vattiere*. She saw Robert Browning the other day at the Grosvenor Gallery. She writes: "Oh, darling, what do you think? I have seen our own dear R.B. in the flesh." You must know that Ada and I having read *Selected Poems*, portions of the *Ring and the Book*, *Pippa Passes*, and the *Soul's Tragedy*, have appropriated Browning, and speak familiarly of him as R.B. . . . Edie and I were in Dublin on Friday. She had a music-lesson, and afterwards I took her to Christ Church, as she'd never been in a cathedral. Fancy, there were only eleven people there for a congregation! Lovely music; service sweet, and lasted only half an hour. The notion of the Protestants of Dublin having *two* cathedrals, and not knowing any better than to desert the services! They ought to hand over St. Patrick's. . . . It was so kind of you to let me see what Father Russell said of me. . . . Yes,

I have the *Imitation*. It's the only religious book of its kind I care for. Only it has no kind. "Of the King's Highway of the Holy Cross"; "Of Four Things which bring much Inward Peace," and the Holy Communion chapters are what I like best. . . . I hope you won't hate the enclosed, for I liked making it up. It was such a delicious night when I thought the things I said in it. But it would come in that metre. *Don't* you think that your father (who strikes me as being clever enough for anything) could find something imperatively needing Papa's presence at Whitehall. I hope God will keep pouring more and more poetry into me, for indeed I do love it. It's a quarter past twelve, so, good-night."

She has been to Scotland, and has returned on June 19th, the date of her next letter. She was very glad to be back.

"Isn't it nice that I'm home again? It was so long over there in the lonely hotel. They were all so glad to have me back, and I was so glad to come. Mother said she had missed me dreadfully with my rush and noise about the house, and Kate was actually tearful. I am repaid. My six weeks in London in the spring seemed comparatively short alongside of this last. I loved travelling in third-class carriages and on top of buses and all the human interests, but it was so *external*. Do you think "Jessie" very bad. She was a little four-year-old girl I made friends with one day at the railway-station, and that Sunday after I wrote to you, as I was coming back from the Holy Communion, I saw little Jessie walking along between her mother and uncle. She ran to me, and I caught her into my arms with all the blood of my body rushing into my face, and those wretched, uncontrollable tears flooding my eyes. She was the only friend I had in Edinburgh, and I felt so sad when her lovely little face went out of my life for ever. . . .

"I didn't tell you I went to St. Giles' Cathedral on Sunday with Papa. I thought I should *never* get out. Such a dull, colourless service, nearly two hours long; and no brightness

or beauty, though the old church is in itself grand enough. I was so delighted when I came across that bit in Matthew Arnold last night, where he says in *The Need for Beauty*: 'Puritanism can never satisfy it. The Catholic Church and the English Church can.' . . . Nothing can deprive us of the Prayer-Book. The Scotch make it up as they go along, so if they are not in a good frame of mind it is a bad joy. Most Irish churches are so ugly that it is a good thing they are kept under lock and key, but it's an odious practice. In England and in your Church the having the churches so accessible gives the people a sort of feeling that they've a right to the place, which is good. I wish they'd arrange the altar flowers less prosaically than they do in most churches. Needless to remark that in Ireland Catholics have the monopoly of flowers and any attempt at beauty. It would be dreadful to have flowers in our churches. Himmel! I think it's so good for people who never see anything pretty in their dreary lives to have something better to look at in their churches. Mary brimmed over with righteous indignation one day about 'how different the chapel was kep' in her place to what it was here,' and how she'd 'like to get at this chapel an' settle it as it ought to be.' In which I fully concurred. I love arranging flowers—do you? Once our church here was 'decorated' at Christmas, and most of the congregation stayed away. Defend me from a respectable Irish Protestant of the tradesman class! Talk of Philistinism! I adore beauty and colour, and life and brightness. It's giving me pure pleasure at this moment to see the colour of a vivid orange nasturtium against the dark brown of the hanging basket it is in. There are the children coming out of church—May in her white frock, with her yellow hair, more like a daisy than ever."

I have given this passage to show how the strong young soul was cleaving a way for itself, and I heartily hope it will cause no lightest distress to anyone.

The letter proceeds: " I did enjoy coming down the Clyde

on our way home. We were a long time on the steamer before she started, and it was bliss. It had been wet and dreary, and my heart had been sobbing all through the streets of Glasgow. But the evening cleared; and the great wide river with the ships gliding past; and the sun setting in red and golden light; and the great band of shimmering, slowly-fading rosy reflection *on* the water; and the blue hills getting far away and mysterious as the twilight came and the lights glimmered out one by one as we floated slowly down the river! Oh dear, it was all lovely! . . . About Rossetti—what bliss if we could read him together! If you could get me from Inchicore I could often come and spend a day with you, if you would only have me. It's too much to ask. And I'm so ignorant. I've never read any Keats or Shelley or Wordsworth or Milton (I never could read Milton) or Byron. I've really read only Tennyson and E. B. Browning, and a little of R. B. and a few scattered poems, and some Shakespeare. I'm always reading, and I've read nothing."¹

The next two or three letters are written in pencil, less decipherable after the passage of twenty-five years. The first, barely begun on the Sunday evening—she had to go to church—is continued, "Mon. Morning, in the drawing-room.*"

"I want you so much. I'm heavy and tired with the tiredness of a coming sore throat. Oh dear, what a good time I had with you last week! . . . Last night I didn't like having to go to church. I like saying my prayers. I'm so fond of the Book of Common Prayer. I like praying, "Give unto Thy servants that peace which the world cannot give." And I like "Lighten our darkness, we beseech Thee, O Lord, and by Thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night, for the love of Thine only Son." But, O Katie darling, the sermon! Do you know what I did? I stared out of my corner at the long rows of lamps stretching down the aisle till they sort of got run into each other and I lost the sense of the sermon, and only heard a long monotonous buzzing. And

then I made myself imagine that there was a great broad river running between the pews where the aisle is; and I said to myself that if I stood up I'd see the lights reflected in it. And I thought of the evening you and I sat on the pier at Kingstown, and how sweet it was, when suddenly Mr. F—— gave a very loud roar, and all at once the lamps got very distinct, and the pews got into pews, and though I couldn't see the aisle, I *knew* it had cocoanut matting on it. . . .

"Dear Father Russell sent me the *I. M.*, with a 'Cycle of Sonnets' by Monty Griffin. Strange that though I understand all the sonnets I should prefer that "Sycamore Wood" of the incomprehensible Yeats. I have *Louise de la Valliere* on my lap, with the second volume of the *Ring and the Book*, *Louise* because she looked so lonely lying far away on a table by the window, and being part of you, I couldn't bear that. . . ."

Another pencilled letter on the following Sunday, when she is kept in bed because of a cold.

"There is a wind springing up. It sounds so nice out there in the faint, grey night. I hear the sycamore trees at the churchyard wall, and the old elm-tree across the road, and the poplar in the opposite garden being rocked to and fro. I can hear the poplar quite distinctly rustling its leaves. The corncrake isn't croaking himself to sleep to-night. I hope it won't rain till Effie gets safe to the sea."

[Effie was a darling invalid sister who was the light of the house.]

"And then I'd like it to come down in soft caressing drops and to keep on for a long time sinking steadily into the ground, with your west wind ruffling my hair when I leant out of the window to watch the rain. I think soft summer rain is so beautiful. It always has a sort of Irish feeling about it. This golden weather has been delightful: it will make the rain sweeter when it comes. I hate rough, boisterous, windy wet days. . . . It's so sweet, all that poem of yours about the hills and the river. You must have *loved* to make it, something like flying. One thing that thrills me is about 'the old

beloved things." It's so human, your Heaven. There's a bit in Isaiah: 'And there the glorious Lord shall be unto us as a place of broad rivers and streams.'¹ There's a marvellous amount of poetry in the Bible. Mother says I shouldn't read it for the sake of the poetry. But sure I do read everything from a poetry standpoint. I'd like to know what comes up to 'For the winter is past: the rain is over and gone.' "

Frances Wynne's long letters continued steadily through 1887. I believe she wrote every Sunday during that year. I can find no letters of a later year; and if they were not lost, I must only conclude that as she was steadily emancipating herself, and as she *ran* on her progress to poetry, she must have been happier and busier, with less need to write these long outpourings. The letters strike me as being such a charming revelation of character, and presenting her surroundings so vividly, that I do not ask pardon for going on with my extracts from them in another chapter.

CHAPTER XXI

FRANCES WYNNE (*continued*)

THERE is a jump to the next letter of my budget, which is dated August 28, 1887.

"MY OWN DEAR,—I do wish you had been in our drawing-room just a minute ago to stand up for me. I was mercilessly sat upon about reading so much (which I don't), and neglecting my accomplishments and the cultivation of my mind. Oh, such rain as we've been having to-day! Such tremendous showers! Papa is delighted, and stands by the staircase window gazing with pensive rapture into the steadily-filling tank. . . . Here the door has opened, and—enter Grannie! Down she sat, the dear, pretty old sweet, and has spent the last twenty minutes giving me a lecture on how I ought to make a list of my hours, &c. &c. But, bless me, it's impossible. If I made a list I'd never be easy till I broke it, and I can't be anyone but myself, just as I am, for all anyone can say. I must go and sing to Mrs. Pep par now, and I'll chatter to you more when I come back. I have to sing:

" ' I'm but a stranger here,
Heaven is my home;
Earth is a desert drear,
Heaven is my home ;
Danger and sorrow stand
Round me on every hand;
Heaven is my fatherland,
Heaven is my home.'

It's gall and wormwood to me. Earth isn't a desert drear, and I don't know what heaven is like. And Ireland's my fatherland."

" *Twelve o'clock, midnight*—I had to wait till a great

shower was over to go to Mrs. Peppar. On my way from her I found Kate and the kitchen-maid milking. So I had to hear the history of how little milk the white cow's daughter gives as compared with her mother, and how the calves couldn't be weaned because there was no grass, &c. &c. And so, darling, I couldn't come back to you after all. . . . Do you know I never read *Maud* till I was fifteen ? Papa read it aloud then. Mother and all were there, so I couldn't say, ' Stop, it's too much.' But, goodness! When I came up to bed ! *How* I cried ! But it was a nice sort of crying. It was hard to explain to Mother when she came up, having heard sobs above her head in the stillness of the night. And Christmas night Papa tried to read out *Enoch Arden* to me, and we both came to grief hopelessly. You should have seen Mother's face when she opened the study door and found her aged husband and young daughter weeping together! *Maud* doesn't affect Papa a bit; but he never got through reading *Enoch Arden* aloud in his life. He hardly ever reads poetry aloud now. Mother likes to talk about the tenants and their woes. Dear darling, she's so human and so good to everyone that's poor or in trouble. It was, oh, so hot in church to-day. I thought the sermon was *never*', *never* going to end. And I had put in an hour and a quarter of Sunday school previously. Oh dear, I was so tired ! I enclose the result of my meditations during the rector's lengthened discourse. There was a darling sunbeam in church, and I imagined I was *ten*. The poem couldn't be worse, I fear, if I was."

The letter goes on : " We have such an idyllic wall in our garden. In another fortnight the jessamine will be out. Kindly imagine it is July when you are reading the poem, and me a small girl in a high pew."

Here follow arrangements about a meeting.

" I suppose the Inchicore tram starts often from College Green. Life is long, and with patience and hope we *may* contrive to meet. (I stopped here and read *Bishop BlougrarrCs Apology*.) Isn't it weird ? Rather uncomfortable. I'm going to invest in a lot of Canterbury Poets when I

go to town. Is Keats published in that series? I have wanted to read Burns so much since I went to Scotland, but Ada's father took the book away from her, so I suppose I mustn't. No one ever notices or knows what I read. I might read anything. It was so sweet of you to say 'Jessie' looked delightful. I am that much of a Celt that anything in the way of *beliefishness* runs warmly through my blood. I do adore that sonnet of Mr. Yeats's. Aunt Sophy, however, scoffed at me for saying so. I suppose some people have a keener feeling for poetry than others, and I have a *feeUsh* perception of poetry. You will understand, having it so much stronger yourself, and won't think me conceited. You know what it means—the intense passion for poetry and the rapture of it. But you can express it, which must be bliss of the most advanced type. I was out late in the evening a few days ago, and it was so dreary. There was a livid sunset, and all the rest was clouds. A heron got up and throbbed along the little river, his wings shining almost blue in the slanting western light. Then I saw him no more. One of these autumnal evenings we've been having I thought of a great garden I know, and how it would soon be dug up and left empty, with only the marigolds in it. So I wrote the enclosed. I'm sure you'll think it very bad, my dear, and you may be as hard on me as you like. It is very unfinished and unconnected I know, but that is how I felt it, and despairing, too. It's odd that I've discovered since that marigolds mean despair. I was so thankful to have it to think about after the loneliness of the last fortnight. Do you know, they are just in from church. And here's all I have written! And it's only 7.15, and I have to have a candle. . . . I should so *love* to meet Miss Mulholland. It *would* be good of you to let me. If Miss Kavanagh liked me half as well as I liked her, I am satisfied with the impression I made. I am so glad you are not thinking of going to England. But I know how it will be. They will overpersuade you, and you will go. I feel it borne in upon me. And then what shall I do? . . .

" *Mon. Morn.*—O dear, such a day ! Rain streaming down ceaselessly. Poor Papa has had to go to a function at Dundalk, something about Land Purchase, and has to drive miles on a car in the rain. My dear little god-child died last evening. The lovely little baby! I feel so much for her poor mother, who has lost another little girl within the last two months. The baby was her little comfort, and she is distracting herself with reproach for always having had her in the room in which poor Daisy was dying of consumption. If you knew the angelic kindness of Papa on Saturday when the little baby was to be buried. The father, who had been away, came home very unsteady, and it was all Papa could do to keep him decently quiet. The little coffin was brought in our carriage to the church. And there were no flowers in this senseless weather for me to send. Poor little baby, she suffered in the five months of her life on earth; but I think God will make it up to her. I was just making some pinafores for her. She had on the little frock I made for her the day before she died. I didn't know she was so near Heaven, poor sweet. She was not long reaching the fulfilment of the baptismal prayer that she might 'so pass the waves of this troublesome world as finally to come to the land of everlasting life.*' 'This troublesome world,' as the dear old poetry-prayer has it, is very troublesome just now. . . .

" I wonder if Father Russell would spare me two or three more copies of the *Irish Monthly*. I'd just love to see Miss Mulholland's poem. It is cold and damp—isn't it. I wish you and I were sitting over some delicious fire together. I wish I were sitting on the floor with my head on your knee. . . ."

Here the letter breaks off abruptly. A sheet of it must have been lost. Indeed, it is being borne in upon me that I have only odd letters left, and since the writer occasionally forgets to date I fear I am jumping from one season to another. The next letter of my batch is dated Aug. 31st, and calls itself a P.S. letter, plainly an addition to something that went before.

" Our visitors have just gone, and there is the consequent lull. I wish you were up here talking to me. I wish you were reading Rossetti to me. Poor Goodymamma has been very ill indeed : everyone is ill and unhappy, and I am lonesome. This time last year I hadn't you. And you know you are a very good joy. It seems a very long time since I heard from you. I wonder how 'November Eve' is getting on! And the article for Oscar Wilde. I don't very often do any needlework, but when I do I'm reminded of you. I have a sweet little workbasket that I lined myself, about four inches long. And stuck inside the lid there is a pin with a green head. And the day Ada and I were at Whitehall you pinned the lily you were wearing into my frock with that pin which matched your frock. Every time I open the workbasket, not thinking of anything, there flashes upon me that good joy day we had with you, when we were so happy *malgre* the wet. Darling, there is such a wind, and yellow boughs to be seen already from my window; and there are two or three swallows fighting with the wind and all going one way. And, oh, I declare there go some leaves of the poplar tree swirling past! Hasn't the beginning of the end set in early this year? The elms in the Borough Field are tossing to and fro. Perhaps they're vexed like me. There are to be twenty police instead of six in Collon now, and several emergency men. Poor, quiet, peaceful little Collon ! We are dreadfully aggrieved."

The next letter I come to is written on the back of a poem and bears no date beyond, "Collon House, Sunday Evening."

" MY DEAR PET,—Fve just come in from church, and Fve put a match to my fire and I'm curled up on the rug, writing to you by the firelight. Now I'm going to tell you about the 'Rocking Chair' (*i.e.* the poem over-leaf). I had a most kind and altogether interested-in-me-ish letter from Father Russell, and he gave me all his views about the poem. He suggested one or two alterations from himself and one from Miss Mulholland, to whom he happened to show it. But wait till I tell you what I've done, Katie

alanna! When first I made it up I had something about a gate. Well, then, because I called it 'A Voyage,' I thought I must have something about sailing. But your letter, where you casually said 'In a Rocking Chair,' made me think how much prettier that was, so I changed the verses, as you see. I'm rather glad I had the patience to change it. Father Russell and Miss Mulholland liked the 'quaint old room.' You know I feel so shy and inclined to hide my head when I think of them two actually taking the trouble to talk over a crock thing of mine. There's the tea-bell! Oh, I love you. Sure you won't leave off loving me?"

"*Mon. Mom.*—Oh, Katie, if you could see the *ecstatic* colour of the trees opposite my window. I don't think God ever made such a good joy autumn as this! "

The letters I have of hers have nearly come to an end. In the autumn of that year Mr. Wynne was instrumental in starting home industries on the Singleton estate, over which he was agent. Mrs. Singleton—"Violet Fane," the beautiful and fashionable woman of the seventies and eighties, who wrote poetry and a novel or two which were notable and praised, I fancy, more because of the writer's beauty and fascination than for their merits—was a distant cousin of the Wynnes, and Mr. Wynne managed her property. Through me apparently he had made acquaintance with Miss Skeffington Thompson and Mrs. Rae, the sister-in-law and wife of the Arctic explorer, and had got "tips" from them about the conduct of the industries, which then were less common than they are now. The industries gave Frances some work and interest. It will be gathered from the letters that she needed such. She had only some six years of life to run, and she was eager: enclosed in a walled garden of life she wanted the world, hungrily. She wanted to be about and doing, because the night cometh, and unknown to herself the shadow of it was about her.

"Dearest dear," she says, "it seems decades since you wrote. Another week that you don't write you must send me a post-card. . . . Papa, Mother, and I went down to Cavan on Wed. morn. We drove thirty miles altogether that day.

We interviewed Miss Thompson's Margaret McCullagh (who by the way has annexed herself to me, which is flattering, as she is a sturdy unemotional Northerner). On Thursday we drove down again to Shercock, stayed at Carrickmacross for the night, at a queer little hotel full of antimacassars, stuffed birds, and shell-boxes; and the Piers Court Home Industries were inaugurated. I do hope and trust it will be successful. The people of Cavan are grasping after money and very stolid. Papa and the parish priest impressed it very strongly on their minds that they wouldn't begin to earn money for their work till they had learnt it thoroughly. I daresay when some of them find that they are paid not a weekly wage but by the article, they will drop off. When we get things into working order you must try to get us some orders. I shall book your sister when she is ordering her wedding-garments. Margaret and her assistant work exquisitely. We got home late on Thursday evening, having driven fifty miles in two days. We came from Carrickmacross to Dunleer (a station six miles from us) by train. We took two hours to do it, forty minutes of which we spent sitting in a siding in the dark at Dundalk, waiting to be attached to the Belfast train. I've spent a very bad, idle week. It's what I was doing this one little poem, and though it is now utterly savourless from repetition, and I know it's no good, yet it gave me pleasure to make it. Fil tell you how I made it. I was desperately lonely for want of a poem, and one evening, rather late, I was tilting backwards and forwards in a queer old chair in the schoolroom which I much affect. When I tilted up I caught just nothing but that gold bit of sky quite covered with poplar leaves, flickering. When I tilted down there wasn't anything but the delicious fire-lit room. It was a good joy, and used to come back to me with a thrill every time I closed my eyes. . . . I expect by this time Mr. Meynell has sent back *Marigolds*. I am sure dear, nice Father Russell won't be above taking it. I sent him back *The Wild Birds of Killeevy* yesterday. I do think it's a sweet book; and there's some really beautiful English in it. Miss Mulholland is a poet. Last night when I did

go to sleep, which was between one and two, I dreamt that one of my 'teeth' dropped out. Kate says that means I shall lose a friend; but she assures me it isn't you! I've had the third volume of the *Ring and the Book* in the house for more than a week, and I haven't yet had a go at it. I *adore* the *Ring and the Book*. Isn't it lovely where he wished he had sat on the bench beside Pompilia that day instead of gathering the 'handful of spring herb and bloom.' They are in from church, and I have to pitch my tent elsewhere."

The next and last letter of my batch is written on the paper of the Piers Court Industries, of which by this time she was in secretarial charge. The letter is much shorter. Perhaps this employment of hers ended the very long letters. I miss one in which she described how she, the daughter of an evangelical household, used to devote an hour of the Sunday afternoon to reading the Catholic papers aloud to the servants—she sitting on the kitchen table, the adoring servants grouped about her.

I have glimpses of her. Once it was at Canon (afterwards Bishop) Wynne's house in Leeson Park. He was Professor of Pastoral Theology in T.C.D., a benign man, with a good, gentle, somewhat narrow face. I always thought that Pastoral Theology must mean that he took his pupils out into the fields to teach. There came a number of his divinity students to tea. Afterwards two of them accompanied Ada and Frances Wynne when they insisted on escorting me to the Shelbourne Hotel, where I was to expound the Nationalist cause in Ireland to Professor Dicey (!). It was an autumn or winter afternoon and the streets were lamp-lit and dark. Mrs. Wynne, Ada's mother, protested against the two girls accompanying me—"Young ladies did not do such things in her day," yet did not prevent them. One of the two accompanying divinity students was Mr. Hannay, now Canon Hannay, better known to English people as George Birmingham. He married Ada Wynne.

For all her impatience with the restrictions of her life at

that time Frances had not cast away the conventions. She was still horror-stricken at the thought of going for lunch or tea to anywhere but Mitchell's, the genteel shop in Grafton Street, Dublin. I'm afraid I forced her to accompany me to an ordinary restaurant, where I caused her still greater suffering by drinking beer with my lunch. Another thing which used to horrify her was my habit of driving on outside cars. I daresay it horrified some few other people, for Dublin was narrower in those days than it is now; but I took full advantage of my being a literary person, knowing that it would explain many eccentricities in my behaviour.

I remember a phrase of hers which amused me. I had come across some people who had taken her up warmly at one time, and had grown less warm, as apparently was their wont. "Tell me," she said, "what they said about me." "Oh, very nice things," I replied. "I know they love me," she said; "but what I want to know is, is it a hatey love or a lovey love?" "Hatey love" is, I think, a phrase for which there has been a felt want.

Four years after these letters were written she married her cousin, Mr. Henry Wynne, and went to live in London. For a time, before he took orders, they lived in Southampton Row, high above the swirling tide of London life. Later on they went to live in an old house in Stepney Green. She seemed as if she could not have enough of life. She plunged into it with the most extraordinary zest. She was excessively in love with London and the free London life after her walled garden of life in Ireland. She delighted in the East End shops, in the galleries of theatres, in crowds, in third-class carriages—in everything that spelt life to her. She was restless. She wanted to write, to see, to meet people. The thirst for adventure was bidding her "Hurry! hurry!" because the time was short. She managed to get in the great experiences. She had known grief, she had loved, she was a wife and a mother. She died after a year and eight months of marriage, aged twenty-seven, leaving an infant of a few days old behind her.

These letters seem to me as fresh, as warm, as breathing,

as though they had come straight from her hand. Her poems were like herself, very lyrical, wistful, full of the joy of life, and eager for fuller draughts of it. Her one slender volume of poems, *Whisper I* was in the press when she died. The title, excellently chosen, seems to conceal and reveal a charming, shy, and roguish face that looks and runs away.

Her poems, like her letters and herself, seem to me epitomes of girlhood. My excuse for giving so much space to the letters, if any excuse is needed, is that now that earth holds no more of her she may be forgotten unless one who knew and loved her keeps her with those words written straight from her own warm and impulsive heart. If others find the letters as fresh and charming as I do—like fresh violets after all those years—my keeping them needs no excuse.

CHAPTER XXII

LADY YOUNG AND HER CIRCLE

IN the chapter on Frances Wynne I have mentioned an interview with Professor Dicey at the Shelbourne Hotel. That I could have had anything to say on the Irish Question to which Mr. Dicey would care to listen seems to me now extremely doubtful. I am amazed now at my own adventurousness that I ever went to that interview; the temerity of youth is all that I can plead in extenuation. I had not even enthusiasm to excuse me, for my interest in the Land League was not a sincere one. My one political enthusiasm began and ended with the Parnell Split.

•• However, I was brought to that meeting with Mr. Dicey through my neighbour, Sir Henry Lawrence, and his mother, Lady Young, whose house, Belgard Castle, stood on a hill, amid woods, overlooking my home nestling in the vale. Belgard had always been a place of romance to my childhood. The big square house had been attached to one of the old castles or keeps, which the English Palesnien planted all along their borders as watch-towers and protections against the OTooles and O'Byrnes, who used to sweep down from the mountains of Wick low and raid the fat cattle of the Palesnien, and anything else they could lay hands on from time to time. Bel Gard, to give it its Norman spelling, belonged to the family of the Talbots. Once it was Emmeline Talbot, the young daughter of the house, who was carried off by a Wicklow chieftain, and loved and married by him. Thomas Davis wrote a fluent and not very good ballad on this story.

The old keep, immovable as Time, still stands at the corner of Belgard Castle, and gives it its descriptive title. The story about it is that a dead man lies unburied, walled

in by solid masonry, in a chamber of the tower. The dead man was killed in the Tithe War, or by Ribbonmen, early in the nineteenth century. The story was that his brother swore he should go unburied till the murderer was caught and punished, and died before that could come about.

The story, or the loneliness of it in winter gave me an eerie feeling about Belgard; but it is a house beautifully situated, high up, overlooking Dublin and the plains of Dublin as they slope to the sea. It used to be said that you could draw a straight line through air from the hall-door steps of Belgard to the top of Nelson's Pillar, which is the highest point in Dublin. The house is stately and dignified. It has beautiful gardens, and there is the wildness about it which differentiates Ireland from England. From an Italian balustrading in front of the house you look down into a tangled orchard with a well in it. The house and the orchard and the well and the park are in many of my stories.

Belgard is surrounded by an ancient buttressed wall. As it is so very old, it is always crumbling in one place or another. It is a Sisyphus-like task to keep that wall in repair.

To Newlands, which adjoins Belgard, I have never penetrated. It belonged to Lord Kilwarden, that noble and humane judge, who deserves a place in the Valhalla of Irish heroes, as well as some of those he sat to judge. He was killed in a street brawl in the Emmet rising of 1804, as irresponsibly and accidentally as Lord Frederick Cavendish some eighty years later. They said that the manner of his death broke Emmet's fine, too sensitive heart. They say that every night at twelve o'clock Lord Kilwarden's coach, driven by a headless coachman, passes through the gates of Newlands. I never met anyone who claimed to have seen it. Every old house has its ghosts. Another thing I used to hear about Newlands, which has had many distinguished tenants of late years, was that there was as much of it built underground as overground.

Belgard, its orchards—there was a second one stretching

along inside the wall—and its hinterlands, which seemed to our childhood to stretch far away into unexplored spaces, was a happy hunting-ground for us in childhood. Very strange and beautiful things grew and lived there. There used to be flights of little blue moths, fluttering about over the fairy ragweed and the shivering grass, and I remember regiments of the most weirdly coloured fungi, bright blue and coral-red, standing under the trees in the belt of woodland which is inside the walls.

Lady Young's father, Dr. Evory Kennedy, had been the owner of Belgard. He belonged to one of those great Northern families—the Napiers, the Rowan Hamiltons, the Temple Blackwoods, the Lawrences; the Kennedys and the Lawrences were cousins—who have given such great sons to the Empire. In Sir Samuel Ferguson's skit upon the Orangemen you will find mention of Colonel John Pitt Kennedy, the brother of Dr. Evory Kennedy, who was a Northern leader in the forties or fifties of the last century. Since it is apposite to our day it may be quoted.

THE LOYAL ORANGEMAN

A am a loyal Orangeman
From Portadown upon the Bann.
Ma loyalty, A wull maintain,
Was ever and always without stain.
Though rebelly Papishes would call
Ma loyalty conditional,
A never did insist upon
Nor ask condition beyont the one—
The crown of the causeway in road or street,
And the Papishes put under ma feet.

It was when rebellion threatened the State,
In the month of April in '48,
A mounted upon my hackney
An' off A set to General Blakeney.
Says I, " Sir Edward, here we are,
Six hundred mortal men of war,

All ready and able, niver fear,
To march from the Causeway to Cape Clear,
And drive the rebels would da'ar to raise
The Irish colours into the says."

Well what div ye think my buffer sly
Had the imperence for to reply ?
Says he, " Your offer's very fair,
An' very timeous, too, A declare ;
For here we're all as one as besieged,
And for your offer we're much obleeged,
But you won't object, A hope, to mix
In the ranks of the loyal Kethohcks."

There was sit tin' by, not lettin' on,
That rebelly Papish Radinton,
An' that other Papisher rebel still,
That fella they call Somcrville.
A gev them both, as A made reply,
A look from the corner of ma eye.
A said, " Make no excuse, A pray,
For askin' us to serve that way.
We'd not consider the trouble much,
For we don't allow there's any such."

Well, what do you think, sir ? After that
A thought A might put on my hat;
You'd have given a pound to see the two,
An' the look they gave as A withdrew.
But hell to my sowl, if they didn't send
An' ask me back by a private friend;
An' A seen the Colonel an' brave John Pitt,
An' A got a gun, an' A hev it yet;
An' if ever the rebelly Papishes da'ar
Again to provoke the North to war,
That Radinton, the rebelly dog,
Is the very first man A'll shoot, by Gog.

Besides being people of action, the Kennedy family were much associated with Art and Letters. The brilliant work of Colonel John Pitt Kennedy's son as an artist in the

eighties will be remembered. He died untimely. Mrs. Alexander, the poetess, was a cousin. Sir Henry Lawrence's mother had married Sir George Young, Praed's nephew, himself a very elegant scholar and something of a poet. His translations of various Greek and Latin poets will be remembered. I remember Dr. Evory Kennedy driving to and from Dublin about those country roads when I was a small child. He was very handsome and distinguished looking. He transmitted to his children the gift of great personal beauty as well as charm. At his house in Merrion Square, and at Belgard, he entertained all the notabilities of the day who came to Dublin. I have heard it said that he was the one person who received kindly handling in Carlyle's *Irish Journal*, apparently the one Irishman he met who did not irritate the bilious sage to madness.

Belgard had been unoccupied for some years after Dr. Evory Kennedy's death. To that, I suppose, was due our immunity when we overran the place. Somewhere about the end of 1886 we heard that Belgard had passed into Sir Henry Lawrence's hands. This young grandson-namesake of the hero of Lucknow had just come of age. The shut-up house was reopened, freshened, and decorated. During the summers of 1886-87, and perhaps longer, Sir Henry Lawrence, with his mother as hostess, entertained parties of Londoners, mainly literary or political people.

I was walking along a country lane one day with a St. Bernard puppy, which was a new and delightful acquisition, when I ran up against Lady Young. She was one of the most beautiful and distinguished-looking women I have ever seen, well worth looking at for a long time. She was accompanied by another lady. My St. Bernard puppy frolicked upon them. I called him: "Sax, come here!"—his name, because he had come to me from England, was "Saxon." Lady Young asked, "What is Sax for?" "Saxon," I replied. "Oh! do you think an Irish girl should call her dog Saxon?"

That was the manner of our becoming acquainted. She introduced me to her companion, Miss Arabella Shore. A few days later she came to see me, and in my absence was

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entertained by my father, with whom she was delighted. All women were. He could convey a compliment better than any man I ever knew, even if he did not speak it. He used to tell a story about one of the Gunnings, how she said that the finest compliment ever paid her was in the streets of Dublin, where one coal-porter said to another: "Look at her, Mick. Bedad, you could light your pipe at the fire of her eye." It must have been Elizabeth; Maria would not have appreciated it. It was just like a thing he would have said himself.

Anyhow, he took Lady Young and her companion—I forget who the companion was—round the garden and the cowsheds, and the barns and the stableyard, and the piggeries, and sent her away much pleased with her entertainment. Not only that, but impressed with his wonderful intelligence as a practical farmer. She used to talk about it all to her London friends. And yet I think his practice was not always up to his theories. The man the other side of the hedge, who farmed in the manner of the Firbolgs, made more out of it. I remember a certain hen-house on which he prided himself so much that we never could bear to tell him that it was a penal institution fitted to kill the hardiest fowl. One day a small boy who loved country pursuits came to see us. He walked about the place with his hands in his pockets, came in to lunch, and remarked: "That hen-house of yours, Mr. Tynan, will never do. It's too hot in summer and too cold in winter, and you'd better do away with it.*" "Upon my word, I believe you're right," said my father, who had doubtless known all the time that there was a flaw in his jewel, although he would not acknowledge it. Maybe he was glad to acknowledge it at last.

After that I used to be pretty constantly at Belgard, where I met many interesting people. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sidgwick were amongst them. I remember him as a pleasant, eager little man with a stutter. Mrs. Sidgwick was a person of much interest to me as the sister of Mr. Balfour, whom it had been our convention to hate, and whom we were beginning to love, half-willingly at first, and whole-heartedly in the end. A spare woman with a keen, incisive face, she had something

of her brother's air of a philosophic tolerance. I am sure I talked more than I ought in such distinguished company, and she was gentle with me.

Another visitor there I remember was Mr. (J. K. S.) Stephen—I remember him as a big, dark young man, massive, but yet soft.

Perhaps these memories are hardly worth preserving—they are so indefinite after the lapse of years. But the memories are very pleasant. I remember one summer late afternoon, when I encountered on the road a party of young Etonians, home for the holidays. They included Mr. George Young, who is now in the diplomatic service, and was fortunate and brave enough to render "first aid" to the Queen of Spain when the bomb was thrown on her marriage-day. There was Geoffrey Young, who has written one or two distinguished volumes of verse; and there was Hilton, the youngest, who has made some excursions into politics. They were delightful boys all three, with the charm of their father and mother, and it was exhilarating to meet them so joyous and so friendly on that summer afternoon.

I believe I was at one political party, not at Belgard, but at St. Anne's Vicarage, in Dawson Street, where Lady Young's sister—a very beautiful creature—who had married Dean Dickenson of the Chapel Royal, resided. Dean Dickenson was a very witty and a very genial man. Another of those lovely sisters was married to a Mr. White, an Englishman. He had grown-up daughters by a previous marriage. They were typically English upper middle-class people, and they were delighted with the Dean's sallies, and always trying to catch up with them. Once someone was talking about the extravagance in attire of the Irish farmers' wives and daughters. It is a characteristic of Anglo-Ireland that it will fly out against any criticism of Ireland as no Celt will do. It may be very pro-English and pro-Union on one side; it will be very anti-English and pro-Irish on the other. Said the Dean: "Oh, I see! You'd rather they'd put *their* rents in *your* garments."

I remember an occasion upon which the witty Dean may

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have been nonplussed. A half-silly, half-cunning country fellow was found mushrooming in Belgard park by the Dean, who ordered him off. Patsy moved along slowly with an air of not hearing or seeing, adding a mushroom now and again to the store he had collected. At last the Dean irritably put a hand on Patsy's shoulder to urge him on his way. "Glory be to goodness!" said Patsy, lifting an eye to heaven, "'tis little I thought that a poor man like me 'ud ever have Dane Dickenson fannin' the flies off me."

Mrs. Dickenson's party was, I think, a political one, in honour of a visit paid by Mr. Goschen and Lord Hartington to Dublin. The family were all Liberal Unionists. I was at that party, but I did not reach the great men. I suppose I must have been the only Nationalist present. Irish people then lived even more in water-tight compartments than they do to-day. I remember the beautiful Mrs. Dickenson, who was a joy to look at, saying to me that night, "Oh, but you are more important to any party you choose to belong to than any of us, for you have the brains." They acted as though they thought I had. It seems to me, looking back, that I had only an outward audacity which covered a despairing inward shyness. No one will ever know with what tremors I went alone to some of those gatherings. I remember stopping behind one of the beautiful thorn trees in Belgard park, when I was on my way to dinner there, feeling that I could *not* go on. After getting my heart quiet I did go on, to meet famous people and raise my small Nationalist voice amid the Liberal Unionists and Conservatives, many of them variously distinguished. Why, I think men have received the Victoria Cross for less courage than I had to summon up. And none, I am sure, ever suspected my doubts, my agonies. I dared to expound the Land League point of view—for which I had no love—even to Professor Dicey, even to Mr. Balfour's sister, with shynesses none knew.

To be sure I felt the charm of my hosts deeply. Sir George Young was charming. It was an ideal marriage. His gentleness to me was very great. Once I touched on a painful topic ignorantly. It was the death of a favourite

brother in the Alps, of which no one ever spoke. I asked himself if he had not been an Alpine climber, with a hazy memory of something I had read. He got up and left me abruptly. How I suffered! The next day brought me Mr. Justice Bowen's translation of the *Eclogues of Virgil*, with the most delightful, cordial, and friendly letter from Sir George Young. He also gave me a beautiful little edition of *Praed*, into which he wrote a long, unpublished poem. These are things not to be forgotten. I send my grateful thoughts back for all those kindnesses of long-dead summers.

By a piquant contrast I went from the reception to Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen straight to the O'Learys, at whose house I passed the night.

CHAPTER XXIII

THEOSOPHISTS IN DUBLIN

A WEEKLY event of those years was Miss O'Leary's evening at home. The brother and sister were very accessible. They used to love to sit surrounded by the young people; and one is pretty sure that those occasions were the fulfilment of a dream, at least to Ellen O'Leary; they were the few golden, tranquil years between wilderness and wilderness in which the brother and sister were together.

There came the Sigersons, Richard Ashe King, Rose Kavanagh, John F. Taylor, Douglas Hyde. There came the three children of Johnston of Ballykilbeg, that Orange fire-eater, who was so gentle under the combativeness that it was said he was the most popular of all the Irish Members of Parliament with his own countrymen, including the Parliamentarians. I think he shared this distinction with Colonel Saunderson, who was admired and regarded affectionately by those he fought so straightly. But Colonel Saunderson was too open-air, daring, robust a person to be a true bigot, whereas Johnston of Ballykilbeg was one, a thorough fanatic, and yet with some honesty and simplicity and real gentleness of heart which thrust the bigotry into the background.

It was an amazing thing to find his children at John O'Leary's house, at my own Sunday *seances*, at various houses which were either genuinely disaffected towards the British rule, or with academic inclinations that way. And yet, was it?

It was more remarkable still when the young Johnstons began to have *stances*, and to bring all manner of rebelly and Papistical people under their father's roof. Not unknown to him either, although Parliament usually kept him in

London. I believe he appeared once or twice on these occasions. Certainly I was led up to him by his daughter on some occasion or other, and presented with a certain pride to the gentle-looking, silky-bearded, dreamy-eyed elderly gentleman, who was so little like the firebrand of the North of whom one had heard such terrible tales.

There were two sons and a daughter, Lewis, Charlie, and Georgie, of the circle. Charlie was the moving spirit. He had plenty of brains, and he had the amusing impudence which well became his slim and pleasant youth. He and Georgie were as full of fads as ever they could be, in so far living up to their paternal derivation. Lewis, who was perfectly normal and very amiable and pleasant, would have had no fads at all if he was left to himself, but he was drawn into his brother's and sister's net. They were all three theosophists, vegetarians, total abstainers, non-smokers—in fact, their father's children, except as regards religion. They took me up with a great warmth. I remember Charlie Johnston leading up various of his friends from T.C.I).—young men with ideas, or influenced by his—to present them to me. I think he delighted in my mockery. He had been a schoolfellow of Willie Yeats's at the Dublin High School, which has produced much brilliancy. Many of the young men were versifiers. One—Mr. Charles Weekes—had an amiable desire that I should give a title to his first volume of poems. I suggested, in Charlie Johnston's private ear, "Mr. Weekes, *His Squeaks*"; but my confidence was not kept.

I remember them coming to the crowded luncheon-table at Whitehall on Sundays, and the difficulty there was in providing them with vegetarian fare. An occasion came when we jibbed. We had heard, or perhaps we only hoped, that they would break the vegetarian rule if they were forced to it. We were indiscreet enough to say that we believed they would be glad to be forced. The incautious speech got round, and on the next occasion they were more rigidly vegetarian than ever. Only the amiable Lewis settled himself to roast-beef contentedly, while the other two feasted on potatoes, peas, and fruit.

I remember a time of bitter cold, such as does not often happen in Ireland, when there was a *seance* at the Johnstons' of a frosty evening. The refreshments were green grapes and home-made lemonade, very strong and deadly cold. After which I crossed over to my sister's house somewhere about midnight and demanded bacon and eggs and mulled wine.

Beyond the circle about which I am talking and shall talk, there were one or two interesting figures who came to those Johnston *seances*, and later on to the O'Learys and other places which were meeting-places. There was a little Russian, with a small, wistful Calmuck face, named Lippman. He was supposed to be a Nihilist who had escaped from Russia. I remember Rosa Mulholland's horror when she met with a Nihilist at a social gathering in those days. Our borders were very wide: we did not mind a Nihilist, being used to revolutionaries of one kind or another. I do not believe he really was a Nihilist at all, but he had used Nihilism as a lever to get in with the English Socialist party—the academic Socialists, of whom William Morris was a leader, rather than what John O'Leary would have called the "trans-acting" Socialists.

Lippman lived for a time at the Temperance Hotel of Mr. T. W. Russell on St. Stephen's Green. I went to at least one evening party given by him there, and Mr. T. W. Russell came in and listened to us, saying very little and looking exactly what he was, a Scottish working man, endowed with more than common gifts, yet with some suggestion about him of not being wholly or merely practical. When the talk was of books he was outside it.

Lippman was very small, very eager and apologetic for being alive. I have a vision, seen from a window, of a wet winter morning, and Willie Yeats and Lippman walking together, Lippman holding an umbrella over the poet's head. Both were wearing straw hats, the insignia of summer; and Lippman was walking tiptoe, his hand extended as high as it would reach, trying to keep the streaming rain from the poet, who would have been scarcely aware of it

if he were saturated. With or without rain, Lippman's face was always like that of a little dog striving to get ashore out of the water, his wet hair over his eyes, and his expression one of a beseeching piteousness.

Poor little chap! he was a daring adventurer enough, but he was not able "to get through with it. I remember that he gave me an autograph of William Morris, which I have stuck into my copy of the *Defence of Guenevere*. Having successfully, or unsuccessfully, raided Morris and others for loans of money he disappeared. In America he reappeared at a Fifth Avenue Hotel as Count Zubof, a Russian nobleman of immense wealth. Somehow or other he got in with New York's Ten Thousand; had a glittering time generally, and was on the eve of marriage with a millionairess when the bubble was pricked. He was recognised and identified by one of his old-time Dublin associates, and escaped by blowing his brains out. I can never remember his unhappy little dog-like expression without a pang of pity.

Charles Johnston introduced Theosophy into Dublin. We heard a great deal of astral bodies and mahatmas in those days. He swept in a number of young people who, having discarded the extreme Low Church in which they were brought up, were ready to turn to something more interesting.

His sister started the first vegetarian restaurant in Dublin, and used to walk about in a strange garment, half esoteric, half business-like, presiding over a number of damsels similarly attired. It did not attract Dublin generally. When I went there, there were always strange young men in mustard-coloured suits, with long hair, lunching; but the teas were very good. I suppose Dublin is too careless generally about its food to be satisfied when it does feed with deceptive beefsteaks made of vegetables that unduly inflate at first and depress later. I rather think even eggs were taboo at that particular restaurant. The food, I remember, was of the mushy order.

Whenever I hear of vegetarianism I recall how Willie Yeats **and** I dined at a vegetarian restaurant somewhere

about Charing Cross, when I was in London in 1889. There was a long and elaborate menu, but after the first or second course I felt that never again, as long as I lived, could I have any appetite, so Willie had the rest of the meal, my portions as well as his own. Afterwards we went to the Southwark Junior Irish Literary Society, founded by Mrs. Rae and Miss Skeffington Thompson, where Irish children were trained in the way they ought to go. Mr. Frank Fahy, who is a very delightful Irish poet, accompanied us back to Westminster Bridge Station. I have a horrid recollection of the pangs of hunger I suffered, positive starvation, on the homeward journey, while Willie Yeats chanted poetry into my ear, being quite unconscious of inflation or depression in his own case, as he would have been indeed if he were a fasting man, or if he was one of those entertainers who undertake to consume an enormous amount of food within a very short given time.

And this carries me on to the time when we used to visit at the O'Learys. There was a thieving maid, of whose proclivities Miss O'Leary was unaware till her wine-bottles began, most unaccountably, to yield up not wine, but water; it was only by the repetition of this strange occurrence that she came to the conclusion that someone must be emptying and filling and resealing the bottles. Willie Yeats knew more about her proceedings, as indeed did I. On one occasion he hung his overcoat in the hall, with a couple of golden sovereigns just paid to him for an article in its pocket. When he resumed his overcoat the money was gone. He was chronically hard up, yet he was not at all concerned about the loss of the money. What absorbed his thoughts was speculation as to the state of mind of the thief and what her motives were, and as to how a dipsomaniac must feel deprived of drink, and so on.

He had an uncanny way of standing aside and looking on at the game of life as a spectator. He told me about this time of how he had sat a night long with a youth who had fallen into disgrace, and was in the depths, not to be left alone for fear of what he might do. I often thought

of what a *macabre* situation it was—the aloof, speculative poet, and the poor human failure, distraught with his own misery.

But to return to the Johnstons and Theosophy. Their most considerable recruit—apart from W. B. Yeats, who, I think, was so passionately absorbed in literature as to have only a transient and hardly sincere interest in other matters—was George Russell, whom we know now as A. E., our George then, the world's now. I find this entry in my diary for a day in December 1887: "W. Y. brought a boy, George Russell, with him. Fond of mysticism, and extraordinarily interesting. Another William Blake." George Russell was very boyish when I first saw him—shy, gentle, incapable of the lightest form of insincerity, a most lovable creature, as he is to-day. He is of the world, unworldly—the world's stain has never touched him; without religion, yet profoundly religious; the peace of God which passeth understanding lies all about him now as it did then. He was brought up in the narrowest tenets of Irish Evangelicalism. I remember when his family was sorely distressed by his association with Willie Yeats. Leaving behind him the narrow and ugly creed to which he was born, he has adopted no other form of Christian religion: he finds gods in the earth and the air—rather, I would say, he finds God; and his life unconsciously has cast incense on the altars of the Unknown God.

I have known in my time some few undoubted geniuses, three certainly in literature—W. B. Yeats, Francis Thompson, and George Russell. To which I believe I have added a fourth in James Stephens. In none of these have I found the beauty of genius as I find it in George Russell. His flame has always burnt upward clearly. There is no room in him for any of the small meannesses of humanity. There is something strangely benign about him. He keeps his image of God undistorted, undefaced, as few of us have kept it. When I am struck cold, remembering that such and such a one, something uniquely precious of God's making, is no longer of this world, I turn to think upon George Russell, that

untroublesome genius. I am glad that in all probability he will survive me, for of him more than anyone else I have ever known I would say: "We shall never look on his like again."

He was a shy, awkward boy, with the benignity and the genius shining from him. He adored Willie Yeats and Charles Johnston. He extended his friendship to me. He joined those Sunday parties at Whitehall, and we met elsewhere. He was then an accountant at Pirn's, the big draper's in George's Street, Dublin. During the day he wrestled with the prices of blankets and carpets, or perhaps he did not wrestle, for he has a preposterous gift for business of a sort or says he has—afterwards he made poems and stories, and he painted, painted, painted, putting the most lovely things on canvas, quite oblivious of how he cast them down and where; not caring greatly what became of them when they were done—feeling, perhaps, that the spilt oblation on the altar of the Unknown God is more precious than the hoarded one. He painted the walls and ceilings of the Theosophical Society's rooms with his wonderful angels and fairies, his mystical dreams and fancies; for he is a mystic to the lips and further, as much akin to the Eastern as to the Christian mystics, although the teachings of his youth, arid and bitter, have closed the door for him on these last. If you go to see him to-day at Plunkett House, Merrion Square, where his business life, which is never without its golden and purple patches, is lived, you will find yourself surrounded by his angels. He told me the other day that he destroyed all his pictures which did not satisfy him: just as he sells them for a wholly inadequate price because he would keep them within reach of the poor man who was minded to give himself a luxury while he would think it dishonest to charge the rich man more.

He gave his early pictures away to any friend who cared to have them. I am the fortunate possessor of several, in water-colours and oils, and black and white. He says the drawing is bad. Well, it may be, but there is no doubt about the genius. Side by side with them on my walls hangs a charming head in crayons by Willie Yeats.

George Russell is a most delightful and voluminous talker. It is such talk as one grieves should be lost. It is wonderful talk. He told me a story the other day of a friend of his who somewhere in the wilds of America became friends with an old Indian. He told him all the marvels of the old world—wireless telegraphy, radium, men flying in air, speech kept long after the speaker is dead. "Wonderful! wonderful!" said the Indian. "Tell me more." At last the reciter paused, wearied. "The white man is very wonderful," said the Indian. "Can he do this?" He stooped, lifted a handful of dust and threw it in the air; stretched himself upwards, and thin delicate flames ascended from his hands and his feet and his hair; his body shone in air; he was a living jewel from head to foot. Then the glory faded. There was only an old Indian, "Can the white man do that?" he asked.

He tells such things in a low crooning voice as comfortable as the sea's on a quiet day. He looks at you with wonderful eyes above the flowing of a great beard; and one realises that he might have sat for God the Father to one of the old Italian painters.

Which reminds me that models are of the thing he abhors; looking upon them, I suppose, as mechanical and insincere devices.

He used to be full of odd theories in the old days. One was that the motive-power of angels must be in wings from the backs of their arms and their feet, instead of wings from their shoulders. So he has made them in a black-and-white illustration for my *Angel of the Annunciation*, great wings of peacock's feathers from the arms, smaller wings from the feet. Another idea he had was that we should see the world through different colours; and it was to please him that we filled in our half-glass hall-door with green and red panes. I remember with what satisfaction he viewed a snowy world through them.

He was so shy and unassuming when I knew him first that he said little, only beamed, when he was of a party; but I remember a visit he paid me when we were alone, when we sat

over the fire, and he told me the stories he had been making ; in his mind—I don't think he ever wrote them—strange, many-coloured, sparkling things, part flower, part jewel, with something of starshine and moonlight.

He used sometimes to spend a night out on the Dublin mountains, where he had revelations and met strange people. He was always perfectly sincere and perfectly simple, so that when he told you of some wonderful meeting you only felt that it must have happened somehow. He told us in later years about his work under the I.A.O.S., the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society (what a mouthful!), of starting co-operative banks in the rural districts of Ireland. He was in a hostile district—the Irish farmer is suspicious—and he wanted to make friends and disarm suspicion as he went along. He began with the car-driver, who was taciturn and dour. "It just occurred to me," said he, as though anyone might have such a happy thought, "that he might know a fairy who belonged to that part of the country whom I knew. So I made a sketch on a page of my notebook, tore it out, and handed it to him; he looked at it and nodded to me. We were friends."

So, too, when he tells you that in one of his incarnations he was a dishonest merchant of Bagdad, and has to cleanse himself from that stain through successive incarnations, you receive it as though you were in the Arabian Nights.

He has a delicious humour, and a benignant one. It is a very human, and a very humane humour. His laughter sparkles over his fellows, and when you have laughed nobody is a penny the worse, but you are very much the better. Wherefore his sudden, unexpected vein of invective has something terrifying about it. When he condemns it is overwhelming, coming from this immense and almost boundless tolerance.

I don't know what they did at the Theosophic functions. I was of the Old Religion, and it afforded me marvels enough, so I made no excursions into Theosophy any more than I did into table-turning, and the planchette, before whose strange doings one of our circle, who had cast off Christianity with his

parson's garb, used to tremble. I have often wondered at the capacity for strange beliefs and superstitions in those who have rejected Christianity. I have seen the emancipated daughter of a bishop almost swoon because she had seen the new moon through glass.

I had an irreverent attitude towards Theosophy, which must have been a bit trying to my friends. Of course the Theosophists of my acquaintance were very young, and had a humorous sense of their own absurdities. Those young Theosophists were all supposed to have a vow of celibacy. They did not mind being twitted about it. But one fine day Charles Johnston married Madame Blavatsky's niece, and wrote to his friends that when they knew his wife they would pardon his change of opinion. I was the first to convey the staggering news to George Russell. He looked on it as an invention of the enemy. It was really a shock to him; and for the first and only time he did not beam at me. Some years later he followed his broken idol's example.

A word more of the Johnstons and I am done. Miss Johnston started a debating society of an appalling dullness. She was quite ready to give me prominence in it; but at the first meeting—the subject under discussion being something that could not possibly interest any human creature—I sat at the back of the meeting and displayed Liberty patterns to some I had led astray. After this lightness the society left me severely alone. I feel now that I must have been a horrible trial to my friends in those days. I used to call it the Philandering Society—it was open to both sexes—and other scoffing names.

Courtship and marriage were severely banned by those serious folk. Great was the falling-away thereof. Not so long after her brother's marriage the sister married, and the last I heard of her was that she was inordinately devoted to a baby.

By the way, Willie Yeats used to visit the Johnstons at Ballykilbeg. Charlie Johnston told me that the poet had been learning from someone about the eatable qualities of

fungi—or, perhaps, "learning" is hardly the word. Anyhow, he took to an indiscriminate eating of them which very much alarmed his hosts, vegetarians though they were. When I consider the number of times that Ireland was in danger of losing her premier poet I am dismayed. Happily some good angel kept guard over him, else literature—Irish literature especially—would have been immeasurably the poorer.

CHAPTER XXIV

W. B. YEATS

I FEEL that hitherto my references to W. B. Yeats have been somewhat in the direction of poking fun at him; and I hope my readers have understood that the fun was affectionate, and that I am never for a moment without a deeply-felt admiration and even reverence for his genius.

All the world that cares about literature knows of his work to-day. I like to go back to the time when he was a boy, very simple, passionately generous to his friends, absorbed in his art; ready with a superhuman energy to undertake the ungrateful task of sweeping away the whole poor fabric of the facile and the ready-made with which the young Irish versifiers before his day were content, and rebuilding, as he has done, the nation's poetry.

We were terribly unexacting with ourselves in those days. We were appallingly easily satisfied with our achievements, as were our friends and critics. The amiable reviewers of the Dublin press, if they liked you, would salute your little work with a dreadful over-praise, likening you to so many shining ones of ancient and modern literature that you were reminded of the fine confusion of:

" Maybe you are Pluto stout,
Or jolly ould Bacchus, drunk and hearty.
No, my lass, your eye is out,
For I'm Napoleon Bonaparte."

I myself have been compared to Sappho and St. Teresa in a breath. I have, moreover, been called a fine flower of womanhood, and a divinely gifted daughter of the gods. As for the English poets whom I had pulled down from their high places and passed by, well, the list included everyone

my reviewer had ever heard of, which I rather think was summed up in Tennyson. I wonder if Tennyson subscribed to a press-cutting agency in those days, and if he trembled for his dominion.

On the other hand, if you were not *persona grata* with the reviewers, what a pulling-down you might receive!

In the case of Willie Yeats's own *Wanderings of Oisín*, I can see now the red-headed, red-bearded reviewer to whom it fell, a man with real knowledge this time, to whom the indiscretions of foolish over-praise would be impossible. "This fellow thinks too much of himself," said he, with that precious first volume in his hand, "and I'm going to slate him." And slate him he did.

Before I pass on I must recall a story of the red-headed reviewer whom I hold in pleasant memory. He put his "big head" in at the door of his editor's room at the time when Stanley had taken out an expedition to join Emin Pasha, and he inquired in a voice which was like a long, low rumble of thunder: "Am I to treat this fellow as a buccaneer or a bagman?" He was leader-writer as well as occasional reviewer. "Bagman," said the editor laconically; and so it was done.

However, this is a long digression. To return to Willie Yeats and the movement with which he had more to do than anyone else. In fact, he was "the onlie begetter" of the new Irish poetry. Heaven knows what rubbish he delivered us from! We were all writing like the poets of a country newspaper, copying a simplicity of the older poets which had long ceased to be simple, aiming at a rhetorical passion which had never been sincere.

I am not of those who see in the later young poets any likeness at all to Yeats. It is only that he showed us all the way; and the young poets may be thankful for the rubbish swept away in those old days. Willie Yeats did the spade-work. He cleared the ground.

Sometime towards the end of 1887, or the beginning of 1888, the Yeats family went back to London. Mr. J. B. Yeats was of the happy sort who are immune from present ills by the

fact that the Happy Islands are always just round the corner. If you find when you have gone in search of them that they are left behind you, well, then, the obvious thing is to turn back again. So this was one of the migrations of the Yeats family in sure and certain hope of El Dorado, which, after all, was a spiritual state and always with the delightful, beloved, unpractical artist and poet.

During the winter of 1886-87, I had seen a great deal of Willie Yeats. He never minded the five miles' walk through the wintry weather so long as he found at the end a fire, a meal, a bed, and a talk about poetry. Indeed, I really think he would not have noticed the absence of material comforts, but being there, he basked in them. I can see him now stretching out his long hands to the blaze—we always kept enormous fires—chanting poetry to himself with a slow delight. The Yeats of the Irish Theatre and of much petting and spoiling is, or may be, quite a different person. The Yeats of that time—well, I knew more about him than anyone else outside his own family; and I feel that I keep him as he was in those days.

Looking back, it seems to me that there was something almost pathetic about him. He was so gentle, so eager to do what one wanted, so patient when one drove him hither and thither. He was made happy by so little kindness.

I have somewhere the privately printed *Mosada*, with his father's sketch of him on the cover. It was a far cry from that to a limited edition at six guineas. Possibly *Mosada* made me sure of what he was. It has beautiful passages.

When he had gone back to England he came again from time to time. He was most adaptable in a household; for he never cared what he ate or drank, or in what corner he slept, nor what he did for the matter of that, so long as there was someone to talk poetry with him. When he stayed with us and wanted to go to town, he was quite ready to take a seat with Tommy Merrigan who drove a milk-van into town. The spectacle of the poet sitting up among the milk-cans is a weird one in my memory. Other young gentlemen occasionally accepted a seat in the milk-van, taking care to get off before they reached the parts of the city that counted. Not so the

poet, who would drive through the smartest streets in the milk-van, unconscious or careless that it differed from the finest carriage.

To be sure, Tommy Merrigan was a congenial companion. There was not a hedge or a bush that had not its phantom for him. An amiable black dog, seen in the twilight, became the most horrible of Celtic evil spirits in his imagination. It was no wonder the poet forgot his equipage in listening to what Tommy could tell him.

I was by this time writing more and more, and I had many absorptions and businesses as well. The poet used to come into my little sitting-room, where I sat at my desk with my back to the fire, subside into the one easy-chair the room contained, in which I am sitting as I write—I had a Spartan dislike of it in those days—with a cat in his lap, stroking it. He used to go down to the kitchen for the cat. As her presence annoyed my St. Bernard, who lay stretched on the hearth-rug, I vaguely resented it. The poet used to talk half-humorously to the cat. "Ah, do you see that great, noisy, foolish creature lying there? He is preferred before you, who are sleek and wise and crafty, and keep your emotions, whatever they may be, to yourself. How shallow that creature is as compared with you!"

These distractions used to annoy me. I have unfortunately the reputation with my friends of possessing a very good temper, which I do not altogether deserve. Even intimate friends will go on believing that I cannot be angry while I am at white heat. The poet never believed in my anger. He used to laugh when I said sharp things to him. Once I did a mean thing to punish him. I daresay I did many, but this I remember. I crunched sweets in his presence, knowing he longed for them for he was a child in his love of sweets, and would not give him even one. I remember how grieved Miss O'Leary was when I told her of this. She was the first of those elder women who have found it pleasant to mother the poet.

Sometimes I got rid of him by sending him to post my letters, while I did something which needed freedom from distraction. He was always gentle and docile in those days.

He used to go off swinging an immense market-basket, with perhaps a solitary letter flying up and down in it, like the pea in the bladder. I used to tie down the market-basket so that he should not lose the letter. He went out through the milking-shed for a short cut. The men, milking by candle-light, would see him flit by like the *Flying Dutchman*. I heard afterwards they called him the Sprite. It was some two miles to the post-office. There was a letter-box in the wall of Belgard, much nearer, but it was not safe to post there when the family were away, as they often were all winter. It was not worth the postman's while coming so far. One year a swallow made her nest in the letter-box, and found the derelict winter's letters very useful for domestic purposes. The poet used to do the journey in seven-league boots, and get back again, blown but happy, just as I was setting to work.

It must have been on one of those days that he was aware of a happening which he writes round about in "A Knight of the Sheep," in *Celtic Twilight*. My father was the "Knight of the Sheep," and though the incident was much more simple and more human than the poet records it, one or two little incidental touches in which he depicts my father are well observed.

"Proud of his descent from one of the great fighting clans" (he was an O'Toole of Wicklow on his mother's side), "he is a man of force alike in his words and his deeds. There is but one man that swears like him, and he lives away on the mountain. 'Father in Heaven, what have I done to deserve this?' he says, when he has mislaid his pipe; and no man but he who lives on the mountains can rival his language on a fair-day over a bargain . . . no soul that wears this garment of blood and clay can surpass him."

My father had the Celtic picturesqueness of speech, which reminds me of the red-headed journalist, who asked if Stanley was to be treated as a buccaneer or a bagman, and his exposition of Gaelic oaths, showing how English cursing was poor and ugly and coarse, whereas the Gaelic curse was a thing of beauty and force. He had forgotten the magnificent

oaths of the Tudors, which were religious oaths in a sense; and that is why modern English profanity is ugly, because it has got away from religion.

Between these comings and goings the poet wrote me many letters. I possess a great number of them, and they are all undated as to the year. But as I want to depict him as he was in those days, I will let him say a few words for himself, taking the letters at random; not looking for the curious and interesting things. His sister had gone to learn embroidery under Miss May Morris, which learning she has put to happy account in the lovely embroideries of Dun Emer and Cuala.

"Lilly likes greatly going to the Morrises. Morris, Miss Morris says, once tried to do embroidery himself. He was going away somewhere, and he made Miss Morris thread him several hundred needles, as that was, he said, the hardest part of the work. He gave it up, however. The other day he said there would soon be nobody in the world but Jews and Irish. Lilly asked him which would he be. He said certainly not a Jew. The other day he came in and said: 'All hands talk French'; and then he started off into the most comic mixture of French and English. He is always having a little joke of one kind or another.

"I have seen several studios, amongst others, S——'s, a good-hearted, vain, empty man. What a very small soul goes to a great piece of prosperity! I hoped to have heard from you, but I suppose you are busy. You do not know what a satisfaction a letter is. Any breath from Ireland in this hateful London, where you cannot go five paces without seeing some wretched object broken either by wealth or poverty, is good. I took the proofs to Mr. Legge, and finding him out thrust them through his letter-box, and heard them spreading themselves out on the floor like a pack of cards. I am horribly irritable and out of sorts. Living over at Berkley Road by myself I tried experiments in cheap dining—for a man, if he does not mean to bow the knee to Baal, must know all such things—making my dinner

off vegetables and so forth. After a time I was gaunt and nervous, and able to do little work, and since then I have had a variable assortment of coughs, colds, and headaches. I have met some literary men over here, with the usual number of *bon mots* and absence of convictions that characterise the class. One, however, has no *bon mots* and several convictions, a Welshman, Ernest Rhys, editor of the Camelot Classics. I like him. I recommended your poems to him strongly. Did I tell you I heard Henley praise your 'St. Francis and the Birds'? . . . I expect naught has changed with you but your outer Nature. The wild-briar roses must be holding their festival now in all your lanes.

"Lilly is still very happy at the Morrisises. She makes cushion-covers and mantelpiece covers without end. She dines at the Morrisises every day. Morris is greatly disturbed by little boys who insist on playing under his study-windows. He rushes out every now and then to drive them off. There is a parrot in the house that keeps up a great noise, whistling and sneezing and holding conversations with itself. He is used to the parrot and does not mind it. The parrot's favourite is one of the servants. It likes her because she makes so much noise, and hops all over the house after her, copying every noise she makes.

"I am writing an article on an old blind Gaelic poet of the last century called Hefernan for the *Scots Observer*. He wrote the original of Mangan's 'Kathleen-ni-Houlihan'.¹ If this article does I shall most likely do other Irish writers for them. Henley has also recommended me to *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* for Irish subjects. I should rather like such work for the present, my great wish being to do no work in which I should have to make a compromise with my artistic conscience. When I cannot write my own thoughts—wishing never to write other people's for money—I want to get mechanical work to do. Otherwise one goes down into the whirlpool of insincerity from which no man returns. I am to write a series of articles on the difference between

Scotch and Irish fairies for some new paper. These article are to be done on approval, but Henley feels small doubt of placing them. All will go well if I can keep my own unpopular thoughts out of them. To be mechanical and workman-like is at present my deepest ambition. I must be careful in no way to suggest that fairies, or something like them, do veritably exist, some flux and flow of spirits between man and the unresolvable mystery. Do you know that passage in De Vere's *Legends of the Saints* on the hierarchy of the angels? It is the most Miltonic passage written this long while. Not that fairies are angels. I am going to tell you a spiritualistic story. Do not be angry with me. I tell it because it is pretty. It is about Mrs. A——K——. After her death, M——went down to her tomb and entreated her for days in his mind to make some sign that all was well with her. No sign came. The other day he handed a letter to a friend of mine who knew Mrs. K——, and asked whose writing it was. My friend at once recognised Mrs. K——'s writing. He asked her to look at the date. It was dated in November last, long after Mrs. K——'s death. This was the letter:

" ' M Y DEAR——,—You are losing your faculties. You could not hear my voice. I cannot speak to you through mediums.'"

" The letter came from a young Scotch girl who had known Mrs. K——so slightly that it is thought she had not even seen her handwriting. One night in the dark she had felt impelled to get writing materials, and under some influence wrote this letter. She was then living in the Highlands Her family said she was possessed by devils, and have sent her to very strict relations in Ireland. I met M——at Lady Wilde's last week. He talked much of Mrs. K——; I could hear her name in every conversation he held. He is an old man with a shrunken chest. He praised her continually. Madame B——says there were two Mrs. K——'s, one a good woman; the other a woman of the world, who dyed her hair. ' She was good,' she added; ' but her progress came more

from intelligence." It was quite pathetic to watch M—— that day at Lady Wilde's. For the first time Mrs. K—— interested me. She must have been good to have inspired so many people with affection. . . .

"I have had one of my 'collapses' on. I have had it these last three or four days. It is a very uncalled-for 'collapse,' as I have given up going out in the evening to see anyone, so as not to get tired out. I find a single vigorous conversation, especially if any philosophic matters come up, leaves me next day dry as a sucked orange.

"I do not think the ballad is of your best—not so good as 'The Heart of a Mother,'¹ or 'St. Francis and the Birds,' or 'The Children of Lir.'* I am not very fond of retrospective art. I do not think that pleasure we get from old methods of looking at things—methods we have long given up ourselves—belongs to the best literature. 'St. Francis' was not retrospective. The St. Francis within you spoke. I do not mean that we should not go to the old ballads and poems for inspiration, but we should search them for new methods of expressing ourselves. Your best work—and no woman-poet of the day has done better—is always where you express your own affectionate nature, or your religious feeling, either directly or indirectly. Your worst—that which stands in your way with the best readers—is where you allow your sense of colour to run away with you, and make you merely a poet of the picturesque.

"You will be angry with me for this criticism. The youngest is always the best beloved. The want in your poetry is, I think, the want also of my own. We both of us need to substitute more and more the landscapes of Nature for the landscapes of art. The other change—a less important one—you perhaps need most. It is curious that your other fault—that of sometimes overstating the emotion—is only present when your landscapes are those of art. We should make poems on the familiar landscapes we love, not the strange and glittering ones we wonder at.

" Here are two verses I made the other day. There is a beautiful Isle of Innisfree in Lough Gill, Sligo, a little rocky island with a legended past. In my story I make one of the characters whenever he is in trouble long to go away and live alone on that island—an old day-dream of my own. Thinking over his feelings I made these verses about them.

" I will arise and go now and go to the island of Innisfree,
And live in a dwelling of wattles, of woven wattles and wood-
work made.

Nine bean-rows will I have there, a yellow hive for the
honey-bee,
And this old care shall fade.

There from the dawn above me peace will come down, drop-
ping slow,

Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the house-
hold cricket sings.

And noontide there be all a glimmer, and midnight be a
purple glow,

And evening full of the linnet's wings/ "

CHAPTER XXV

W. B. YEATS: SOME LETTERS

HERE is a very early letter, dated June 25, 1887. For once the poet remembered to date his letter. He had gone to see Mr. Montgomerie Ranking, a poet and reviewer, with whom I had had a friendship since he had given my first book a warm welcome in the *Graphic* two years previously.

"I saw Mr. Ranking on Thursday. He is decidedly interesting, seems much disappointed and pathetically angry against everybody and everything modern, and yet is withal, I think, kindly. He looks older than in your photograph, and in his long dressing-gown was not unlike a retired and somewhat sentimental old cavalry officer, spending his latter days between a laugh and a tear. I fear despondence and indifferent health have left him little energy. I asked him did he know Watson's work, and recited:

" ' In mid-whirl of the dance of Time ye start,
Start at the cold touch of Eternity,
And cast your cloaks about ye and depart.
The minstrels pause not in their minstrelsy.' "

When I came to the third line he gave the queerest little shudder and looked down at his dressing-gown, and I changed the subject.

"I met, somehow since, S——. He it is who is to bring out that Irish poem book. On the whole, I hated S——at first sight.

" ' None ever hate aright
Who hate not at first sight,' "

but begin to like him now.

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" London literary folk seem to divide into two classes—the stupid men with brains, and the clever men without any.—, I fear, belongs to the latter class. Ernest Rhys, and possibly Mr. Ranking, to the first. The latter is the most numerous. Young men possessing only an indolent and restless talent that warms nothing and lights nothing. Indeed, I find little good, with hardly an exception, in any of these young literary men. I feel malignant on the whole subject, and made myself uncivil, I fear, to young S——, who seems, however, to bear no malice. He lectured on Irish Rebel Songs last Sunday sympathetically and well. I was introduced to Miss Morris afterwards. She is decidedly beautiful, and seems very intelligent.

" Last Sunday evening I had supper at Morris's. Pictures by Rossetti all round the walls, and in the middle much Socialistic conversation. Morris asked me to write for the *Commonweal* on the Irish Question. However, though I think Socialism good work, I am not sure it is my work.

" I find this hot weather very trying, and go about like a sick wasp feeling a dull resentment against I know not what. I was introduced to W. S.—and hated his red British face of flaccid contentment. I do not think I shall ever find London very tolerable. It can give me nothing. I am not fond of the theatre. Literary society bores me. I loathe crowds, and was very well content with Dublin, though that was a little too populous for me, but I suppose—

" ' Whenever in the wastes of wrinkling sand,
Worn by the fan of ever flaming time,
Longing for human converse, we have pitched
A camp for musing in some seldom spot
Of not unkindly nurture, and let loose
To roam and ponder those sad dromedaries,
Our dreams. The Master of the pilgrimage
Cries 'nay ' ; the caravan goes ever on :
The goal lies farther than the morning star.' "

Next I take up a letter bearing an Oxford address.

" I am down here copying a thing in the Bodleian. I copy six and a half hours a day, then go for a walk until tea-time, making up lines for ' The Countess' as I walk. After tea I read Kichham, for a couple of volumes of Irish Selections I am doing for Puttenham of Boston; but on the whole I am too tired after tea to do much good at anything. I am in lodgings here, and do not know a soul. I lodge in the same rooms Vigasson (the Icelander who died the other day, a friend of York Powell's) lived in. The landlady is a good woman, with a pale ungenial English face; and there is a big engraving on the wall called 'The Soldier's Dream,' and two more of the Bartolozzi school, of children being led through the sky by a couple of guardian angels with pointed noses. I am always glad to get away by myself for a time, and should be contented enough here but for the miserable allegory I copy out for Nutt.

" Of course we shall be delighted to have you with us. You can have my study—to yourself if you like—to write in. Apropos of which Mrs. Stannard says, she cannot work unless all her family are in the room. She once tried to work alone, but cried for loneliness.

" I have a good deal of work to do at present, more than I can manage, all at Irish literary subjects, which is as it should be. I wish you had made up the Irish novelists and folklorists. You with your ready pen would find plenty to say about them. There is a want for a short book on Irish literature—lives and criticisms of all the writers since Moore. Some day you or I must take it in hand. There is a great want for a just verdict on these men and their use for Ireland. The worst would be one's necessity of blaming so many whose use is not yet exhausted. Blake, I daresay, is the one big prose matter I shall try just yet. By big I mean not articles merely. Though Blake's book will be truly a biggish book. What a downpour it has been this afternoon. I have written to you instead of going for my walk. Now it is clearing up, and a sparrow is beginning to chirp."

In another letter he tells of his way of life.

"I have no news. One day here is much the same as another. I read every morning from 11 to 1.30 at the Art Library, South Kensington Museum, where I am now writing—a very pleasant place, the air blowing through the open window from the chestnut trees, the most tolerable spot London has yet revealed to me. I then dine, and through the afternoon I write, as fate, and languor, the destroyer, will have it. In the evening I read out to my father, who is afraid to tax his eyes. Michel's (*i.e.* Mitchel's) Jail Journal has sufficed us for many days now.

"There is a society at whose meetings Michael Field (Miss Bradley) is to be seen. It is called the Society of the New Life, and seeks to carry out some of the ideas of Thoreau and Whitman. They live together in a Surrey village. Ernest Rhys is to bring me to a meeting. Michael Field is a bird of another feather from those London *litterateurs* whom I cannot but rather despise/'

In another 1887 letter he talks of his various literary doings. He is very busy editing, criticising, and collecting.

"My father does not wish me to do critical work. He wants me to write stories. I am working at one, as you know/" (This would be 'John Sherman,' a real achievement, the story of life and a soul in a stagnant little Irish town, in Sligo of his mother's people. There is a deal of W. B. Yeats in 'John Sherman.') "It is almost done now. There is some good character drawing in it, I think, but the construction is patchy and incoherent. I have not much hope of it. It will join, I fear, my ever multiplying boxes of unsaleable MSS., work too strange at one moment, too incoherent at the next for any first-class magazine, too ambitious for any local paper. Yet I don't know that it is ambition, for I have no wish but to write a saleable story. Ambitious!—no. I am as easily pleased as a mouse in a wainscot. . . .

"I must write in this letter no more bookish news, as I know you think me too little interested in other things. I am a much more human person than you think, and . . . have

sometimes to bury my head in books like an ostridge in the sand. . . . My life is altogether ink and paper. But it is hard to go on working industriously for the MSS. boxes. It tends to bring about a state of things when one is too industrious to be idle, and too idle to be industrious. However, I am exemplary at present. I really do a fair amount of work, and I have written lately everything with a practical intention, nothing for the mere pleasure of writing, not a single scrap of a poem all these months. . . .

"In looking over your letter I see that you are in hot water with Miss Johnston. You should remind her that George Eliot liked nothing so much as a talk about dress.

"By the by, Bussell is not so much a theosophist as you call him ab a mystic of medium type. You must not blame him for that. It gives originality to his pictures and his thoughts.

"Have you read the *Fairy Tales* yet? There are some that would do for ballads, I think. I shall some day try my hand at Countess Kathleen O'Shee and The Devil and the Hearth Money Man, the first in a more elaborate way than a ballad perhaps. It is a subject that would suit you, I think.

"I am reading Tolstoi—great and joyless, the only joyless man in literature, so different from Tourganeef. He seems to describe all things whether beautiful or ugly, painful or pleasant, with the same impartial, indifferent joylessness. Also I have just read Meredith's *Diana*, He makes the mistake of making the reader think too much. One is continually laying the book down to think. He is so suggestive one's mind wanders. . . . How I long for your opinion on this little story of mine, a very quiet, plotless little story. But all this is too bookish. . . ."

In his next letter he is talking of regular work which he hopes to get. He weighs the advantages and disadvantages.

"I am anxious to look about me and become passive for a while. I have woven about me a web of thoughts. I wish to break through it and see the world again. The incident about——pained me at the time, but now that he is out of my sight, if I heard he was dead I should not think twice

about it; so thick has the web got. An accident to one of my MSS. or a poem turning out badly would seem of more importance. Yet I do not think I am an egoist. There are a few whose welfare is more to me than my own. It is all the web. If I had routine work for a time I could break it.

"I went to see Madame Blavatsky the other day and found she had gone away, but had left the Countess W——to look after her study. She even sleeps there, so close ^{us}/_C she watch over the sacred MSS. When she heard I had been to a spiritualistic seance she told me she had gone to many, till Madame Blavatsky told her it was wrong. So you need not fear spiritualistic influence coming to me from that quarter. She told me of horrible things she has seen, or believes she has seen, the medium thrown down by a spirit and half-stifled, the marks of fingers coming on his throat, and his clothes being set on fire. She declares she has seen distant places in mirrors and crystals. Being rich, she has travelled much in search of magic in its many forms, is a clairvoyant and has seen many visions, some beautiful. Has more titles than talent, but is interesting on the whole.

"A sad accident happened at Madame Blavatsky's lately, I hear. A big materialist sat on the astral double of a poor young Indian. It was sitting on the sofa, and he was too material to be able to see it.

"Last night at Morris's I met Bernard Shaw, who is certainly very witty. But like most people who have wit rather than humour, his mind is maybe somewhat wanting in depth."

The next letter I come upon is from Sligo.

"I went last Wednesday up Ben Bulbin to see the place where Dermot died, a dark pool, fabulously deep, and still haunted, 1732 feet above the sea-level, open to all winds. Tracks of sheep and deer, and smaller tracks of hares, converging from all sides, made as they go to drink. All peasants at the foot of the mountain know the legend, and know that Dermot still haunts the pool and fear it. Every hill and stream is somehow or other connected with the story.

"I lived some days in a haunted house a little while ago; heard nothing but strange knockings on the walls and on the glass of an old mirror. The servant one evening, before I heard anything, heard the tramping of heavy feet, the house being empty. . . .

"Am as usual lighting that old snake, revery, to get from him a few hours each day for my writing.

"Here is a little song written lately, one thing written this long while beside bare prose.

" ' The angels are sending
A smile to your bed.
They weary of tending
The souls of the dead.

Of tending the Seven—
The planets' old brood :
And God smiles in heaven
To see you so good.

My darling, I kiss you,
With arms round my own.
Ah, how shall I miss you
When heavy and grown.' "

"I have just had Russian influenza, so can fix my mind no more upon this letter.""

Again he is back in London.

"William Morris is greatly pleased with *Oisin*. I met him yesterday in Holborn, and he walked some way with me and talked of it. Not a soul have I yet heard from about the book. Even you have only written an age since when it was in proof, about the first two parts of *Oisin*. Rolleston wrote to say that he could have spared some of *Oisin* for the sake of *Island of Statues*, I was getting quite out of conceit with *Oisin* till I met Morris.

"When I last wrote I was out of spirits, what with fatigue and being somewhat unwell. Whenever I write you a letter

so full of myself and my sensations you may know that I am tired and unwell, either like a sick wasp or a cat going about looking for someone to rub itself against. . . . It is pleasant to think that this letter will go away out of this horrid London, and get to the fields, and rattle along in the basket from Clondalkin to Whitehall. I wish I could fold myself up and go in it. A ghost, you know, can hide in a diamond or any such thing. I suppose the buds are all coming out with you. Here there is snow on the ground."

A little later he is at Rosses Point in Sligo again.

"It is a wonderfully beautiful day. The air is full of trembling light. The very feel of the familiar Sligo earth puts me in good spirits. I should like to live here always, not so much out of liking for the people as for the earth and sky, though I like the people too. I went to see yesterday a certain cobbler of my acquaintance, and he discoursed over his cat as though he had walked out of one of Kickham's novels. 'Cats are not to be depended on,' he said; and then told me how a neighbour's cat had gone up the evening before to the top of a tree where a blackbird used to sing every night and pulled him down. He finished sadly, 'Cats are not to be depended on.'"

"I enclose these trivial verses, the first fruit of my fairy-hunting.

" ' The fairy doctor comes our way
Over the sorrel-coloured wold ;
How sadly, how unearthly gay !
A little withered man, and old.

He knows by signs of secret wit
The man whose hour of death draws nigh ;
And who will house in the under-pit,
And who foregather in the sky.

He sees the fairy hosting move
By heath or hollow or rushy mere,
And then his heart is full of love,
And full his eyes of fairy cheer.

Cures he hath for cow or goat,
With fairy-smitten udders dry ;
Cures for calf with plaining throat,
Staggering, with languid eye.

Many herbs and many a spell
For hurts and ailes and lovers' moan,
For all save him who pining fell
Glamoured by fairies for their own.

Greet him courteous, greet him kind,
Lest some glamour he may fold
Closely round in body and mind,
The little withered man and old.'

" CVLeary tells me that you talk of bringing out a new book next year, and selecting the contents when I am with you. How glad I shall be to see you and go through the poems with you! London is always horrible to me. Nothing can make amends for the loss of green field and mountain slope, and for the tranquil hours of one's own countryside. . . . When you write always tell me about yourself, and what you are doing and thinking of. It is not so much news I want as to feel your personality through the ink and paper. Think of me in this matter as most exacting. You cannot tell me enough about yourself."

With this I conclude, not daring to look further into the pile of letters which are so deeply interesting. The excerpts I have made are chosen quite at random, and from one or two bundles of letters, the rest being unopened. My desire has been to show what a poet, who has more than fulfilled all that was expected of him, was like in his eager and fervid boyhood. I think the letters present a charming personality, and it is a cause of great pride with me that I was so closely associated in friendship with the writer of the letters at a period when his work was just beginning. I feel that I have a bit of him which no one else has, in his simple and touching boyhood. It is curious to find myself engaged in the attempt to humanise " Fairy Willie," as a friend of mine calls him. What courage!

What presumption! I think he was human enough and very lovable. I wonder how I bullied him and drove him all over the place as I did. The ignorance, the hardness, the self-satisfaction of youth! But at least he derived happiness from the friendship—that is plain enough in the letters; and doubtless he understood, perhaps even liked the bullying.

Remembering the poems he has not written, I close this page of W. B. Yeats with a malediction upon the Irish Theatre, which could have dispensed quite well with the sacrifice of what was given for the supreme delight of mankind.

CHAPTER XXVI

1888

1887 had brought me a new friendship, that with the American poets, Mr. and Mrs. Piatt. Mr. Piatt was American Consul at Queenstown. Some time in 1887 Mrs. Piatt's poems came my way and delighted me hugely. I wrote an article about them in the *Irish Monthly*, and this led to our friendship and to my visiting Mr. and Mrs. Piatt at the Priory, Queens-town.

However, it was certainly not in the radiant summer of 1887 that my first visit was paid. That visit took place in cold and wet weather, and I remember coming back and writing a poem, "Rainy Summer," which fixes the year as 1888.

The Piatts were a delightful couple. They had the absolute devotion to each other which belongs to American marriages when they are happy ones, as though the same people must exemplify marriage at its most perfect and at its worst. Mrs. Piatt always reminded me of a story I once read in *Harper's*, of a girl living and dreaming and loving in full flush of radiant life and beauty who suddenly looks in the glass and realises that she is old, Mrs. Piatt was incurably young in all her ways, only that she was sad because she was no longer young. They were a very quaint couple. Both of them were pretty constantly writing poetry, though you saw no evidence of it. I never heard either of them read a poem aloud or refer to their own poems, which only reached you when they saw the light of print. The two used to creep about together quietly in a ghost-like abstraction. Sometimes if you saw Mrs. Piatt coming to meet you from the other end of a long corridor she would turn aside and vanish into a room, with a sudden access of shyness, I suppose. Once—it was the quaintest thing—I came upon her sweeping a room. Was it with an idea such

as Miss Alcott had that "chores" were good for the soul? I do not know; but Mrs. Alcott was a New Englander, whereas Mrs. Piatt was a Southerner.

At first I was a little afraid of Mrs. Piatt. I kept the discreet side of me turned out for several days. I talked poetry and authors and literary things generally. Then one day—we were sight-seeing in a proper round—coming down from Cork by steamer, we took refuge from the rain in the saloon or cabin. Opposite us sat a singularly comely youth, really good to look at, something debonair and gracious about him. As though I spoke to one of my own age I commented on his good looks to Mrs. Piatt after he had got up and strolled away. The girl who housed in her looked at me from her eyes. "I was just thinking," she said, in her soft drawl, "what a lovely young fellow he was!" After that we began to understand each other, and I supplied her something of the gaiety she was starved for.

She was a very pretty, delicate woman, no longer young at that time. She had a look of being so light that you might blow her away. Perhaps it was her soft, fine hair, which blew out about her head, as that kind of hair has a way of doing. I have always believed that hair is a very sure index of character. The one other woman I know who has obstinately refused to be anything but a girl has just the same hair. Mrs. Piatt had had great sorrows, poor darling. One of her sons had been killed in America by the bursting of a rocket with which he was commemorating Independence Day; another had been drowned in the Lee. When the girl in her was not pushing the sad woman into the background, she spent much of her life in a passionate companionship with her dead children.

The living children were four robust boys, who had refused to go to school and were amphibious, and a gentle delicate girl, rather like her mother, but without that mother's poetic gift which is a considerable one. All those wet summer days I remember the rain streaming in sheets on the sea, and the Piatt boys drifting by in their boats like the Wandering Jew. They were as much at home in the sea, or on it, as a seal. I remember one of the boys reading all day long in his boat

opposite the windows of the Priory. You could only see him when the sheets of rain lifted for a moment. I used to wonder about the condition of the book, for there was no attempt at shelter for either the reader or the book.

I grew to love Mrs. Piatt very much. For several years I paid them a yearly visit at Queenstown. In the latter years a Sigerson girl generally accompanied me.

I found myself in a very American atmosphere in the Piatts' house. I picked up all sorts of knowledge concerning American things and people. I made the acquaintance of many American writers in their books. The delightful old-fashioned house at the waters edge was a depository of Americana. There were many letters from American notabilities framed between sheets of glass, so that one could read the whole letter. One such was from Longfellow; but there were some of a greater importance. The Stars and Stripes were everywhere in that house; the boys used to discuss American politics in a high nasal during meals. Such names as Levi P. Morton became a commonplace to me. The boys were aggressively American, anti-British. The father and mother belonged to English literature. Lamb would have loved them.

It seems to me in my memory of Mr. and Mrs. Piatt that they were always walking off the stage, hand in hand, their backs turned to us and the world. The boys used to make an incredible noise over their discussions. Seeing that they were all agreed I can't imagine how they made so much noise. Mr. and Mrs. Piatt would sit silent through the hurly-burly with the air of being withdrawn into a cell, as though the noise passed over their heads. Now and again, when it was at its loudest, Mr. Piatt would interfere, pounding the table gently and saying, "That will do. I will have no more of this." The storm would subside amazingly. There was a legend in the family that Mr. Piatt could be terrible when roused. Mrs. Piatt used to look up from her dreamy abstraction and say, "John! John! restrain yourself!" Mr. Piatt always struck me as being one of the gentlest men I ever knew.

Mrs. Piatt used sometimes to look at the boys, brown with the sun and the sea-wind, in their weather-stained home-

spun suits, and say, as though to herself, " Ah, well, they were lovely babies! " They were, as a matter of fact, very nice, good boys, so the remark can have conveyed no reflection upon them.

The Piatts had all the American capacity for passionate pilgrimages. Old storied places and literary shrines of one kind or another drew them like a magnet. Having nothing old in their own country they adored what was old. I am reminded of an argument between two brothers, one seven, the other nine years of age. " The Reformation is quite a new thing,"¹ said seven years old. " It is quite old," said his brother* " Only 450 years," said seven years old.

Nothing pleased the Piatts better than to meet literary people; and like many Americans, I am sure they would have been happier in Europe than in America. It is like the Middle Ages, when all the gentle and high-minded ones slipped into convents, leaving the swash-bucklers to carry on the world. The gentle spirits escape from the strenuous life of America to the cloister of Europe. Nothing delighted them more than a visit to London in the season, with a special eye to seeing literary people. Yet the American *amour propre* was easily wounded. The only time I ever saw irritability on Mr. Piatt's part was when I referred to Hardy and Meredith as great men. I don't think he really doubted their greatness, but perhaps he had some suspicion of my attitude towards some of his idols. I certainly had begun to revise my early judgment of—say, Longfellow, by that time.

That visit gave me the very first glimpse into the strait-lacedness of speech in American family life. We were all strait-laced then, but Irish reticence was as water unto wine compared with American reticence. The mere mention of an interesting family event caused such manifest embarrassment at the Piatts table that the transgressor did not know whether to laugh or cry. There was a piquant contrast in the American newspapers with which the house was littered, plain-spoken as Holy Writ.

The Piatts, husband and wife, are a fragrant memory.

Dear Mrs. Piatt, yesterday's rose, wherever she is, I send my heart's love to her.

That visit after nearly a quarter of a century I recall as something chilly and sweet, chilly as to the wet summer, for the Piatts had not acquired the Irish habit of fires at all seasons. I had some very cold bathing that year, and my breakfast-tray used to come up to my room with a chilly wet rose upon it, and a little plate of strawberries, cold and wettoo. And there was Mrs. Piatt, a little moonlight figure, full of delicate femininity, and an old-fashioned almost old-maidish sweetness: underneath it very warm and human, and turning eagerly to my robust gaiety and my stories. Twilight used to settle down on the little house with the robust boys gone to bed and the father and mother filling their diaries—they kept voluminous diaries—and the pretty daughter, with something of her mother's air of a tired rose, would play the saddest music, and Mrs. Piatt would come in like a little gentle ghost and say: "I don't know what you are playing, Marian, but I cannot endure it."

In the night one would hear the big liners coming in, puffing like grampuses, to the harbour. At dawn Mrs. Piatt used to steal out to bathe. She loved the sea and the dawn. In one of the most beautiful of her poems I see her dear beloved little soul plain.

" Some sweetest mouth on earth bitter with brine,
That would not kiss you back you may have kissed,
Counting your treasures by the night lamp's shine,
Some head that was your gold you may have missed.

Some head that glimmers down the unmeasured wave
And makes an utter darkness where it was,
Or flung back in derision lights some grave,
Some sudden grave cut deep into the grass.

If so, there shall be no sea there ; and yet,
Where is the soul who would not take the sea
Out of the world with it ? What wild regret
In God's high inland country there must be!

Never to lift faint eyes in love with sleep
 Across the spiritual dawn and see
 Some lonesome water-bird standing dream-deep
 In mist and tide : how bitter it would be ?

Never to watch the dead come sailing through
 Sunset or stars or dews of dusk or morn
 With flowers shut in their folded hands that grew
 Down there in the green world where they were born.

There shall be no sea there. . . . What shall we do ?
 Shall we not gather shells, then, any more,
 Or write our . . . names in sand, as here, we two
 Who watch the moon set on this island shore ? "

In 1887 I had begun to keep a diary—a very scrappy one, which I might easily have made better. From it I gather that my career as a prose-writer began about then. My friend, Rosa Mulholland, had been urging me to write prose, but I doubted my ability. It must have been in 1887 that Mr. Alfred Williams of the *Providence Journal* came to Dublin, and asked me to write for his *Sunday Journal*. Mr. Williams was an Englishman settled in America, with an extraordinary *flair* for literature and that curious passion for Ireland which is found in many an English breast. He wrote one or two excellent books himself—one on Celtic folklore, the other a biography of Sam Houston, the Texan leader. In the *Providence Sunday Journal*, a very wilderness of a paper, one discovered the stars in the English literary sky while they were yet only on the horizon. I remember the delight with which I first read "Danny Deever" there, and Meredith's short stories, and other delectable things.

Mr. Williams was visiting in Ireland Mrs. Banim, the widow of Michael Banim, the Irish novelist. The poor lady, who was blind or nearly blind, had just come back from Belgium where she had been living for twenty years or so with her two daughters, Mary and Matilda. The Banim sisters contributed constantly to the *Providence Sunday Journal*, Mary writing articles and Matilda illustrating them. They were very quaint ladies, for they had not modified **the**

fashion of their dresses since they were young, so we had the pleasure of meeting ladies with a ringlet over either shoulder wearing dresses frilled to the waist, with pointed bodices, loose sleeves, undersleeves of lace and net—in fact, the dress of the sixties.

Mr. Williams found nothing amiss. He was suffering from a weakness of the eyelids, which made it difficult to keep his eyes open. And to be sure there was nothing amiss. They had only stepped out of *Cranford*. They had the etiquette of the sixties too, for some small omission of mine met with a kindly, yet stern rebuke from Matilda; and she must have been the first of the suffragettes, for detecting in me a dreaminess which connoted a sentimental frame of mind she was very sharp on the subject of men, assuring me that women were quite competent to carry on the affairs of the world without any assistance from men, and that it was only the slavish woman who thought otherwise.

Mr. Williams was very happy with the Banims in the little Dalkey house, where they lived with their books and their writing and drawing, in a very pleasant, refined atmosphere. He had lost a beloved young wife, and still grieved passionately for her behind those half-shut eyes of his. I daresay his happiest moments were spent in that autumn of 1887 in the little white house overlooking the sea, where he and the Banims used to sit up into the small hours talking Irish folklore and Irish poetry and such delights.

Mr. Williams made me begin seriously to write prose. My diary for 1888 is studded with cheques from the *Providence Journal*. I invariably spent the money as soon as I got it. I fear I was a dreadful spendthrift. Writing prose for the *Providence Journal* set me to writing prose for other things, chiefly American magazines and papers. It must have been in 1887 that I earned £58, and Father Russell warned me not to expect to double it next year. "Oh, indeed now, take care. Don't expect too much. Above all, be a good child and say your prayers."

Looking up my old account-books I find that in 1887 I earned £58, 11s. 5½d. In 1888 I earned some £90 odd; in 1889 I got up to £124 5s. 4d.; in 1890 I earned £132, 1s. M.; in 1891, £171, 13s. 2d. So that I was steadily progressive.

I got rid of my money as fast as I received it. I take a page at random to show how it was spent:

	s.	d.
Sweets	1	6
Cards.	7	0
Cards.	6	0
Figs.		7
Train	1	11
Silk for bodice	7	6
Hair washing	1	0
Tea	1	2
Picture	6	4
Catullus.	3	4
Ties.	2	6
Sweets		7
Soap		8

It seems a frivolous list. You must take it that I leave out the serious items. I always had a great delight in keeping these accounts. They gave me a business-like feeling, as though I saved the money when I was really spending it.

I began writing for the *Catholk World* of New York, the magazine of the Paulist Fathers, in 1888, with a series of articles on the leading Irish politicians. Very high-falutin they seem as I turn them over, till I am arrested by this strange sentence in an article on Mr. Parnell:

"He has received popular adulation which might make many a great man *tete montee*, and has remained grave, simple, sincere, quiet almost to coldness, though the fires may burn within. I have seen him at some of his greatest moments, in that wonderful triumphal procession of his on an October Sunday in 1881, when

" ' The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day/

" An ominous quotation, did you say ?—yet scarcely ominous for this patriot, although in Dublin streets Henry Grattan, dear and venerable name! was stoned by the populace."

Alas, alas, and alas! He was to have a greater procession on an October Sunday in 1891, when our hearts were broken as we followed him to his grave.

That year 1888 was spent between work and "playing about," as the pregnant phrase of the Cockney has it. Not very much serious. No incursions into politics, though I was still enterprising and managed to get to the City Hall to see Lord Ripon and John Morley receive the freedom of the city in February of that year. For the rest, private friendships and friends; Dr. Kenny, a politician too ideal for any politics except Irish politics; Richard Ashe King, and others. Dr. Kenny lent me books and was kind—he was the kindest creature alive; no one ever knew how he lived, for he would take no fees from a friend and all the world was his friend. Mr. Ashe King, who came to an evening meeting at the O'Learys, brought great joy into my life and the lives of the group of friends, the Sigersons, &c, with whom I was much at that time.

Mr. King lived at Waltham Terrace, Black rock, a little cul-de-sac of delightful cottage houses wrapped in flowers. His house, Number 11, was one of those quaint houses which I have seen nowhere else except in the environments of Dublin, of two floors, a flight of steps going up to the hall-door on the second floor; the lower floor on the level of the garden. That little house stands out in my memory as one of the dearest things I have ever known. The very thought of walking up from Blackrock station and turning in at the Terrace—" Waltham 1840 " (I won't swear to the date) carved on one of the stone piers at the end of the road—brings me a rush of golden memories. Mr. King was very fond of his girl friends and they of him. He was, and is, the writer of the Book Letter in *Truth*, so that he lived surrounded by all the new books. You could borrow practically anything you liked, and he was one to give, and give generously.

He always had very delightful little lunches, giving us the dishes we had expressed a preference for. I believe it was always the chickens and bacon of my choice; for where there are many chickens people often prefer other things, so the dish must have been something of a novelty to me. He used to have much fruit, many sweets, cigarettes, and curacoa, a true woman's banquet. I have rather a cloying memory of the sweets and the curacoa. I used to smoke cigarettes in those days, *6patant le bourgeois*, and was vastly delighted when I was told that a certain gentleman who had visited Whitehall one Sunday, being asked by someone what I was like had replied in chilling tones: ' When I tell you she smokes cigarettes I have said enough.'¹¹ But I never became a smoker, although I smoked to keep my friends company. It gave me no such agreeably soothing sensation as my smoking friends talked of. I used to say that being constantly of my father's company, and he being a tremendous smoker of strong tobacco, I was inoculated against such mild things as cigarettes.

We would arrive at Mr. King's for lunch and remain till the evening shades were falling. Various other people used to be there, old and young, middle-aged and elderly. I believe the luncheon-table was usually young, for I remember the happy intimacy of it. The married ladies came in after lunch. We used to bristle with jokes. I remember one of my own which amused Mr. King. I said that my friend, Blanche Fagan, who was a living rose, was partial to Hims, Ancient and Modern.

Anything more kindly, more unselfish than Mr. King as host, I cannot imagine. Not only did he give us sweets, but he invited our sweethearts. Golden days, indeed! Perhaps the happiest were when my dear Mary Gill used to drive over to tea and carry me back to dear, hospitable Roebuck in her comfortable brougham, with perhaps, in the later years, at all events, one other guest.

From about 1884 onwards I had really begun to live. I had found out what I could do, and being regarded as an exceptional person at home and abroad, I had perfect freedom

about my actions. I had as many masculine friends as I liked, and saw as much of them as I wished. Politics did not interest me just then. Except for that reference in my diary to the conferring of the freedom of the city on Lord Ripon and Mr. John Morley, I do not seem to have touched politics, although I kept in touch with politicians.

The little table of expenditure I have given earlier has shown that I played cards. Well, the society at my father's house in those days was mixed: it was intellectual and un-intellectual. With the unintellectual, I played cards; and I really enjoyed playing cards almost, or quite as much as I enjoyed discussing poetry. Cards, I believe, were devised for the unintellectual, to take the place of gossip. We used to play Nap in those days and Spoil Five; and we often saw daylight in. Sometimes the intellectuals took a hand. I remember Douglas Hyde being a past-master at Spoil Five; but when he played Nap and went Nap he always began with a lower card, having the ace in his hand. He explained that he was sure of winning with the ace whenever he played it. Such are the limitations of the intellectual.

I have since found my taste for card-playing invaluable in English country life.

I lost and won various sums in those days, and often knew what it was to go to bed bankrupt and to play a losing game all night in my dreams. A sister of mine was philosophic about her losses. She said she was perfectly certain that at the end of the year everyone had won a little.

CHAPTER XXVII

1888-89

IN the autumn of 1888 began a certain matter of much interest to myself, which interest continues happily; and I imagine the thoughts of that autumn were nearly all intimate and personal, as were those of the succeeding spring, till I went to London towards the end of May.

Before going on to the London life I must speak here of my neighbours and friends, the Furlongs, a family consisting of a father, mother, and four daughters, who lived not far away in a cottage in the Dublin mountains. Of the four sisters three wrote poetry. They were wild, leggy young things, with manes of black hair, like mountain ponies; and they were always chattering about poetry and the things that make poetry at the top of their cheerful young voices. They had a beloved father, brown and handsome, who was proud of them and teased them and had a great strain of poetry in himself—though by profession he was a sporting journalist, and anything he did not know of horses was not worth knowing. Someone said that when he came into a Dublin newspaper office at night where the gas was flaring, the place throbbing with the engines, flimsies flying, everything going at fever heat—for in those days the newspaper men did not set to work till the last possible moment for producing the paper—he brought the fields with him.

The young lean sisters were always producing poetry then—always reading and admiring; full of generosity and innocence and simplicity; loving their mountains; saying their prayers; living in the best of all possible worlds.

James Furlong was killed in a gallant attempt to stop a runaway horse at a race-meeting, where the sacrifice of his life saved the lives of some of the crowd at all events.

He lived just one night, during which he fumbled incessantly for his notebook and pencil when he was not crying out, "My God! the mare's off! Stop the mare!"

Mary Furlong became a professional nurse, volunteered to nurse typhus patients in one of those mysterious epidemics which occasionally break out on the western sea-board of Ireland. She was a darling nurse—a gawky, spiritual young creature, with honest eyes and the kindest heart. She contracted the typhus herself and died a young martyr. Katie died of consumption. Maggie, the one girl who was not a poet, married a poet, Mr. P. J. McCall. Alice still lives and writes beautiful poetry and poetic prose in a nook in the Dublin mountains, almost within sight of her old home, near her "Dead in the Green Glen," to whom she has cried so much of her touching poetry.

Another friendship which began in those days, but was yet a matter of correspondence, was with Anna Johnston, who under the name of Ethna Carbery had won her place as a poet and poetic prose-writer before her early death in 1902. Alas! so many of those friends died early deaths. There are in Ireland the people who die very young, and the people who live to be very old. Wherefore Ireland is full of memories with the fragrance of crushed spikenard and myrrh.

Among the editors I was writing for just then was a certain mysterious "M. Bertram," who lived in Paris and ran a magazine called *East and West*. No magazine could have been run in a more unbusiness-like fashion, but the payments were all right, and they were always made in Bank of England notes. Someone printed and published the magazine in London, and I may say that the production was scandalous. "Nor were English maids blind to his Irish beauty," in an article of mine, came out: "Nor were English made blinds," &c. The proof-reading, well! I have had a line of poetry—

"Seeth he under the lone, awful sky"

reproduced as

"Seeth he down the lane, awful sly."

And

" A gold crown on your hair, my dear,"

come out as

" A gold crown on your chair,"

to the inextinguishable laughter of the Irish editor who was responsible.

Also in a story intended for convent consumption chiefly, a girl who spoke of herself as " a great ould botch " appeared with the " o " of botch changed to " i . "

These were bad enough; but I suffered as much from the proof-readers of *East and West* as I have ever done from Irish proof-readers.

There was a mystery about " M. Bertram." That paying in Bank of England notes was part of the mystery; she would not sign her name to a cheque. We achieved a certain degree of intimacy by letter-writing. I believe I was " My dear Katie " to her, and she " my dear M. Bertram " to me. She was very generous; she paid what was asked. I am glad to remember that I took no advantage of this generosity; but once, when she procured through me some poems from a certain American poetess now dead, she paid a fancy price. After a time there was a certain note of anxiety in her letters, as though her funds were running low. She could not edit herself. I thought afterwards she wanted me to edit for her, although she never asked me. None of her contributors knew anything about her. She wrote in the hand of a person who has learnt to write in France, a difficult, ci'amped, legible handwriting, every letter formed with exactitude. I went to see Mrs. L. T. Meade at the offices of *Atalanta* one day. She also wrote for " M. Bertram," and was exercised over the mystery. She told me that she had heard from someone who made inquiries that " M. Bertram " was the cook at the address to which we wrote.

I do not remember when my correspondence with " M. Bertram " ceased, or when *East and West* faded into the limbo of forgotten things. But some twenty years later my friend, Louise Imogen Guiney, wrote to me that a friend

in America had written to her: "Going through the papers of an aunt who lived all alone in Paris we came upon a bundle of letters from your friend, Katharine Tynan. From this we gather that Aunt——ran a magazine of her own some twenty years ago. None of us suspected it. We used to wonder how she got rid of her money." So there was the mystery solved.

I went to London in May 1889. My dear friends, the Meynells, almost the oldest of my friends now, and none more dear, had been asking me to come for some time; but I had engrossing interests just then. However, at last I made up my mind and went, remaining in England some four months.

Turning up my diary I am amazed at my strenuous doing. I arrived on the evening of the 27th, travelling by the North-Wall express, which at that time was timed to reach London about 9.30, and got in anywhere about 11. The next day the Meynells had a musical party in the afternoon, at which I met some old friends and made some new ones. Mrs. Thompson, the mother of Lady Butler and Mrs. Meynell, had been in the house all the morning, at the piano. She was an impassioned musician, and wonderfully young. I remember her stopping, with her hands on the keys, to say that she knew where the birds got their songs from. They were taught note for note by the angels. Then she went back to improvising the most delicious bird-notes and thrills.

Of the musical party I remember that I wore a Liberty red dress, with angel sleeves, that I drank more iced coffee than I like to think of now, and that someone was talking to me on the stairs, when we were "Hushed!" for the playing of the Kreutzer Sonata.

Unfortunately my diary entries are of the scantiest. "I went here," "I went there"; I suppose I was too busy to be more explicit.

That same evening we went to what was really a memorable party, at Sir Charles Russell's house in Harley Street. There were present as the principal guests Mr. Gladstone,

Mr. Parnell, and Lord Randolph Churchill. It was in some sense a rehabilitation—I might easily get a better word—of the Irish leader, after the breakdown of the Parnell Commission. The three statesmen had dined at the house. Afterwards there was a crowded evening party, out of which I remember a few things. Lord Randolph Churchill I did not get near at all. To Mr. Gladstone I was introduced. He had retired into a corner with Miss Wyse, the sister of Sir Thomas Wyse and an old friend of his, and was out of the crush, talking with his old friend. My principal memory is of Mr. Parnell. I would not have approached him, seeing how he was thronged about—he was the man of the hour and the occasion—only Wilfred Meyneil led me up to him. His eye fell upon me, and I am quite sure his face brightened. Was it because I was an obscure little Irish follower of his in the great London crowd? Was it with some premonition of the passionate loyalty that would have died for him in a day yet to be? He had been listening to all the sweet and adulatory things that were being said to him with an exquisite, chilly courtesy. His face brightened—I am sure of it—as his gaze found me out, hesitating. He took my hand and held it in a clasp which was not cold.

"Oh, Mr. Parnell, you don't remember me," I said.
⁶ⁱ You've seen me in Ireland; but, of course . . ."

"I remember you perfectly," he said. "I have been reading your poems."

Now this overwhelmed me, for we had always believed that Mr. Parnell's reading was of the most practical.

"Yes, indeed," he said. "I have been reading them at Avondale."

Others besides myself commented on the warmth of Mr. Parnell's reception of me, and I was congratulated on every side. I don't think he had cared very much about his rehabilitation. Perhaps I brought him the mountains and the fields of home.

I wrote a little account of that memorable party for the *Boston Pilot*, to which I was a contributor in those days. I believe I sent my only copy to Lady Russell, for I can

find no trace of it among many articles of the time, and it was not acknowledged. I met Sir Charles a little later at Crabbet, and I asked him if she had liked the article. "She would prefer nothing had been written about it," he said. "Oh!" murmured I, and fled, feeling as though I wanted the earth to swallow me.

On Friday the 31st of May I went with Mrs. Meynell to the very first Worn en-Writers' Dinner. Literary London had made prodigiously merry over the dinner. I think it was Mr. Barrie who wrote a screamingly funny article, from the male point of view, in the *Scots Observer*, under the heading:

"On the 31st ult., at the Criterion, the Literary Ladies of London—of a dinner."

We were prodigiously excited over our dinner, and very shy. We rather imagined reporters in the garb of waiters. We all tried to look as though we were quite used to having a dinner on our own account. Most of us smoked after dinner. I remember Amy Levy, that tragic personality, who had so short a time to live, sitting opposite to me, her charming little Eastern face dreamy in a cloud of tobacco-smoke.

She died in the following autumn, by her own hand. She had made previous attempts at suicide. The story was that she and another distinguished writer, at the other side of the world, had made a compact to die together at the same time and hour. The other writer still lives. I have a letter somewhere from Amy Levy, asking me to tea one day that summer. I could not go, and afterwards I had poignant regrets, as though I might have done something if I had come to know her better. But I dare say she was doomed, poor, gifted little soul. She had written more than one novel. *Reuben Sachs* seemed to me at that time to promise big things. She had one or two good friends. Dr.—now Sir W.—Robertson Nicoll had encouraged her, and had run *Reuben Sachs* as a serial in the *British Weekly*. She told me he had been very good to her. But perhaps no one could have held her back from the way she meant to take.

I believe Mathilde Blind was in the chair at that first dinner. I did not care for her poetry and I disliked her harsh, guttural voice. Clementina Black impressed me with her air of capable honesty. She was a great friend of poor Amy Levy, and, doubtless, if anyone could have helped her to live and carry her burden it would have been she. Another new friend was Graham Tomson, afterwards Mrs. Marriott Watson, beautiful with her dark face and uplifted, passionate eyes, in a Liberty garment of yellow silk.

There was a little to-do about getting cigarettes, which had to be asked for before they were brought. Someone grumbled that there were no liqueurs—not so much that liqueurs were desired, as that it was a wrong to woman not to provide them. I complained to Mrs. Meynell afterwards, to her amusement, that certainly the waiter must have thought me a total abstainer, since he only gave me one glass of champagne. A good deal of water has flowed under the bridges since then, when we sat to a dinner which so far as the Criterion could ensure it was perfectly lady-like.

My next event of public interest was the Herkomer play at Bushey, then the quietest of little country stations and villages. We trudged through summer dust, past hedgerows whitened by the dust, from the station to the country village in which were Herkomer's two small communicating cottages, scarcely distinguishable from their humble neighbours. The big red-brick house was growing up behind on the ruins of the gardens.

The play was a conventional thing enough. As usual, I was interested in the people. The President of the Royal Academy, Sir Frederic Leighton, walked back with us to the station. I remember his soft hat, his grey clothes, his spats, and, better still, the ruddily handsome face and grizzling beard. Going up to town in the train we had for travelling companion Miss Dorothy Dene, who was so often Sir Frederic's model. She was beautiful, I think, and beautifully dressed. The line from ear to chin and the white throat were lovely under the flowing ostrich feathers

of her big hat. Women's dress was good to look at in those days. Oh for another aesthetic movement to banish the most hideous and grotesque fashions of to-day, in which the women who wear them set forth their own unfitness to be taken as reasonable creatures! For the rest, Miss Dorothy Dene belied her beauty by talking a deal of nonsense in the fashionable slang of the day.

On Whitsunday I find from my diary that we supped with the William Sharps. They were living at that time in the wilds of Hampstead, in one of a row of newly-built houses. I had heard of them as cousins who had waited seven years to be married. William Sharp looked as though he exuded health and strength. He was almost Philistine in his air of well-being. At that time Fiona Macleod was yet in the dim distance. I knew nothing of William Sharp's work beyond his editing. Both husband and wife were kind, as indeed everybody was that golden summer. I may say here that I do not even yet believe that William Sharp was Fiona Macleod. But of that more in its proper place.

One of those days Sir William and Lady Butler came to lunch, and I had to play hostess, as they came at the last moment and Wilfred and Alice Meynell were unavoidably absent. I was very much delighted with them. I had been warned that Lady Butler was somewhat deaf, but I forgot all about it. In her case then and now her bright intelligence reads the words on your lips. I did not at all feel shy of the great soldier, and altogether it was a most happy occasion. That same evening Vernon Blackburn came back from Fort Augustus, where he had all but taken his final vows as a Benedictine. But—no: there must have been an interval, for he had just come from Rome. He brought various bits of Venetian glass and other curios: one I remember was a little hat of the Bersaglieri for Alice Meynell, who almost wept because it recalled Home.

That summer the Meynells' house in Palace Court was a-building, and they had a temporary home in Linden Gardens, Bayswater. When I came first the lovely children, who might have tumbled out of the sky of some Florentine painter, so

round, so soft, so exquisitely coloured were they, were there; but presently they went off to the Isle of Wight with their nurses, while their parents sat down in London to watch the progress of the new house. Monica, the eldest, soon came back; she grieved so much at the separation that she had to come back. My memory of that summer takes in Vernon Blackburn playing and singing at the piano pretty constantly, and Monica, a lovely child, like a brown velvet pansy, delighting us with her pranks. We used to dine at restaurants every night and led a most Bohemian existence generally.

Again there came to London Mrs. Alexander Sullivan of Chicago, in great trouble this time because her husband had been arrested for the murder of Dr. Cronin. We were all sympathetic and set out to be very consolatory, but after the first she brightened up so much that we concluded she knew everything and believed that he would be soon released, which he was. I think she had the deliberate intention at that time of appearing everywhere she could and meeting as many people—of facing the music, so to speak, and confuting by her presence those who might have believed her husband guilty. One afternoon I was going to tea at the Temple with Mr. J. G.—now, I think, Sir J. G.—Legge. The Pennells were to be of the party and Mr. Fisher Unwin; I forget who else. I had been on a shopping expedition, and met Wilfred Meynell, who was accompanying me to the tea-party, on the Embankment outside the Middle Temple Gardens. To my embarrassment, Mrs. Sullivan was with him, and plainly proposed to accompany us. I was not the one to frustrate her. However, the thing went off very well. Neither host nor fellow-guests seemed to be aware of anything difficult in the situation and I was very grateful to them.

I went down to Oxford for the Encaenia that year and stayed with the Legges in Keble Terrace. Dr. Legge was, of course, Chinese Professor, and a very dear, charming old man. He had snow-white hair, bushy eyebrows and side whiskers, the blue eyes and pink and white complexion of a child. "Lovely as a Lapland night."

Dr. Legge had been a Methodist missionary in China. He

had great simplicities. His daughter told me *on* arrival that she had never mentioned that I was a Papistical person, "because papa is rather old-fashioned." She also begged me not to be offended if he made any disparaging remarks about my religion. So much I willingly promised. That was of a Saturday. The first evening Dr. Legge looked at me but said very little. The next morning I went to early Mass at St. Aloysius's. Dr. Legge, who was then well on in the seventies, used to rise at four o'clock every morning, make himself a cup of tea, and work away through the quiet hours at his Chinese folios. As I let myself in, on returning, very quietly, the door of Dr. Legge's study opened and he appeared on the threshold. He invited me to come in, and I entered the study, hung with Chinese scrolls, walled about with Dr. Legge's life-work in the shape of Chinese classics which the Oxford wits used to say might or might not be genuine, since none but Dr. Legge himself knew anything about them. I gave myself up for lost when he remarked: "You're a Romanist, I see."¹ I answered in the affirmative. He kept his blue eyes fixed on me till I began to wonder what bombshell was coming. At last he spoke: "We two are in the same boat," he said in his strong Scotch accent. "The Church people; they'd burn us."

After that an *entente cordiale* was established between us. He was a dear, beautiful, kindly old man, a child for all his abstruse scholarship. I once heard him speak with indignation of somebody's lectures—literary lectures, which were crowded. Indignation was so foreign to him that I asked somebody why it was. "Don't you see," I was answered, "only about four men attend his lectures; and of them not one can tell if he knows the subject or not. If he were minded to play a practical joke on the University of Oxford . . .! But there, he doesn't look like it."

He was justly proud that he had refused a chair at a Scottish University in his young manhood because he would have had to conform in some way; and after all an Oxford chair awaited him.

He had appalling moments of frankness. Once at a dinner-party he hovered about looking for the lady he was to take in.

Finally he stopped before a velvet-clad matron. "My daughter told me I was to take in the oldest lady present," he said. There was a moment's gasp. Then—"and I believe I'm beginning at the wrong end."¹

On the same occasion someone asked him if he had not been left an enormous sum on trust by some old lady. Yes—it was quite true. The bequest was for missions to the Chinese. We opened our eyes at the magnitude of the sums Dr. Legge mentioned so carelessly. At the end of the narrative he added very quietly: "The poor lady had a delusion. She left nothing but her debts, which I was to pay out of the fortune that had no existence."

He had charming daughters. Of the eldest, a sunny brunette, bubbling over with laughter, a laughing goddess, it was said that every man in Oxford, from Jowett down to the youngest undergraduate, was in love with her. A good many women, too, I should think.

CHAPTER XXVIII

1889

I HAD a very gay time at Oxford that summer. Once I went down the river to Bagley Woods with a Mr. Ross, one of Dr. Legge's pupils who was going out to China as a missionary. He was extremely good-looking, but very sententious. He gave me the tiller of the boat and I turned her into a bed of water-lilies. While I tried to explain to him that she *would* go that way in spite of me he remarked chillily, "The boat has absolutely no volition of its own," which remark reduced me to silence.

We went to undergraduate luncheons of cold salmon in mayonnaise, cold lamb and salad, strawberries and claret cup, in the colleges. We went to college concerts, where the gardens were lit with Chinese lanterns till it was a feast of jewels. We dined with the Provost and Fellows of Corpus in hall. We went to garden-parties where there was a deplorable absence of male youth and a preponderance of bald heads and grey beards. We were at the Encaenia and on a college barge for the procession of boats and the bumping.

Midway of my visit I was called back to London to spend a week-end at Crabbet Park with the Blunts. I got leave from my kind hosts and I went. I saw Sussex first in the leafy July of an ideal summer. Crabbet is buried in woods, and through the woods run a string of lakes, wrapped about in fox-gloves, meadow-sweet, and water-mints, sheeted with water-lilies giving forth their delicious smell.

Miss Wyse, whom I have mentioned before as having been at the memorable party at Sir Charles Russell's, travelled down with the Meynells and me. We found a party on the lawn. There were a Mr. Brand and Captain Brand, sons

of the Speaker (not yet Lord Hampden, I think), and the wife of the former, who looked exactly like one of Du Mairer's tall, beautiful ladies. How beautiful such a woman could be in 1889! To-day it is a Bedlam world of women. We were rather shy. After tea we strolled in the direction of the lake which lies in front of Crabbet. Captain Brand, a naval captain—I think he was a Sea Lord—got into a boat and stuck fast in the weeds. His beautiful sister-in-law's peals of laughter somehow broke the ice of our shyness.

At dinner there joined the party the son and daughter of Sir Hugh Wyndham, who, at Rogate, might be counted as neighbours of Crabbet Park, the son a very pleasant young soldier, the daughter a gracious and lovely memory to me. The accident of my mistaking her for another Pamela Wyndham was the means of bringing me to one who has had a very happy influence on my later life.

Mr. Wyndham was my neighbour at dinner, and we talked of Oxford, of which I was rather full. He was an Oxford man and interested in all I had to say about his Mother University. I commented on the general level of good looks among the undergraduates. "Ah yes," he said: "the plain ones go to Cambridge." I told this a little later at Cambridge, and the jest was received with a chilling silence.

After dinner the guests who were not staying in the house departed. Mrs. Meynell, Miss Wyse and I left the dining-room (it was, by the way, a dining-hall, a gallery running round it—a very beautiful room) with Lady Anne Blunt. Immediately outside the door she took a candlestick from a number on the side-table. "As Sunday morning is always an early one," she said, "I hope you will excuse me," and off she went. We did not even know where the drawing-room was. We had been out of doors till the dressing-bell rang. We did not know what to do. Finally we decided that we also had better retire. As we went round the gallery to the corridor on which our bedrooms opened we saw below us the male members of the party playing dominoes at a table

under the gallery. Dominoes was a very favourite game with Mr. Blunt. We watched them unseen. I think it was then we gave up hope. We thought them settled down for the night. So we took refuge in our bedrooms, not foreseeing the amazement of the host at finding an empty drawing-room.

The next morning we had Mass said by a Capuchin from Crawley in the private chapel of the house. The meek, tonsured figure in the brown habit might have stepped out of the Middle Ages. It was beautifully in keeping with the Sussex country, with the English country which lost so much of its poetry with the passing of the friars. I would rather attend Mass in a private chapel or an ordinary room than in the most beautiful Cathedral. Heaven comes so much nearer in the little spaces. I have a most vivid memory of that morning, of the June wind blowing over the Sussex woodlands, entering sweetly at the open window, of the stirring of roses by the pane and the cooing of doves outside. I had lain awake in the night, hoping to hear the nightingales, but it was too late for them. I had to wait ten years before I should hear them.

Crabbet was conducted on principles of the most absolute freedom. You came to a meal—except dinner, of course—to find your host or hostess going away. You helped yourself or some fellow-guest helped you. Breakfast was on the table all the morning.

During the morning we did exactly as we liked. I liked to drift about in a boat on the lake. In the afternoon we went with Lady Anne for a walk through the woods, and to see the Arab horses. They were wild, beautiful creatures. Mr. Blunt at that time bore a certain resemblance to his Arabs. His young daughter, who rode with him in the afternoon, had the same look of a wild and soft shyness.

Lady Anne had her pockets full of sugar for the horses. They were great pets, and would come thronging and pressing about us, trying to get their noses into Lady Anne's pockets in search of the sugar. It was a little alarming to be in the midst of a herd of the beautiful wild creatures. Lady

Anne pushed them away with an open hand on their soft muzzles: and if they were over-persistent she rapped them sharply with the little riding-whip she carried. She was a little woman with a clear brown face and a look of simplicity and courage, very little to be the mother of the tall young daughter who was so like her father.

There was a ruddy-faced, elderly man there whom we admired immensely, because of his extreme horsiness. He lived in riding-dress till dinner-time, and had more buckles and straps about his legs than any man I ever saw. He told us a ghost-story or an apparition-story after dinner, looking rather shy over it. He had had an assignation with a young woman in his youth, which—"not to deceive you," he said with a blush—was unknown to her parents. They were to meet in a little London square. He waited for her and saw her come—he mentioned incidentally that the dress of the day which she was wearing was a cottage bonnet, the front filled in with roses, a small crinoline under a voluminous skirt, her shoulders draped with a scarf. She came walking along the pathway towards him. He flew to meet her. She was not there. "She was fifty miles away," he said: "her parents had prevented her coming at the last moment."

I remember the beds of great poppies by the garden-wall, the Arab tent in which "the Squire," as his neighbours called Mr. Blunt, used to sleep, the tethered horse grazing quietly close by, the Arab spear by the flap of the tent, as though around spread the desert instead of dear leafy Sussex.

In the house there were Byron relics everywhere, pictures, portraits, a cast of his hand, delicately feminine. Crabbet in that July was in strange contrast to Gal way Jail, where Mr. Blunt had, not long before, spent three months in vindication of the rights of free speech.

I admired Mr. Blunt immensely, but I was in love with Lady Anne. She looked so good, so much of the open air, so wholesome, so simple.

After that visit I went back to Oxford to finish my visits. One of these Sunday mornings at St. Aloysius's I heard the prayers of the congregation asked for the repose of the soul

of Father Gerard Hopkins, my first intimation of his illness, of his death.

After Oxford I was back again in London. On Tuesday, the 2nd of July, I went to a garden party at Mrs. Mona Caird's. Mrs. Caird was one of the sensations of that year, having set on foot the *Daily Telegraph* discussion for the Silly Season, "Is Marriage a Failure?" As a sensation the topic had a *succes fou*. Mrs. Caird spoke for the Ayes, and wrote one or two novels to press home her point. She was a very agreeable surprise to those who met her. She was a pretty young woman, with a look of honest sunburn about her, and very true, gentle brown eyes, and she dressed charmingly. That summer we were all wearing streamers to our hats, and I have a vivid memory of her green ribbons, going well with the browns of her face and eyes and hair.

I think she was dissatisfied with marriage vicariously: someone, a sister perhaps, had made an unfortunate marriage. Her own, I am sure, was happy enough. Her husband was a most unassertive person who was present at his wife's parties, but was unrecognised by nine out of ten people as their host.

At that special party I enjoyed myself very much, talking to Mr. H. 1). Traill, for whom I was to write later when he controlled *Literature*, and Mr. Sydney Hall, the black and white artist. It seemed to touch Mr. Traill's sense of humour that I should have been staying at the house of the Chinese professor at Oxford. I remember that we laughed a good deal, irresponsibly, as though my two companions were boys instead of mature men.

There came trailing to us across the grass Miss Emily Hickey, the founder of the Browning Society and herself a poet of achievement, in a wonderful Liberty garment of pale green, one of those beautiful aesthetic dresses which in that dead and gone summer made vivid splashes of colour in the West End streets of London. We could not have forecasted then the day in the far future when Miss Hickey should become a fervent daughter of the Catholic Church, devoted to its service and dressing as nun-like as might be.

Presently I was visiting the Yeatses at Bedford Park; and find many interesting names in my diary. "May Morris and Halliday Sparling here." "Home of the *Hobby Horse* here." The *Hobby Horse* was the precursor of a number of periodicals produced for pure delight, wonderful pictures, beautiful printing, aesthetic prose and poetry: paying no one but delighting many. There is no room for such a thing in our jog-trot days. On a Sunday evening, "Went to a Socialist lecture at Morris's." That morning I had found my way to the little Catholic church at Turnham Green. "Is that the Catholic church?" I asked a lady who was going the same way as I was. "Yes, *thank God!*" she said. It reminded me that I was in a country where the minority is very fervent.

On Wednesday, 10th July, I was at a party given by the William Sharps in honour of Mrs. Atherton, who was just heard of at that time. I remember that she was all in white, but I do not remember that we spoke. I was quite satisfied, for I talked with Thomas Hardy. I remember him standing, with his peculiar air of modesty, his head down-bent, while I told him that every good thing that happened to me brought joy to my father in Ireland, and that the story of my having met him would be a great joy.

Unfortunately for me all those letters to my father which told of my great events to the least detail are missing. He used to keep them in his safe, but they were less precious to others when he was gone.

Frederick Wedmore, too, I talked with that day and Amy Levy again. I find a mem. in my diary, "Sunday 21st. Amy Levy. 4.30. At home Wednesdays." Perhaps that indicated a meeting which did not come off. By Sunday the 21st there was a visitor to London who distracted me for a time from all my distractions.

On Friday the 12th I was at the Parnell Commission, and watched from the gallery Sir Frank Lockwood making sketches and handing them about. The interest of the proceedings must have been thin, for I remember nothing at all about them. Mrs. Alexander Sullivan was present and gave us lunch at her hotel, an uninteresting lunch and a

disappointing one, for some silver-foiled bottles which I thought to be sparkling wine—I liked sparkling wine in those days because it was festive—turned out to be only Salutaris.

We went to tea at Home's of the *Hobby Horse*, where was Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton, of whom I saw a good deal that summer. On the Saturday following I took a specially conducted party of Americans, of which Mrs. Alexander Sullivan was one, to Oxford; another, destined to be a life-long friend of mine, was Miss Louise Imogen Guiney, a delightfully frank, fresh, and boyish girl, who was writing the best poetry of her day in America.

On the 17th of July I went for the first time to the sale of Arabs, and the garden party following, at Crabbet Park. This for many years was one of the events of the London season. At Three Bridges station it was raining. There were many brakes and open carriages of all sorts to carry up the guests and buyers to Crabbet: only one closed carriage. As I stood in the station doorway looking out at the fast-falling rain, unwilling to expose my finery in an open brake, I suddenly saw Sir Charles Russell. I stood so much in awe of him that my inclination was always to keep in the background; but he never failed to recognise me. I suppose he recognised everyone he had met. You had a feeling of those eyes singling you out in a crowd. Impossible to elude or escape them.

I made for a brake with my companion. Sir Charles stopped me. "You can't go in that; you will be wet." He opened the door of the brougham. Within sat Lady Wentworth, Lady Anne Blunfs sister-in-law, a very proud-looking lady, Miss (Lady Mary?) Milbanke, whom I had met at Crabbet previously, and Lady Wentworth's maid sitting with her lady's jewel-case on her knee.

"Come out and sit on the box," said Sir Charles to the maid. I trembled. I would a thousand times rather have braved the rain than Lady Wentworth's obvious displeasure. "Come out and sit on the box." The maid, who had hesitated, looking at her mistress, came out in answer to that

imperious summons, and Sir Charles handed me in. Another lady followed, and he banged the door.

We drove up in the most chilly silence. At Crabbet it was still raining. While the men and the horsey ladies went round the stables, we, who had our fine frocks on, sat in the drawing-room. Not a word was said. The stiffness was such as to make one want to jump up and break something in order to create a diversion.

At the worst moment a very vivacious-looking little lady suddenly crossed over to me. "Can't we talk?" she asked, with just a touch of American accent. I was flattered at her selecting me. She was Mrs.—afterwards Lady—Evans, the wife of Mr.—afterwards Sir Frank—Evans, who was then member for Southampton.

Together, as soon as the rain lifted, we went out and saw the stables. Mrs. Evans wanted a horse. We delighted in the horsey ladies, with the slightly husky, flat voices, dressed in tailor-mades, who went round taking the horses' feet into their hands and examining them, and doing other strange things.

I will not speak for the bale that day. I wrote a very detailed account of it for an American newspaper; but while it was in progress I was in a boat on the lake, and narrowly escaped being caught fast in the roots of water-lilies and having to wait for rescue.

Oscar Wilde was one of the prominent figures of that day, affable as ever, with his large, fat face, and the heavy hair. There also was the first of the two Pamelas. I brought up Oscar Wilde to her. She was curious about him. Poor, pretty little Mrs. Oscar was there also. So was Miss Jane Cobden, nobly handsome. There was Mrs. William Morris, wonderfully dressed, trailing a long, shimmering garment across the grass. There were—oh, all manner of people, for everybody who was anybody in London went in those days to Crabbet for the sale of Arabs.

The next day I went to the *Meistersinger* at Covent Garden with Mrs. Martin, a cousin of Lady Young's, with whom I had formed a friendship. Wagner was then com-

paratively new to London, and there were tremendous crowds. We were only able to book seats in the gallery, where we were surrounded by German clerks and their wives, each couple with their score following the opera in an impassioned absorption. I was delighted with my experience. Our neighbours were most kind, courteous, and pleasant, coming out of their absorption to explain to the ignorant stranger about the *motif* and other things. I have never seen, not even in church, a more rapt audience. They seemed spell-bound, listening motionlessly till something in the music sent a low sigh of rapture through them, and they trembled as a cornfield trembles when the wind blows over it. In the interval everyone adjourned to the most decorous of refreshment-counters, where coffee and light beer were much in demand. It was not easy to realise that one was in London and not in a German city.

While I stayed with the Yeatses at Bedford Park one of the many interesting people I met was Nettleship, the animal painter, whom I liked as much as I liked his pictures. He was perpetually painting the animals at the Zoo, and while he was very eager, I thought I saw in him something of the repose of the great felines he was always studying. I remember going to see him in Wimpole Street with W. B. Yeats; but in the strange way that memory uses us, losing us the important things, leaving us the unimportant, I can remember of that visit only the look of Wimpole Street on a summer evening, the closed shops, the air of dead-alive dustiness. I can remember standing, having knocked at the door, awaiting its opening. Then—the slate is clean. All that would have been in my letters to my father, *my* one eager listener, if only they had been preserved.

On Monday, 22nd July, I visited another poet, Miss May Probyn, who was a great invalid. On Wednesday I went down to Norfolk to the Fagans.

When I look back on that visit the one outstanding person is—Jim Alderson. He was reading for the army with Mr. Fagan, a lean, freckled, clear-eyed boy, honest as the day. At first he doubted me. He was very English

and very loyal. He looked on me as an Irish rebel, and he had had a lot to put up with in Mr. Fagan's unreasoning Irishism. But very soon we became friends. I came to have a great affection for Jim Alderson, as he had for me. In a somewhat darkened atmosphere he was the light of the house. His joyous heart never failed for an instant, and he had young, rollicking, boyish ways. He was as loyal as a puppy and as good. How we laughed! And how he did things for me! And how kind and grieved he was when I was frightened by a thunderstorm! And how he watched over me!

Ah, well, we were young in spite of everything; playing ecarte together of evenings, going for drives with a village pony, which at times used to pasture by the side of the road and refuse to budge till he thought he would. Jim Alderson would pretend to whack him, and sing ridiculous songs at the top of his young cracked voice, and make preposterous jests, while we laughed as though we were mad.

How indignant he was when a malevolent lady at a garden-party put it about that I was the daughter of "No. 1" Tynan, who was supposed to be connected with the Invincibles! How he set out to scotch that calumny, and was stern with the lady like a young accusing spirit!

We used to correspond, and he came later to see me at the Meynells, and we went to the Spanish Exhibition together, and dined in a restaurant and had high jinks.

I wish I had kept his innocent letters. To the last he spelt Dublin "Doublin," and as a superfluity of naughtiness he always spelt goddess with a single "d." He scraped into the Army, was in the Royal Irish, went to India with his regiment, and in saving his colonel's life had his own arm clawed by a tigress—the muscle torn clean out of it. After I was married he came to see me, not the awkward boy in shabby homespuns I remembered, but a slight, rather elegant young man, wearing extremely well-cut clothes, very lean still: with the honest, clean eyes I remembered. There were two visits home, the first immediately after I was married: the second, some four years later,, we saw a good deal of him ;

he had been clawed by the tiger, and was in the hands of doctors, masseurs, &c, all trying to save his sword-arm and failing to get much sensation into it.

The South African War gave him his chance. They did not ask too many questions about the sword-arm. He went to the front, fought unscathed through that blackest of black winters, in the following July was shot by a party of Boers with whom he had sat up the preceding night in friendly converse. He was sent down to the camps, riddled with bullets and suffering terribly on the journey—I am sure without a complaint. He died of his wounds a few hours after he had arrived.

" Heart too full of heavenly haste, too like the bubble bright,
On loud little water floating half of an April night,
Gone from the ear in music, gone from the eye in light."

Here is what I wrote about him in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, an instant appreciation, which must have some freshness the dust-choked years have lost.

A SOLDIER

(JAMES BEAUCHAMP STANLEY ALDERSON)

BETHLEHEM, *July 5th*, 1900

On another July Sunday, ten years ago, they gathered field flowers in a Norfolk lane. To remember it now makes her old and dreary, though she has justified her life by work and wifeness and maternity; and the mother of children need never be old. He was a lean boy then, lean as a hound, long and freckled, with a wholesome brown face and honest eyes. Circumstances, unhappy in one way, threw them together in an unusual intimacy for some weeks of time. They had hardly any secrets from each other, the boy of twenty and the woman some years his senior, and theirs was a pure friendship, a friendship which was only conscious of sex through the boy's tender chivalry towards a dear woman and the woman's pleasure in the feeling she had awakened. He had just then put on his sword, a sword

which has always seemed to her an emblem of his swift bright readiness to serve and to save a woman if that were needed. For some five or six happy weeks of time, the woman, older, cleverer, had the boy's soul under her eyes. Every thought of the frank and simple nature was laid bare to her. There was nothing she might not see. In a turgid and troubled atmosphere his simplicity and his tenderness made him a light in dark places. For all that simplicity his nature had depths, untroubled depths, of devotion, selflessness, self-sacrifice, and belief. He was perfectly joyous, while capable of suffering indignation and pity. He was far from being intellectual; his spelling was the despair of examiners, and to the day he died he wrote like a schoolboy; but all the same the woman met him upon heights, hills of nobility and innocence, to which he certainly was not the climber. Amid the dreams and shadows of her maidenhood she had premonitions of how his mother must love him, must feel her heart swell with pride and joy for the man-child she had brought into the world. He was a soldier by right; one could imagine no other career for him. His patriotism was a passion, if one can speak of passion where there was no tumult, for every motion in him was pure and fresh as a mountain rill, though that, too, has its torrents.

"What have I done for you,
England, my England?"

he would have cried, with the poet, if he had known anything of poetry, as he did not, except to live it unconsciously. His nearest approach to an appreciation of verse was his joy in a rollicking, somewhat foolish comic song, shouted out in a young, untuneful, dear voice, with such enjoyment to himself that one must enjoy it too. Despite his unletteredness, so to speak, the woman never mistook him for an instant, never doubted that she was face to face with an elect soul, which yet gave her assurance that such election was far from uncommon among the class to which he belonged. He would indeed have been the first to resent being set apart from his fellows if he could have imagined such a

thing. Nor did he deserve so melancholy a distinction; for he was human all through as befitted so masculine a creature, not exempt from the temptations and falls of the natural man, but somehow beautiful and bright through that saving salt of gentlehood. She used to think that in deadly peril she would choose to have him by her side. She imagined impossible situations in which he would realise the most exquisite ideals of protection and selflessness. He was clean as his sword and as bright; though, after all, he was only a lean, sunburnt, boy, full of laughter the wise might have called foolish; prejudiced as only his country-people can be; with a little horizon, though a clear one; almost plain-looking in his shabby suit of country home-spuns, if it were not for that indefinable something of distinction, of breeding, which marked him as gentle. After years of absence, when he came home a man of thirty from India, she pointed him out to an acute student of men and character. "Look at him," she said; "he would do what Sidney has been vaunted for all these centuries—that is, deny himself the draught of water that one of his Tommies might have it; and it would never occur to him that there was anything remarkable about it." "I can believe it," said the expert, looking at the lean face bronzed by the Indian suns. "And there must be many like him," she went on. For that is the happy faith he has left her. There are affections that depend on the nearness of the object. Indeed, few of our affections can stand a long separation. But this was one neither time nor tide could alter, nor even the separation of the grave. "His very memory is fair and bright," and will be so long as she lives. She knows nothing of how he died, though she never doubts that it was heroically. Certainly he would not grudge his own life, bitterly as she does, nor think it intolerable that he should be sacrificed in a little skirmish at the end of a war of which the interest is spent. If it had been in a crusading war! There he had been in his rightful place, for in his simple way he was religious, though he would have been dreadfully ashamed to talk about it; and to the last he said the prayers learned at his mother's

knee. But she is sure that he went to his death as becomes a soldier—without regret, without misgiving, joyously, as he lived. He should have made some woman perfectly happy, and given sons like himself to the country he adored. Or so it seems to the woman on this side of their friendship, who thinks of his mother and wishes her own sons might be like him. But as for him, he was always ready, and took as merrily as though it were a lads' friendly wrestling bout the hard bullets dealt him by Fortune, who, relenting at last, gave him his company on the edge of the grave. And, after all, there is a fitness in thinking of him in that eternal boyhood which death has conferred on him. The gravities, the fears of husband and fatherhood, were not for him. Amid bitter, bitter tears for a world suddenly emptied of him, and the desolation one imagines in the heart of her who bore him, one can still say with humble and perfect realisation:

" Dear and stainless heart of a boy ! no sweeter thing may be
Drawn to the quiet centre of God who is our sea;
Whither through troubled valleys we also follow thee."

CHAPTER XXIX

1889-90

AFTER Norfolk I went to Cambridge to stay with Mrs. Bateson, the widow of the Master of John's, a very ardent Home Ruler. I lunched with the Lytteltons at Selwyn, where were some dons, including A. W. Verrall, tea'd with Miss Clough at Newnham, and was introduced to Miss Helen Gladstone. Another day I visited Girton and other colleges, dined at Jesus, tea'd at Sidney Sussex; doing very well for a flying visit in the " Long."

I went back then to the Meynells and stayed for a month with them before going home. It was just the time of the great dock strike, and on Sunday the 1st of September there was a mass meeting in the Park. I had the hardihood to go into the crowd, with Wilfred Meynell and Vernon Blackburn. We got quite close to the platform from which John Burns was speaking. He was at that time the idol of the populace. I liked him and was impressed with a sense of his honesty. When it came to taking a collection I handed up my parasol open to John Burns, starting the collection with a couple of half-crowns. There was great laughter and excitement as the open parasol was passed about among the crowd, coins raining into it. When it was handed up to John Burns it was quite full and had to make a second journey. After that we were invited to a seat on the platform, and I was helped up by Mr. Cunninghame Graham, with all the courtesy of the Spanish Don he looked like. We had a long talk with him afterwards without saying anything about who we were. That was the first and last time I was cheered by an English crowd.

The following day I spent at the docks; saw **the** men

standing idle about the dockyard gates, and heard many tales of misery.

Another day we—Alice Meynell and I, accompanied by a Yeats girl—went to Tilbury and lunched on the schooner *Clara* of Sligo, which belonged to the Polloxens of Sligo, Mrs. J. B. Yeats's family. The *Clara* was lying up in dock unable to get out, and we had a real sea-faring lunch, all sorts of tinned things being brought out from the lockers for us. It was a surprise lunch, but we were treated with the utmost hospitality, and Captain Polloxen and the mate, Mr. Quinn, made excellent hosts. Tilbury Docks was a howling wilderness that day.

One morning in September I went with Wilfred Meynell to see Cardinal Manning. It was a beautiful morning. I think it must have been on that occasion that I omitted out of sheer nervousness to kiss his ring, with the usual curtsey. But no: I think it must have been earlier in the summer, though I have no record of it. It seems to me that I must have seen him thrice that summer and never again. On the occasion of the first visit, when I behaved in a stiff-kneed, heretical manner, I was covered with confusion at my own unreadiness. I was young enough then to feel such things acutely. Wilfred Meynell seemed to have observed nothing, for which I was deeply grateful: but that evening, when Mr. J. G. Snead Cox and some other people were at dinner with us, Wilfred suddenly said across the table, "By the way, Cox, K. T." (as I am to my intimates), "when the Cardinal gave her his ring to kiss, behaved exactly as you did with Monsignor Ruffo Scilla, and gave him a hearty British handshake."

On my second visit, when I behaved quite properly, the Cardinal remarked, "You were very stiff the last time you came to see me."

That same day we visited Lady Colin Campbell, who was a neighbour of the Cardinal's. She looked very beautiful and sleek, like Cleopatra in her barge, as she reclined amid heaps of gaily-coloured silk cushions, smoking a cigarette. She told us that she had been to see the Cardinal, and that he had given her one of his books, adding as an after-thought: "But you

won't read it." "O yes, your Eminence, I shall. I always read when my maid is brushing my hair, and I shall certainly read it then."

I paid my last visit to the Cardinal just before I left for home at the end of September. The visit was made in the early forenoon, and as we walked along from Victoria Station the newsboys were shouting the latest Jack-the-Ripper murder. We were the first to carry the intelligence to the Cardinal, who received us in the little inner room off his big room, where he sat by the fire wearing his warm quilted overcoat. I suppose there was an autumnal nip in the air, though I did not feel it. He looked very old and frail as he sat there; and now and again he hummed to himself in a way which spoke painfully of old age. I dare say the business of the dock strike had wearied him, for he looked a very tired old saint that day. When Wilfred Meynell told him of the murder he closed his eyes and the strangest look came into his face, "careful for a whole world of sin and pain." He gave me his little book, *Towards Evening*, as he said good-bye to me for the last time.

Wilfred Meynell was always playing tricks on me in those days. I had told him a story I had heard somewhere of the Cardinal's old servant—oddly enough, named Newman—of how, in the very early days, when a Cardinal was stranger in England than a white blackbird, a London bus-load of passengers had a bet upon it as to whether or not the little man they saw passing in and out of the Cardinal's house was the Cardinal himself. Finally the matter was referred to Newman, who was reported to have said, "Look 'ere, you blokes! If you come a-kiddin' me I'll jolly well punch your 'eads for you," or something of the kind.

What was my horror when Wilfred Meynell told this absurd story to old Newman, who really understudied the Cardinal in the way of dignity! He pretended to take the old fellow's side against me, saying, "It's an absurd cock-and-bull story, of course. But this lady is responsible for it. She brought it from Dublin, where they are always starting these absurd stories, and everyone believes it." Old Newman was extremely annoyed.

I must have been rather a joy in those days, for I was quite angry when Wilfred set out to demonstrate to me that the Jack-the-Ripper murders were the work of an Irishman. On a later occasion, when I had come back to Palace Court from one of my absences in the country, and had been followed into the house by a particularly dreadful specimen of the cab-runner, that heartbreaking creature of the London streets, who, thank God, has disappeared with the arrival of the taxi-cab, Wilfred Meynell leant over the stairs calling out affectionate welcomes to me, but adding softly between his requests to the cab-runner to go away, "Still, K. T. dear, why bring your Irish patriots with you?" By that time, however, I knew his freakish humour and did *not* rise.

Another day in that September I went down and had tea with May Morris in the garden of Kelmscott House, where she sat under a big mulberry tree in the old garden which was rapidly being built in. George Bernard Shaw's mother joined us at tea. Like her son, she was very witty, very satirical, and yet neither wit nor satire left anything painful behind. You were amused: you laughed when the rapier flashed in your eyes: afterwards you felt it was sword-play, with neither intention nor desire to wound. I remember that she expressed strong Irish Protestant sentiments, which were perhaps hardly well-founded. The meeting brought me back five years to the first time I saw and heard Bernard Shaw at a meeting of the Browning Society, when my neighbour whispered to me that he was very brilliant and had a great future. I can only remember that he discussed "Caliban upon Seiches," and his remarking that if Caliban was now alive he would belong to the Philharmonic Society.

I was tremendously interested in Morris's house, the dining-room, looking as far as possible like a beautiful kitchen, with its plain white wood dresser, covered with blue china: the drawing-room with the hooded fire-place and settles, the Rossettis, the Burne Joneses on the wall. I had already met Morris himself in Dublin, and had amused and pleased him by knowing by heart the "Sailing of the Sword" and others of his earlier poems (which I had by heart from reading them in the

bound volumes of magazines which afforded me such rich reading in my fallow years), and asking him to clear up knotty points concerning them.

One of those September days Mivart lunched with the Meynells. Some of the conversation turned on the probable successor of Cardinal Manning. I do not think that Mivart was anxious for a successor from Salford. He impressed me with a sense of being an advanced and liberal thinker. At that time we Catholics were very proud of Mivart, and it was an event to me to meet him.

The autumn of that year has nothing very much to record. I saw my friends constantly, and I had a grief in the death of Ellen O'Leary. I had a second, but I did not know how great a grief, in Rose Kavanagh's going to winter in the South of France. I came back just in time to see her before I went, and to tell her all I had to tell. You could always empty your heart to Rose. As a matter of fact I was never to see her again. It was a cruel winter in the South that year, the pine-forests about Arcachon heaped with snow that lay on Rose's window-sill and blotted out the sky. She wrote to me several times. I have only one letter, dated the 2nd December, full of home-sickness. She came back, only too glad to come home, to die, and she never left her own Tyrone again. She had been everything to me a friend could be—a great soul, yet a very human one, unlike some other lofty souls I have known, who were too high for common folk.

1890 brought additional work and friends. Early in the year came a commission from the Loretto nuns to write a life of one of their members, which I did, and received for it the sum of £50—a huge sum, it seemed to me then. When I received it I had a great mind to put it into Pneumatic Tyres, which had not then begun to boom, but I was dissuaded. I should have been quite a rich woman if I had followed up my intention.

Long before that time I had started a Post Office Savings Bank account, but I am afraid that very soon my thriftiness deserted me, for I rapidly drew out what I had put in, leaving only 13s. 9d. to my account, a sum which plagued the Post-

Office people for some years. That reminds me of an occasion when I received 2s. 4d. from an American publisher as royalties on a book. I was so incensed at the contemptibleness of the sum that I flung the letter and the check (it deserves the American spelling) into a drawer, vowing that I never would demean myself so far as to cash it. For some years I received bi-yearly an anguished entreaty from the cashier of that American firm begging me to cash the "check," since he could not get his accounts straight without it. At last I wrote to him telling him to devote the sum to any good work he was interested in, as I never would stoop to deposit such a thing at my bank. About a year later I had occasion to pay a small sum to an American press-cutting agency, and remembering the despised "check" I looked for it, found it, and sent it in part payment. I have from time to time since then considered what remarks that American cashier may have made respecting me.

Before setting to work at the Nun's life I went down to see New Ross, Kilkenny and Waterford, being commissioned to write round these ancient Anglo-Norman towns for a magazine. An adventure of mine afforded my friends some amusement when I told them of it, so I tell it again here, hoping it may amuse a larger circle.

It was at Kilkenny it happened. I was staying in one of those big barrack-like hotels which you will often find in Irish country towns, speaking eloquently of splendid days gone by. I was all by myself and I was lonesome: a little nervy perhaps from seeing many churches and churchyards; and desperately afraid of a strange bedroom.

There was not a soul staying in the house beyond myself and a whole army of "Commercial." I had spent a dispirited evening in the vast drawing-room alone, and when I went up to bed I was in a thoroughly nervy condition. My bedroom was as big as a church, and there was a bed like a catafalque for me to sleep in. Terrible shadows lurked behind the big articles of furniture, ran away from me as I came with my solitary candle, and mowed and mopped as they fled into corners. I was thoroughly frightened. When I got into bed I sat up looking to the distant parts of the room, which were like

Darkest Africa, and wondering how I was to get through the night.

Suddenly I remembered—it was like a message from Heaven—I had noticed outside my door a full score of tall candles in candlesticks, with a box of matches set conveniently. Heavens, what a deliverance! I vow that I never dreamt of a connection between those candles and the simple-minded Commercial down there in the bar. I only saw that I was saved.

I stole out soft-footed. The gas on the stairs had already been turned out. I had stayed up late, with a hope of being so sleepy that I must sleep. I carried in the candles in relays, every one, took the box of matches too by way of precaution, and felt that I was saved: a couple of lit candles on the dressing-table, two by my bed, would keep the shadows at bay. I could count on my own nerviness to wake me up before the candles needed renewal. I lay down and slept in a splendid illumination.

Midway of my first sleep I was awakened by a hurly-burly outside my door. People were falling over things: there was language; shouts for Pat the Boots: a door slammed down-stairs. "Bad luck to the blackguard!" said someone. "He's gone to bed and he's left us in the dark. The divil a candle's in it, nor a match either."

Well, I was alarmed when I realised my nefarious deed, but there was no going back. And I simply *hugged* my lighted room. I sat up in bed and partook of light refreshments while the Commercial outside my door fell over more obstacles than I could have thought possible, and used such language that I really had to stick my fingers in my ears.

I had a glorious night, only broken by changing the candles three or four times. Early in the morning, when the blessed sun sent a long shaft through my window-blinds, I got up and stealing out very softly restored the burnt-out or partly-burnt candles, with the box of matches, to their place on the table. Then I slept again.

Again I was awakened by a hurly-burly. There was a chorus

of excited voices. I thought I heard a boot thrown. Then came Pat the Booths voice, more in sorrow than in anger.

"Gintlemen, gintlemen," he said, "yez wor drunk last night. Didn't I hear yez makin' a bastely row an' me goin' to me well-earned rest? I'm ashamed of yez, gintlemen, so I am. Whatever devilment were yez up to at all?"—in a more sprightly voice. "No candles, indeed! Will yez come an' look for yourselves? There's not a candle missing an' yez used them too, for they're burnt out, the half o' them. Och, gintlemin, gintlemin! Yez must have been very bad entirely."

I left the hotel after breakfast that morning, and heard as I passed through the hall Pat the Boots telling the barmaid of the tricks of the "playboys" upstairs.

That spring I also made an expedition with Miss Mulholland to see New Tipperary, which was then just springing up on the ruins of Mrs. Hurley's garden. Mrs. Hurley was the wife of one of the leading merchants in Tipperary, then a very prosperous inland town. We stayed at Dobbyn's Hotel and heard the night-watchman going his rounds. "Half-past twelve o'clock and a fine morning." He told the hour and the weather through the night. Tipperary stuck to its Town Watch, long after the quaint institution had been superseded elsewhere. We had gone down ready to be enthusiastic, having heard much of the willing sacrifice of the people of Tipperary Town, who were fighting not for themselves but for others against the tyranny of the landlord, Mr. Smith Barry. As a matter of fact we found something disquieting in the atmosphere. We were most hospitably received and entertained by priests and people. There was a certain amount of fine talk, but there was something else in the air: Mrs. Hurley wiped away a tear when she talked of her garden: there was an anxiety, a shadow. The old, wise priest, Canon Cahill, could not be drawn into enthusiasm. Some of the younger priests, taking us to see the Glen of Aherlow, whispered their forebodings.

I came the other day upon a card of invitation to the opening of New Tipperary, to be inaugurated, of course, by

a banquet. The Irish could do nothing in those days without a banquet.

Of course everyone knows that New Tipperary ended in what a Lord Mayor of Dublin once called "chowse." The great "Mart" was a terrible failure and fiasco. The people who suffered most were the loyal merchants and shopkeepers of Tipperary—I mean loyal to the National Cause. They suffered, and I think they knew all through they were going to suffer. They used to say in the years following that Tipperary could never again return to its old prosperity, that the great folly had completely ruined it. I hope, however, that those who said so were wrong. I was greatly impressed by the Hurleys, the O'Brien Dal tons, and the other loyal people who had to suffer for New Tipperary. By the end of the year we were standing shoulder to shoulder by Mr. Parnell. I could have been sure of them, beforehand. I pray that there may be many like them in Ireland to-day. When you can find a good Tipperary man—or woman—you can stake your life on him or her.

That year, too, I find a mention here and there in my diary of Miss Gonne. I first saw her at a meeting of the Protestant Home Rule Association, to which she was accompanied by a Miss Ida Pirn. Her extraordinary beauty drew all eyes to her. She was the most beautiful woman I have ever seen, and in keeping with her beauty was an exquisite voice. She dressed beautifully as well, and in Dublin, where taste in dress is not a strong point, her dress made her as conspicuous as her beauty. When one met her walking in a Dublin street one felt as if a goddess had come to earth.

She was staying at that time at a Dublin hotel, where she entertained her friends hospitably. I have always been sorry that the accident of a letter remaining unposted, through the carelessness of the person to whom it was entrusted, should have prevented my being of her friends.

Her strange and winning beauty, together with her aloofness from all things unconcerned with the absorbing interest of her life, made her many enemies. Personally I have

never had any doubt that she saw only one thing, that she was absorbed by an enthusiasm so passionate and sincere that nothing else mattered to her. For men, or women, she had no use at all, as men and women. They were so many pawns in the revolutionary game. At first every man on whom she looked was in love with her—such women, too, as she was gracious to, who were above jealousy. I remember when the heads of all my male friends, young and old, were flustered by her beauty and grace. But they soon got over it. I have always held that love must have something to live upon, something of invitation if not of response. Her aloofness must have chilled the most ardent lover.

We were still timidly conventional in Dublin of that day. The middle-class conventions held us in check. No woman who was not very emancipated drove on an outside car unaccompanied by a male escort. Miss Gonne drove on a car quite alone, with only her bulldog for escort. That in itself made Dublin look askance at her. In Dublin the middle-class, a far narrower class, is as dominant and predominant as in England. The bulldog went everywhere with her. He followed her once majestically into the dining-room of the Westminster Palace Hotel, where she sat at a table at which were a couple of Irish patriots. She was absorbed in conversation when a waiter came and stood respectfully waiting to speak. At last she looked up. Some people in the dining-room had objected to the presence of Madam's bulldog. The manager was very sorry, but . . . "Remove him," said Miss Gonne, with the slightest pause in the conversation. The waiter looked at the bulldog, and like a prudent man, departed. Presently came the manager. "Would Madam be good enough to remove her dog? It was entirely against the rules," &c., &c. "Remove him," said Miss Gonne, proceeding with the conversation. In the result the bulldog stayed.

In the autumn of that year I visited Mr. Parnell's house, Avondale, Co. Wicklow. I had been staying with some friends, close at hand, and they drove me over one day. Looking back, my impressions are of a white, stucco-fronted, eighteenth-

century house at the head of a glen, pillared, porticoed in pseudo-classical style, the stuccoed walls wept upon by the green tears of the rain. A dusty hall, with a billiard-table, faded and frayed. Dusty rugs. A rusted grate. Something of sadness and loneliness over it all.

In an inner room, a library, there was a fire: and it was a pleasant room, overlooking the valley of the Avonmore river, having bookcases round the walls, which showed the gilt and tooled backs of the volumes of the Transactions of the Irish Parliament. Mr. Parneirs mining treatises lay in the deep window-seats. He had sunk a deal of money in his mining. Every time he had made up his mind to throw no more good money after bad there was a new find of ore and he went on again. It was due to him that in that last glorious and terrible year of his life he should know at last what it was to receive selfless devotion. The man who knows more about Mr. Parnell than any other man living, said the other day in my hearing that at a time when he had on hand two big contracts for the supply of paving setts to the corporations of Dublin and Cardiff the men at the Arklow Quarries struck for sevenpence a day increase of wages. "That sevenpence represented the profits." Oh, indeed, that Irish leader, like many Irish leaders, must have had many an illusion torn rudely from his eyes. But, to be sure, as the old man said when he came home to find all his people dead, "There are always the mountains."

I wrote in the *Speaker* about that visit of mine to Avondale. Looking back, my impression of the house is one of almost unrelieved gloom. There was a desolation about it: and it was not helped by the fact that the man who was showing us over the house had an epileptic seizure in the dining-room.

On the whole, looking back over my brief records of that year, I am struck by the extraordinary liberty I enjoyed. When my father trusted he trusted altogether. I seem to have been perpetually visiting and being visited by my friends, still the friends of the last couple of years

—Mrs. Gill, the Sigersons, Father Russell, Mr. Ashe King, Douglas Hyde, George Russell, W. B. Yeats. It was a year of social interests, chiefly, up to the last month of it. Despite my incessant junketing, I did a quite amazing amount of work. When I was at home I used to go to my own little room in the evening about 7, and write till 10 or 10.30. About that hour, I used to extinguish my lamp and grope my way in the darkness through the rooms which lay between me and the general sitting-room, where I would find my father sitting, smoking and reading while he waited for me. If he had gone to bed, I was depressed by the empty room: but that only happened when he was over-tired, or I had sat unconscionably late. I was always afraid going through the dark rooms lest something from behind should overtake me. It was correspondingly uplifting, when I had fumbled for the last handle and found it, to come out into the light and find the quiet figure, which always brought me such a rich sense of security, in the lamplit room. He would lay down his book, yawn, and say: "Well, love; are you done for to-night?" He always called me "love": and I was "Kate" to him, as I have never been to anyone else.

When I came home from my visits I often found him fast asleep in my little room, with my St. Bernard stretched out at his feet. The room would be fireless in my absence. He would have returned, weary, from fair or market, for which he had risen at 4 o'clock. One of my poignant memories of his latter days is of hearing him called in the dark of the morning, called and called again till at last he would shake off the fetters of sleep, and rise and go. He had no one to lift his burdens from him even when he was old.

There they would be, the man and the dog who loved me, happier in the fireless, empty room, because my presence yet lingered in it, than elsewhere by a fire.

Once I came home from an absence of some weeks. I had a great pile of correspondence awaiting me. So engrossed

was I in it that I never thought to look outside, where great improvements had been effected in my absence so that when I looked through my window I should see masses of flowers. He had told my sisters to say nothing about it, so that I should have the joy of the surprise. He looked up with eager anticipation when I came down to the sitting-room, and his face fell a little. I had been thinking only of my letters. I had seen nothing.

CHAPTER XXX

THE PARNELL SPLIT

IN November of that year came the O'Shea Divorce Case. It was no great surprise to anyone who had their ears and eyes open. I may state at once how the case stood for us who were loyal to Mr. Parnell, as to many others who for one or another reason were not loyal to him. There was no trail of the sensual over it at all. It appeared to us that this great and lonely man had had, for him, the irreparable misfortune of falling in love with a woman who was a wronged and deserted wife. There was no betrayal of a friend, no breaking up of a home: none of the bad features that usually accompany such cases. We had a very bad opinion of Captain O'Shea. Whatever might or might not have been his motive for publishing his wrongs at the eleventh hour, we believed that the story of the fire-escape was a malignant invention, sprung upon Mr. Parnell at a moment when his lips were sealed, because if collusion was proved there would be no divorce and consequently no marriage with the woman he adored. I state this point of view because it will explain how to many devout Catholic Irishwomen, to whom the sensual sin is the one thing abhorrent, the O'Shea Divorce Case was simply not considered at all.

I will also plead, in justice to those who opposed Mr. Parnell—there may have been some honest among them—that for a long time Mr. Parnell had almost disappeared from the public mind. For one reason or another the reins of leadership had hung so slackly that the leader was almost forgotten. He had lost his hold on people. If he had died then he would have left comparatively little mark behind. They might have gone on saying, as they were saying, that this, that, and the other had done the work and not he. It

needed that last crowded hour to show him as the giant he was. Reading now the comments of the English press at the time of his death I find that he was regarded then as a great but somewhat sinister figure—a sort of Satan after the Fall, splendid, but better away. The haggard desperado, invented by Sir F. Carruthers Gould, who figured on the cover of Mr. T. P. O'Connor's *Parnell Movement* as in the *Westminster Gazette*, had perhaps something to do with this view of him. English people thought he looked like Guy Fawkes. Whatever it said for Gould's qualities as a caricaturist, it said little for his inner imagination. But the judgment that sits behind our transient day, sifting, winnowing, casting into the dust or keeping, has reversed all that. Steadily, in all the years that have gone since his death, I have seen, while the little reputations faded away, Mr. Parnell's greatness grow brighter and brighter. It has come to be recognised that he was not only a great man of his day, but a great leader among the great leaders of history. "When Gladstone is a splendid commonplace," I heard Mr. J. L. Garvin say once, "Parnell will be remembered among the great men of the earth."

In my diary I find no mention at all of events before December 2. The Irish members had re-elected Mr. Parnell as their chairman: there had been the great meeting at the Leinster Hall at which they had pledged themselves to stand by him. The American delegates had sent home brave words. There was nothing to be excited about. Then came Committee Room 15. My father was, I think, away at a fair. On Tuesday the 2nd December I find this entry: "Spent all the morning reading speeches at Parnell meeting. Afterwards read them for papa." I remember how I read those speeches, under such excitement that I had to get up and walk up and down, up and down, to the great inconvenience of Pat, my St. Bernard, who occupied the hearthrug; and the room was narrow. I could do nothing. I was quivering from head to foot with excitement. I wanted to share my feelings with someone who would understand them, and my father was away. When he came home I read the speeches to him. Nothing could have been more indicative of the excitement

in our minds than the fact that I was able to read the speeches, that reticences were swept away like straws before a flood.

My father had not yet grasped the situation. "Well, Kate," he said, "would it not be as well if he retired for a while?"

"No, it wouldn't," said I, and started out on a passionate exposition of the case. In a day or two he was as strong a Parnellite as myself. The next day again I was reading the speeches and could do nothing else. On Monday the 8th I wrote to Mr. Parnell, a letter full of passionate loyalty doubtless. On Tuesday the 9th I went to town and got tickets at the National League for the great meeting at the Rotunda the following night.

On the morning of the 10th Mr. Parnell arrived in Dublin. We were heartened and delighted by his seizure that morning of *United Ireland*, which had gone against him. That was the quiet unhistoric seizure. He walked into the office of *United Ireland* with some of his followers, prepared for a fight if there was to be a fight. Mr. John Clancy, the sub-Sheriff of Dublin, who has been in every stirring event that has happened in Ireland in his time, cut short the palaver of Mr. Matthias MacDonnell Bodkin, who was in the editorial chair. "Will you walk out, Matty?" he asked, "or will you be thrown out?" Matty walked out; and Mr. Parnell left the office in charge of his followers.

That night there was the great meeting at the Rotunda. All Dublin was mad for Parnell. The Dublin working men are always to be found on the right side in politics, and this time Dublin was practically unanimous. Dora Sigerson (Mrs. Clement Shorter), Mary Fitzpatrick (now Mrs. W. Sullivan, the wife of the son of a one-time President of Queen's College, Cork; Dr. Sullivan is well known as a specialist in mental diseases and criminology), and myself started out from Dr. Sigerson's house in Clare Street under the escort of three Trinity College students. My father apparently had thought it wise to leave me to the care of a younger man, for he went on his own account.

I marvel now at the temerity that launched us into that

crowd, a seething, swaying, dense crowd that filled Sackville street as far as the Pillar and stretched up Rutland Square the way Mr. Parnell must come. None of us had any misgivings. We were too excited. We got into the crowd, and our escorts pushed and elbowed a way for us towards the door by which ticket-holders for the platform were to enter. I arrived safely enough, though just as we were carried in by the crowd as though by a wave of the sea, I heard a despairing cry from poor Mary Fitzpatrick, who was as small as a child, "Oh Katie, I've lost my Louise hat." She did indeed arrive without a vestige of her headgear from the Regent Street milliner, but herself intact fortunately. I daresay it made it easier for us that the whole crowd was in sympathy.

I found myself carried on a rush through the door where the stewards struggled in vain to take tickets. A moment for breathing; then another short struggle, and I was being helped up on to the platform by friendly hands, the first my father's. He was delighted that I was in safety and near him. What a moment it was! It was worth living for. Everyone was talking eagerly, excitedly: no one listening. All manner of people were shaking hands with one, as often as not, absolute strangers. Oh, that crowded hour of glorious life! It was well worth living for if one had had to die the next hour.

I quote here my immediate impressions of the meeting, contributed to some American paper or other.

"It was nearly 8.30 when we heard the bands coming, then the windows were lit up by the lurid glare of thousands of torches in the street outside. There was a distant roaring like the sea. The great gathering within waited, silent with expectation. Then the cheering began, and we craned our necks and looked out eagerly, and there was the tall, slender, distinguished figure of the Irish Leader, making its way across the platform. I don't think any words could do justice to his reception. The house rose at him; everywhere around there was a sea of passionate faces, loving, admiring, almost worshipping that silent, pale man. The cheering broke

out again and again; there was no quelling it. Mr. Parnell bowed from side to side, sweeping the assemblage with his glance. The people were fairly mad with excitement. I don't think anyone outside Ireland can understand what a charm Mr. Parnell has for the Irish heart; that wonderful personality of his, his proud bearing, his handsome, strong face, the distinction of look which marks him more than anyone I have ever seen. All these are irresistible to the artistic Irish.

"I said to Dr. Kenny who was standing by me: 'He is the only quiet man here.' 'Outwardly,' said the keen medical man, emphatically. Looking again, one saw the dilated nostrils, the flashing eye, the passionate face; the leader was simply drinking in thirstily this immense love, which must have been more heartening than one can say after that bitter time in the English capital. Mr. Parnell looked frail enough in body—perhaps the black frock-coat, buttoned so tightly across his chest, gave him that look of attenuation; but he also looked full of indomitable spirit and fire.

"For a time silence was not obtainable. Then Father Walter Hurley climbed on the table and stood with his arms extended. It was curious how the attitude silenced a crowd which could hear no words.

"When Mr. Parnell came to speak, the passion within him found vent. It was a wonderful speech; not one word of it for oratorical effect, but every word charged with a pregnant message to the people who were listening to him, and the millions who should read him. It was a long speech, lasting nearly an hour: but listened to with intense interest, punctuated by fierce cries against men whom this crisis had made odious, now and again marked in a pause by a deep-drawn moan of delight. It was a great speech—simple, direct, suave—with no device and no artificiality. Mr. Parnell said long ago, in a furious moment in the House of Commons, that he cared nothing for the opinion of the English people. One remembered it now, noting his passionate assurances to his own people, who loved him too well to ask questions."

After the meeting was over, so unsated were we that we

actually fought our way up Rutland Square to hear Mr. Parnell speak a few words from the balcony of the National Club to the huge crowd which had not been able to get into the Rotunda. Afterwards we went to Corless's, a famous Dublin restaurant of the day, where my father awaited us and gave us supper—a very needful thing, for enthusiasm is apt to make one very hungry. He would have oysters, and when the waiter asked him how many oysters he said, "Let us begin on a hundred." The waiter gasped, and I had much difficulty in inducing my father to begin with dozens instead of hundreds.

That night, during the meeting, *United Ireland* was recaptured by the Anti-Parnellites. Mr. Barry O'Brien has given an eye-witness's graphic account of the recapture, which was much more exciting than the original capture. My father brought the news of it to me, describing how Mr. Parnell tried to leap the railings into the area, and struggled with those who held him back, while his followers went in his stead. This time the Anti-Parnellites were not gently handled. I wonder they escaped with their lives from the crowd.

Mr. Parnell, it will be remembered, burst the door open with a crowbar before his eager followers could admit him. Rushing upstairs, he flung open the front window and spoke to the crowd. I have a curious relic of that day in my possession. A few years ago a young priest, whose father had been a strong Parnellite, sent it to me. It is a copy of Mr. T. P. O'Connor's *Parnell Movement* which Mr. Parnell found on the table in the *United Ireland* office, and flung into the street. The mud of the street where it fell face downward is on the printed page. Inside the fly-leaf is written :

" This book was thrown out of the office of *United Ireland* by Mr. Chas. S. Parnell, on the morning of December 11th, 1890, when he, by the aid of a crowbar, broke open the offices of the above newspaper. I was present and received the book as it fell to the ground from the window of said office.

A. H. BARDEN."

Dr. Shaw, the witty Fellow of T.C.D., and editor of the

Dublin *Evening Mail*, had referred to *United Ireland* under the editorship of Mr. Matthias Bodkin, with reference to its old days of prohibition, when it called itself "*Insuppressible United Ireland*," as "William O'Brien's Inexpressible held up by a Bodkin."

Father Healy's *jeu d'esprit* regarding Mr. Bodkin's violent expulsion may be given here.

"Sure, it was foretold in the Scriptures," he said, when he heard the news.

"Not really, Father."

"Oh, bedad it was. Don't you remember? 'And the lot fell upon Matthias.'"

The next excitement was the Kilkenny election, at which Mr. Parnell's candidate, Mr. Vincent Scully, was beaten. But before that I ought to have mentioned a visit I paid to the *United Ireland* office, which was being guarded by Mr. Parnell's men under siege. It was Mr. Pat O'Brien, I think, who took Mary Fitzpatrick and myself in. It was very thrilling. There was a concerted knock at the door, which opened and let us in. In the hall were several of Mr. Parnell's stalwarts, ready to throw out any enemy who presented himself. We stayed for a few minutes, looked round to see what was to be seen, and were let out again with the same precautions.

During the weeks that followed I was the recipient of many anonymous letters, some merely ugly and insulting, others written more in sorrow than in anger. A sadder thing was the parting of the ways which divided friend from friend, and made enemies of members of the same household. I suffered less in this way than most people, for practically all my friends were with me, except a priest here and there, who was professionally bound to be on the other side. As for members of the household—well, the members of my father's household were bound to be Parnellites. If they were not he would have wanted to know the reason why. Not that any one of them was disaffected, happily. Nor were our neighbours. Dublin and Dublin County were practically solid for Mr. Parnell.

At the first possible opportunity I became a member of the National League, which had remained loyal to Mr. Parnell. "We have the Leader; we have the paper; we have the League," said Dr. Byrne of the *Freeman's Journal*, little knowing how soon the paper would slip from under his feet. Women had not hitherto joined the League, but I was proposed and elected. Some other women followed my example—one, I think, Miss Charlotte O'Brien, the daughter of William Smith O'Brien, well known and honoured for her labours on behalf of Irish emigrant girls as well as for her literary work. She was a convert, and a fervent one, to the Catholic Church. Indeed, in my experience, the women who were loyal to Mr. Parnell were nearly all devout Catholics. It was not so very pleasant to be at daggers drawn with the priests, for us who were sincere and faithful Catholics. Indeed many of us suffered. But we believed we saw the right thing, and we did it without counting the cost. Time has proved that we were right.

But the Sunderings of friends were terrible. I still believe it was a sifting, and that the best took the side of Mr. Parnell. The bitterness was incredible. A distinguished Dublin Jesuit said to someone after I had joined the National League that if he met me in the street he would not lift his hat to me. I have said earlier in this book, or perhaps I only meant to say, that Father Russell never tried to argue me out of my convictions, even at the time of "the Split." I believe that is true. Certainly his friendship showed no slackening. Yet we were in opposite camps—of feeling. By chance, I have come upon a letter of my own to Mrs. Gill, in the autumn after Mr. Parnell's death. Her husband was an Anti-Parnellite. Not that it made any difference in my relations with that house, after one or two breezes. Mrs. Gill was too sweet and comfortable to be anti-anything with the thoroughness required in the bitter struggle of that day. From her greenhouses I carried a great basket of flowers to Mr. Parnell's lying-in-state. The letter betrays the inward bitterness of my soul when it was written. She was the dearest, warmest and sweetest of friends to me.

"On the whole I think I won't come. After all it is not fair to identify you too much with me. I've been feeling quite a wicked person since I received a letter this morning from Father Russell saying that he could do nothing for my poems or the Nun in the *Irish Monthly*, because of the part I'd taken in politics. It isn't *his* will, but stronger wills outside. He told me for the first time that several of his subscribers returned the *Irish Monthly* last December because I had something in it. They think me very wicked, but perhaps they are like the Pharisee in the Gospel in the sight of God."

Oh, it was not easy for many of us; it was bitterly hard for us to have the things said of us that were said then. The campaign against Mr. Parnell was conducted very often with reckless indecency. When a peasant is coarse he can be very coarse indeed. One's heart bled for the man who was stabbed through the woman he held dear. There was no pity, no mercy.

Sometimes the things that happened were amusing. A country meeting, with the parish priest in the chair, passed a resolution :

"That we, the members of the——branch of the——, do place on record our condemnation and scorn of brazen-faced Katherine Tynan for having joined ParneU's infamous League, and consider her a disgrace to the fair fame of Irish womanhood."

These things left no sting. Mr. Parnell was worth them, and our loyalty only burned up higher. But what a Catholic woman could suffer who was a devout Catholic while being a staunch follower of Mr. Parnell, may be read in the reports of the Meath Petition, which, tried before a Judge who was also a most devout Catholic, resulted in the unseating of the two Anti-Parnellite members because of the methods used to return them by the priests. Well—one turns to Mr. Parnell for a word of tolerance for the priests in those days. "The priests have been our very good friends in the past," he said. "They will be our very good friends in the future. Do not say a word against them."

That day at the National League my father and I stood

and talked with Mr. Parnell for a while. "I have not seen you," he said with the delicate enunciation which belonged to him, "since the party at Sir Charles Russell's." Kilkenny was fought and lost then. We talked of the fight. How changed his manner was to his friends in those days! It was not in him to be effusive: but he looked at you with a steady, friendly glance that said: "I know you: I can trust you: you are my friend."

Then or another day Mrs. Wyse Power, another ardent Parnellite, was present. "Ah, Mr. Parnell," she said, "things would have been very different if you had given us votes for women. You'd have swept the country."

"I daresay you are quite right," he said, smiling as he turned away.

Going along Sackville-O'Connell Street afterwards—it is characteristic of Ireland that the principal street of Dublin is named according to your religious and political convictions—under the portico of the Post Office I ran up against Sir William Butler. He stood frowning down at me. "We are at this moment the most disgraced people under Heaven," he said, with a terrible severity of aspect. I quailed. Was he an Anti-Parnellite, and could he read in my face that I had just been received into the National League? I was fighting my corner well and valiantly: but I had and have a constitutional aversion to running up against unpleasantness. There was a terrible pause. Then: "The people who have betrayed a leader like Parnell will never make a nation!"

Oh, the relief of it! I wrung his hand joyously. He must have been amazed at the change in my face.

CHAPTER XXXI

1891

THE year 1891 was completely absorbed by the Parnell campaign. Never was such a parting of the ways. Only Parnellites came to our house in those days, and I may say that it was a very hospitable house. How we talked! There was something electrical in the atmosphere that kept us tense and eager all that year. If occasionally, very occasionally, a faint-heart or a wobbler—to say nothing of an Anti-Parnellite—found themselves by accident in this nest of Parnellites, how he or she was *ccrase*, wiped out. But wobblers or faint-hearts or Anti-Parnellities did not come after the first.

Oh, the exhilaration of those days, when we had a Chief who was worth fighting for! My devotion to Mr. Parnell left me, so far as politics are concerned, burnt out, exhausted. How drab the days, how small the politicians, to us who knew Parnell!

The excitement, the exaltation carried us along. We ran through the year, little knowing what waited us at the end. I see now, after twenty-one years, that Parnell lives and shines by that one year. To the Muse of History it matters very little whether movements fall or succeed, whether men live or die untimely. She is concerned only with men. And here was a man to whom longer living could have added nothing of lustre, of splendour. To the Muse of History it matters little that Parnell died when he did. He had reached his full height. His place is secure.

Sunday after Sunday an ardent band of Parnellites surrounded my father's board. In that summer of 1891 there was that series of meetings throughout the country to which Mr. Parnell travelled Sunday after Sunday as though he knew

the night was coming. His restless energy in those days was amazing. He must have been borne up in that last year, above the cruelties he suffered, by the passion of loyalty he had evoked from those who had remained true to him. If his path was beset by brutality and insult, which must have been terribly galling to his proud and sensitive nature, it was beset also by loyalties, little and great. The little loyalties were the sweet loyalties of the poor and humble.

Even still, after twenty-one years, one comes upon traces of it. A couple of years ago I happened to be staying in a Dublin hotel. It was a wet October Sunday—Parnell Sunday. "A bad day for the Procession!" I said to the chambermaid. "Aye," she said; "the sky's weepin' for him; it always does." I—"It's like his funeral day." She—"It is: I remember it well." I (surprised)—"But you must have been very young at the time." She—"I was only a slip, but I followed him all the same. The skies were eryiif for him, and they've cried ever since. Sure, why wouldn't they? It was the worst day we ever had when we lost him."

The other day I was lunching at the house of a well-known Irish Conservative politician. He said to me: "I suppose you were a tremendous Parnellite?" "Was and am and shall be," I returned. "I thought it was all over in the quiet nearly twenty years of my life in England. But when I came back I knew it was there still. I am True Blue Parnellite through and through."

Saying which, I turned about to the man-servant who was offering me a dish. I met a face of such delighted and beaming approval that I knew, before the mask of the well-trained servant fell again, that here was a Parnellite and a brother.

In that year my *Life of Mother Xaveria Fallon* had the misfortune, for the Nuns, to be published. The *National Press* of the Anti-Parnellites, which the ragged little newsboys of Dublin, Parnellite to a boy, used to offer you as "Tim Healy's toe-rag," appeared with a couple of columns of abuse of me and the book, tearing the poor nuns to pieces incidentally.

It caused the utmost consternation among the nuns. Some of them, I fear, have looked at me askance ever since, because it was my Parnellism which was responsible for this amazing farrago of insult. For many years I thought it was written by an old friend of mine, James O'Connor, once a Fenian, later on a member of Parliament. I was glad to learn in later years that the author was really a person who is now a Professor in the National University whom I remember as a pink-nosed boy lavishing complimentary epithets upon the young debaters in a Convent-School Debating Society of which I was President.

It was strange indeed to be cast down from the pedestal of honour which I had occupied with priests and nuns and the orthodox Catholics generally. Mr. Parnell stood with his back against the wall. We also who stood by him had our backs against the wall, with all the forces allied against us. To be sure there were priests with us, but not many of them spoke out as did Father Nicholas Murphy, P.P. of Kilmanagh, Co. Kilkenny, who kept in the forefront of the battle with us all the time; not many of them were like Father Walter Hurley. I turned up the other day a pamphlet which brought joy to our hearts in those days: "A Defence of the Parnell Leadership by a D.D. of Rome." I never knew who the D.D. of Rome was, but his Defence was a great comfort to us.

The Parnell betrayal remains and will remain as the most disgraceful fact in Irish history. A word about the character of those who stood by Parnell may not be uninteresting. Of his own party the few notorious evil-livers deserted him on "the moral question." Those who stood by him, the Redmonds, Dr. Kenny, Edmund Leamy, James Carew, Timothy Harrington and others were irreproachable. And speaking of Timothy Harrington, one remembers that he alone of the four members of Parliament in America at the time of "the Split," stood by his Leader without hesitation. I remember his telling me when he came back how the Irish servants, hanging over the banisters of the New York hotel, called out to him: "Mr. Harrington, stick to the Chief. Mr. Harrington, never desert him."

Mr. Parnell had a great fascination for women, but he fascinated men almost as much. There is one of those who stood by him for whose action I have always had the greatest admiration, and that is Count Plunkett. Count Plunkett belonged to what one might call the official Catholics of Dublin. I mean he was one of those trusted Catholic laymen who represented the best and the most orthodox Catholic feeling of Dublin. He had entertained the Papal Legate, Monsignor Persico, when he came to Dublin. He was a Papal Count. In all things he was of the most orthodox. Yet he came out to stand by Parnell, at whose Land League movement he had looked askance, and bore with the rest of us the obloquy, the unjust condemnation, the wrongs, that even yet have left their iron in the soul.

It was worth it all. A good many of those who went against Mr. Parnell may have wished in later days that they had acted differently. As I have said, at the moment the issue was obscured by those years during which Mr. Parnell had lain *perdu*. For the sure instinct which made me spring to his side then I can never be grateful enough. It was worth all one could suffer to have taken the right road at the parting of the ways.

There was plenty of exhilaration for us in that year. No adherent to the big battalions can ever know the joy of fighting against immense odds with a leader who is worth all the risks and all the chances. We laughed! Being Irish, we laughed a deal in that year that was to end in tears. Mr. Parnell himself enjoyed the fight. "What will you do, Mr. Parnell," someone asked him, "if you are the only member of your party returned in the next Parliament?" "Then I shall be sure of having a party whose integrity will not be sapped," he replied. For the first time he was sure of the passionate fealty of his followers. For the first time he was a King. For the first time we had a King for whom the sacrifice of life itself would not have been a hard thing. "Charlie is my darling," we used to say as we lived over again the Jacobite passion of loyalty for our born King of men.

My father followed him about to all his great meetings.

Sometimes the meetings were near home, and a number of the members of Parliament and prominent speakers would come in for a meal. Sometimes the meeting was at a distance. Once, at Thurles, my father, standing behind Mr. Parnell and thinking he looked tired, procured a chair and drew his attention to it by touching him on the shoulder. Mr. Parnell turned round with a sharp, nervous irritability. Seeing who it was, the fierce look softened. "Ah, I didn't know it was you, Andrew," he said. My father liked to lay stress on that "Andrew."

I remember a story that made Mr. Parnell laugh. It was of a County Kerry small farmer of whom the neighbours said: "That's the greatest man alive. He made four priests out of three cows and a few pigs."

Once a friend of mine sitting beside him at dinner spoke sympathetically of the immense fatigues he had to bear. Mr. Parnell smiled. "All that is a bagatelle," he said. "The only thing I am afraid of is the bad whisky."

My father, in his top hat and black overcoat faced with velvet, might have passed for a very good-looking parish priest. The story was started by some of the frolicsome ones that his appearance on various platforms had brought over many waverers, that the people said, "Sure, hasn't Parnell got a suspended Bishop going about with him?" This humorousness my father heard with a wry smile. He would not have minded being taken for a Bishop. It was the "suspended" he did not like. Similarly he was displeased with a genealogist who traced his descent from an Abbot of Glendalough about the time of St. Patrick. He thought it a reflection on the conduct of an ancestor.

We used to wait at the newspaper offices for the results of the elections. There was one at Carlow in that summer. Mr. Parnell's candidate, Mr. A. J. Kettle, was defeated. Another Professor of the National University, who had been a friend of mine before the Split, and came to see me the other day after the lapse of years, told me that on the day the Carlow election returns came in he was warned by one of the Sigersons not to go a certain way. "You will meet Katie," she said, "and she

is furious." I forgave that Anti-Parnellite because during all the bitter time he was bringing the Parnellite papers to a nun who was an ardent Parnellite and the sister of perhaps the best-known priest in Dublin.

I have another friend to whom I said the other day: "I only forgive you for having been Anti-Parnellite because you were always a Whig." Being the most reasonable person in the world, he accepted the statement, even remarking cheerfully, "That is like Parnell. 'No one minds B—,' he said. 'He was always a Whig.'"

In June 1891 Mr. Parnell married Mrs. O'Shea. Only in Ireland would it have followed that the campaign against him became more merciless and more deadly. Those "moralists" had neither reason nor mercy. Some of them who owed everything to Mr. Parnell were among the most rabid of his revilers. I have heard of one of the deadliest of his enemies at the time of the Galway Election coming to a newspaper man with a telegram from Mrs. O'Shea to Mr. Parnell. It had been intercepted somehow or other. It ran—it sounds Pickwickian—"Be sure to wear your skull-cap when speaking." "Now," said this person, "now we have clear proof of his infamy. Here is evidence of this disgraceful intrigue, and all the world shall hear of it." The other man waited till he had done: then said quietly, "If you would only keep your head you would see that that telegram would tell in his favour and not against him. Don't you see that it is a wife and not a mistress who sends such a message? And other people will see it too." That telegram never reached the public.

Over the elections there used to be great fun and excitement. Stories were flying from one to another of the encounters with the priests who brought the obedient voters to the polling booths; of the number of dead men who voted; of the word that was handed round, "Vote Early and Vote Often." Very often the stories were "ben trovato," but there were "playboys" in those days who were up to all sorts of pranks. One of the most prominent among these was Michael Manning, a Waterford man, about seven feet high and broad in proportion. Once when we offered him a lift on an outside

car, we, being a very comfortable weight, were high in air, while his feet almost trailed on the ground. He had an immense red face, a rolling eye of infinite humour, and the richest brogue imaginable. He addressed all the world as "Child!" from an immense height, and the first sight of him was calculated to send one off into bubbling laughter with an anticipation of joyous things to come. He was up to any amount of "divilment," and so was John O'Mahony, newly come up from Cork, who was afterwards my brother-in-law. What rich laughter there was at my father's dinner-table, Sunday after Sunday, when these and such as these were present!

One should have kept a commonplace book in those days. Coming back to Ireland we have found that the multiplicity of good stories poured into our ears at a sitting have this effect, that they jostle each other so that it is very hard to disentangle one from the other. Perhaps the sense is blunted by some years of life in English country. The elections certainly were full of humour. They had their absurdities. An Anti-Parnellite voter would be driven to the polling booth by his Parnellite coachman: each would go in and record his vote, with the result that both might as well have stayed at home. In the General Election which came after Mr. Parnell's death my father was personating agent for the Parnellite candidate at the Tallaght polling-booth. He kept a sharp look-out for men in his own employment as they came to vote. Of only one had he any doubt—a cantankerous person, who was always in opposition. "Walk in there, Mick," said my father, in a terrible voice, "and vote according to your conscience. And if you don't it will be the worse for you."

In a good many churches at that time there were Anti-Parnellite sermons or addresses delivered by the priests on Sunday mornings. The Parnellite men in some cases answered by walking out when the sermon began. This was from my point of view deplorable—and illogical. I said as much once to an intellectual priest. "It may be illogical," he said, "but it's human nature." Well, one story I heard was of an occasion when seven men stood up and left the church. Father Pat

paused for a second, then remarked while they were still within hearing, "There go the Seven Deadlies."

Another story of those days was concerned with the fear among the more ignorant of the peasantry that something dreadful would happen to them if they opposed the priests. "Did you ever hear, Molly," asked a weak-kneed one of his stout better half, "that the priest could turn you into a mouse if you were to go against him?" "I'm ashamed of you," said Molly, "to be talkin' such nonsense." "You don't think there's anything in it?" "'Deed an' I don't, you foolish man." "Well, anyway—wouldn't it be just as well to turn out the cat?"

We used to meet Mr. Parnell at the Kingsbridge when he returned from his meetings. I think it was the evening of the Carlow result that we drove down on an outside car to await his arrival, and receive his hearty handshake as he left the train. We drove after his car to Dr. Kenny's—coming in for some of the cheering—went in and talked with him, he standing with his back to the fire, without which one does not go even of a summer evening in Ireland, talking easily in the most friendly way till the dinner-bell rang and we went away, leaving him to the food and rest he needed.

It was a year of incessant movement. I remember the Leinster Hall Convention, and the waiting crowds outside, and the enthusiasm within the Hall. In the midst of the enthusiasm, Mr. Parnell turned quietly aside for a talk with a Dr. Hyland, who was a mining expert, on the subject of his Wicklow mines. This detachment reminded me of the days long ago when the Land League was only in its inception. He was in the chair; at his feet a beautiful red setter dog which had accompanied him from Avondale. In mid-course of business he got up, went out and was absent for some time, to the amazement of the others. When at last he came back he said very quietly, "I remembered that the dog had not had his dinner."

We were always going to meetings of one kind or another. My father had accepted the Presidency of the Working Men's Club at Inchicore, the members of which were mainly the skilled artisans employed in the great railway works.

He was very much beloved by these men, and he never missed a meeting. The meetings took place in the evening, and were often prolonged to a late hour. I used to sit, more or less patiently, waiting for him, in the little pony-trap outside. Sometimes it must have been very late. I remember a night of full moon—one side of the street light as day, the other in velvety black shadow. Suddenly, from the blackness there was projected upon the bright space a number of queer shadows, coming in a procession. I watched, with half-alarmed curiosity: and presently the shadows resolved themselves into a man carrying a table on his head, a woman carrying a shapeless bundle, and three children carrying respectively a chair, a sweeping-brush, and a teapot. I remembered it was the eve of Quarter-day, and realised that here was a flitting of the kind that "shoots the moon.*"

I had not always things so diverting to occupy me: but after the meeting we used to drive home—we had usually bought something in the way of shell-fish for our supper—to find the family gone to bed and the door on the latch, and Pat, my St. Bernard, left on guard, coming out with a wagging tail to welcome us. I can feel myself blinking now, coming in from the dark night to the firelit, lamplit room with its spread supper-table. After we had enjoyed our supper we used to sit and talk while my father smoked. Ah—they were good days. One lived every hour of them.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE NIGHT

ON the first Sunday of October 1891, Michael Manning, "Long" John Clancy, and others of the wild spirits had played a notable prank. After Mr. Parnell's marriage the *Freeman's Journal* had ratted to the Anti-Parnellites. The prank was to have a mock funeral of the *Freeman* to Kilbarrack Churchyard, near Howth, where Higgins, "the Sham Squire," an infamous eighteenth-century celebrity who was one of the first founders of the *Freeman*, was buried. It was a prank which set all Dublin laughing—but, alas!

That was the day of the Creggs meeting, to which Mr. Parnell went in defiance of his doctors. "If I do not go," he said, "they will say I am dead." He went in company with Mr. J. P. Quinn, long connected with his movement; and Mr. Luke Hayden was the only one of his party at the meeting.

Next day there was the inaugural meeting of the new paper at the National League Rooms. Mr. Parnell came in looking very pale and ill, his arm in a sling. It was a crowded meeting, barely standing-room. We all noticed how ill the Chief looked, and some of us begged Mr. Harrington to fetch him a chair, which he did, although he said that Mr. Parnell would not like it; and sure enough he refused to sit down. He stood during his speech, but at the end he was obviously very much exhausted, though instead of sitting down he went and leant against the wall with a very weary air.

We were all in high spirits. The greater the reverses, the greater the opposition, the higher rose our spirits. There was something extraordinarily refined about Mr. Parnell's voice and way of speaking. I remember his references to "young Mr. Gray" at that meeting—poor "young Mr. Gray," who I believe really had some elements of greatness about him, if the

bad fairy had not dropped in something of indecision, of insincerity among the good fairy's gifts at his christening, if he had not been too young, if he had had a less troubled time in which to play his part, if he had had wise counsellors. He had found himself a mere boy in command of the *Freeman's Journal* at one of the most difficult moments in Irish history. The *Freeman* went Parnellite. Young Gray had magnificent ideas. He started special trains to distribute the papers all over the country in the early mornings. He had more ideas than have gone to the making of huge journalistic fortunes. He had delightful manners, and the Irish youth of his class is often lacking in manners. He was gentle, courteous, painstaking: he could stand a baiting which few men could have endured, with scarcely a quiver of the eyelids. It was said that his mother, a devout Catholic, took fright at the strenuousness of the fight between Parnellism and the priests: that her scruples prevailed with her son when the *Freeman* "ratted."¹ I have only to say, *en parenthese*, that women as religious as she stood by Mr. Parnell to the end.

Well it was not often that Mr. Parnell handled an opponent ungently, and he was perfectly gentle in his references to young Gray. It was always a delight to hear him speak. He was surrounded by a crowd of orators of the florid kind; and he was not called an orator, by his own people at least. But if direct and quiet yet passionate appeal, a capacity for saying the thing he needed to say in the most convincing and briefest manner, a fastidious choice of words, a fine reticence, a beautiful delivery, and a voice of the most delicate *timbre* could make an orator, he was one. In fact I look upon him as the finest orator I ever heard. I may be prejudiced. I have suffered all my life from an incapacity for hearing the spoken word without drowsiness and languor. Wherefore being read aloud to is little pleasure, and in the matter of sermons I find great difficulty in following. I have heard Mr. Parnell speak amid a crowd of orators who have only succeeded in making me drowsy. When he began every sense was alert. Here would be no flummery. Not a redundant word. He had his message to deliver, and he would

deliver it in the clearest, the most concise way. In that year of the "Split" it was heart speaking to heart, deep calling to deep.

I remember that some of the speakers—the plain men who were ready to plank down money for their shares—were a bit prolix, and Mr. Harrington, who was "boss" of the League, was inclined to closure them somewhat abruptly. But Mr. Parnell would not have it. In his quiet way he interposed. Everyone should have his say.

One very wild-looking man, who was sitting in the body of the meeting just in front of Mr. Parnell, had started up two or three times to obtain a hearing. Mr. Parnell leant forward with his air of perfect courtesy, and asked him to wait his turn. The turn came. Up got the wild man of the West, his flaming locks flying in the breeze. "Your name, please?" said Mr. Parnell. Then came a tremendous roar. "Mr. O'Tiehir*"—a pause—"from Clare." There was a huge outburst of laughter, in which Mr. Parnell joined, and it was some time before the merriment subsided sufficiently to allow the would-be orator to proceed.

Mr. Parnell had captured the hillside men, that is to say the Fenians. Mr. O'Hehir from Clare was one of them, I think, and I rather think also that he played a romantic part a few years later in the history of the time. The Fenians were certainly representative of what was most ideal in Irish Nationalism. They had hated the Land League rightly. John O'Leary, the most stainless idealist, had come forward to stand by Parnell at the time of the Split. I remember how he used to give one of his great laughs. "Good God in Heaven," he would say, "while he was ruining the morals of the country they were all with him. Now that it is only a question of his own morals they are all against him." John O'Leary had a way of saying everything excellently well. In their own place I shall give some of his *obiter dicta*.

After the meeting we all crowded round Mr. Parnell, for a word and a hand-shake. He was crossing to England that night. Dr. Kenny, who watched over him with many loves rolled into one, was against his travelling. But he was not

one to submit. I dare say, being so ill, he longed to be at home with the one heart he leant upon.

"I will come back on Saturday week," he said.

Things were always preceptibly duller when he was out of the country. I had a visitor, Anna Johnston, who became afterwards Mrs. Seumas MacManus—Ethna Carbery of the poems and the poetic prose. She too was an ardent Parnellite, her father being an old hillside man.

On Wednesday, the 7th of October, she and I went into Dublin together. We had a day of gaieties before us, and were as happy as possible. We thought it strange afterwards that we should have been so happy.

Going down town on top of the tram we became aware of an unusual commotion in the street: of groups standing about talking, of people asking questions and going away with a hanging head. Suddenly there was a clamour, and the streets were full of the newsboys shouting the Stop-Press Edition. "Death of Mr. Parnell! Death of Mr. Parnell!"

We got down from the tram at Trinity College. The air was full of the horrible sounds. We would *not* believe it. It was a device of the enemy, a wicked, horrible lie that would be contradicted almost as soon as it was spoken. Everyone was buying papers and talking in agitated voices. We spoke to absolute strangers as we snatched our papers. "Do you think it is true?" No one knew. We would not believe it. We had said that with the Chief—only the Chief—our cause must win. We could afford to wait while all those others went by. We could not believe that Death himself had intervened and that the great days were over.

We went down to the National League. When we came into the outer office, Timothy Harrington stared at us in a blind way, turned about, and went into the inner office. The place was besieged with people clamouring to know if the news was true.

We went home. I really feared for the effect of the shock on my father, whom we had left going quietly about his country business. I thought I would go home and tell him myself, but he had had a telegram before I arrived.

Even then—what passionate gratitude we had to the occasional priest who came in with the others to the National League Office, asked if it was true, and turned away with a stricken face. There was a considerable number of priests who were Parnellites, but, since it is the essential thing of a priest's being to obey, few made any public show of their loyalty.

Two days later we were arranging for a public funeral. I remember Edmund Leamy, that soft-hearted, thorough-going idealist, James Carew, charming, debonnair, Henry Harrison, the tall "Stripling" whom we loved because he had fought by the Chief's side "in the danger zone," perhaps a little, too, because he was young, good-looking, and had delightful manners. There we sat hearing the arrangements being made. Now that dear, high-minded, honest Tim Harrington is gone to his reward, it will not hurt him if I say that while he hustled through the business and put a stopper on the impracticable ones, we recalled the gentle patience and courtesy of the Chief, whom we should never have with us again.

The Saturday morning we spent—a Ladies' Committee had been formed hastily—arranging flowers and wreaths for the funeral. If the names of some of those who sent flowers were told at this day it would be an indiscretion—wives of high officials: shining lights in the Catholic life of Dublin: names had to be suppressed sometimes: ah, well, we did not doubt that these good friends had reasons for not coming into the open. So long as they loved the Chief they were our sisters and friends. Again I will say that women of the most saintly lives were ardent Parnellites, while men, not at all saintly, were his bitter enemies.

We went home early. My spiritual counsellor said to me that day: "Well, well, it's a troubled time. It is very hard not to be bitter and angry, but we can try not to be." He was one of those priests of the Orders, who had made it easy for us to keep in touch with Heaven during those troubled times.

What a night! In the night the storm sprang up. I had fallen into a troubled sleep when I was awakened by the

piteous baying of my St. Bernard. It was a quite unusual thing with him, and there was terror and anguish in his baying. Then the wind was let loose. It cried as no wind ever cried in my experience. Anguish and tears and desolation. The elements were mourning Ireland's Dead, and the ghosts of dead heroes were going by. The anguish and the trouble of the night and the rain daunted hearts already oppressed to the last point of endurance. No one could sleep during that dreadful night of keening, keening.

Anna Johnston and I got up for early Mass. We were going to the funeral. We put on our heavy mourning badges with a forlorn air and went like widows to the church, where the people stared at us. A firebrand curate might have told us to take off that crape before approaching the Altar of God. But nothing happened. Perhaps the intervention of Death came as a melancholy triumph to those of our enemies who had hearts and souls. Hatred had been fed full enough by the last infamy of the "Stop Thief" article that rang in the ears of a dying lion.

After breakfast we drove into Dublin. We drove first to the *United Ireland* office to pick up some of our party. It was still wild and wet. I can see plainly now that October morning and the dingy office, and myself standing talking with Mr. J. L. Garvin, who had come over for the funeral. He was at that time on the *Newcastle Chronicle*, and John M'Grath, the assistant editor of *United Ireland*, who had a huge and well-founded opinion of him, had introduced us with a melancholy pride. We stood and talked in low tones about the Chief while we awaited the others of our contingent. I should not be surprised if Mr. Garvin's great enthusiasm, which nothing can ever replace, were, not for Sir Edward Carson or Mr. Bonar Law, nor even for Tariff Reform, but for Mr. Farnell.

We had to leave our carriage in a side street and get as best we could to the City Hall where was the lying-in-state. Again the indomitable and tiny Mary Fitzpatrick was of the party. This time we were a party of women, braving that enormous swaying crowd. For some reason we had thought we could get close to the City Hall in the carriage.

Dublin had been awake since daylight, and some of it all night. In the dark of the morning a procession of people accompanied by bands had gone down to receive Mr. Parnell, who had kept his word to the letter and had come home.

The rain, the desolation, the crying of the wind! Someone has told me how terrible it was to hear the coming of the bands and the steady march of men's feet through the storm in the dark as they came, bringing him home. For some minutes the procession halted before the Old House in College Green, where he would have led us, a united Ireland. Then on again to the City Hall, tramp, tramp, to the desolate music, poor mortals whose idol had been snatched from them by the Veiled Figure, against whom one may cry and rage in vain.

Again we were in a dense crowd of packed human beings, this time to see his coffin. It was a very quiet crowd except when there was one of those inexplicable swayings which are the dangerous moments in a crowd. As we came up Dame Street I had seen the terrible black wing of crape which swung out from the portico of the City Hall and hung above the heads of the crowd. I do not know who was responsible for that wing, or I have forgotten. Whoever he was, he was a genius. Anything more ominous, more terrible than that great black pinion between us and the sky I cannot well imagine. It was as though some Bird of Death hung with extended wings above us, silent, brooding, motionless.

Some good fellow in the crowd took charge of little Mary Fitzpatrick, saving her from being pressed to death. Little by little we moved on, till someone lifted us on to the steps of the City Hall. In turn we entered the Death Chamber and stood by the coffin heaped with flowers. The feeling was tense. Someone laughed out of sight, a laugh of some overwrought woman in all probability; but that anyone could laugh, within hearing, hurt one like an intolerable affront.

I do not know how long we spent on the steps of the City Hall, while the never-ending procession circled round the coffin. We must have been there many hours, of which I remember very little, except the poignant shock it was to come

face to face with Mr. Henry Parnell, who bore a striking resemblance to his brother.

The crowd was very kind. Every man in it was a man and a brother, and we were kept in sheltered corners, provided with chairs, by the kindness of a total stranger. To be sure we were all in one common grief that day. At long last the coffin came, carried on the shoulders of his colleagues of the Parliamentary Party. I remember Mr. Rochfort Maguire going first down the steep steps, the weight of the coffin shifting on to his shoulders. They had been tender to the Chiefs loathing of the coffin shape—that terrible shape indeed which rises between us poor mortals and the sun, and grows with our growth—and had given him a coffin of straight sides. And still the Wing of Death hung limp as though the Bird drooped in the sky.

We drove by a circuitous route to the cemetery, to find the grave guarded by Gaels, holding their *camans* or hurley sticks together to make a living barrier. The procession meanwhile was treading its slow way through the streets. A grave-digger offered me a flower from the grave and an ivy-leaf, telling me that the grave was beautifully lined with moss. We stood near the grave-head, inside the line of *camans*. The storm had passed by and it was very still and chilly, the air suffused with a clear green and golden light, the autumn evening fast drawing in. Stars were looking out of the quiet sky; and a great peace had fallen in the wake of the storm.

At last came the procession and the solemn funeral service of the English Church.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord. He that believeth in Me though he were dead yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall not die."

The voice of the reader was a good voice, and he did justice to the glorious words. The great crowd, nearly altogether a Catholic crowd, listened in a mournful silence to the living words of hope and consolation, while the Gaels with their linked *camans* kept the pressure away from the grave.

The service went on to its close.

"Man born of a woman hath but a short time to live and

is full of misery : he cometh up and is cut down likela flower: he fleeth as it were a shadow and never continueth in one stay."

The coffin was lowered. A woman shrieked, and there was a second's confusion: then stillness and the silvery voice of the reader. But as earth touched earth—and anyone who was present will bear me out in this—the most glorious meteor sailed across the clear space of the heavens and fell suddenly. He had omens and portents to the end.

Then we turned about, leaving him to the night and the Mercy of God, and went home with the stillness and the darkness in our hearts.

That was the end of one great chapter of Irish history.

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