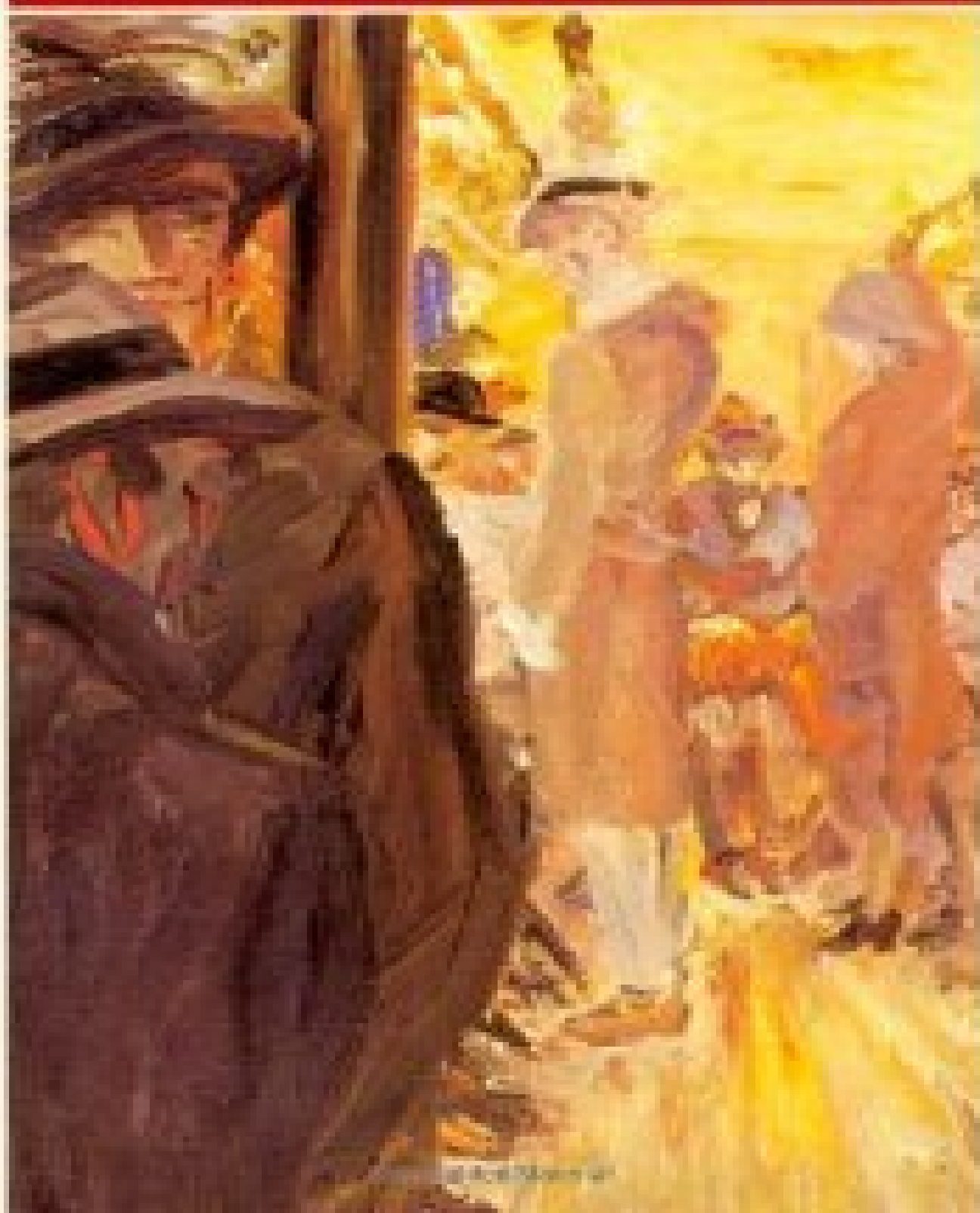


OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS

JAMES JOYCE  
DUBLINERS



The Project Gutenberg Etext of Dubliners

by James Joyce

(#1 in our series by James Joyce)

Dubliners

by James Joyce

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## DUBLINERS

### THE SISTERS

THERE was no hope for him this time: it was the third stroke.

Night after night I had passed the house (it was vacation time) and

studied the lighted square of window: and night after night I had

found it lighted in the same way, faintly and evenly. If he was

dead, I thought, I would see the reflection of candles on the

darkened blind for I knew that two candles must be set at the head

of a corpse. He had often said to me: "I am not long for this world," and I had thought his words idle. Now I knew they were

true. Every night as I gazed up at the window I said softly to myself the word paralysis. It had always sounded strangely in my

ears, like the word gnomon in the Euclid and the word simony in

the Catechism. But now it sounded to me like the name of some

maleficent and sinful being. It filled me with fear, and yet I longed

to be nearer to it and to look upon its deadly work.

Old Cotter was sitting at the fire, smoking, when I came downstairs to supper. While my aunt was ladling out my stirabout

he said, as if returning to some former remark of his:

"No, I wouldn't say he was exactly... but there was something

queer... there was something uncanny about him. I'll tell you my

opinion...."

He began to puff at his pipe, no doubt arranging his opinion in his

mind. Tiresome old fool! When we knew him first he used to be

rather interesting, talking of fairs and worms; but I soon grew

tired of him and his endless stories about the distillery.

"I have my own theory about it," he said. "I think it was one of

those ... peculiar cases .... But it's hard to say...."

He began to puff again at his pipe without giving us his theory. My

uncle saw me staring and said to me:

"Well, so your old friend is gone, you'll be sorry to hear."

"Who?" said I.

"Father Flynn."

"Is he dead?"

"Mr. Cotter here has just told us. He was passing by the house."

I knew that I was under observation so I continued eating as if the

news had not interested me. My uncle explained to old Cotter.

"The youngster and he were great friends. The old chap taught him

a great deal, mind you; and they say he had a great wish for him."

"God have mercy on his soul," said my aunt piously.

Old Cotter looked at me for a while. I felt that his little beady black eyes were examining me but I would not satisfy him by

looking up from my plate. He returned to his pipe and finally spat

rudely into the grate.

"I wouldn't like children of mine," he said, "to have too much to

say to a man like that."

"How do you mean, Mr. Cotter?" asked my aunt.

"What I mean is," said old Cotter, "it's bad for children. My idea is:

let a young lad run about and play with young lads of his own age

and not be... Am I right, Jack?"

"That's my principle, too," said my uncle. "Let him learn to box his

corner. That's what I'm always saying to that Rosicrucian there:

take exercise. Why, when I was a nipper every morning of my life

I had a cold bath, winter and summer. And that's what stands to me

now. Education is all very fine and large.... Mr. Cotter might take a

pick of that leg mutton," he added to my aunt.

"No, no, not for me," said old Cotter.

My aunt brought the dish from the safe and put it on the table.

"But why do you think it's not good for children, Mr. Cotter?"  
she  
asked.

"It's bad for children," said old Cotter, "because their mind  
are so  
impressionable. When children see things like that, you  
know, it  
has an effect...."

I crammed my mouth with stirabout for fear I might give  
utterance

to my anger. Tiresome old red-nosed imbecile!

It was late when I fell asleep. Though I was angry with old  
Cotter

for alluding to me as a child, I puzzled my head to extract  
meaning

from his unfinished sentences. In the dark of my room I  
imagined

that I saw again the heavy grey face of the paralytic. I drew  
the

blankets over my head and tried to think of Christmas. But  
the grey

face still followed me. It murmured, and I understood that it



desired to confess something. I felt my soul receding into some

pleasant and vicious region; and there again I found it waiting for

me. It began to confess to me in a murmuring voice and I wondered why it smiled continually and why the lips were so moist with spittle. But then I remembered that it had died of paralysis and I felt that I too was smiling feebly as if to absolve the

simoniac of his sin.

The next morning after breakfast I went down to look at the little

house in Great Britain Street. It was an unassuming shop, registered under the vague name of Drapery . The drapery consisted mainly of children's bootees and umbrellas; and on

ordinary days a notice used to hang in the window, saying:

Umbrellas Re-covered . No notice was visible now for the shutters

were up. A crape bouquet was tied to the doorknocker with ribbon.

Two poor women and a telegram boy were reading the card pinned

on the crape. I also approached and read:

July 1st, 1895

The Rev. James Flynn (formerly of S. Catherine's Church,  
Meath Street), aged sixty-five years.

R. I. P.

The reading of the card persuaded me that he was dead and  
I was

disturbed to find myself at check. Had he not been dead I  
would

have gone into the little dark room behind the shop to find  
him

sitting in his arm-chair by the fire, nearly smothered in his  
great-coat. Perhaps my aunt would have given me a packet  
of High

Toast for him and this present would have roused him from  
his

stupefied doze. It was always I who emptied the packet into  
his

black snuff-box for his hands trembled too much to allow  
him to

do this without spilling half the snuff about the floor. Even as  
he

raised his large trembling hand to his nose little clouds of smoke

dribbled through his fingers over the front of his coat. It may have

been these constant showers of snuff which gave his ancient

priestly garments their green faded look for the red handkerchief,

blackened, as it always was, with the snuff-stains of a week, with

which he tried to brush away the fallen grains, was quite inefficacious.

I wished to go in and look at him but I had not the courage to

knock. I walked away slowly along the sunny side of the street,

reading all the theatrical advertisements in the shop-windows as I

went. I found it strange that neither I nor the day seemed in a

mourning mood and I felt even annoyed at discovering in myself a

sensation of freedom as if I had been freed from something by his

death. I wondered at this for, as my uncle had said the night before, he had taught me a great deal. He had studied in the Irish

college in Rome and he had taught me to pronounce Latin properly. He had told me stories about the catacombs and about

Napoleon Bonaparte, and he had explained to me the meaning of

the different ceremonies of the Mass and of the different vestments

worn by the priest. Sometimes he had amused himself by putting

difficult questions to me, asking me what one should do in certain

circumstances or whether such and such sins were mortal or venial

or only imperfections. His questions showed me how complex and

mysterious were certain institutions of the Church which I had

always regarded as the simplest acts. The duties of the priest

towards the Eucharist and towards the secrecy of the confessional

seemed so grave to me that I wondered how anybody had ever

found in himself the courage to undertake them; and I was not

surprised when he told me that the fathers of the Church had

written books as thick as the Post Office Directory and as closely

printed as the law notices in the newspaper, elucidating all these

intricate questions. Often when I thought of this I could make no

answer or only a very foolish and halting one upon which he used

to smile and nod his head twice or thrice. Sometimes he used to

put me through the responses of the Mass which he had made me

learn by heart; and, as I pattered, he used to smile pensively and

nod his head, now and then pushing huge pinches of snuff up each

nostril alternately. When he smiled he used to uncover his big

discoloured teeth and let his tongue lie upon his lower lip--a habit

which had made me feel uneasy in the beginning of our acquaintance before I knew him well.

As I walked along in the sun I remembered old Cotter's words and

tried to remember what had happened afterwards in the dream. I

remembered that I had noticed long velvet curtains and a swinging

lamp of antique fashion. I felt that I had been very far away, in

some land where the customs were strange--in Persia, I thought....

But I could not remember the end of the dream.

In the evening my aunt took me with her to visit the house of

mourning. It was after sunset; but the window-panes of the houses

that looked to the west reflected the tawny gold of a great bank of

clouds. Nannie received us in the hall; and, as it would have been

unseemly to have shouted at her, my aunt shook hands with her for

all. The old woman pointed upwards interrogatively and, on my

aunt's nodding, proceeded to toil up the narrow staircase before us,

her bowed head being scarcely above the level of the banister-rail.

At the first landing she stopped and beckoned us forward encouragingly towards the open door of the dead-room. My aunt

went in and the old woman, seeing that I hesitated to enter, began

to beckon to me again repeatedly with her hand.

I went in on tiptoe. The room through the lace end of the blind was

suffused with dusky golden light amid which the candles looked

like pale thin flames. He had been coffined. Nannie gave the lead

and we three knelt down at the foot of the bed. I pretended to pray

but I could not gather my thoughts because the old woman's

mutterings distracted me. I noticed how clumsily her skirt was

hooked at the back and how the heels of her cloth boots were

trodden down all to one side. The fancy came to me that the old

priest was smiling as he lay there in his coffin.

But no. When we rose and went up to the head of the bed I saw

that he was not smiling. There he lay, solemn and copious, vested

as for the altar, his large hands loosely retaining a chalice. His face

was very truculent, grey and massive, with black cavernous nostrils and circled by a scanty white fur. There was a heavy odour

in the room--the flowers.

We crossed ourselves and came away. In the little room downstairs

we found Eliza seated in his arm-chair in state. I groped my way

towards my usual chair in the corner while Nannie went to the

sideboard and brought out a decanter of sherry and some



wine-glasses. She set these on the table and invited us to take a

little glass of wine. Then, at her sister's bidding, she filled out the

sherry into the glasses and passed them to us. She pressed me to

take some cream crackers also but I declined because I thought I

would make too much noise eating them. She seemed to be somewhat disappointed at my refusal and went over quietly to the

sofa where she sat down behind her sister. No one spoke: we all

gazed at the empty fireplace.

My aunt waited until Eliza sighed and then said:

"Ah, well, he's gone to a better world."

Eliza sighed again and bowed her head in assent. My aunt fingered

the stem of her wine-glass before sipping a little.

"Did he... peacefully?" she asked.

"Oh, quite peacefully, ma'am," said Eliza. "You couldn't tell when

the breath went out of him. He had a beautiful death, God be

praised."

"And everything...?"

"Father O'Rourke was in with him a Tuesday and anointed him and

prepared him and all."

"He knew then?"

"He was quite resigned."

"He looks quite resigned," said my aunt.

"That's what the woman we had in to wash him said. She said he

just looked as if he was asleep, he looked that peaceful and resigned. No one would think he'd make such a beautiful corpse."

"Yes, indeed," said my aunt.

She sipped a little more from her glass and said:

"Well, Miss Flynn, at any rate it must be a great comfort for you to

know that you did all you could for him. You were both very kind

to him, I must say."

Eliza smoothed her dress over her knees.

"Ah, poor James!" she said. "God knows we done all we could, as

poor as we are--we wouldn't see him want anything while he was

in it."

Nannie had leaned her head against the sofa-pillow and seemed

about to fall asleep.

"There's poor Nannie," said Eliza, looking at her, "she's wore out.

All the work we had, she and me, getting in the woman to wash

him and then laying him out and then the coffin and then arranging

about the Mass in the chapel. Only for Father O'Rourke I don't

know what we'd done at all. It was him brought us all them flowers

and them two candlesticks out of the chapel and wrote out the

notice for the Freeman's General and took charge of all the papers

for the cemetery and poor James's insurance."

"Wasn't that good of him?" said my aunt

Eliza closed her eyes and shook her head slowly.

"Ah, there's no friends like the old friends," she said, "when all is

said and done, no friends that a body can trust."

"Indeed, that's true," said my aunt. "And I'm sure now that he's

gone to his eternal reward he won't forget you and all your kindness to him."

"Ah, poor James!" said Eliza. "He was no great trouble to us. You

wouldn't hear him in the house any more than now. Still, I know

he's gone and all to that...."

"It's when it's all over that you'll miss him," said my aunt.

"I know that," said Eliza. "I won't be bringing him in his cup of

beef-tea any me, nor you, ma'am, sending him his snuff. Ah, poor

James!"

She stopped, as if she were communing with the past and then said

shrewdly:

"Mind you, I noticed there was something queer coming over him

latterly. Whenever I'd bring in his soup to him there I'd find him

with his breviary fallen to the floor, lying back in the chair and his

mouth open."

She laid a finger against her nose and frowned: then she continued:

"But still and all he kept on saying that before the summer was

over he'd go out for a drive one fine day just to see the old house

again where we were all born down in Irishtown and take me and

Nannie with him. If we could only get one of them new-fangled

carriages that makes no noise that Father O'Rourke told him about,

them with the rheumatic wheels, for the day cheap--he said, at

Johnny Rush's over the way there and drive out the three of us

together of a Sunday evening. He had his mind set on that.... Poor

James!"

"The Lord have mercy on his soul!" said my aunt.

Eliza took out her handkerchief and wiped her eyes with it. Then

she put it back again in her pocket and gazed into the empty grate

for some time without speaking.

"He was too scrupulous always," she said. "The duties of the priesthood was too much for him. And then his life was, you might say, crossed."

"Yes," said my aunt. "He was a disappointed man. You could see that."

A silence took possession of the little room and, under cover of it,

I approached the table and tasted my sherry and then returned

quietly to my chair in the corner. Eliza seemed to have fallen into a

deep revery. We waited respectfully for her to break the silence:

and after a long pause she said slowly:

"It was that chalice he broke.... That was the beginning of it. Of

course, they say it was all right, that it contained nothing, I mean.

But still.... They say it was the boy's fault. But poor James was so

nervous, God be merciful to him!"

"And was that it?" said my aunt. "I heard something...."

Eliza nodded.

"That affected his mind," she said. "After that he began to mope by

himself, talking to no one and wandering about by himself. So one

night he was wanted for to go on a call and they couldn't find him

anywhere. They looked high up and low down; and still they couldn't see a sight of him anywhere. So then the clerk suggested

to try the chapel. So then they got the keys and opened the chapel

and the clerk and Father O'Rourke and another priest that was

there brought in a light for to look for him.... And what do you

think but there he was, sitting up by himself in the dark in his



confession-box, wide- awake and laughing-like softly to himself?"

She stopped suddenly as if to listen. I too listened; but there was

no sound in the house: and I knew that the old priest was lying still

in his coffin as we had seen him, solemn and truculent in death, an

idle chalice on his breast.

Eliza resumed:

"Wide-awake and laughing-like to himself.... So then, of course,

when they saw that, that made them think that there was something

gone wrong with him...."

## AN ENCOUNTER

IT WAS Joe Dillon who introduced the Wild West to us. He had a

little library made up of old numbers of The Union Jack , Pluck

and The Halfpenny Marvel . Every evening after school we met in

his back garden and arranged Indian battles. He and his fat young

brother Leo, the idler, held the loft of the stable while we tried to

carry it by storm; or we fought a pitched battle on the grass. But,

however well we fought, we never won siege or battle and all our

bouts ended with Joe Dillon's war dance of victory. His parents

went to eight- o'clock mass every morning in Gardiner Street and

the peaceful odour of Mrs. Dillon was prevalent in the hall of the

house. But he played too fiercely for us who were younger and

more timid. He looked like some kind of an Indian when he

capered round the garden, an old tea-cosy on his head, beating a

tin with his fist and yelling:

"Ya! yaka, yaka, yaka!"

Everyone was incredulous when it was reported that he had a

vocation for the priesthood. Nevertheless it was true.

A spirit of unruliness diffused itself among us and, under its influence, differences of culture and constitution were waived. We

banded ourselves together, some boldly, some in jest and some

almost in fear: and of the number of these latter, the reluctant

Indians who were afraid to seem studious or lacking in robustness,

I was one. The adventures related in the literature of the Wild

West were remote from my nature but, at least, they opened doors

of escape. I liked better some American detective stories which

were traversed from time to time by unkempt fierce and beautiful

girls. Though there was nothing wrong in these stories and though

their intention was sometimes literary they were circulated secretly

at school. One day when Father Butler was hearing the four pages

of Roman History clumsy Leo Dillon was discovered with a copy

of The Halfpenny Marvel .

"This page or this page? This page Now, Dillon, up! 'Hardly had

the day' ... Go on! What day? 'Hardly had the day dawned' ... Have

you studied it? What have you there in your pocket?"

Everyone's heart palpitated as Leo Dillon handed up the paper and

everyone assumed an innocent face. Father Butler turned over the

pages, frowning.

"What is this rubbish?" he said. "The Apache Chief! Is this what

you read instead of studying your Roman History? Let me not find

any more of this wretched stuff in this college. The man who wrote

it, I suppose, was some wretched fellow who writes these things

for a drink. I'm surprised at boys like you, educated, reading such

stuff. I could understand it if you were ... National School boys.

Now, Dillon, I advise you strongly, get at your work or..."

This rebuke during the sober hours of school paled much of the

glory of the Wild West for me and the confused puffy face of Leo

Dillon awakened one of my consciences. But when the restraining

influence of the school was at a distance I began to hunger again

for wild sensations, for the escape which those chronicles of disorder alone seemed to offer me. The mimic warfare of the

evening became at last as wearisome to me as the routine of school

in the morning because I wanted real adventures to happen to

myself. But real adventures, I reflected, do not happen to people

who remain at home: they must be sought abroad.

The summer holidays were near at hand when I made up my mind

to break out of the weariness of school life for one day at least.

With Leo Dillon and a boy named Mahony I planned a day's mischief. Each of us saved up sixpence. We were to meet at ten in

the morning on the Canal Bridge. Mahony's big sister was to write

an excuse for him and Leo Dillon was to tell his brother to say he

was sick. We arranged to go along the Wharf Road until we came

to the ships, then to cross in the ferryboat and walk out to see the

Pigeon House. Leo Dillon was afraid we might meet Father Butler

or someone out of the college; but Mahony asked, very sensibly,

what would Father Butler be doing out at the Pigeon House. We

were reassured: and I brought the first stage of the plot to an end

by collecting sixpence from the other two, at the same time

showing them my own sixpence. When we were making the last

arrangements on the eve we were all vaguely excited. We shook

hands, laughing, and Mahony said:

"Till tomorrow, mates!"

That night I slept badly. In the morning I was firstcomer to the

bridge as I lived nearest. I hid my books in the long grass near the

ashpit at the end of the garden where nobody ever came and

hurried along the canal bank. It was a mild sunny morning in the

first week of June. I sat up on the coping of the bridge admiring

my frail canvas shoes which I had diligently pipeclayed overnight

and watching the docile horses pulling a tramload of business

people up the hill. All the branches of the tall trees which lined the

mall were gay with little light green leaves and the sunlight slanted

through them on to the water. The granite stone of the bridge was

beginning to be warm and I began to pat it with my hands in time

to an air in my head. I was very happy.

When I had been sitting there for five or ten minutes I saw

Mahony's grey suit approaching. He came up the hill, smiling, and

clambered up beside me on the bridge. While we were waiting he

brought out the catapult which bulged from his inner pocket and

explained some improvements which he had made in it. I asked

him why he had brought it and he told me he had brought it to

have some gas with the birds. Mahony used slang freely, and spoke

of Father Butler as Old Bunser. We waited on for a quarter of an

hour more but still there was no sign of Leo Dillon. Mahony, at

last, jumped down and said:



"Come along. I knew Fatty'd funk it."

"And his sixpence...?" I said.

"That's forfeit," said Mahony. "And so much the better for us--a

bob and a tanner instead of a bob."

We walked along the North Strand Road till we came to the  
Vitriol

Works and then turned to the right along the Wharf Road.  
Mahony

began to play the Indian as soon as we were out of public  
sight. He

chased a crowd of ragged girls, brandishing his unloaded  
catapult

and, when two ragged boys began, out of chivalry, to fling  
stones

at us, he proposed that we should charge them. I objected  
that the

boys were too small and so we walked on, the ragged troop  
screaming after us: "Swaddlers! Swaddlers!" thinking that  
we were

Protestants because Mahony, who was dark-complexioned,  
wore

the silver badge of a cricket club in his cap. When we came to the

Smoothing Iron we arranged a siege; but it was a failure because

you must have at least three. We revenged ourselves on Leo Dillon

by saying what a funk he was and guessing how many he would

get at three o'clock from Mr. Ryan.

We came then near the river. We spent a long time walking about

the noisy streets flanked by high stone walls, watching the working

of cranes and engines and often being shouted at for our

immobility by the drivers of groaning carts. It was noon when we

reached the quays and as all the labourers seemed to be eating

their lunches, we bought two big currant buns and sat down to eat

them on some metal piping beside the river. We pleased ourselves

with the spectacle of Dublin's commerce--the barges signalled

from far away by their curls of woolly smoke, the brown  
fishing

fleet beyond Ringsend, the big white sailingvessel which  
was

being discharged on the opposite quay. Mahony said it  
would be

right skit to run away to sea on one of those big ships and  
even I,

looking at the high masts, saw, or imagined, the geography  
which

had been scantily dosed to me at school gradually taking  
substance

under my eyes. School and home seemed to recede from us  
and

their influences upon us seemed to wane.

We crossed the Liffey in the ferryboat, paying our toll to be  
transported in the company of two labourers and a little Jew  
with a

bag. We were serious to the point of solemnity, but once  
during the

short voyage our eyes met and we laughed. When we  
landed we

watched the discharging of the graceful threemaster which  
we had

observed from the other quay. Some bystander said that she was a

Norwegian vessel. I went to the stern and tried to decipher the

legend upon it but, failing to do so, I came back and examined the

foreign sailors to see had any of them green eyes for I had some

confused notion.... The sailors' eyes were blue and grey and even

black. The only sailor whose eyes could have been called green

was a tall man who amused the crowd on the quay by calling out

cheerfully every time the planks fell:

"All right! All right!"

When we were tired of this sight we wandered slowly into

Ringsend. The day had grown sultry, and in the windows of the

grocers' shops musty biscuits lay bleaching. We bought some

biscuits and chocolate which we ate sedulously as we wandered

through the squalid streets where the families of the fishermen

live. We could find no dairy and so we went into a huckster's shop

and bought a bottle of raspberry lemonade each. Refreshed by this,

Mahony chased a cat down a lane, but the cat escaped into a wide

field. We both felt rather tired and when we reached the field we

made at once for a sloping bank over the ridge of which we could

see the Dodder.

It was too late and we were too tired to carry out our project of

visiting the Pigeon House. We had to be home before four o'clock

lest our adventure should be discovered. Mahony looked

regretfully at his catapult and I had to suggest going home by train

before he regained any cheerfulness. The sun went in behind some

clouds and left us to our jaded thoughts and the crumbs of our

provisions.

There was nobody but ourselves in the field. When we had lain on

the bank for some time without speaking I saw a man approaching

from the far end of the field. I watched him lazily as I chewed one

of those green stems on which girls tell fortunes. He came along

by the bank slowly. He walked with one hand upon his hip and in

the other hand he held a stick with which he tapped the turf lightly.

He was shabbily dressed in a suit of greenish-black and wore what

we used to call a jerry hat with a high crown. He seemed to be

fairly old for his moustache was ashen-grey. When he passed at

our feet he glanced up at us quickly and then continued his way.

We followed him with our eyes and saw that when he had gone on

for perhaps fifty paces he turned about and began to retrace his

steps. He walked towards us very slowly, always tapping the ground with his stick, so slowly that I thought he was looking for something in the grass.

He stopped when he came level with us and bade us goodday. We

answered him and he sat down beside us on the slope slowly and

with great care. He began to talk of the weather, saying that it

would be a very hot summer and adding that the seasons had

changed greedy since he was a boy--a long time ago. He said that

the happiest time of one's life was undoubtedly one's schoolboy

days and that he would give anything to be young again. While he

expressed these sentiments which bored us a little we kept silent.

Then he began to talk of school and of books. He asked us whether

we had read the poetry of Thomas Moore or the works of Sir

Walter Scott and Lord Lytton. I pretended that I had read every

book he mentioned so that in the end he said:

"Ah, I can see you are a bookworm like myself. Now," he added,

pointing to Mahony who was regarding us with open eyes, "he is

different; he goes in for games."

He said he had all Sir Walter Scott's works and all Lord Lytton's

works at home and never tired of reading them. "Of course," he

said, "there were some of Lord Lytton's works which boys couldn't

read." Mahony asked why couldn't boys read them--a question

which agitated and pained me because I was afraid the man would

think I was as stupid as Mahony. The man, however, only smiled. I

saw that he had great gaps in his mouth between his yellow teeth.

Then he asked us which of us had the most sweethearts. Mahony



mentioned lightly that he had three totties. The man asked me how

many I had. I answered that I had none. He did not believe me and

said he was sure I must have one. I was silent.

"Tell us," said Mahony pertly to the man, "how many have you

yourself?"

The man smiled as before and said that when he was our age he

had lots of sweethearts.

"Every boy," he said, "has a little sweetheart."

His attitude on this point struck me as strangely liberal in a man of

his age. In my heart I thought that what he said about boys and

sweethearts was reasonable. But I disliked the words in his mouth

and I wondered why he shivered once or twice as if he feared

something or felt a sudden chill. As he proceeded I noticed that his

accent was good. He began to speak to us about girls,  
saying what

nice soft hair they had and how soft their hands were and  
how all

girls were not so good as they seemed to be if one only  
knew.

There was nothing he liked, he said, so much as looking at a  
nice

young girl, at her nice white hands and her beautiful soft  
hair. He

gave me the impression that he was repeating something  
which he

had learned by heart or that, magnetised by some words of  
his own

speech, his mind was slowly circling round and round in the  
same

orbit. At times he spoke as if he were simply alluding to  
some fact

that everybody knew, and at times he lowered his voice and  
spoke

mysteriously as if he were telling us something secret which  
he did

not wish others to overhear. He repeated his phrases over  
and over

again, varying them and surrounding them with his  
monotonous

voice. I continued to gaze towards the foot of the slope,  
listening

to him.

After a long while his monologue paused. He stood up  
slowly,

saying that he had to leave us for a minute or so, a few  
minutes,

and, without changing the direction of my gaze, I saw him  
walking

slowly away from us towards the near end of the field. We  
remained silent when he had gone. After a silence of a few  
minutes I heard Mahony exclaim:

"I say! Look what he's doing!"

As I neither answered nor raised my eyes Mahony exclaimed  
again:

"I say... He's a queer old jossler!"

"In case he asks us for our names," I said "let you be  
Murphy and I'll

be Smith."

We said nothing further to each other. I was still considering whether I would go away or not when the man came back and sat

down beside us again. Hardly had he sat down when Mahony,

catching sight of the cat which had escaped him, sprang up and

pursued her across the field. The man and I watched the chase. The

cat escaped once more and Mahony began to throw stones at the

wall she had escalated. Desisting from this, he began to wander

about the far end of the field, aimlessly.

After an interval the man spoke to me. He said that my friend was

a very rough boy and asked did he get whipped often at school. I

was going to reply indignantly that we were not National School

boys to be whipped, as he called it; but I remained silent. He began

to speak on the subject of chastising boys. His mind, as if

magnetised again by his speech, seemed to circle slowly round and

round its new centre. He said that when boys were that kind they

ought to be whipped and well whipped. When a boy was rough and

unruly there was nothing would do him any good but a good sound

whipping. A slap on the hand or a box on the ear was no good:

what he wanted was to get a nice warm whipping. I was surprised

at this sentiment and involuntarily glanced up at his face. As I did

so I met the gaze of a pair of bottle-green eyes peering at me from

under a twitching forehead. I turned my eyes away again.

The man continued his monologue. He seemed to have forgotten

his recent liberalism. He said that if ever he found a boy talking to

girls or having a girl for a sweetheart he would whip him and whip

him; and that would teach him not to be talking to girls. And if a

boy had a girl for a sweetheart and told lies about it then he would

give him such a whipping as no boy ever got in this world. He said

that there was nothing in this world he would like so well as that.

He described to me how he would whip such a boy as if he were

unfolding some elaborate mystery. He would love that, he said,

better than anything in this world; and his voice, as he led me

monotonously through the mystery, grew almost affectionate and

seemed to plead with me that I should understand him.

I waited till his monologue paused again. Then I stood up abruptly.

Lest I should betray my agitation I delayed a few moments pretending to fix my shoe properly and then, saying that I was

obliged to go, I bade him good-day. I went up the slope calmly but

my heart was beating quickly with fear that he would seize me by

the ankles. When I reached the top of the slope I turned round and,

without looking at him, called loudly across the field:

"Murphy!"

My voice had an accent of forced bravery in it and I was ashamed

of my paltry stratagem. I had to call the name again before

Mahony saw me and hallooed in answer. How my heart beat as he

came running across the field to me! He ran as if to bring me aid.

And I was penitent; for in my heart I had always despised him a

little.

ARABY

NORTH RICHMOND STREET being blind, was a quiet street

except at the hour when the Christian Brothers' School set the boys

free. An uninhabited house of two storeys stood at the blind end,

detached from its neighbours in a square ground The other houses

of the street, conscious of decent lives within them, gazed at one

another with brown imperturbable faces.

The former tenant of our house, a priest, had died in the back

drawing-room. Air, musty from having been long enclosed, hung

in all the rooms, and the waste room behind the kitchen was littered with old useless papers. Among these I found a few paper-covered books, the pages of which were curled and damp:

The Abbot, by Walter Scott, The Devout Communicant and The

Memoirs of Vidocq. I liked the last best because its leaves were

yellow. The wild garden behind the house contained a central

apple-tree and a few straggling bushes under one of which I found

the late tenant's rusty bicycle-pump. He had been a very charitable



priest; in his will he had left all his money to institutions and the

furniture of his house to his sister.

When the short days of winter came dusk fell before we had well

eaten our dinners. When we met in the street the houses had grown

sombre. The space of sky above us was the colour of

ever-changing violet and towards it the lamps of the street lifted

their feeble lanterns. The cold air stung us and we played till our

bodies glowed. Our shouts echoed in the silent street. The career

of our play brought us through the dark muddy lanes behind the

houses where we ran the gauntlet of the rough tribes from the

cottages, to the back doors of the dark dripping gardens where

odours arose from the ashpits, to the dark odorous stables where a

coachman smoothed and combed the horse or shook music from

the buckled harness. When we returned to the street light from the

kitchen windows had filled the areas. If my uncle was seen turning

the corner we hid in the shadow until we had seen him safely

housed. Or if Mangan's sister came out on the doorstep to call her

brother in to his tea we watched her from our shadow peer up and

down the street. We waited to see whether she would remain or go

in and, if she remained, we left our shadow and walked up to

Mangan's steps resignedly. She was waiting for us, her figure

defined by the light from the half-opened door. Her brother always

teased her before he obeyed and I stood by the railings looking at

her. Her dress swung as she moved her body and the soft rope of

her hair tossed from side to side.

Every morning I lay on the floor in the front parlour watching her

door. The blind was pulled down to within an inch of the sash so

that I could not be seen. When she came out on the doorstep my

heart leaped. I ran to the hall, seized my books and followed her. I

kept her brown figure always in my eye and, when we came near

the point at which our ways diverged, I quickened my pace and

passed her. This happened morning after morning. I had never

spoken to her, except for a few casual words, and yet her name

was like a summons to all my foolish blood.

Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to

romance. On Saturday evenings when my aunt went marketing I

had to go to carry some of the parcels. We walked through the

flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women,

amid the curses of labourers, the shrill litanies of shop-boys who

stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal  
chanting of

street-singers, who sang a come-all-you about O'Donovan  
Rossa,

or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These  
noises

converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined  
that I

bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. Her name  
sprang

to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which  
I

myself did not understand. My eyes were often full of tears  
(I

could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart  
seemed to

pour itself out into my bosom. I thought little of the future. I  
did

not know whether I would ever speak to her or not or, if I  
spoke to

her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration. But my  
body

was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers  
running upon the wires.

One evening I went into the back drawing-room in which the priest

had died. It was a dark rainy evening and there was no sound in the

house. Through one of the broken panes I heard the rain impinge

upon the earth, the fine incessant needles of water playing in the

sodden beds. Some distant lamp or lighted window gleamed below

me. I was thankful that I could see so little. All my senses seemed

to desire to veil themselves and, feeling that I was about to slip

from them, I pressed the palms of my hands together until they

trembled, murmuring: "O love! O love!" many times.

At last she spoke to me. When she addressed the first words to me

I was so confused that I did not know what to answer. She asked

me was I going to Araby. I forgot whether I answered yes or no. It

would be a splendid bazaar, she said she would love to go.

"And why can't you?" I asked.

While she spoke she turned a silver bracelet round and round her

wrist. She could not go, she said, because there would be a retreat

that week in her convent. Her brother and two other boys were

fighting for their caps and I was alone at the railings. She held one

of the spikes, bowing her head towards me. The light from the

lamp opposite our door caught the white curve of her neck, lit up

her hair that rested there and, falling, lit up the hand upon the

railing. It fell over one side of her dress and caught the white

border of a petticoat, just visible as she stood at ease.

"It's well for you," she said.

"If I go," I said, "I will bring you something."

What innumerable follies laid waste my waking and sleeping

thoughts after that evening! I wished to annihilate the tedious

intervening days. I chafed against the work of school. At night in

my bedroom and by day in the classroom her image came between

me and the page I strove to read. The syllables of the word Araby

were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated

and cast an Eastern enchantment over me. I asked for leave to go

to the bazaar on Saturday night. My aunt was surprised and hoped

it was not some Freemason affair. I answered few questions in

class. I watched my master's face pass from amiability to

sternness; he hoped I was not beginning to idle. I could not call my

wandering thoughts together. I had hardly any patience with the

serious work of life which, now that it stood between me and my

desire, seemed to me child's play, ugly monotonous child's play.

On Saturday morning I reminded my uncle that I wished to go to

the bazaar in the evening. He was fussing at the hallstand, looking

for the hat-brush, and answered me curtly:

"Yes, boy, I know."

As he was in the hall I could not go into the front parlour and lie at

the window. I left the house in bad humour and walked slowly

towards the school. The air was pitilessly raw and already my heart

misgave me.

When I came home to dinner my uncle had not yet been home.

Still it was early. I sat staring at the clock for some time and when

its ticking began to irritate me, I left the room. I mounted the

staircase and gained the upper part of the house. The high cold

empty gloomy rooms liberated me and I went from room to room



singing. From the front window I saw my companions  
playing

below in the street. Their cries reached me weakened and  
indistinct and, leaning my forehead against the cool glass, I  
looked

over at the dark house where she lived. I may have stood  
there for

an hour, seeing nothing but the brown-clad figure cast by  
my

imagination, touched discreetly by the lamplight at the  
curved

neck, at the hand upon the railings and at the border below  
the

dress.

When I came downstairs again I found Mrs. Mercer sitting at  
the

fire. She was an old garrulous woman, a pawnbroker's  
widow, who

collected used stamps for some pious purpose. I had to  
endure the

gossip of the tea-table. The meal was prolonged beyond an  
hour

and still my uncle did not come. Mrs. Mercer stood up to go:  
she

was sorry she couldn't wait any longer, but it was after eight o'clock and she did not like to be out late as the night air was bad

for her. When she had gone I began to walk up and down the

room, clenching my fists. My aunt said:

"I'm afraid you may put off your bazaar for this night of Our Lord."

At nine o'clock I heard my uncle's latchkey in the halldoor. I heard

him talking to himself and heard the hallstand rocking when it had

received the weight of his overcoat. I could interpret these signs.

When he was midway through his dinner I asked him to give me

the money to go to the bazaar. He had forgotten.

"The people are in bed and after their first sleep now," he said.

I did not smile. My aunt said to him energetically:

"Can't you give him the money and let him go? You've kept him

late enough as it is."

My uncle said he was very sorry he had forgotten. He said he

believed in the old saying: "All work and no play makes Jack a

dull boy." He asked me where I was going and, when I had told

him a second time he asked me did I know The Arab's Farewell to

his Steed. When I left the kitchen he was about to recite the opening lines of the piece to my aunt.

I held a florin tightly in my hand as I strode down Buckingham

Street towards the station. The sight of the streets thronged with

buyers and glaring with gas recalled to me the purpose of my

journey. I took my seat in a third-class carriage of a deserted train.

After an intolerable delay the train moved out of the station slowly. It crept onward among ruinous house and over the

twinkling river. At Westland Row Station a crowd of people pressed to the carriage doors; but the porters moved them back,

saying that it was a special train for the bazaar. I remained alone in

the bare carriage. In a few minutes the train drew up beside an

improvised wooden platform. I passed out on to the road and saw

by the lighted dial of a clock that it was ten minutes to ten. In front

of me was a large building which displayed the magical name.

I could not find any sixpenny entrance and, fearing that the bazaar

would be closed, I passed in quickly through a turnstile, handing a

shilling to a weary-looking man. I found myself in a big hall girdled at half its height by a gallery. Nearly all the stalls were

closed and the greater part of the hall was in darkness. I recognised

a silence like that which pervades a church after a service. I

walked into the centre of the bazaar timidly. A few people were

gathered about the stalls which were still open. Before a curtain,

over which the words Cafe Chantant were written in coloured

lamps, two men were counting money on a salver. I listened to the

fall of the coins.

Remembering with difficulty why I had come I went over to one of

the stalls and examined porcelain vases and flowered tea-sets. At

the door of the stall a young lady was talking and laughing with

two young gentlemen. I remarked their English accents and listened vaguely to their conversation.

"O, I never said such a thing!"

"O, but you did!"

"O, but I didn't!"

"Didn't she say that?"

"Yes. I heard her."

"O, there's a ... fib!"

Observing me the young lady came over and asked me did I wish

to buy anything. The tone of her voice was not encouraging; she

seemed to have spoken to me out of a sense of duty. I looked

humbly at the great jars that stood like eastern guards at either side

of the dark entrance to the stall and murmured:

"No, thank you."

The young lady changed the position of one of the vases and went

back to the two young men. They began to talk of the same subject. Once or twice the young lady glanced at me over her

shoulder.

I lingered before her stall, though I knew my stay was useless, to

make my interest in her wares seem the more real. Then I turned

away slowly and walked down the middle of the bazaar. I allowed

the two pennies to fall against the sixpence in my pocket. I heard a

voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out. The

upper part of the hall was now completely dark.

Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and

derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger.

EVELINE

SHE sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue.

Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. She was tired.

Few people passed. The man out of the last house passed on his

way home; she heard his footsteps clacking along the concrete

pavement and afterwards crunching on the cinder path before the

new red houses. One time there used to be a field there in which

they used to play every evening with other people's children. Then

a man from Belfast bought the field and built houses in it-- not

like their little brown houses but bright brick houses with shining

roofs. The children of the avenue used to play together in that field

--the Devines, the Waters, the Dunns, little Keogh the cripple, she

and her brothers and sisters. Ernest, however, never played: he was

too grown up. Her father used often to hunt them in out of the field

with his blackthorn stick; but usually little Keogh used to keep nix

and call out when he saw her father coming. Still they seemed to

have been rather happy then. Her father was not so bad then; and



besides, her mother was alive. That was a long time ago;  
she and

her brothers and sisters were all grown up her mother was  
dead.

Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back to  
England. Everything changes. Now she was going to go  
away like  
the others, to leave her home.

Home! She looked round the room, reviewing all its familiar  
objects which she had dusted once a week for so many  
years,

wondering where on earth all the dust came from. Perhaps  
she

would never see again those familiar objects from which she  
had

never dreamed of being divided. And yet during all those  
years she

had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing  
photograph hung on the wall above the broken harmonium  
beside

the coloured print of the promises made to Blessed  
Margaret Mary

Alacoque. He had been a school friend of her father.  
Whenever he

showed the photograph to a visitor her father used to pass it with a

casual word:

"He is in Melbourne now."

She had consented to go away, to leave her home. Was that wise?

She tried to weigh each side of the question. In her home anyway

she had shelter and food; she had those whom she had known all

her life about her. Of course she had to work hard, both in the

house and at business. What would they say of her in the Stores

when they found out that she had run away with a fellow? Say she

was a fool, perhaps; and her place would be filled up by

advertisement. Miss Gavan would be glad. She had always had an

edge on her, especially whenever there were people listening.

"Miss Hill, don't you see these ladies are waiting?"

"Look lively, Miss Hill, please."

She would not cry many tears at leaving the Stores.

But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not

be like that. Then she would be married--she, Eveline.  
People

would treat her with respect then. She would not be treated  
as her

mother had been. Even now, though she was over nineteen,  
she

sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence.  
She knew

it was that that had given her the palpitations. When they  
were

growing up he had never gone for her like he used to go for  
Harry

and Ernest, because she was a girl but latterly he had begun  
to

threaten her and say what he would do to her only for her  
dead

mother's sake. And no she had nobody to protect her. Ernest  
was

dead and Harry, who was in the church decorating business,  
was

nearly always down somewhere in the country. Besides, the invariable squabble for money on Saturday nights had begun to

weary her unspeakably. She always gave her entire wages--seven

shillings--and Harry always sent up what he could but the trouble

was to get any money from her father. He said she used to squander the money, that she had no head, that he wasn't going to

give her his hard-earned money to throw about the streets, and

much more, for he was usually fairly bad on Saturday night. In the

end he would give her the money and ask her had she any intention

of buying Sunday's dinner. Then she had to rush out as quickly as

she could and do her marketing, holding her black leather purse

tightly in her hand as she elbowed her way through the crowds and

returning home late under her load of provisions. She had hard

work to keep the house together and to see that the two young

children who had been left to her charge went to school regularly

and got their meals regularly. It was hard work--a hard life--but

now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly

undesirable life.

She was about to explore another life with Frank. Frank was very

kind, manly, open-hearted. She was to go away with him by the

night-boat to be his wife and to live with him in Buenos Ayres

where he had a home waiting for her. How well she remembered

the first time she had seen him; he was lodging in a house on the

main road where she used to visit. It seemed a few weeks ago. He

was standing at the gate, his peaked cap pushed back on his head

and his hair tumbled forward over a face of bronze. Then they had

come to know each other. He used to meet her outside the Stores

every evening and see her home. He took her to see The Bohemian

Girl and she felt elated as she sat in an unaccustomed part of the

theatre with him. He was awfully fond of music and sang a little.

People knew that they were courting and, when he sang about the

lass that loves a sailor, she always felt pleasantly confused. He

used to call her Poppens out of fun. First of all it had been an excitement for her to have a fellow and then she had begun to like

him. He had tales of distant countries. He had started as a deck boy

at a pound a month on a ship of the Allan Line going out to

Canada. He told her the names of the ships he had been on and the

names of the different services. He had sailed through the Straits

of Magellan and he told her stories of the terrible Patagonians. He

had fallen on his feet in Buenos Ayres, he said, and had come over

to the old country just for a holiday. Of course, her father had

found out the affair and had forbidden her to have anything to say

to him.

"I know these sailor chaps," he said.

One day he had quarrelled with Frank and after that she had to

meet her lover secretly.

The evening deepened in the avenue. The white of two letters in

her lap grew indistinct. One was to Harry; the other was to her

father. Ernest had been her favourite but she liked Harry too. Her

father was becoming old lately, she noticed; he would miss her.

Sometimes he could be very nice. Not long before, when she had

been laid up for a day, he had read her out a ghost story and made

toast for her at the fire. Another day, when their mother was alive,

they had all gone for a picnic to the Hill of Howth. She

remembered her father putting on her mothers bonnet to make the

children laugh.

Her time was running out but she continued to sit by the window,

leaning her head against the window curtain, inhaling the odour of

dusty cretonne. Down far in the avenue she could hear a street

organ playing. She knew the air Strange that it should come that

very night to remind her of the promise to her mother, her promise

to keep the home together as long as she could. She remembered

the last night of her mother's illness; she was again in the close

dark room at the other side of the hall and outside she heard a

melancholy air of Italy. The organ-player had been ordered to go



away and given sixpence. She remembered her father strutting

back into the sickroom saying:

"Damned Italians! coming over here!"

As she mused the pitiful vision of her mother's life laid its spell on

the very quick of her being--that life of commonplace sacrifices

closing in final craziness. She trembled as she heard again her

mother's voice saying constantly with foolish insistence:

"Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun!"

She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must

escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps

love, too. But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy? She

had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her

in his arms. He would save her.

She stood among the swaying crowd in the station at the North

Wall. He held her hand and she knew that he was speaking to her,

saying something about the passage over and over again. The

station was full of soldiers with brown baggages. Through the wide

doors of the sheds she caught a glimpse of the black mass of the

boat, lying in beside the quay wall, with illumined portholes. She

answered nothing. She felt her cheek pale and cold and, out of a

maze of distress, she prayed to God to direct her, to show her what

was her duty. The boat blew a long mournful whistle into the mist.

If she went, tomorrow she would be on the sea with Frank, steaming towards Buenos Ayres. Their passage had been booked.

Could she still draw back after all he had done for her? Her distress awoke a nausea in her body and she kept moving her lips

in silent fervent prayer.

A bell clanged upon her heart. She felt him seize her hand:

"Come!"

All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing

her into them: he would drown her. She gripped with both hands at

the iron railing.

"Come!"

No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in

frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish.

"Eveline! Evvy!"

He rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow. He was

shouted at to go on but he still called to her. She set her white face

to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign

of love or farewell or recognition.

## AFTER THE RACE

THE cars came scudding in towards Dublin, running evenly like

pellets in the groove of the Naas Road. At the crest of the hill at

Inchicore sightseers had gathered in clumps to watch the cars

careering homeward and through this channel of poverty and

inaction the Continent sped its wealth and industry. Now and again

the clumps of people raised the cheer of the gratefully oppressed.

Their sympathy, however, was for the blue cars--the cars of their

friends, the French.

The French, moreover, were virtual victors. Their team had finished solidly; they had been placed second and third and the

driver of the winning German car was reported a Belgian. Each

blue car, therefore, received a double measure of welcome as it

topped the crest of the hill and each cheer of welcome was acknowledged with smiles and nods by those in the car. In one of

these trimly built cars was a party of four young men whose spirits

seemed to be at present well above the level of successful

Gallicism: in fact, these four young men were almost hilarious.

They were Charles Segouin, the owner of the car; Andre Riviere, a

young electrician of Canadian birth; a huge Hungarian named

Villona and a neatly groomed young man named Doyle. Segouin

was in good humour because he had unexpectedly received some

orders in advance (he was about to start a motor establishment in

Paris) and Riviere was in good humour because he was to be appointed manager of the establishment; these two young men

(who were cousins) were also in good humour because of the

success of the French cars. Villona was in good humour because

he had had a very satisfactory luncheon; and besides he was an

optimist by nature. The fourth member of the party, however, was

too excited to be genuinely happy.

He was about twenty-six years of age, with a soft, light brown

moustache and rather innocent-looking grey eyes. His father, who

had begun life as an advanced Nationalist, had modified his views

early. He had made his money as a butcher in Kingstown and by

opening shops in Dublin and in the suburbs he had made his money many times over. He had also been fortunate enough to

secure some of the police contracts and in the end he had become

rich enough to be alluded to in the Dublin newspapers as a merchant prince. He had sent his son to England to be educated in

a big Catholic college and had afterwards sent him to Dublin

University to study law. Jimmy did not study very earnestly and

took to bad courses for a while. He had money and he was popular;

and he divided his time curiously between musical and motoring

circles. Then he had been sent for a term to Cambridge to see a

little life. His father, remonstrative, but covertly proud of the excess, had paid his bills and brought him home. It was at Cambridge that he had met Segouin. They were not much more

than acquaintances as yet but Jimmy found great pleasure in the

society of one who had seen so much of the world and was reputed

to own some of the biggest hotels in France. Such a person (as his

father agreed) was well worth knowing, even if he had not been

the charming companion he was. Villona was entertaining also--a

brilliant pianist--but, unfortunately, very poor.

The car ran on merrily with its cargo of hilarious youth. The two

cousins sat on the front seat; Jimmy and his Hungarian friend sat

behind. Decidedly Villona was in excellent spirits; he kept up a

deep bass hum of melody for miles of the road The Frenchmen

flung their laughter and light words over their shoulders and often

Jimmy had to strain forward to catch the quick phrase. This was

not altogether pleasant for him, as he had nearly always to make a

deft guess at the meaning and shout back a suitable answer in the

face of a high wind. Besides Villona's humming would confuse

anybody; the noise of the car, too.

Rapid motion through space elates one; so does notoriety; so does

the possession of money. These were three good reasons for

Jimmy's excitement. He had been seen by many of his friends that



day in the company of these Continentals. At the control  
Segouin

had presented him to one of the French competitors and, in  
answer

to his confused murmur of compliment, the swarthy face of  
the

driver had disclosed a line of shining white teeth. It was  
pleasant

after that honour to return to the profane world of  
spectators amid

nudges and significant looks. Then as to money--he really  
had a

great sum under his control. Segouin, perhaps, would not  
think it a

great sum but Jimmy who, in spite of temporary errors, was  
at

heart the inheritor of solid instincts knew well with what  
difficulty

it had been got together. This knowledge had previously  
kept his

bills within the limits of reasonable recklessness, and if he  
had

been so conscious of the labour latent in money when there  
had

been question merely of some freak of the higher  
intelligence, how

much more so now when he was about to stake the greater part of

his substance! It was a serious thing for him.

Of course, the investment was a good one and Segouin had managed to give the impression that it was by a favour of friendship the mite of Irish money was to be included in the capital

of the concern. Jimmy had a respect for his father's shrewdness in

business matters and in this case it had been his father who had

first suggested the investment; money to be made in the motor

business, pots of money. Moreover Segouin had the unmistakable

air of wealth. Jimmy set out to translate into days' work that lordly

car in which he sat. How smoothly it ran. In what style they had

come careering along the country roads! The journey laid a magical finger on the genuine pulse of life and gallantly the machinery of human nerves strove to answer the bounding courses

of the swift blue animal.

They drove down Dame Street. The street was busy with unusual

traffic, loud with the horns of motorists and the gongs of impatient

tram-drivers. Near the Bank Segouin drew up and Jimmy and his

friend alighted. A little knot of people collected on the footpath to

pay homage to the snorting motor. The party was to dine together

that evening in Segouin's hotel and, meanwhile, Jimmy and his

friend, who was staying with him, were to go home to dress. The

car steered out slowly for Grafton Street while the two young men

pushed their way through the knot of gazers. They walked northward with a curious feeling of disappointment in the exercise,

while the city hung its pale globes of light above them in a haze of

summer evening.

In Jimmy's house this dinner had been pronounced an occasion. A

certain pride mingled with his parents' trepidation, a certain eagerness, also, to play fast and loose for the names of great

foreign cities have at least this virtue. Jimmy, too, looked very

well when he was dressed and, as he stood in the hall giving a last

equation to the bows of his dress tie, his father may have felt even

commercially satisfied at having secured for his son qualities often

unpurchaseable. His father, therefore, was unusually friendly with

Villona and his manner expressed a real respect for foreign accomplishments; but this subtlety of his host was probably lost

upon the Hungarian, who was beginning to have a sharp desire for

his dinner.

The dinner was excellent, exquisite. Segouin, Jimmy decided, had

a very refined taste. The party was increased by a young

Englishman named Routh whom Jimmy had seen with Segouin at

Cambridge. The young men supped in a snug room lit by electric

candle lamps. They talked volubly and with little reserve. Jimmy,

whose imagination was kindling, conceived the lively youth of the

Frenchmen twined elegantly upon the firm framework of the

Englishman's manner. A graceful image of his, he thought, and a

just one. He admired the dexterity with which their host directed

the conversation. The five young men had various tastes and their

tongues had been loosened. Villona, with immense respect, began

to discover to the mildly surprised Englishman the beauties of the

English madrigal, deploring the loss of old instruments. Riviere,

not wholly ingenuously, undertook to explain to Jimmy the

triumph of the French mechanicians. The resonant voice of the

Hungarian was about to prevail in ridicule of the spurious lutes of

the romantic painters when Segouin shepherded his party into

politics. Here was congenial ground for all. Jimmy, under generous

influences, felt the buried zeal of his father wake to life within

him: he aroused the torpid Routh at last. The room grew doubly

hot and Segouin's task grew harder each moment: there was even

danger of personal spite. The alert host at an opportunity lifted his

glass to Humanity and, when the toast had been drunk, he threw

open a window significantly.

That night the city wore the mask of a capital. The five young men

strolled along Stephen's Green in a faint cloud of aromatic smoke.

They talked loudly and gaily and their cloaks dangled from their

shoulders. The people made way for them. At the corner of

Grafton Street a short fat man was putting two handsome ladies on

a car in charge of another fat man. The car drove off and the short

fat man caught sight of the party.

"Andre."

"It's Farley!"

A torrent of talk followed. Farley was an American. No one knew

very well what the talk was about. Villona and Riviere were the

noisiest, but all the men were excited. They got up on a car, squeezing themselves together amid much laughter. They drove by

the crowd, blended now into soft colours, to a music of merry

bells. They took the train at Westland Row and in a few seconds,

as it seemed to Jimmy, they were walking out of Kingstown Station. The ticket-collector saluted Jimmy; he was an old man:

"Fine night, sir!"

It was a serene summer night; the harbour lay like a darkened

mirror at their feet. They proceeded towards it with linked arms,

singing Cadet Roussel in chorus, stamping their feet at every:

"Ho! Ho! Hohe, vraiment!"

They got into a rowboat at the slip and made out for the American's yacht. There was to be supper, music, cards. Villona

said with conviction:

"It is delightful!"

There was a yacht piano in the cabin. Villona played a waltz for

Farley and Riviere, Farley acting as cavalier and Riviere as lady.

Then an impromptu square dance, the men devising original figures. What merriment! Jimmy took his part with a will; this was



seeing life, at least. Then Farley got out of breath and cried "Stop!"

A man brought in a light supper, and the young men sat down to it

for form's sake. They drank, however: it was Bohemian. They

drank Ireland, England, France, Hungary, the United States of

America. Jimmy made a speech, a long speech, Villona saying:

"Hear! hear!" whenever there was a pause. There was a great

clapping of hands when he sat down. It must have been a good

speech. Farley clapped him on the back and laughed loudly. What

jovial fellows! What good company they were!

Cards! cards! The table was cleared. Villona returned quietly to his

piano and played voluntaries for them. The other men played game

after game, flinging themselves boldly into the adventure. They

drank the health of the Queen of Hearts and of the Queen of

Diamonds. Jimmy felt obscurely the lack of an audience: the wit

was flashing. Play ran very high and paper began to pass. Jimmy

did not know exactly who was winning but he knew that he was

losing. But it was his own fault for he frequently mistook his cards

and the other men had to calculate his I.O.U.'s for him. They were

devils of fellows but he wished they would stop: it was getting late.

Someone gave the toast of the yacht The Belle of Newport and

then someone proposed one great game for a finish.

The piano had stopped; Villona must have gone up on deck. It was

a terrible game. They stopped just before the end of it to drink for

luck. Jimmy understood that the game lay between Routh and

Segouin. What excitement! Jimmy was excited too; he would lose,

of course. How much had he written away? The men rose to their

feet to play the last tricks. talking and gesticulating. Routh won.

The cabin shook with the young men's cheering and the cards were

bundled together. They began then to gather in what they had won.

Farley and Jimmy were the heaviest losers.

He knew that he would regret in the morning but at present he was

glad of the rest, glad of the dark stupor that would cover up his

folly. He leaned his elbows on the table and rested his head between his hands, counting the beats of his temples. The cabin

door opened and he saw the Hungarian standing in a shaft of grey

light:

"Daybreak, gentlemen!"

TWO GALLANTS

THE grey warm evening of August had descended upon the city

and a mild warm air, a memory of summer, circulated in the streets. The streets, shuttered for the repose of Sunday, swarmed

with a gaily coloured crowd. Like illumined pearls the lamps shone from the summits of their tall poles upon the living texture

below which, changing shape and hue unceasingly, sent up into the

warm grey evening air an unchanging unceasing murmur.

Two young men came down the hill of Rutland Square. On of them was just bringing a long monologue to a close. The other,

who walked on the verge of the path and was at times obliged to

step on to the road, owing to his companion's rudeness, wore an

amused listening face. He was squat and ruddy. A yachting cap

was shoved far back from his forehead and the narrative to which

he listened made constant waves of expression break forth over his

face from the corners of his nose and eyes and mouth. Little jets of

wheezing laughter followed one another out of his convulsed body.

His eyes, twinkling with cunning enjoyment, glanced at every

moment towards his companion's face. Once or twice he rearranged the light waterproof which he had slung over one

shoulder in toreador fashion. His breeches, his white rubber shoes

and his jauntily slung waterproof expressed youth. But his figure

fell into rotundity at the waist, his hair was scant and grey and his

face, when the waves of expression had passed over it, had a

ravaged look.

When he was quite sure that the narrative had ended he laughed

noiselessly for fully half a minute. Then he said:

"Well!... That takes the biscuit!"

His voice seemed winnowed of vigour; and to enforce his words he

added with humour:

"That takes the solitary, unique, and, if I may so call it,  
recherche  
biscuit! "

He became serious and silent when he had said this. His  
tongue

was tired for he had been talking all the afternoon in a  
public-house in Dorset Street. Most people considered  
Lenehan a

leech but, in spite of this reputation, his adroitness and  
eloquence

had always prevented his friends from forming any general  
policy

against him. He had a brave manner of coming up to a party  
of

them in a bar and of holding himself nimbly at the borders  
of the

company until he was included in a round. He was a  
sporting

vagrant armed with a vast stock of stories, limericks and  
riddles.

He was insensitive to all kinds of discourtesy. No one knew  
how

he achieved the stern task of living, but his name was vaguely

associated with racing tissues.

"And where did you pick her up, Corley?" he asked.

Corley ran his tongue swiftly along his upper lip.

"One night, man," he said, "I was going along Dame Street and I

spotted a fine tart under Waterhouse's clock and said good-night,

you know. So we went for a walk round by the canal and she told

me she was a slavey in a house in Baggot Street. I put my arm

round her and squeezed her a bit that night. Then next Sunday,

man, I met her by appointment. We went out to Donnybrook and I

brought her into a field there. She told me she used to go with a

dairyman.... It was fine, man. Cigarettes every night she'd bring me

and paying the tram out and back. And one night she brought me

two bloody fine cigars--O, the real cheese, you know, that the old

fellow used to smoke.... I was afraid, man, she'd get in the family

way. But she's up to the dodge."

"Maybe she thinks you'll marry her," said Lenehan.

"I told her I was out of a job," said Corley. "I told her I was in Pim's. She doesn't know my name. I was too hairy to tell her that.

But she thinks I'm a bit of class, you know."

Lenehan laughed again, noiselessly.

"Of all the good ones ever I heard," he said, "that emphatically

takes the biscuit."

Corley's stride acknowledged the compliment. The swing of his

burly body made his friend execute a few light skips from the path

to the roadway and back again. Corley was the son of an inspector



of police and he had inherited his father's frame and gut. He walked with his hands by his sides, holding himself erect and

swaying his head from side to side. His head was large, globular

and oily; it sweated in all weathers; and his large round hat, set

upon it sideways, looked like a bulb which had grown out of another. He always stared straight before him as if he were on

parade and, when he wished to gaze after someone in the street, it

was necessary for him to move his body from the hips. At present

he was about town. Whenever any job was vacant a friend was

always ready to give him the hard word. He was often to be seen

walking with policemen in plain clothes, talking earnestly. He

knew the inner side of all affairs and was fond of delivering final

judgments. He spoke without listening to the speech of his

companions. His conversation was mainly about himself what he

had said to such a person and what such a person had said to him

and what he had said to settle the matter. When he reported these

dialogues he aspirated the first letter of his name after the manner

of Florentines.

Lenehan offered his friend a cigarette. As the two young men

walked on through the crowd Corley occasionally turned to smile

at some of the passing girls but Lenehan's gaze was fixed on the

large faint moon circled with a double halo. He watched earnestly

the passing of the grey web of twilight across its face. At length he

said:

"Well... tell me, Corley, I suppose you'll be able to pull it off all

right, eh?"

Corley closed one eye expressively as an answer.

"Is she game for that?" asked Lenehan dubiously. "You can never know women."

"She's all right," said Corley. "I know the way to get around her, man. She's a bit gone on me."

"You're what I call a gay Lothario," said Lenehan. "And the proper kind of a Lothario, too!"

A shade of mockery relieved the servility of his manner. To save himself he had the habit of leaving his flattery open to the interpretation of raillery. But Corley had not a subtle mind.

"There's nothing to touch a good slavey," he affirmed. "Take my tip for it."

"By one who has tried them all," said Lenehan.

"First I used to go with girls, you know," said Corley, unbosoming;

"girls off the South Circular. I used to take them out, man, on the

tram somewhere and pay the tram or take them to a band or a play

at the theatre or buy them chocolate and sweets or something that

way. I used to spend money on them right enough," he added, in a

convincing tone, as if he was conscious of being disbelieved.

But Lenehan could well believe it; he nodded gravely.

"I know that game," he said, "and it's a mug's game."

"And damn the thing I ever got out of it," said Corley.

"Ditto here," said Lenehan.

"Only off of one of them," said Corley.

He moistened his upper lip by running his tongue along it. The

recollection brightened his eyes. He too gazed at the pale disc of

the moon, now nearly veiled, and seemed to meditate.

She was... a bit of all right," he said regretfully.

He was silent again. Then he added:

"She's on the turf now. I saw her driving down Earl Street one

night with two fellows with her on a car."

"I suppose that's your doing," said Lenehan.

"There was others at her before me," said Corley philosophically.

This time Lenehan was inclined to disbelieve. He shook his head

to and fro and smiled.

"You know you can't kid me, Corley," he said.

"Honest to God!" said Corley. "Didn't she tell me herself?"

Lenehan made a tragic gesture.

"Base betrayer!" he said.

As they passed along the railings of Trinity College, Lenehan

skipped out into the road and peered up at the clock.

"Twenty after," he said.

"Time enough," said Corley. "She'll be there all right. I always let

her wait a bit."

Lenehan laughed quietly.

'Ecod! Corley, you know how to take them," he said.

"I'm up to all their little tricks," Corley confessed.

"But tell me," said Lenehan again, "are you sure you can bring it

off all right? You know it's a ticklish job. They're damn close on

that point. Eh? ... What?"

His bright, small eyes searched his companion's face for

reassurance. Corley swung his head to and fro as if to toss aside an

insistent insect, and his brows gathered.

"I'll pull it off," he said. "Leave it to me, can't you?"

Lenehan said no more. He did not wish to ruffle his friend's temper, to be sent to the devil and told that his advice was not

wanted. A little tact was necessary. But Corley's brow was soon

smooth again. His thoughts were running another way.

"She's a fine decent tart," he said, with appreciation; "that's what

she is."

They walked along Nassau Street and then turned into Kildare

Street. Not far from the porch of the club a harpist stood in the

roadway, playing to a little ring of listeners. He plucked at the

wires heedlessly, glancing quickly from time to time at the face of

each new-comer and from time to time, wearily also, at the sky.

His harp, too, heedless that her coverings had fallen about her

knees, seemed weary alike of the eyes of strangers and of her

master's hands. One hand played in the bass the melody of Silent,

O Moyle, while the other hand careered in the treble after each

group of notes. The notes of the air sounded deep and full.

The two young men walked up the street without speaking, the

mournful music following them. When they reached Stephen's

Green they crossed the road. Here the noise of trams, the lights and

the crowd released them from their silence.

"There she is!" said Corley.

At the corner of Hume Street a young woman was standing. She

wore a blue dress and a white sailor hat. She stood on the

curbstone, swinging a sunshade in one hand. Lenehan grew lively.

"Let's have a look at her, Corley," he said.



Corley glanced sideways at his friend and an unpleasant grin

appeared on his face.

"Are you trying to get inside me?" he asked.

"Damn it!" said Lenehan boldly, "I don't want an introduction. All I

want is to have a look at her. I'm not going to eat her."

"O ... A look at her?" said Corley, more amiably. "Well... I'll tell

you what. I'll go over and talk to her and you can pass by."

"Right!" said Lenehan.

Corley had already thrown one leg over the chains when Lenehan

called out:

"And after? Where will we meet?"

"Half ten," answered Corley, bringing over his other leg.

"Where?"

"Corner of Merrion Street. We'll be coming back."

"Work it all right now," said Lenehan in farewell.

Corley did not answer. He sauntered across the road swaying his

head from side to side. His bulk, his easy pace, and the solid sound

of his boots had something of the conqueror in them. He

approached the young woman and, without saluting, began at once

to converse with her. She swung her umbrella more quickly and

executed half turns on her heels. Once or twice when he spoke to

her at close quarters she laughed and bent her head.

Lenehan observed them for a few minutes. Then he walked rapidly

along beside the chains at some distance and crossed the road

obliquely. As he approached Hume Street corner he found the air

heavily scented and his eyes made a swift anxious scrutiny of the

young woman's appearance. She had her Sunday finery on. Her

blue serge skirt was held at the waist by a belt of black leather.

The great silver buckle of her belt seemed to depress the centre of

her body, catching the light stuff of her white blouse like a clip.

She wore a short black jacket with mother-of-pearl buttons and a

ragged black boa. The ends of her tulle collarette had been

carefully disordered and a big bunch of red flowers was pinned in

her bosom stems upwards. Lenehan's eyes noted approvingly her

stout short muscular body. rank rude health glowed in her face, on

her fat red cheeks and in her unabashed blue eyes. Her features

were blunt. She had broad nostrils, a straggling mouth which lay

open in a contented leer, and two projecting front teeth. As he

passed Lenehan took off his cap and, after about ten seconds,

Corley returned a salute to the air. This he did by raising his hand

vaguely and pensively changing the angle of position of his hat.

Lenehan walked as far as the Shelbourne Hotel where he halted

and waited. After waiting for a little time he saw them coming

towards him and, when they turned to the right, he followed them,

stepping lightly in his white shoes, down one side of Merrion Square. As he walked on slowly, timing his pace to theirs, he watched Corley's head which turned at every moment towards the

young woman's face like a big ball revolving on a pivot. He kept

the pair in view until he had seen them climbing the stairs of the

Donnybrook tram; then he turned about and went back the way he

had come.

Now that he was alone his face looked older. His gaiety seemed to

forsake him and, as he came by the railings of the Duke's Lawn, he

allowed his hand to run along them. The air which the harpist had

played began to control his movements His softly padded feet

played the melody while his fingers swept a scale of variations idly

along the railings after each group of notes.

He walked listlessly round Stephen's Green and then down Grafton

Street. Though his eyes took note of many elements of the crowd

through which he passed they did so morosely. He found trivial all

that was meant to charm him and did not answer the glances which

invited him to be bold. He knew that he would have to speak a

great deal, to invent and to amuse and his brain and throat were

too dry for such a task. The problem of how he could pass the

hours till he met Corley again troubled him a little. He could think

of no way of passing them but to keep on walking. He turned to the

left when he came to the corner of Rutland Square and felt more at

ease in the dark quiet street, the sombre look of which suited his

mood. He paused at last before the window of a poor-looking shop

over which the words Refreshment Bar were printed in white letters. On the glass of the window were two flying inscriptions:

Ginger Beer and Ginger Ale. A cut ham was exposed on a great

blue dish while near it on a plate lay a segment of very light plum-pudding. He eyed this food earnestly for some time and then,

after glancing warily up and down the street, went into the shop

quickly.

He was hungry for, except some biscuits which he had asked two

grudging curates to bring him, he had eaten nothing since breakfast-time. He sat down at an uncovered wooden table

opposite two work-girls and a mechanic. A slatternly girl waited

on him.

"How much is a plate of peas?" he asked.

"Three halfpence, sir," said the girl.

"Bring me a plate of peas," he said, "and a bottle of ginger beer."

He spoke roughly in order to belie his air of gentility for his entry

had been followed by a pause of talk. His face was heated. To

appear natural he pushed his cap back on his head and planted his

elbows on the table. The mechanic and the two work-girls

examined him point by point before resuming their conversation in

a subdued voice. The girl brought him a plate of grocer's hot peas,

seasoned with pepper and vinegar, a fork and his ginger beer. He

ate his food greedily and found it so good that he made a note of

the shop mentally. When he had eaten all the peas he sipped his

ginger beer and sat for some time thinking of Corley's adventure.

In his imagination he beheld the pair of lovers walking along some

dark road; he heard Corley's voice in deep energetic gallantries and

saw again the leer of the young woman's mouth. This vision made

him feel keenly his own poverty of purse and spirit. He was tired

of knocking about, of pulling the devil by the tail, of shifts and

intrigues. He would be thirty-one in November. Would he never

get a good job? Would he never have a home of his own? He

thought how pleasant it would be to have a warm fire to sit by and

a good dinner to sit down to. He had walked the streets long

enough with friends and with girls. He knew what those friends

were worth: he knew the girls too. Experience had embittered his



heart against the world. But all hope had not left him. He felt

better after having eaten than he had felt before, less weary of his

life, less vanquished in spirit. He might yet be able to settle down

in some snug corner and live happily if he could only come across

some good simple-minded girl with a little of the ready.

He paid twopence halfpenny to the slatternly girl and went out of

the shop to begin his wandering again. He went into Capel Street

and walked along towards the City Hall. Then he turned into Dame

Street. At the corner of George's Street he met two friends of his

and stopped to converse with them. He was glad that he could rest

from all his walking. His friends asked him had he seen Corley and

what was the latest. He replied that he had spent the day with

Corley. His friends talked very little. They looked vacantly after

some figures in the crowd and sometimes made a critical remark.

One said that he had seen Mac an hour before in Westmoreland

Street. At this Lenehan said that he had been with Mac the night

before in Egan's. The young man who had seen Mac in

Westmoreland Street asked was it true that Mac had won a bit over

a billiard match. Lenehan did not know: he said that Holohan had

stood them drinks in Egan's.

He left his friends at a quarter to ten and went up George's Street.

He turned to the left at the City Markets and walked on into

Grafton Street. The crowd of girls and young men had thinned and

on his way up the street he heard many groups and couples bidding

one another good-night. He went as far as the clock of the College

of Surgeons: it was on the stroke of ten. He set off briskly along

the northern side of the Green hurrying for fear Corley should

return too soon. When he reached the corner of Merrion Street he

took his stand in the shadow of a lamp and brought out one of the

cigarettes which he had reserved and lit it. He leaned against the

lamp-post and kept his gaze fixed on the part from which he expected to see Corley and the young woman return.

His mind became active again. He wondered had Corley managed

it successfully. He wondered if he had asked her yet or if he would

leave it to the last. He suffered all the pangs and thrills of his

friend's situation as well as those of his own. But the memory of

Corley's slowly revolving head calmed him somewhat: he was sure

Corley would pull it off all right. All at once the idea struck him

that perhaps Corley had seen her home by another way and given

him the slip. His eyes searched the street: there was no sign of

them. Yet it was surely half-an-hour since he had seen the clock of

the College of Surgeons. Would Corley do a thing like that? He lit

his last cigarette and began to smoke it nervously. He strained his

eyes as each tram stopped at the far corner of the square. They

must have gone home by another way. The paper of his cigarette

broke and he flung it into the road with a curse.

Suddenly he saw them coming towards him. He started with delight and keeping close to his lamp-post tried to read the result

in their walk. They were walking quickly, the young woman taking

quick short steps, while Corley kept beside her with his long stride.

They did not seem to be speaking. An intimation of the result

pricked him like the point of a sharp instrument. He knew Corley

would fail; he knew it was no go.

They turned down Baggot Street and he followed them at once,

taking the other footpath. When they stopped he stopped too. They

talked for a few moments and then the young woman went down

the steps into the area of a house. Corley remained standing at the

edge of the path, a little distance from the front steps. Some

minutes passed. Then the hall-door was opened slowly and

cautiously. A woman came running down the front steps and

coughed. Corley turned and went towards her. His broad figure hid

hers from view for a few seconds and then she reappeared running

up the steps. The door closed on her and Corley began to walk

swiftly towards Stephen's Green.

Lenahan hurried on in the same direction. Some drops of light rain

fell. He took them as a warning and, glancing back towards the

house which the young woman had entered to see that he was not

observed, he ran eagerly across the road. Anxiety and his swift run

made him pant. He called out:

"Hallo, Corley!"

Corley turned his head to see who had called him, and then continued walking as before. Lenehan ran after him, settling the

waterproof on his shoulders with one hand.

"Hallo, Corley!" he cried again.

He came level with his friend and looked keenly in his face. He

could see nothing there.

"Well?" he said. "Did it come off?"

They had reached the corner of Ely Place. Still without answering,

Corley swerved to the left and went up the side street. His features

were composed in stern calm. Lenehan kept up with his friend,

breathing uneasily. He was baffled and a note of menace pierced

through his voice.

"Can't you tell us?" he said. "Did you try her?"

Corley halted at the first lamp and stared grimly before him. Then

with a grave gesture he extended a hand towards the light and,

smiling, opened it slowly to the gaze of his disciple. A small gold

coin shone in the palm.

## THE BOARDING HOUSE

MRS. MOONEY was a butcher's daughter. She was a woman who

was quite able to keep things to herself: a determined woman. She

had married her father's foreman and opened a butcher's shop near

Spring Gardens. But as soon as his father-in-law was dead Mr.

Mooney began to go to the devil. He drank, plundered the till, ran

headlong into debt. It was no use making him take the pledge: he

was sure to break out again a few days after. By fighting his wife

in the presence of customers and by buying bad meat he ruined his

business. One night he went for his wife with the cleaver and she

had to sleep a neighbour's house.

After that they lived apart. She went to the priest and got a separation from him with care of the children. She would give him

neither money nor food nor house-room; and so he was obliged to

enlist himself as a sheriff's man. He was a shabby stooped little

drunkard with a white face and a white moustache white eyebrows,

pencilled above his little eyes, which were veined and raw; and all

day long he sat in the bailiff's room, waiting to be put on a job.



Mrs. Mooney, who had taken what remained of her money out of

the butcher business and set up a boarding house in Hardwicke

Street, was a big imposing woman. Her house had a floating population made up of tourists from Liverpool and the Isle of Man

and, occasionally, artistes from the music halls. Its resident population was made up of clerks from the city. She governed the

house cunningly and firmly, knew when to give credit, when to be

stern and when to let things pass. All the resident young men spoke

of her as The Madam.

Mrs. Mooney's young men paid fifteen shillings a week for board

and lodgings (beer or stout at dinner excluded). They shared in

common tastes and occupations and for this reason they were very

chummy with one another. They discussed with one another the

chances of favourites and outsiders. Jack Mooney, the Madam's

son, who was clerk to a commission agent in Fleet Street, had the

reputation of being a hard case. He was fond of using soldiers'

obscenities: usually he came home in the small hours. When he

met his friends he had always a good one to tell them and he was

always sure to be on to a good thing-that is to say, a likely horse or

a likely artiste. He was also handy with the mits and sang comic

songs. On Sunday nights there would often be a reunion in Mrs.

Mooney's front drawing-room. The music-hall artistes would

oblige; and Sheridan played waltzes and polkas and vamped

accompaniments. Polly Mooney, the Madam's daughter, would

also sing. She sang:

I'm a ... naughty girl.

You needn't sham:

You know I am.

Polly was a slim girl of nineteen; she had light soft hair and a

small full mouth. Her eyes, which were grey with a shade of green

through them, had a habit of glancing upwards when she spoke

with anyone, which made her look like a little perverse madonna.

Mrs. Mooney had first sent her daughter to be a typist in a corn-factor's office but, as a disreputable sheriff's man used to

come every other day to the office, asking to be allowed to say a

word to his daughter, she had taken her daughter home again and

set her to do housework. As Polly was very lively the intention was

to give her the run of the young men. Besides young men like to

feel that there is a young woman not very far away. Polly, of course, flirted with the young men but Mrs. Mooney, who was a

shrewd judge, knew that the young men were only passing the time

away: none of them meant business. Things went on so for a long

time and Mrs. Mooney began to think of sending Polly back to

typewriting when she noticed that something was going on

between Polly and one of the young men. She watched the pair and

kept her own counsel.

Polly knew that she was being watched, but still her mother's

persistent silence could not be misunderstood. There had been no

open complicity between mother and daughter, no open

understanding but, though people in the house began to talk of the

affair, still Mrs. Mooney did not intervene. Polly began to grow a

little strange in her manner and the young man was evidently

perturbed. At last, when she judged it to be the right moment, Mrs.

Mooney intervened. She dealt with moral problems as a cleaver

deals with meat: and in this case she had made up her mind.

It was a bright Sunday morning of early summer, promising heat,

but with a fresh breeze blowing. All the windows of the boarding

house were open and the lace curtains ballooned gently towards

the street beneath the raised sashes. The belfry of George's Church

sent out constant peals and worshippers, singly or in groups,

traversed the little circus before the church, revealing their purpose

by their self-contained demeanour no less than by the little

volumes in their gloved hands. Breakfast was over in the boarding

house and the table of the breakfast-room was covered with plates

on which lay yellow streaks of eggs with morsels of bacon-fat and

bacon-rind. Mrs. Mooney sat in the straw arm-chair and watched

the servant Mary remove the breakfast things. She had  
Mary

collect the crusts and pieces of broken bread to help to  
make

Tuesday's bread- pudding. When the table was cleared, the  
broken

bread collected, the sugar and butter safe under lock and  
key, she

began to reconstruct the interview which she had had the  
night

before with Polly. Things were as she had suspected: she  
had been

frank in her questions and Polly had been frank in her  
answers.

Both had been somewhat awkward, of course. She had been  
made

awkward by her not wishing to receive the news in too  
cavalier a

fashion or to seem to have connived and Polly had been  
made

awkward not merely because allusions of that kind always  
made

her awkward but also because she did not wish it to be  
thought that

in her wise innocence she had divined the intention behind  
her

mother's tolerance.

Mrs. Mooney glanced instinctively at the little gilt clock on the

mantelpiece as soon as she had become aware through her revery

that the bells of George's Church had stopped ringing. It was seventeen minutes past eleven: she would have lots of time to have

the matter out with Mr. Doran and then catch short twelve at

Marlborough Street. She was sure she would win. To begin with

she had all the weight of social opinion on her side: she was an

outraged mother. She had allowed him to live beneath her roof,

assuming that he was a man of honour and he had simply abused

her hospitality. He was thirty-four or thirty-five years of age, so

that youth could not be pleaded as his excuse; nor could ignorance

be his excuse since he was a man who had seen something of the

world. He had simply taken advantage of Polly's youth and inexperience: that was evident. The question was: What reparation would he make?

There must be reparation made in such case. It is all very well for

the man: he can go his ways as if nothing had happened, having

had his moment of pleasure, but the girl has to bear the brunt.

Some mothers would be content to patch up such an affair for a

sum of money; she had known cases of it. But she would not do so.

For her only one reparation could make up for the loss of her daughter's honour: marriage.

She counted all her cards again before sending Mary up to Doran's

room to say that she wished to speak with him. She felt sure she

would win. He was a serious young man, not rakish or loud-voiced

like the others. If it had been Mr. Sheridan or Mr. Meade or



Bantam Lyons her task would have been much harder. She did not

think he would face publicity. All the lodgers in the house knew

something of the affair; details had been invented by some.

Besides, he had been employed for thirteen years in a great

Catholic wine-merchant's office and publicity would mean for

him, perhaps, the loss of his job. Whereas if he agreed all might be

well. She knew he had a good screw for one thing and she suspected he had a bit of stuff put by.

Nearly the half-hour! She stood up and surveyed herself in the

pier-glass. The decisive expression of her great florid face satisfied

her and she thought of some mothers she knew who could not get

their daughters off their hands.

Mr. Doran was very anxious indeed this Sunday morning. He had

made two attempts to shave but his hand had been so unsteady that

he had been obliged to desist. Three days' reddish beard fringed his

jaws and every two or three minutes a mist gathered on his glasses

so that he had to take them off and polish them with his

pocket-handkerchief. The recollection of his confession of the

night before was a cause of acute pain to him; the priest had drawn

out every ridiculous detail of the affair and in the end had so

magnified his sin that he was almost thankful at being afforded a

loophole of reparation. The harm was done. What could he do now

but marry her or run away? He could not brazen it out. The affair

would be sure to be talked of and his employer would be certain to

hear of it. Dublin is such a small city: everyone knows everyone

else's business. He felt his heart leap warmly in his throat as he

heard in his excited imagination old Mr. Leonard calling out in his

rasping voice: "Send Mr. Doran here, please."

All his long years of service gone for nothing! All his industry and

diligence thrown away! As a young man he had sown his wild oats,

of course; he had boasted of his free-thinking and denied the

existence of God to his companions in public- houses. But that was

all passed and done with... nearly. He still bought a copy of

Reynolds's Newspaper every week but he attended to his religious

duties and for nine-tenths of the year lived a regular life. He had

money enough to settle down on; it was not that. But the family

would look down on her. First of all there was her disreputable

father and then her mother's boarding house was beginning to get a

certain fame. He had a notion that he was being had. He could

imagine his friends talking of the affair and laughing. She was a

little vulgar; some times she said "I seen" and "If I had've known."

But what would grammar matter if he really loved her? He could

not make up his mind whether to like her or despise her for what

she had done. Of course he had done it too. His instinct urged him

to remain free, not to marry. Once you are married you are done

for, it said.

While he was sitting helplessly on the side of the bed in shirt and

trousers she tapped lightly at his door and entered. She told him

all, that she had made a clean breast of it to her mother and that

her mother would speak with him that morning. She cried and

threw her arms round his neck, saying:

"O Bob! Bob! What am I to do? What am I to do at all?"

She would put an end to herself, she said.

He comforted her feebly, telling her not to cry, that it would be all

right, never fear. He felt against his shirt the agitation of her bosom.

It was not altogether his fault that it had happened. He

remembered well, with the curious patient memory of the celibate,

the first casual caresses her dress, her breath, her fingers had given

him. Then late one night as he was undressing for she had  
tapped

at his door, timidly. She wanted to relight her candle at his  
for hers

had been blown out by a gust. It was her bath night. She  
wore a

loose open combing- jacket of printed flannel. Her white  
instep

shone in the opening of her furry slippers and the blood  
glowed

warmly behind her perfumed skin. From her hands and  
wrists too

as she lit and steadied her candle a faint perfume arose.

On nights when he came in very late it was she who  
warmed up his

dinner. He scarcely knew what he was eating feeling her  
beside

him alone, at night, in the sleeping house. And her  
thoughtfulness!

If the night was anyway cold or wet or windy there was sure  
to be

a little tumbler of punch ready for him. Perhaps they could  
be

happy together....

They used to go upstairs together on tiptoe, each with a candle,

and on the third landing exchange reluctant goodnights. They used

to kiss. He remembered well her eyes, the touch of her hand and

his delirium....

But delirium passes. He echoed her phrase, applying it to himself:

"What am I to do?" The instinct of the celibate warned him to hold

back. But the sin was there; even his sense of honour told him that

reparation must be made for such a sin.

While he was sitting with her on the side of the bed Mary came to

the door and said that the missus wanted to see him in the parlour.

He stood up to put on his coat and waistcoat, more helpless than

ever. When he was dressed he went over to her to comfort her. It

would be all right, never fear. He left her crying on the bed and

moaning softly: "O my God!"

Going down the stairs his glasses became so dimmed with moisture that he had to take them off and polish them. He longed

to ascend through the roof and fly away to another country where

he would never hear again of his trouble, and yet a force pushed

him downstairs step by step. The implacable faces of his employer

and of the Madam stared upon his discomfiture. On the last flight

of stairs he passed Jack Mooney who was coming up from the

pantry nursing two bottles of Bass. They saluted coldly; and the

lover's eyes rested for a second or two on a thick bulldog face and

a pair of thick short arms. When he reached the foot of the staircase he glanced up and saw Jack regarding him from the door

of the return-room.



Suddenly he remembered the night when one of the  
music-hall

artistes, a little blond Londoner, had made a rather free  
allusion to

Polly. The reunion had been almost broken up on account of  
Jack's

violence. Everyone tried to quiet him. The music-hall artiste,  
a

little paler than usual, kept smiling and saying that there  
was no

harm meant: but Jack kept shouting at him that if any fellow  
tried

that sort of a game on with his sister he'd bloody well put  
his teeth

down his throat, so he would.

Polly sat for a little time on the side of the bed, crying. Then  
she

dried her eyes and went over to the looking-glass. She  
dipped the

end of the towel in the water-jug and refreshed her eyes  
with the

cool water. She looked at herself in profile and readjusted a

hairpin above her ear. Then she went back to the bed again  
and sat

at the foot. She regarded the pillows for a long time and the sight

of them awakened in her mind secret, amiable memories. She

rested the nape of her neck against the cool iron bed-rail and fell

into a reverie. There was no longer any perturbation visible on her

face.

She waited on patiently, almost cheerfully, without alarm. her

memories gradually giving place to hopes and visions of the future. Her hopes and visions were so intricate that she no longer

saw the white pillows on which her gaze was fixed or remembered

that she was waiting for anything.

At last she heard her mother calling. She started to her feet and ran

to the banisters.

"Polly! Polly!"

"Yes, mamma?"

"Come down, dear. Mr. Doran wants to speak to you."

Then she remembered what she had been waiting for.

## A LITTLE CLOUD

EIGHT years before he had seen his friend off at the North Wall

and wished him godspeed. Gallaher had got on. You could tell that

at once by his travelled air, his well-cut tweed suit, and fearless

accent. Few fellows had talents like his and fewer still could remain unspoiled by such success. Gallaher's heart was in the right

place and he had deserved to win. It was something to have a

friend like that.

Little Chandler's thoughts ever since lunch-time had been of his

meeting with Gallaher, of Gallaher's invitation and of the great city

London where Gallaher lived. He was called Little Chandler because, though he was but slightly under the average stature, he

gave one the idea of being a little man. His hands were white and

small, his frame was fragile, his voice was quiet and his manners

were refined. He took the greatest care of his fair silken hair and

moustache and used perfume discreetly on his handkerchief. The

half-moons of his nails were perfect and when he smiled you caught a glimpse of a row of childish white teeth.

As he sat at his desk in the King's Inns he thought what changes

those eight years had brought. The friend whom he had known

under a shabby and necessitous guise had become a brilliant figure

on the London Press. He turned often from his tiresome writing to

gaze out of the office window. The glow of a late autumn sunset

covered the grass plots and walks. It cast a shower of kindly

golden dust on the untidy nurses and decrepit old men who  
drowsed on the benches; it flickered upon all the moving  
figures--

on the children who ran screaming along the gravel paths  
and on

everyone who passed through the gardens. He watched the  
scene

and thought of life; and (as always happened when he  
thought of

life) he became sad. A gentle melancholy took possession of  
him.

He felt how useless it was to struggle against fortune, this  
being

the burden of wisdom which the ages had bequeathed to  
him.

He remembered the books of poetry upon his shelves at  
home. He

had bought them in his bachelor days and many an evening,  
as he

sat in the little room off the hall, he had been tempted to  
take one

down from the bookshelf and read out something to his  
wife. But

shyness had always held him back; and so the books had  
remained

on their shelves. At times he repeated lines to himself and this

consoled him.

When his hour had struck he stood up and took leave of his desk

and of his fellow-clerks punctiliously. He emerged from under the

feudal arch of the King's Inns, a neat modest figure, and walked

swiftly down Henrietta Street. The golden sunset was waning and

the air had grown sharp. A horde of grimy children populated the

street. They stood or ran in the roadway or crawled up the steps

before the gaping doors or squatted like mice upon the thresholds.

Little Chandler gave them no thought. He picked his way deftly

through all that minute vermin-like life and under the shadow of

the gaunt spectral mansions in which the old nobility of Dublin

had roystered. No memory of the past touched him, for his mind

was full of a present joy.

He had never been in Corless's but he knew the value of the name.

He knew that people went there after the theatre to eat oysters and

drink liqueurs; and he had heard that the waiters there spoke

French and German. Walking swiftly by at night he had seen cabs

drawn up before the door and richly dressed ladies, escorted by

cavaliers, alight and enter quickly. They wore noisy dresses and

many wraps. Their faces were powdered and they caught up their

dresses, when they touched earth, like alarmed Atalantas. He had

always passed without turning his head to look. It was his habit to

walk swiftly in the street even by day and whenever he found

himself in the city late at night he hurried on his way

apprehensively and excitedly. Sometimes, however, he courted the

causes of his fear. He chose the darkest and narrowest streets and,

as he walked boldly forward, the silence that was spread about his

footsteps troubled him, the wandering, silent figures troubled him;

and at times a sound of low fugitive laughter made him tremble

like a leaf.

He turned to the right towards Capel Street. Ignatius Gallaher on

the London Press! Who would have thought it possible eight years

before? Still, now that he reviewed the past, Little Chandler could

remember many signs of future greatness in his friend. People used

to say that Ignatius Gallaher was wild Of course, he did mix with a

rakish set of fellows at that time. drank freely and borrowed money on all sides. In the end he had got mixed up in some shady

affair, some money transaction: at least, that was one version of his



flight. But nobody denied him talent. There was always a certain...

something in Ignatius Gallaher that impressed you in spite of

yourself. Even when he was out at elbows and at his wits' end for

money he kept up a bold face. Little Chandler remembered (and

the remembrance brought a slight flush of pride to his cheek) one

of Ignatius Gallaher's sayings when he was in a tight corner:

"Half time now, boys," he used to say light-heartedly.

"Where's my

considering cap?"

That was Ignatius Gallaher all out; and, damn it, you couldn't but

admire him for it.

Little Chandler quickened his pace. For the first time in his life he

felt himself superior to the people he passed. For the first time his

soul revolted against the dull inelegance of Capel Street. There

was no doubt about it: if you wanted to succeed you had to go

away. You could do nothing in Dublin. As he crossed Grattan Bridge he looked down the river towards the lower quays and

pitied the poor stunted houses. They seemed to him a band of

tramps, huddled together along the riverbanks, their old coats

covered with dust and soot, stupefied by the panorama of sunset

and waiting for the first chill of night bid them arise, shake themselves and begone. He wondered whether he could write a

poem to express his idea. Perhaps Gallaher might be able to get it

into some London paper for him. Could he write something original? He was not sure what idea he wished to express but the

thought that a poetic moment had touched him took life within

him like an infant hope. He stepped onward bravely.

Every step brought him nearer to London, farther from his own

sober inartistic life. A light began to tremble on the horizon of his

mind. He was not so old--thirty-two. His temperament might be

said to be just at the point of maturity. There were so many different moods and impressions that he wished to express in

verse. He felt them within him. He tried weigh his soul to see if it

was a poet's soul. Melancholy was the dominant note of his temperament, he thought, but it was a melancholy tempered by

recurrences of faith and resignation and simple joy. If he could

give expression to it in a book of poems perhaps men would listen.

He would never be popular: he saw that. He could not sway the

crowd but he might appeal to a little circle of kindred minds. The

English critics, perhaps, would recognise him as one of the Celtic

school by reason of the melancholy tone of his poems; besides

that, he would put in allusions. He began to invent sentences and

phrases from the notice which his book would get. "Mr. Chandler

has the gift of easy and graceful verse." ... "wistful sadness

pervades these poems." ... "The Celtic note." It was a pity his name

was not more Irish-looking. Perhaps it would be better to insert his

mother's name before the surname: Thomas Malone Chandler, or

better still: T. Malone Chandler. He would speak to Gallaher about

it.

He pursued his revery so ardently that he passed his street and had

to turn back. As he came near Corless's his former agitation began

to overmaster him and he halted before the door in indecision.

Finally he opened the door and entered.

The light and noise of the bar held him at the doorways for a few

moments. He looked about him, but his sight was confused by the

shining of many red and green wine-glasses The bar seemed to him

to be full of people and he felt that the people were observing him

curiously. He glanced quickly to right and left (frowning slightly to

make his errand appear serious), but when his sight cleared a little

he saw that nobody had turned to look at him: and there, sure

enough, was Ignatius Gallaher leaning with his back against the

counter and his feet planted far apart.

"Hallo, Tommy, old hero, here you are! What is it to be? What will

you have? I'm taking whisky: better stuff than we get across the

water. Soda? Lithia? No mineral? I'm the same Spoils the

flavour.... Here, garcon, bring us two halves of malt whisky, like a

good fellow.... Well, and how have you been pulling along since I

saw you last? Dear God, how old we're getting! Do you see any

signs of aging in me--eh, what? A little grey and thin on the top--

what?"

Ignatius Gallaher took off his hat and displayed a large closely

cropped head. His face was heavy, pale and cleanshaven. His eyes,

which were of bluish slate-colour, relieved his unhealthy pallor

and shone out plainly above the vivid orange tie he wore. Between

these rival features the lips appeared very long and shapeless and

colourless. He bent his head and felt with two sympathetic fingers

the thin hair at the crown. Little Chandler shook his head as a

denial. Ignatius Galaher put on his hat again.

"It pulls you down," he said, "Press life. Always hurry and scurry,

looking for copy and sometimes not finding it: and then, always to

have something new in your stuff. Damn proofs and printers, I say,

for a few days. I'm deuced glad, I can tell you, to get back to the

old country. Does a fellow good, a bit of a holiday. I feel a ton

better since I landed again in dear dirty Dublin.... Here you are,

Tommy. Water? Say when."

Little Chandler allowed his whisky to be very much diluted.

"You don't know what's good for you, my boy," said Ignatius Gallaher. "I drink mine neat."

"I drink very little as a rule," said Little Chandler modestly. "An

odd half-one or so when I meet any of the old crowd: that's all."

"Ah well," said Ignatius Gallaher, cheerfully, "here's to us and to

old times and old acquaintance."

They clinked glasses and drank the toast.

"I met some of the old gang today," said Ignatius Gallaher.  
"O'Hara

seems to be in a bad way. What's he doing?"

"Nothing," said Little Chandler. "He's gone to the dogs."

"But Hogan has a good sit, hasn't he?"

"Yes; he's in the Land Commission."

"I met him one night in London and he seemed to be very  
flush....

Poor O'Hara! Boose, I suppose?"

"Other things, too," said Little Chandler shortly.

Ignatius Gallaher laughed.

"Tommy," he said, "I see you haven't changed an atom.  
You're the

very same serious person that used to lecture me on  
Sunday

mornings when I had a sore head and a fur on my tongue.  
You'd

want to knock about a bit in the world. Have you never been



anywhere even for a trip?"

"I've been to the Isle of Man," said Little Chandler.

Ignatius Gallaher laughed.

"The Isle of Man!" he said. "Go to London or Paris: Paris, for choice. That'd do you good."

"Have you seen Paris?"

"I should think I have! I've knocked about there a little."

"And is it really so beautiful as they say?" asked Little Chandler.

He sipped a little of his drink while Ignatius Gallaher finished his

boldly.

"Beautiful?" said Ignatius Gallaher, pausing on the word and on

the flavour of his drink. "It's not so beautiful, you know. Of course,

it is beautiful.... But it's the life of Paris; that's the thing. Ah, there's

no city like Paris for gaiety, movement, excitement...."

Little Chandler finished his whisky and, after some trouble, succeeded in catching the barman's eye. He ordered the same again.

"I've been to the Moulin Rouge," Ignatius Gallaher continued when

the barman had removed their glasses, "and I've been to all the

Bohemian cafes. Hot stuff! Not for a pious chap like you, Tommy."

Little Chandler said nothing until the barman returned with two

glasses: then he touched his friend's glass lightly and reciprocated

the former toast. He was beginning to feel somewhat disillusioned.

Gallaher's accent and way of expressing himself did not please

him. There was something vulgar in his friend which he had not

observed before. But perhaps it was only the result of living in

London amid the bustle and competition of the Press. The old

personal charm was still there under this new gaudy manner. And,

after all, Gallaher had lived, he had seen the world. Little Chandler

looked at his friend enviously.

"Everything in Paris is gay," said Ignatius Gallaher. "They believe

in enjoying life--and don't you think they're right? If you want to

enjoy yourself properly you must go to Paris. And, mind you, they've a great feeling for the Irish there. When they heard I was

from Ireland they were ready to eat me, man."

Little Chandler took four or five sips from his glass.

"Tell me," he said, "is it true that Paris is so... immoral as they

say?"

Ignatius Gallaher made a catholic gesture with his right arm.

"Every place is immoral," he said. "Of course you do find spicy

bits in Paris. Go to one of the students' balls, for instance. That's

lively, if you like, when the cocottes begin to let themselves loose.

You know what they are, I suppose?"

"I've heard of them," said Little Chandler.

Ignatius Gallaher drank off his whisky and shook his head.

"Ah," he said, "you may say what you like. There's no woman like

the Parisienne--for style, for go."

"Then it is an immoral city," said Little Chandler, with timid insistence--"I mean, compared with London or Dublin?"

"London!" said Ignatius Gallaher. "It's six of one and half-a-dozen

of the other. You ask Hogan, my boy. I showed him a bit about

London when he was over there. He'd open your eye.... I say,

Tommy, don't make punch of that whisky: liquor up."

"No, really...."

"O, come on, another one won't do you any harm. What is it? The

same again, I suppose?"

"Well... all right."

"Francois, the same again.... Will you smoke, Tommy?"

Ignatius Gallaher produced his cigar-case. The two friends lit their

cigars and puffed at them in silence until their drinks were served.

"I'll tell you my opinion," said Ignatius Gallaher, emerging after

some time from the clouds of smoke in which he had taken refuge,

"it's a rum world. Talk of immorality! I've heard of cases-- what

am I saying?--I've known them: cases of... immorality...."

Ignatius Gallaher puffed thoughtfully at his cigar and then, in a

calm historian's tone, he proceeded to sketch for his friend some

pictures of the corruption which was rife abroad. He summarised

the vices of many capitals and seemed inclined to award the palm

to Berlin. Some things he could not vouch for (his friends had told

him), but of others he had had personal experience. He spared

neither rank nor caste. He revealed many of the secrets of religious

houses on the Continent and described some of the practices which

were fashionable in high society and ended by telling, with details,

a story about an English duchess--a story which he knew to be

true. Little Chandler was astonished.

"Ah, well," said Ignatius Gallaher, "here we are in old jog-along

Dublin where nothing is known of such things."

"How dull you must find it," said Little Chandler, "after all the other places you've seen!"

Well," said Ignatius Gallaher, "it's a relaxation to come over here,

you know. And, after all, it's the old country, as they say, isn't it?

You can't help having a certain feeling for it. That's human nature.... But tell me something about yourself. Hogan told me you

had... tasted the joys of connubial bliss. Two years ago, wasn't it?"

Little Chandler blushed and smiled.

"Yes," he said. "I was married last May twelve months."

"I hope it's not too late in the day to offer my best wishes," said

Ignatius Gallaher. "I didn't know your address or I'd have done so

at the time."

He extended his hand, which Little Chandler took.

"Well, Tommy," he said, "I wish you and yours every joy in life,

old chap, and tons of money, and may you never die till I shoot

you. And that's the wish of a sincere friend, an old friend. You

know that?"

"I know that," said Little Chandler.

"Any youngsters?" said Ignatius Gallaher.

Little Chandler blushed again.

"We have one child," he said.

"Son or daughter?"

"A little boy."

Ignatius Gallaher slapped his friend sonorously on the back.

"Bravo," he said, "I wouldn't doubt you, Tommy."



Little Chandler smiled, looked confusedly at his glass and bit his

lower lip with three childish white front teeth.

"I hope you'll spend an evening with us," he said, "before you go

back. My wife will be delighted to meet you. We can have a little

music and----"

"Thanks awfully, old chap," said Ignatius Gallaher, "I'm sorry we

didn't meet earlier. But I must leave tomorrow night."

"Tonight, perhaps...?"

"I'm awfully sorry, old man. You see I'm over here with another

fellow, clever young chap he is too, and we arranged to go to a

little card-party. Only for that..."

"O, in that case..."

"But who knows?" said Ignatius Gallaher considerately.

"Next year

I may take a little skip over here now that I've broken the ice. It's

only a pleasure deferred."

"Very well," said Little Chandler, "the next time you come we

must have an evening together. That's agreed now, isn't it?"

"Yes, that's agreed," said Ignatius Gallaher. "Next year if I come,

parole d'honneur."

"And to clinch the bargain," said Little Chandler, "we'll just have

one more now."

Ignatius Gallaher took out a large gold watch and looked at it.

"Is it to be the last?" he said. "Because you know, I have an a.p."

"O, yes, positively," said Little Chandler.

"Very well, then," said Ignatius Gallaher, "let us have another one

as a deoc an doruis--that's good vernacular for a small  
whisky, I

believe."

Little Chandler ordered the drinks. The blush which had  
risen to

his face a few moments before was establishing itself. A  
trifle

made him blush at any time: and now he felt warm and  
excited.

Three small whiskies had gone to his head and Gallaher's  
strong

cigar had confused his mind, for he was a delicate and  
abstinent

person. The adventure of meeting Gallaher after eight  
years, of

finding himself with Gallaher in Corless's surrounded by  
lights and

noise, of listening to Gallaher's stories and of sharing for a  
brief

space Gallaher's vagrant and triumphant life, upset the  
equipoise of

his sensitive nature. He felt acutely the contrast between his  
own

life and his friend's and it seemed to him unjust. Gallaher  
was his

inferior in birth and education. He was sure that he could do something better than his friend had ever done, or could ever do,

something higher than mere tawdry journalism if he only got the

chance. What was it that stood in his way? His unfortunate timidity

He wished to vindicate himself in some way, to assert his manhood. He saw behind Gallaher's refusal of his invitation.

Gallaher was only patronising him by his friendliness just as he

was patronising Ireland by his visit.

The barman brought their drinks. Little Chandler pushed one glass

towards his friend and took up the other boldly.

"Who knows?" he said, as they lifted their glasses. "When you

come next year I may have the pleasure of wishing long life and

happiness to Mr. and Mrs. Ignatius Gallaher."

Ignatius Gallaher in the act of drinking closed one eye expressively

over the rim of his glass. When he had drunk he smacked his lips

decisively, set down his glass and said:

"No blooming fear of that, my boy. I'm going to have my fling first

and see a bit of life and the world before I put my head in the sack

--if I ever do."

"Some day you will," said Little Chandler calmly.

Ignatius Gallaher turned his orange tie and slate-blue eyes full

upon his friend.

"You think so?" he said.

"You'll put your head in the sack," repeated Little Chandler stoutly,

"like everyone else if you can find the girl."

He had slightly emphasised his tone and he was aware that he had

betrayed himself; but, though the colour had heightened in his

cheek, he did not flinch from his friend's gaze. Ignatius Gallaher

watched him for a few moments and then said:

"If ever it occurs, you may bet your bottom dollar there'll be no

mooning and spooning about it. I mean to marry money. She'll

have a good fat account at the bank or she won't do for me."

Little Chandler shook his head.

"Why, man alive," said Ignatius Gallaher, vehemently, "do you

know what it is? I've only to say the word and tomorrow I can have

the woman and the cash. You don't believe it? Well, I know it.

There are hundreds--what am I saying?--thousands of rich Germans and Jews, rotten with money, that'd only be too glad....

You wait a while my boy. See if I don't play my cards properly.

When I go about a thing I mean business, I tell you. You just wait."

He tossed his glass to his mouth, finished his drink and laughed

loudly. Then he looked thoughtfully before him and said in a calmer tone:

"But I'm in no hurry. They can wait. I don't fancy tying myself up

to one woman, you know."

He imitated with his mouth the act of tasting and made a wry face.

"Must get a bit stale, I should think," he said.

Little Chandler sat in the room off the hall, holding a child in his

arms. To save money they kept no servant but Annie's young sister

Monica came for an hour or so in the morning and an hour or so in

the evening to help. But Monica had gone home long ago. It was a

quarter to nine. Little Chandler had come home late for tea and,

moreover, he had forgotten to bring Annie home the parcel of

coffee from Bewley's. Of course she was in a bad humour and gave

him short answers. She said she would do without any tea but

when it came near the time at which the shop at the corner closed

she decided to go out herself for a quarter of a pound of tea and

two pounds of sugar. She put the sleeping child deftly in his arms

and said:

"Here. Don't waken him."

A little lamp with a white china shade stood upon the table and its

light fell over a photograph which was enclosed in a frame of

crumpled horn. It was Annie's photograph. Little Chandler looked

at it, pausing at the thin tight lips. She wore the pale blue summer

blouse which he had brought her home as a present one Saturday.



It had cost him ten and elevenpence; but what an agony of nervousness it had cost him! How he had suffered that day, waiting

at the shop door until the shop was empty, standing at the counter

and trying to appear at his ease while the girl piled ladies' blouses

before him, paying at the desk and forgetting to take up the odd

penny of his change, being called back by the cashier, and finally,

striving to hide his blushes as he left the shop by examining the

parcel to see if it was securely tied. When he brought the blouse

home Annie kissed him and said it was very pretty and stylish; but

when she heard the price she threw the blouse on the table and said

it was a regular swindle to charge ten and elevenpence for it. At

first she wanted to take it back but when she tried it on she was

delighted with it, especially with the make of the sleeves, and

kissed him and said he was very good to think of her.

Hm!...

He looked coldly into the eyes of the photograph and they answered coldly. Certainly they were pretty and the face itself was

pretty. But he found something mean in it. Why was it so unconscious and ladylike? The composure of the eyes irritated

him. They repelled him and defied him: there was no passion in

them, no rapture. He thought of what Gallaher had said about rich

Jewesses. Those dark Oriental eyes, he thought, how full they are

of passion, of voluptuous longing!... Why had he married the eyes

in the photograph?

He caught himself up at the question and glanced nervously round

the room. He found something mean in the pretty furniture which

he had bought for his house on the hire system. Annie had chosen

it herself and it reminded hi of her. It too was prim and pretty. A

dull resentment against his life awoke within him. Could he not

escape from his little house? Was it too late for him to try to live

bravely like Gallaher? Could he go to London? There was the furniture still to be paid for. If he could only write a book and get

it published, that might open the way for him.

A volume of Byron's poems lay before him on the table. He opened

it cautiously with his left hand lest he should waken the child and

began to read the first poem in the book:

Hushed are the winds and still the evening gloom,

Not e'en a Zephyr wanders through the grove,

Whilst I return to view my Margaret's tomb

And scatter flowers on the dust I love.

He paused. He felt the rhythm of the verse about him in the room.

How melancholy it was! Could he, too, write like that, express the

melancholy of his soul in verse? There were so many things he

wanted to describe: his sensation of a few hours before on Grattan

Bridge, for example. If he could get back again into that mood....

The child awoke and began to cry. He turned from the page and

tried to hush it: but it would not be hushed. He began to rock it to

and fro in his arms but its wailing cry grew keener. He rocked it

faster while his eyes began to read the second stanza:

Within this narrow cell reclines her clay,

That clay where once...

It was useless. He couldn't read. He couldn't do anything.  
The

wailing of the child pierced the drum of his ear. It was  
useless,

useless! He was a prisoner for life. His arms trembled with  
anger

and suddenly bending to the child's face he shouted:

"Stop!"

The child stopped for an instant, had a spasm of fright and  
began

to scream. He jumped up from his chair and walked hastily  
up and

down the room with the child in his arms. It began to sob  
piteously, losing its breath for four or five seconds, and then  
bursting out anew. The thin walls of the room echoed the  
sound.

He tried to soothe it but it sobbed more convulsively. He  
looked at

the contracted and quivering face of the child and began to  
be

alarmed. He counted seven sobs without a break between  
them and

caught the child to his breast in fright. If it died!...

The door was burst open and a young woman ran in, panting.

"What is it? What is it?" she cried.

The child, hearing its mother's voice, broke out into a paroxysm of sobbing.

"It's nothing, Annie ... it's nothing.... He began to cry..."

She flung her parcels on the floor and snatched the child from him.

"What have you done to him?" she cried, glaring into his face.

Little Chandler sustained for one moment the gaze of her eyes and

his heart closed together as he met the hatred in them. He began to

stammer:

"It's nothing.... He ... he began to cry.... I couldn't ... I didn't do

anything.... What?"

Giving no heed to him she began to walk up and down the room,

clasping the child tightly in her arms and murmuring:

"My little man! My little mannie! Was 'ou frightened, love?...

There now, love! There now!... Lambabaun! Mamma's little lamb

of the world!... There now!"

Little Chandler felt his cheeks suffused with shame and he stood

back out of the lamplight. He listened while the paroxysm of the

child's sobbing grew less and less; and tears of remorse started to

his eyes.

## COUNTERPARTS

THE bell rang furiously and, when Miss Parker went to the tube, a

furiously voice called out in a piercing North of Ireland accent:

"Send Farrington here!"

Miss Parker returned to her machine, saying to a man who was writing at a desk:

"Mr. Alleyne wants you upstairs."

The man muttered "Blast him!" under his breath and pushed back

his chair to stand up. When he stood up he was tall and of great

bulk. He had a hanging face, dark wine-coloured, with fair eyebrows and moustache: his eyes bulged forward slightly and the

whites of them were dirty. He lifted up the counter and, passing by

the clients, went out of the office with a heavy step.

He went heavily upstairs until he came to the second landing,

where a door bore a brass plate with the inscription Mr. Alleyne.

Here he halted, puffing with labour and vexation, and knocked.



The shrill voice cried:

"Come in!"

The man entered Mr. Alleyne's room. Simultaneously Mr. Alleyne,

a little man wearing gold-rimmed glasses on a cleanshaven face,

shot his head up over a pile of documents. The head itself was so

pink and hairless it seemed like a large egg reposing on the papers.

Mr. Alleyne did not lose a moment:

"Farrington? What is the meaning of this? Why have I always to

complain of you? May I ask you why you haven't made a copy of

that contract between Bodley and Kirwan? I told you it must be

ready by four o'clock."

"But Mr. Shelley said, sir----"

"Mr. Shelley said, sir .... Kindly attend to what I say and not to

what Mr. Shelley says, sir. You have always some excuse or another for shirking work. Let me tell you that if the contract is not

copied before this evening I'll lay the matter before Mr. Crosbie....

Do you hear me now?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you hear me now?... Ay and another little matter! I might as

well be talking to the wall as talking to you. Understand once for

all that you get a half an hour for your lunch and not an hour and a

half. How many courses do you want, I'd like to know.... Do you

mind me now?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Alleyne bent his head again upon his pile of papers. The man

stared fixedly at the polished skull which directed the affairs of

Crosbie & Alleyne, gauging its fragility. A spasm of rage gripped

his throat for a few moments and then passed, leaving after it a

sharp sensation of thirst. The man recognised the sensation and felt

that he must have a good night's drinking. The middle of the month

was passed and, if he could get the copy done in time, Mr. Alleyne

might give him an order on the cashier. He stood still, gazing

fixedly at the head upon the pile of papers. Suddenly Mr. Alleyne

began to upset all the papers, searching for something. Then, as if

he had been unaware of the man's presence till that moment, he

shot up his head again, saying:

"Eh? Are you going to stand there all day? Upon my word, Farrington, you take things easy!"

"I was waiting to see..."

"Very good, you needn't wait to see. Go downstairs and do your work."

The man walked heavily towards the door and, as he went out of

the room, he heard Mr. Alleyne cry after him that if the contract

was not copied by evening Mr. Crosbie would hear of the matter.

He returned to his desk in the lower office and counted the sheets

which remained to be copied. He took up his pen and dipped it in

the ink but he continued to stare stupidly at the last words he had

written: In no case shall the said Bernard Bodley be... The evening

was falling and in a few minutes they would be lighting the gas:

then he could write. He felt that he must slake the thirst in his

throat. He stood up from his desk and, lifting the counter as before,

passed out of the office. As he was passing out the chief clerk

looked at him inquiringly.

"It's all right, Mr. Shelley," said the man, pointing with his finger

to indicate the objective of his journey.

The chief clerk glanced at the hat-rack, but, seeing the row complete, offered no remark. As soon as he was on the landing the

man pulled a shepherd's plaid cap out of his pocket, put it on his

head and ran quickly down the rickety stairs. From the street door

he walked on furtively on the inner side of the path towards the

corner and all at once dived into a doorway. He was now safe in

the dark snug of O'Neill's shop, and filling up the little window

that looked into the bar with his inflamed face, the colour of dark

wine or dark meat, he called out:

"Here, Pat, give us a g.p.. like a good fellow."

The curate brought him a glass of plain porter. The man drank it at

a gulp and asked for a caraway seed. He put his penny on the

counter and, leaving the curate to grope for it in the gloom, retreated out of the snug as furtively as he had entered it.

Darkness, accompanied by a thick fog, was gaining upon the dusk

of February and the lamps in Eustace Street had been lit. The man

went up by the houses until he reached the door of the office,

wondering whether he could finish his copy in time. On the stairs a

moist pungent odour of perfumes saluted his nose: evidently Miss

Delacour had come while he was out in O'Neill's. He crammed his

cap back again into his pocket and re-entered the office, assuming

an air of absentmindedness.

"Mr. Alleyne has been calling for you," said the chief clerk severely. "Where were you?"

The man glanced at the two clients who were standing at the

counter as if to intimate that their presence prevented him from

answering. As the clients were both male the chief clerk allowed

himself a laugh.

"I know that game," he said. "Five times in one day is a little bit...

Well, you better look sharp and get a copy of our correspondence

in the Delacour case for Mr. Alleyne."

This address in the presence of the public, his run upstairs and the

porter he had gulped down so hastily confused the man and, as he

sat down at his desk to get what was required, he realised how

hopeless was the task of finishing his copy of the contract before

half past five. The dark damp night was coming and he longed to

spend it in the bars, drinking with his friends amid the glare of gas

and the clatter of glasses. He got out the Delacour correspondence

and passed out of the office. He hoped Mr. Alleyne would not discover that the last two letters were missing.

The moist pungent perfume lay all the way up to Mr. Alleyne's

room. Miss Delacour was a middle-aged woman of Jewish

appearance. Mr. Alleyne was said to be sweet on her or on her

money. She came to the office often and stayed a long time when

she came. She was sitting beside his desk now in an aroma of

perfumes, smoothing the handle of her umbrella and nodding the

great black feather in her hat. Mr. Alleyne had swivelled his chair

round to face her and thrown his right foot jauntily upon his left



knee. The man put the correspondence on the desk and bowed

respectfully but neither Mr. Alleyne nor Miss Delacour took any

notice of his bow. Mr. Alleyne tapped a finger on the

correspondence and then flicked it towards him as if to say: "That's

all right: you can go."

The man returned to the lower office and sat down again at his

desk. He stared intently at the incomplete phrase: In no case shall

the said Bernard Bodley be... and thought how strange it was that

the last three words began with the same letter. The chief clerk

began to hurry Miss Parker, saying she would never have the

letters typed in time for post. The man listened to the clicking of

the machine for a few minutes and then set to work to finish his

copy. But his head was not clear and his mind wandered away to

the glare and rattle of the public-house. It was a night for hot

punches. He struggled on with his copy, but when the clock struck

five he had still fourteen pages to write. Blast it! He couldn't finish

it in time. He longed to execrate aloud, to bring his fist down on

something violently. He was so enraged that he wrote Bernard

Bernard instead of Bernard Bodley and had to begin again on a

clean sheet.

He felt strong enough to clear out the whole office singlehanded.

His body ached to do something, to rush out and revel in violence.

All the indignities of his life enraged him.... Could he ask the cashier privately for an advance? No, the cashier was no good, no

damn good: he wouldn't give an advance.... He knew where he

would meet the boys: Leonard and O'Halloran and Nosey Flynn.

The barometer of his emotional nature was set for a spell of riot.

His imagination had so abstracted him that his name was called

twice before he answered. Mr. Alleyne and Miss Delacour were

standing outside the counter and all the clerks had turn round in

anticipation of something. The man got up from his desk. Mr.

Alleyne began a tirade of abuse, saying that two letters were

missing. The man answered that he knew nothing about them, that

he had made a faithful copy. The tirade continued: it was so bitter

and violent that the man could hardly restrain his fist from descending upon the head of the manikin before him:

"I know nothing about any other two letters," he said stupidly.

"You--know--nothing. Of course you know nothing," said Mr.

Alleyne. "Tell me," he added, glancing first for approval to the

lady beside him, "do you take me for a fool? Do you think me an

utter fool?"

The man glanced from the lady's face to the little egg-shaped head

and back again; and, almost before he was aware of it, his tongue

had found a felicitous moment:

"I don't think, sir," he said, "that that's a fair question to put to me."

There was a pause in the very breathing of the clerks. Everyone

was astounded (the author of the witticism no less than his neighbours) and Miss Delacour, who was a stout amiable person,

began to smile broadly. Mr. Alleyne flushed to the hue of a wild

rose and his mouth twitched with a dwarf's passion. He shook his

fist in the man's face till it seemed to vibrate like the knob of some

electric machine:

"You impertinent ruffian! You impertinent ruffian! I'll make short

work of you! Wait till you see! You'll apologise to me for your impertinence or you'll quit the office instanter! You'll quit this, I'm

telling you, or you'll apologise to me!"

He stood in a doorway opposite the office watching to see if the

cashier would come out alone. All the clerks passed out and finally

the cashier came out with the chief clerk. It was no use trying to

say a word to him when he was with the chief clerk. The man felt

that his position was bad enough. He had been obliged to offer an

abject apology to Mr. Alleyne for his impertinence but he knew

what a hornet's nest the office would be for him. He could remember the way in which Mr. Alleyne had hounded little Peake

out of the office in order to make room for his own nephew.  
He

felt savage and thirsty and revengeful, annoyed with himself  
and

with everyone else. Mr. Alleyne would never give him an  
hour's

rest; his life would be a hell to him. He had made a proper  
fool of

himself this time. Could he not keep his tongue in his cheek?  
But

they had never pulled together from the first, he and Mr.  
Alleyne,

ever since the day Mr. Alleyne had overheard him mimicking  
his

North of Ireland accent to amuse Higgins and Miss Parker:  
that

had been the beginning of it. He might have tried Higgins  
for the

money, but sure Higgins never had anything for himself. A  
man

with two establishments to keep up, of course he couldn't....

He felt his great body again aching for the comfort of the  
public-house. The fog had begun to chill him and he  
wondered

could he touch Pat in O'Neill's. He could not touch him for more

than a bob--and a bob was no use. Yet he must get money somewhere or other: he had spent his last penny for the g.p. and

soon it would be too late for getting money anywhere. Suddenly,

as he was fingering his watch-chain, he thought of Terry Kelly's

pawn-office in Fleet Street. That was the dart! Why didn't he think

of it sooner?

He went through the narrow alley of Temple Bar quickly, muttering to himself that they could all go to hell because he was

going to have a good night of it. The clerk in Terry Kelly's said A

crown! but the consignor held out for six shillings; and in the end

the six shillings was allowed him literally. He came out of the

pawn-office joyfully, making a little cylinder, of the coins between

his thumb and fingers. In Westmoreland Street the footpaths were

crowded with young men and women returning from business and

ragged urchins ran here and there yelling out the names of the

evening editions. The man passed through the crowd, looking on

the spectacle generally with proud satisfaction and staring masterfully at the office-girls. His head was full of the noises of

tram- gongs and swishing trolleys and his nose already sniffed the

curling fumes punch. As he walked on he preconsidered the terms

in which he would narrate the incident to the boys:

"So, I just looked at him--coolly, you know, and looked at her.

Then I looked back at him again--taking my time, you know. 'I

don't think that that's a fair question to put to me,' says I."

Nosey Flynn was sitting up in his usual corner of Davy Byrne's



and, when he heard the story, he stood Farrington a half-one,

saying it was as smart a thing as ever he heard. Farrington stood a

drink in his turn. After a while O'Halloran and Paddy Leonard

came in and the story was repeated to them. O'Halloran stood

tailors of malt, hot, all round and told the story of the retort he had

made to the chief clerk when he was in Callan's of Fownes's Street;

but, as the retort was after the manner of the liberal shepherds in

the eclogues, he had to admit that it was not as clever as

Farrington's retort. At this Farrington told the boys to polish off

that and have another.

Just as they were naming their poisons who should come in but

Higgins! Of course he had to join in with the others. The men

asked him to give his version of it, and he did so with great vivacity for the sight of five small hot whiskies was very

exhilarating. Everyone roared laughing when he showed the way in

which Mr. Alleyne shook his fist in Farrington's face. Then he imitated Farrington, saying, "And here was my nabs, as cool as you

please," while Farrington looked at the company out of his heavy

dirty eyes, smiling and at times drawing forth stray drops of liquor

from his moustache with the aid of his lower lip.

When that round was over there was a pause. O'Halloran had

money but neither of the other two seemed to have any; so the

whole party left the shop somewhat regretfully. At the corner of

Duke Street Higgins and Nosey Flynn bevelled off to the left while

the other three turned back towards the city. Rain was drizzling

down on the cold streets and, when they reached the Ballast

Office, Farrington suggested the Scotch House. The bar was full of

men and loud with the noise of tongues and glasses. The three men

pushed past the whining matchsellers at the door and formed a

little party at the corner of the counter. They began to exchange

stories. Leonard introduced them to a young fellow named

Weathers who was performing at the Tivoli as an acrobat and

knockabout artiste. Farrington stood a drink all round. Weathers

said he would take a small Irish and Apollinaris. Farrington, who

had definite notions of what was what, asked the boys would they

have an Apollinaris too; but the boys told Tim to make theirs hot.

The talk became theatrical. O'Halloran stood a round and then

Farrington stood another round, Weathers protesting that the

hospitality was too Irish. He promised to get them in behind the

scenes and introduce them to some nice girls. O'Halloran said that

he and Leonard would go, but that Farrington wouldn't go because

he was a married man; and Farrington's heavy dirty eyes leered at

the company in token that he understood he was being chaffed.

Weathers made them all have just one little tincture at his expense

and promised to meet them later on at Mulligan's in Poolbeg Street.

When the Scotch House closed they went round to Mulligan's.

They went into the parlour at the back and O'Halloran ordered

small hot specials all round. They were all beginning to feel mellow. Farrington was just standing another round when

Weathers came back. Much to Farrington's relief he drank a glass

of bitter this time. Funds were getting low but they had enough to

keep them going. Presently two young women with big hats and a

young man in a check suit came in and sat at a table close by.

Weathers saluted them and told the company that they were out of

the Tivoli. Farrington's eyes wandered at every moment in the

direction of one of the young women. There was something striking in her appearance. An immense scarf of peacock-blue

muslin was wound round her hat and knotted in a great bow under

her chin; and she wore bright yellow gloves, reaching to the elbow.

Farrington gazed admiringly at the plump arm which she moved

very often and with much grace; and when, after a little time, she

answered his gaze he admired still more her large dark brown eyes.

The oblique staring expression in them fascinated him. She glanced at him once or twice and, when the party was leaving the

room, she brushed against his chair and said "O, pardon!" in a

London accent. He watched her leave the room in the hope that she

would look back at him, but he was disappointed. He cursed his

want of money and cursed all the rounds he had stood, particularly

all the whiskies and Apolinaris which he had stood to Weathers. If

there was one thing that he hated it was a sponge. He was so angry

that he lost count of the conversation of his friends.

When Paddy Leonard called him he found that they were talking

about feats of strength. Weathers was showing his biceps muscle

to the company and boasting so much that the other two had called

on Farrington to uphold the national honour. Farrington pulled up

his sleeve accordingly and showed his biceps muscle to the company. The two arms were examined and compared and finally

it was agreed to have a trial of strength. The table was cleared and

the two men rested their elbows on it, clasping hands. When Paddy

Leonard said "Go!" each was to try to bring down the other's hand

on to the table. Farrington looked very serious and determined.

The trial began. After about thirty seconds Weathers brought his

opponent's hand slowly down on to the table. Farrington's dark

wine-coloured face flushed darker still with anger and humiliation

at having been defeated by such a stripling.

"You're not to put the weight of your body behind it. Play fair," he

said.

"Who's not playing fair?" said the other.

"Come on again. The two best out of three."

The trial began again. The veins stood out on Farrington's forehead, and the pallor of Weathers' complexion changed to

peony. Their hands and arms trembled under the stress. After a

long struggle Weathers again brought his opponent's hand slowly

on to the table. There was a murmur of applause from the spectators. The curate, who was standing beside the table, nodded

his red head towards the victor and said with stupid familiarity:

"Ah! that's the knack!"

"What the hell do you know about it?" said Farrington fiercely,

turning on the man. "What do you put in your gab for?"

"Sh, sh!" said O'Halloran, observing the violent expression of

Farrington's face. "Pony up, boys. We'll have just one little smahan

more and then we'll be off."

A very sullen-faced man stood at the corner of O'Connell Bridge



waiting for the little Sandymount tram to take him home. He was

full of smouldering anger and revengefulness. He felt humiliated

and discontented; he did not even feel drunk; and he had only

twopence in his pocket. He cursed everything. He had done for

himself in the office, pawned his watch, spent all his money; and

he had not even got drunk. He began to feel thirsty again and he

longed to be back again in the hot reeking public-house. He had

lost his reputation as a strong man, having been defeated twice by

a mere boy. His heart swelled with fury and, when he thought of

the woman in the big hat who had brushed against him and said

Pardon! his fury nearly choked him.

His tram let him down at Shelbourne Road and he steered his great

body along in the shadow of the wall of the barracks. He loathed

returning to his home. When he went in by the side- door he found

the kitchen empty and the kitchen fire nearly out. He bawled

upstairs:

"Ada! Ada!"

His wife was a little sharp-faced woman who bullied her husband

when he was sober and was bullied by him when he was drunk.

They had five children. A little boy came running down the stairs.

"Who is that?" said the man, peering through the darkness.

"Me, pa."

"Who are you? Charlie?"

"No, pa. Tom."

"Where's your mother?"

"She's out at the chapel."

"That's right.... Did she think of leaving any dinner for me?"

"Yes, pa. I --"

"Light the lamp. What do you mean by having the place in darkness? Are the other children in bed?"

The man sat down heavily on one of the chairs while the little boy

lit the lamp. He began to mimic his son's flat accent, saying half to

himself: "At the chapel. At the chapel, if you please!" When the

lamp was lit he banged his fist on the table and shouted:

"What's for my dinner?"

"I'm going... to cook it, pa," said the little boy.

The man jumped up furiously and pointed to the fire.

"On that fire! You let the fire out! By God, I'll teach you to do that

again!"

He took a step to the door and seized the walking-stick which was standing behind it.

"I'll teach you to let the fire out!" he said, rolling up his sleeve in order to give his arm free play.

The little boy cried "O, pa!" and ran whimpering round the table, but the man followed him and caught him by the coat. The little boy looked about him wildly but, seeing no way of escape, fell upon his knees.

"Now, you'll let the fire out the next time!" said the man striking at him vigorously with the stick. "Take that, you little whelp!"

The boy uttered a squeal of pain as the stick cut his thigh. He clasped his hands together in the air and his voice shook with

fright.

"O, pa!" he cried. "Don't beat me, pa! And I'll... I'll say a Hail Mary

for you.... I'll say a Hail Mary for you, pa, if you don't beat me....

I'll say a Hail Mary...."

CLAY

THE matron had given her leave to go out as soon as the women's

tea was over and Maria looked forward to her evening out. The

kitchen was spick and span: the cook said you could see yourself

in the big copper boilers. The fire was nice and bright and on one

of the side-tables were four very big barmbracks. These

barmbracks seemed uncut; but if you went closer you would see

that they had been cut into long thick even slices and were ready to

be handed round at tea. Maria had cut them herself.

Maria was a very, very small person indeed but she had a very long

nose and a very long chin. She talked a little through her nose,

always soothingly: "Yes, my dear," and "No, my dear." She was

always sent for when the women quarrelled Over their tubs and

always succeeded in making peace. One day the matron had said to

her:

"Maria, you are a veritable peace-maker!"

And the sub-matron and two of the Board ladies had heard the

compliment. And Ginger Mooney was always saying what she

wouldn't do to the dummy who had charge of the irons if it wasn't

for Maria. Everyone was so fond of Maria.

The women would have their tea at six o'clock and she would be

able to get away before seven. From Ballsbridge to the Pillar,

twenty minutes; from the Pillar to Drumcondra, twenty minutes;

and twenty minutes to buy the things. She would be there before

eight. She took out her purse with the silver clasps and read again

the words A Present from Belfast. She was very fond of that purse

because Joe had brought it to her five years before when he and

Alphy had gone to Belfast on a Whit-Monday trip. In the purse

were two half-crowns and some coppers. She would have five

shillings clear after paying tram fare. What a nice evening they

would have, all the children singing! Only she hoped that Joe

wouldn't come in drunk. He was so different when he took any

drink.

Often he had wanted her to go and live with them;-but she would

have felt herself in the way (though Joe's wife was ever so nice

with her) and she had become accustomed to the life of the laundry. Joe was a good fellow. She had nursed him and Alphy too; and Joe used often say:

"Mamma is mamma but Maria is my proper mother."

After the break-up at home the boys had got her that position in the

Dublin by Lamplight laundry, and she liked it. She used to have

such a bad opinion of Protestants but now she thought they were

very nice people, a little quiet and serious, but still very nice people to live with. Then she had her plants in the conservatory

and she liked looking after them. She had lovely ferns and wax-plants and, whenever anyone came to visit her, she always

gave the visitor one or two slips from her conservatory. There was

one thing she didn't like and that was the tracts on the walks; but

the matron was such a nice person to deal with, so genteel.



When the cook told her everything was ready she went into the

women's room and began to pull the big bell. In a few minutes the

women began to come in by twos and threes, wiping their steaming hands in their petticoats and pulling down the sleeves of

their blouses over their red steaming arms. They settled down

before their huge mugs which the cook and the dummy filled up

with hot tea, already mixed with milk and sugar in huge tin cans.

Maria superintended the distribution of the barmbrack and saw

that every woman got her four slices. There was a great deal of

laughing and joking during the meal. Lizzie Fleming said Maria

was sure to get the ring and, though Fleming had said that for so

many Hallow Eves, Maria had to laugh and say she didn't want any

ring or man either; and when she laughed her grey-green eyes

sparkled with disappointed shyness and the tip of her nose nearly

met the tip of her chin. Then Ginger Mooney lifted her mug of tea

and proposed Maria's health while all the other women clattered

with their mugs on the table, and said she was sorry she hadn't a

sup of porter to drink it in. And Maria laughed again till the tip of

her nose nearly met the tip of her chin and till her minute body

nearly shook itself asunder because she knew that Mooney meant

well though, of course, she had the notions of a common woman.

But wasn't Maria glad when the women had finished their tea and

the cook and the dummy had begun to clear away the tea-things!

She went into her little bedroom and, remembering that the next

morning was a mass morning, changed the hand of the alarm from

seven to six. Then she took off her working skirt and her

house-boots and laid her best skirt out on the bed and her tiny

dress-boots beside the foot of the bed. She changed her blouse too

and, as she stood before the mirror, she thought of how she used to

dress for mass on Sunday morning when she was a young girl; and

she looked with quaint affection at the diminutive body which she

had so often adorned, In spite of its years she found it a nice tidy

little body.

When she got outside the streets were shining with rain and she

was glad of her old brown waterproof. The tram was full and she

had to sit on the little stool at the end of the car, facing all the

people, with her toes barely touching the floor. She arranged in her

mind all she was going to do and thought how much better it was

to be independent and to have your own money in your pocket.

She hoped they would have a nice evening. She was sure they

would but she could not help thinking what a pity it was Alphy and

Joe were not speaking. They were always falling out now but when

they were boys together they used to be the best of friends: but

such was life.

She got out of her tram at the Pillar and ferreted her way quickly

among the crowds. She went into Downes's cake-shop but the shop

was so full of people that it was a long time before she could get

herself attended to. She bought a dozen of mixed penny cakes, and

at last came out of the shop laden with a big bag. Then she thought

what else would she buy: she wanted to buy something really nice.

They would be sure to have plenty of apples and nuts. It was hard

to know what to buy and all she could think of was cake. She

decided to buy some plumcake but Downes's plumcake had not

enough almond icing on top of it so she went over to a shop in

Henry Street. Here she was a long time in suiting herself and the

stylish young lady behind the counter, who was evidently a little

annoyed by her, asked her was it wedding-cake she wanted to buy.

That made Maria blush and smile at the young lady; but the young

lady took it all very seriously and finally cut a thick slice of plumcake, parcelled it up and said:

"Two-and-four, please."

She thought she would have to stand in the Drumcondra tram

because none of the young men seemed to notice her but an elderly

gentleman made room for her. He was a stout gentleman and he

wore a brown hard hat; he had a square red face and a greyish

moustache. Maria thought he was a colonel-looking gentleman and

she reflected how much more polite he was than the young men

who simply stared straight before them. The gentleman began to

chat with her about Hallow Eve and the rainy weather. He supposed the bag was full of good things for the little ones and

said it was only right that the youngsters should enjoy themselves

while they were young. Maria agreed with him and favoured him

with demure nods and hems. He was very nice with her, and when

she was getting out at the Canal Bridge she thanked him and

bowed, and he bowed to her and raised his hat and smiled agreeably, and while she was going up along the terrace, bending

her tiny head under the rain, she thought how easy it was to know a

gentleman even when he has a drop taken.

Everybody said: "O, here's Maria!" when she came to Joe's house.

Joe was there, having come home from business, and all the children had their Sunday dresses on. There were two big girls in

from next door and games were going on. Maria gave the bag of

cakes to the eldest boy, Alphy, to divide and Mrs. Donnelly said it

was too good of her to bring such a big bag of cakes and made all

the children say:

"Thanks, Maria."

But Maria said she had brought something special for papa and

mamma, something they would be sure to like, and she began to

look for her plumcake. She tried in Downes's bag and then in the

pockets of her waterproof and then on the hallstand but nowhere

could she find it. Then she asked all the children had any of them

eaten it--by mistake, of course--but the children all said no and

looked as if they did not like to eat cakes if they were to be accused of stealing. Everybody had a solution for the mystery and

Mrs. Donnelly said it was plain that Maria had left it behind her in

the tram. Maria, remembering how confused the gentleman with

the greyish moustache had made her, coloured with shame and

vexation and disappointment. At the thought of the failure of her

little surprise and of the two and fourpence she had thrown away

for nothing she nearly cried outright.

But Joe said it didn't matter and made her sit down by the fire. He

was very nice with her. He told her all that went on in his office,

repeating for her a smart answer which he had made to the manager. Maria did not understand why Joe laughed so much over



the answer he had made but she said that the manager must have

been a very overbearing person to deal with. Joe said he wasn't so

bad when you knew how to take him, that he was a decent sort so

long as you didn't rub him the wrong way. Mrs. Donnelly played

the piano for the children and they danced and sang. Then the two

next-door girls handed round the nuts. Nobody could find the

nutcrackers and Joe was nearly getting cross over it and asked how

did they expect Maria to crack nuts without a nutcracker. But

Maria said she didn't like nuts and that they weren't to bother about

her. Then Joe asked would she take a bottle of stout and Mrs.

Donnelly said there was port wine too in the house if she would

prefer that. Maria said she would rather they didn't ask her to take

anything: but Joe insisted.

So Maria let him have his way and they sat by the fire talking over

old times and Maria thought she would put in a good word for

Alphy. But Joe cried that God might strike him stone dead if ever

he spoke a word to his brother again and Maria said she was sorry

she had mentioned the matter. Mrs. Donnelly told her husband it

was a great shame for him to speak that way of his own flesh and

blood but Joe said that Alphy was no brother of his and there was

nearly being a row on the head of it. But Joe said he would not

lose his temper on account of the night it was and asked his wife to

open some more stout. The two next-door girls had arranged some

Hallow Eve games and soon everything was merry again. Maria

was delighted to see the children so merry and Joe and his wife in

such good spirits. The next-door girls put some saucers on the

table and then led the children up to the table, blindfold.  
One got

the prayer-book and the other three got the water; and  
when one of

the next-door girls got the ring Mrs. Donnelly shook her  
finger at

the blushing girl as much as to say: O, I know all about it!  
They

insisted then on blindfolding Maria and leading her up to the  
table

to see what she would get; and, while they were putting on  
the

bandage, Maria laughed and laughed again till the tip of her  
nose

nearly met the tip of her chin.

They led her up to the table amid laughing and joking and  
she put

her hand out in the air as she was told to do. She moved her  
hand

about here and there in the air and descended on one of the  
saucers. She felt a soft wet substance with her fingers and  
was

surprised that nobody spoke or took off her bandage. There  
was a

pause for a few seconds; and then a great deal of scuffling and

whispering. Somebody said something about the garden, and at

last Mrs. Donnelly said something very cross to one of the next-door girls and told her to throw it out at once: that was no

play. Maria understood that it was wrong that time and so she had

to do it over again: and this time she got the prayer-book.

After that Mrs. Donnelly played Miss McCloud's Reel for the children and Joe made Maria take a glass of wine. Soon they were

all quite merry again and Mrs. Donnelly said Maria would enter a

convent before the year was out because she had got the prayer-book. Maria had never seen Joe so nice to her as he was

that night, so full of pleasant talk and reminiscences. She said they

were all very good to her.

At last the children grew tired and sleepy and Joe asked Maria

would she not sing some little song before she went, one of the old

songs. Mrs. Donnelly said "Do, please, Maria!" and so Maria had

to get up and stand beside the piano. Mrs. Donnelly bade the

children be quiet and listen to Maria's song. Then she played the

prelude and said "Now, Maria!" and Maria, blushing very much

began to sing in a tiny quavering voice. She sang I Dreamt that I

Dwelt, and when she came to the second verse she sang again:

I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls

With vassals and serfs at my side,

And of all who assembled within those walls

That I was the hope and the pride.

I had riches too great to count; could boast

Of a high ancestral name,

But I also dreamt, which pleased me most,  
That you loved me still the same.

But no one tried to show her her mistake; and when she had ended

her song Joe was very much moved. He said that there was no time

like the long ago and no music for him like poor old Balfe,

whatever other people might say; and his eyes filled up so much

with tears that he could not find what he was looking for and in the

end he had to ask his wife to tell him where the corkscrew was.

## A PAINFUL CASE

MR. JAMES DUFFY lived in Chapelizod because he wished to live as far as possible from the city of which he was a citizen and

because he found all the other suburbs of Dublin mean, modern

and pretentious. He lived in an old sombre house and from his

windows he could look into the disused distillery or upwards along

the shallow river on which Dublin is built. The lofty walls of his

uncarpeted room were free from pictures. He had himself bought

every article of furniture in the room: a black iron bedstead, an

iron washstand, four cane chairs, a clothes- rack, a coal- scuttle, a

fender and irons and a square table on which lay a double desk. A

bookcase had been made in an alcove by means of shelves of

white wood. The bed was clothed with white bedclothes and a

black and scarlet rug covered the foot. A little hand-mirror hung

above the washstand and during the day a white-shaded lamp stood

as the sole ornament of the mantelpiece. The books on the white

wooden shelves were arranged from below upwards according to

bulk. A complete Wordsworth stood at one end of the lowest shelf

and a copy of the Maynooth Catechism, sewn into the cloth cover

of a notebook, stood at one end of the top shelf. Writing materials

were always on the desk. In the desk lay a manuscript translation

of Hauptmann's Michael Kramer, the stage directions of which

were written in purple ink, and a little sheaf of papers held together by a brass pin. In these sheets a sentence was inscribed

from time to time and, in an ironical moment, the headline of an

advertisement for Bile Beans had been pasted on to the first sheet.

On lifting the lid of the desk a faint fragrance escaped--the fragrance of new cedarwood pencils or of a bottle of gum or of an

overripe apple which might have been left there and forgotten.

Mr. Duffy abhorred anything which betokened physical or mental

disorder. A medieval doctor would have called him saturnine. His



face, which carried the entire tale of his years, was of the brown

tint of Dublin streets. On his long and rather large head grew dry

black hair and a tawny moustache did not quite cover an unamiable mouth. His cheekbones also gave his face a harsh

character; but there was no harshness in the eyes which, looking at

the world from under their tawny eyebrows, gave the impression of

a man ever alert to greet a redeeming instinct in others but often

disappointed. He lived at a little distance from his body, regarding

his own acts with doubtful side-glasses. He had an odd autobiographical habit which led him to compose in his mind from

time to time a short sentence about himself containing a subject in

the third person and a predicate in the past tense. He never gave

alms to beggars and walked firmly, carrying a stout hazel.

He had been for many years cashier of a private bank in  
Baggot

Street. Every morning he came in from Chapelized by tram.  
At

midday he went to Dan Burke's and took his lunch--a bottle  
of

lager beer and a small trayful of arrowroot biscuits. At four  
o'clock

he was set free. He dined in an eating-house in George's  
Street

where he felt himself safe from the society o Dublin's gilded  
youth

and where there was a certain plain honesty in the bill of  
fare. His

evenings were spent either before his landlady's piano or  
roaming

about the outskirts of the city. His liking for Mozart's music

brought him sometimes to an opera or a concert: these  
were the

only dissipations of his life.

He had neither companions nor friends, church nor creed.  
He lived

his spiritual life without any communion with others, visiting  
his

relatives at Christmas and escorting them to the cemetery when

they died. He performed these two social duties for old dignity's

sake but conceded nothing further to the conventions which regulate the civic life. He allowed himself to think that in certain

circumstances he would rob his bank but, as these circumstances

never arose, his life rolled out evenly--an adventureless tale.

One evening he found himself sitting beside two ladies in the

Rotunda. The house, thinly peopled and silent, gave distressing

prophecy of failure. The lady who sat next him looked round at the

deserted house once or twice and then said:

"What a pity there is such a poor house tonight! It's so hard on

people to have to sing to empty benches."

He took the remark as an invitation to talk. He was surprised that

she seemed so little awkward. While they talked he tried to fix her

permanently in his memory. When he learned that the young girl

beside her was her daughter he judged her to be a year or so

younger than himself. Her face, which must have been handsome,

had remained intelligent. It was an oval face with strongly marked

features. The eyes were very dark blue and steady. Their gaze

began with a defiant note but was confused by what seemed a

deliberate swoon of the pupil into the iris, revealing for an instant

a temperament of great sensibility. The pupil reasserted itself

quickly, this half-disclosed nature fell again under the reign of

prudence, and her astrakhan jacket, moulding a bosom of a certain

fullness, struck the note of defiance more definitely.

He met her again a few weeks afterwards at a concert in Earlsfort

Terrace and seized the moments when her daughter's attention was

diverted to become intimate. She alluded once or twice to her

husband but her tone was not such as to make the allusion a

warning. Her name was Mrs. Sinico. Her husband's

great-great-grandfather had come from Leghorn. Her husband was

captain of a mercantile boat plying between Dublin and Holland;

and they had one child.

Meeting her a third time by accident he found courage to make an

appointment. She came. This was the first of many meetings; they

met always in the evening and chose the most quiet quarters for

their walks together. Mr. Duffy, however, had a distaste for

underhand ways and, finding that they were compelled to meet

stealthily, he forced her to ask him to her house. Captain Sinico

encouraged his visits, thinking that his daughter's hand was in

question. He had dismissed his wife so sincerely from his gallery

of pleasures that he did not suspect that anyone else would take an

interest in her. As the husband was often away and the daughter

out giving music lessons Mr. Duffy had many opportunities of

enjoying the lady's society. Neither he nor she had had any such

adventure before and neither was conscious of any incongruity.

Little by little he entangled his thoughts with hers. He lent her

books, provided her with ideas, shared his intellectual life with

her. She listened to all.

Sometimes in return for his theories she gave out some fact of her

own life. With almost maternal solicitude she urged him to let his

nature open to the full: she became his confessor. He told her that

for some time he had assisted at the meetings of an Irish Socialist

Party where he had felt himself a unique figure amidst a score of

sober workmen in a garret lit by an inefficient oil-lamp. When the

party had divided into three sections, each under its own leader

and in its own garret, he had discontinued his attendances. The

workmen's discussions, he said, were too timorous; the interest

they took in the question of wages was inordinate. He felt that they

were hard-featured realists and that they resented an exactitude

which was the produce of a leisure not within their reach. No

social revolution, he told her, would be likely to strike Dublin for

some centuries.

She asked him why did he not write out his thoughts. For what, he

asked her, with careful scorn. To compete with phrasemongers,

incapable of thinking consecutively for sixty seconds? To submit

himself to the criticisms of an obtuse middle class which entrusted

its morality to policemen and its fine arts to impresarios?

He went often to her little cottage outside Dublin; often they spent

their evenings alone. Little by little, as their thoughts entangled,

they spoke of subjects less remote. Her companionship was like a

warm soil about an exotic. Many times she allowed the dark to fall

upon them, refraining from lighting the lamp. The dark discreet

room, their isolation, the music that still vibrated in their ears

united them. This union exalted him, wore away the rough edges

of his character, emotionalised his mental life. Sometimes he

caught himself listening to the sound of his own voice. He thought

that in her eyes he would ascend to an angelical stature; and, as he



attached the fervent nature of his companion more and more

closely to him, he heard the strange impersonal voice which he

recognised as his own, insisting on the soul's incurable loneliness.

We cannot give ourselves, it said: we are our own. The end of

these discourses was that one night during which she had shown

every sign of unusual excitement, Mrs. Sinico caught up his hand

passionately and pressed it to her cheek.

Mr. Duffy was very much surprised. Her interpretation of his words disillusioned him. He did not visit her for a week, then he

wrote to her asking her to meet him. As he did not wish their last

interview to be troubled by the influence of their ruined

confessional they meet in a little cakeshop near the Parkgate. It

was cold autumn weather but in spite of the cold they wandered up

and down the roads of the Park for nearly three hours. They agreed

to break off their intercourse: every bond, he said, is a bond to

sorrow. When they came out of the Park they walked in silence

towards the tram; but here she began to tremble so violently that,

fearing another collapse on her part, he bade her good-bye quickly

and left her. A few days later he received a parcel containing his

books and music.

Four years passed. Mr. Duffy returned to his even way of life. His

room still bore witness of the orderliness of his mind. Some new

pieces of music encumbered the music-stand in the lower room

and on his shelves stood two volumes by Nietzsche: Thus Spake

Zarathustra and The Gay Science. He wrote seldom in the sheaf of

papers which lay in his desk. One of his sentences, written two

months after his last interview with Mrs. Sinico, read: Love between man and man is impossible because there must not be

sexual intercourse and friendship between man and woman is

impossible because there must be sexual intercourse. He kept away

from concerts lest he should meet her. His father died; the junior

partner of the bank retired. And still every morning he went into

the city by tram and every evening walked home from the city after

having dined moderately in George's Street and read the evening

paper for dessert.

One evening as he was about to put a morsel of corned beef and

cabbage into his mouth his hand stopped. His eyes fixed

themselves on a paragraph in the evening paper which he had

propped against the water-carafe. He replaced the morsel of food

on his plate and read the paragraph attentively. Then he drank a

glass of water, pushed his plate to one side, doubled the paper

down before him between his elbows and read the paragraph over

and over again. The cabbage began to deposit a cold white grease

on his plate. The girl came over to him to ask was his dinner not

properly cooked. He said it was very good and ate a few mouthfuls

of it with difficulty. Then he paid his bill and went out.

He walked along quickly through the November twilight, his stout

hazel stick striking the ground regularly, the fringe of the buff Mail

peeping out of a side-pocket of his tight reefer overcoat. On the

lonely road which leads from the Parkgate to Chapelizod he

slackened his pace. His stick struck the ground less emphatically

and his breath, issuing irregularly, almost with a sighing sound,

condensed in the wintry air. When he reached his house he went

up at once to his bedroom and, taking the paper from his pocket,

read the paragraph again by the failing light of the window. He

read it not aloud, but moving his lips as a priest does when he

reads the prayers Secreto. This was the paragraph:

## DEATH OF A LADY AT SYDNEY PARADE

### A PAINFUL CASE

Today at the City of Dublin Hospital the Deputy Coroner (in the

absence of Mr. Leverett) held an inquest on the body of Mrs.

Emily Sinico, aged forty-three years, who was killed at Sydney

Parade Station yesterday evening. The evidence showed that the

deceased lady, while attempting to cross the line, was knocked

down by the engine of the ten o'clock slow train from Kingstown,

thereby sustaining injuries of the head and right side which led to

her death.

James Lennon, driver of the engine, stated that he had been in the

employment of the railway company for fifteen years. On hearing

the guard's whistle he set the train in motion and a second or two

afterwards brought it to rest in response to loud cries. The train

was going slowly.

P. Dunne, railway porter, stated that as the train was about to start

he observed a woman attempting to cross the lines. He ran towards

her and shouted, but, before he could reach her, she was caught by

the buffer of the engine and fell to the ground.

A juror. "You saw the lady fall?"

Witness. "Yes."

Police Sergeant Croly deposed that when he arrived he found the

deceased lying on the platform apparently dead. He had the body

taken to the waiting-room pending the arrival of the ambulance.

Constable 57 corroborated.

Dr. Halpin, assistant house surgeon of the City of Dublin Hospital,

stated that the deceased had two lower ribs fractured and had

sustained severe contusions of the right shoulder. The right side of

the head had been injured in the fall. The injuries were not sufficient to have caused death in a normal person. Death, in his

opinion, had been probably due to shock and sudden failure of the

heart's action.

Mr. H. B. Patterson Finlay, on behalf of the railway company, expressed his deep regret at the accident. The company had always

taken every precaution to prevent people crossing the lines except

by the bridges, both by placing notices in every station and by the

use of patent spring gates at level crossings. The deceased had

been in the habit of crossing the lines late at night from platform to

platform and, in view of certain other circumstances of the case,

he did not think the railway officials were to blame.

Captain Sinico, of Leoville, Sydney Parade, husband of the deceased, also gave evidence. He stated that the deceased was his

wife. He was not in Dublin at the time of the accident as he had

arrived only that morning from Rotterdam. They had been married

for twenty-two years and had lived happily until about two years

ago when his wife began to be rather intemperate in her habits.

Miss Mary Sinico said that of late her mother had been in the habit



of going out at night to buy spirits. She, witness, had often tried to

reason with her mother and had induced her to join a League. She

was not at home until an hour after the accident. The jury returned

a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence and exonerated

Lennon from all blame.

The Deputy Coroner said it was a most painful case, and expressed

great sympathy with Captain Sinico and his daughter. He urged on

the railway company to take strong measures to prevent the possibility of similar accidents in the future. No blame attached to

anyone.

Mr. Duffy raised his eyes from the paper and gazed out of his

window on the cheerless evening landscape. The river lay quiet

beside the empty distillery and from time to time a light appeared

in some house on the Lucan road. What an end! The whole

narrative of her death revolted him and it revolted him to think that

he had ever spoken to her of what he held sacred. The threadbare

phrases, the inane expressions of sympathy, the cautious words of

a reporter won over to conceal the details of a commonplace

vulgar death attacked his stomach. Not merely had she degraded

herself; she had degraded him. He saw the squalid tract of her vice,

miserable and malodorous. His soul's companion! He thought of

the hobbling wretches whom he had seen carrying cans and bottles

to be filled by the barman. Just God, what an end! Evidently she

had been unfit to live, without any strength of purpose, an easy

prey to habits, one of the wrecks on which civilisation has been

reared. But that she could have sunk so low! Was it possible he

had deceived himself so utterly about her? He remembered her

outburst of that night and interpreted it in a harsher sense than he

had ever done. He had no difficulty now in approving of the course

he had taken.

As the light failed and his memory began to wander he thought her

hand touched his. The shock which had first attacked his stomach

was now attacking his nerves. He put on his overcoat and hat

quickly and went out. The cold air met him on the threshold; it

crept into the sleeves of his coat. When he came to the

public-house at Chapelizod Bridge he went in and ordered a hot

punch.

The proprietor served him obsequiously but did not venture to talk.

There were five or six workingmen in the shop discussing the

value of a gentleman's estate in County Kildare They drank at

intervals from their huge pint tumblers and smoked, spitting often

on the floor and sometimes dragging the sawdust over their spits

with their heavy boots. Mr. Duffy sat on his stool and gazed at

them, without seeing or hearing them. After a while they went out

and he called for another punch. He sat a long time over it. The

shop was very quiet. The proprietor sprawled on the counter

reading the Herald and yawning. Now and again a tram was heard

swishing along the lonely road outside.

As he sat there, living over his life with her and evoking

alternately the two images in which he now conceived her, he

realised that she was dead, that she had ceased to exist,  
that she

had become a memory. He began to feel ill at ease. He  
asked

himself what else could he have done. He could not have  
carried

on a comedy of deception with her; he could not have lived  
with

her openly. He had done what seemed to him best. How was  
he to

blame? Now that she was gone he understood how lonely  
her life

must have been, sitting night after night alone in that room.  
His

life would be lonely too until he, too, died, ceased to exist,  
became

a memory--if anyone remembered him.

It was after nine o'clock when he left the shop. The night  
was cold

and gloomy. He entered the Park by the first gate and  
walked along

under the gaunt trees. He walked through the bleak alleys  
where

they had walked four years before. She seemed to be near  
him in

the darkness. At moments he seemed to feel her voice  
touch his

ear, her hand touch his. He stood still to listen. Why had he  
withheld life from her? Why had he sentenced her to death?  
He

felt his moral nature falling to pieces.

When he gained the crest of the Magazine Hill he halted and  
looked along the river towards Dublin, the lights of which  
burned

redly and hospitably in the cold night. He looked down the  
slope

and, at the base, in the shadow of the wall of the Park, he  
saw

some human figures lying. Those venal and furtive loves  
filled him

with despair. He gnawed the rectitude of his life; he felt that  
he

had been outcast from life's feast. One human being had  
seemed to

love him and he had denied her life and happiness: he had  
sentenced her to ignominy, a death of shame. He knew that  
the

prostrate creatures down by the wall were watching him and

wished him gone. No one wanted him; he was outcast from life's

feast. He turned his eyes to the grey gleaming river, winding along

towards Dublin. Beyond the river he saw a goods train winding out

of Kingsbridge Station, like a worm with a fiery head winding through the darkness, obstinately and laboriously. It passed slowly

out of sight; but still he heard in his ears the laborious drone of the

engine reiterating the syllables of her name.

He turned back the way he had come, the rhythm of the engine

pounding in his ears. He began to doubt the reality of what memory told him. He halted under a tree and allowed the rhythm

to die away. He could not feel her near him in the darkness nor her

voice touch his ear. He waited for some minutes listening. He

could hear nothing: the night was perfectly silent. He listened

again: perfectly silent. He felt that he was alone.

## IVY DAY IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM

OLD JACK raked the cinders together with a piece of cardboard

and spread them judiciously over the whitening dome of coals.

When the dome was thinly covered his face lapsed into darkness

but, as he set himself to fan the fire again, his crouching shadow

ascended the opposite wall and his face slowly reemerged into

light. It was an old man's face, very bony and hairy. The moist blue

eyes blinked at the fire and the moist mouth fell open at times,

munching once or twice mechanically when it closed. When the

cinders had caught he laid the piece of cardboard against the wall,

sighed and said:

"That's better now, Mr. O'Connor."



Mr. O'Connor, a grey-haired young man, whose face was disfigured by many blotches and pimples, had just brought the

tobacco for a cigarette into a shapely cylinder but when spoken to

he undid his handiwork meditatively. Then he began to roll the

tobacco again meditatively and after a moment's thought decided

to lick the paper.

"Did Mr. Tierney say when he'd be back?" he asked in a sky falsetto.

"He didn't say."

Mr. O'Connor put his cigarette into his mouth and began search his

pockets. He took out a pack of thin pasteboard cards.

"I'll get you a match," said the old man.

"Never mind, this'll do," said Mr. O'Connor.

He selected one of the cards and read what was printed on it:

## MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

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### ROYAL EXCHANGE WARD

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Mr. Richard J. Tierney, P.L.G., respectfully solicits the favour of your vote and influence at the coming election in the Royal Exchange Ward.

Mr. O'Connor had been engaged by Tierney's agent to canvass one

part of the ward but, as the weather was inclement and his boots

let in the wet, he spent a great part of the day sitting by the fire in

the Committee Room in Wicklow Street with Jack, the old

caretaker. They had been sitting thus since the short day had grown

dark. It was the sixth of October, dismal and cold out of doors.

Mr. O'Connor tore a strip off the card and, lighting it, lit his cigarette. As he did so the flame lit up a leaf of dark glossy ivy the

lapel of his coat. The old man watched him attentively and then,

taking up the piece of cardboard again, began to fan the fire slowly

while his companion smoked.

"Ah, yes," he said, continuing, "it's hard to know what way to bring

up children. Now who'd think he'd turn out like that! I sent him to

the Christian Brothers and I done what I could him, and there he

goes boosing about. I tried to make him someway decent."

He replaced the cardboard wearily.

"Only I'm an old man now I'd change his tune for him. I'd take the

stick to his back and beat him while I could stand over him-- as I

done many a time before. The mother, you know, she cocks him

up with this and that...."

"That's what ruins children," said Mr. O'Connor.

"To be sure it is," said the old man. "And little thanks you get for

it, only impudence. He takes th'upper hand of me whenever he sees

I've a sup taken. What's the world coming to when sons speaks that

way to their fathers?"

"What age is he?" said Mr. O'Connor.

"Nineteen," said the old man.

"Why don't you put him to something?"

"Sure, amn't I never done at the drunken bowsy ever since he left

school? 'I won't keep you,' I says. 'You must get a job for yourself.'

But, sure, it's worse whenever he gets a job; he drinks it all."

Mr. O'Connor shook his head in sympathy, and the old man fell

silent, gazing into the fire. Someone opened the door of the room

and called out:

"Hello! Is this a Freemason's meeting?"

"Who's that?" said the old man.

"What are you doing in the dark?" asked a voice.

"Is that you, Hynes?" asked Mr. O'Connor.

"Yes. What are you doing in the dark?" said Mr. Hynes.  
advancing

into the light of the fire.

He was a tall, slender young man with a light brown  
moustache.

Imminent little drops of rain hung at the brim of his hat and  
the

collar of his jacket-coat was turned up.

"Well, Mat," he said to Mr. O'Connor, "how goes it?"

Mr. O'Connor shook his head. The old man left the hearth  
and

after stumbling about the room returned with two candlesticks

which he thrust one after the other into the fire and carried to the

table. A denuded room came into view and the fire lost all its

cheerful colour. The walls of the room were bare except for a copy

of an election address. In the middle of the room was a small table

on which papers were heaped.

Mr. Hynes leaned against the mantelpiece and asked:

"Has he paid you yet?"

"Not yet," said Mr. O'Connor. "I hope to God he'll not leave us in

the lurch tonight."

Mr. Hynes laughed.

"O, he'll pay you. Never fear," he said.

"I hope he'll look smart about it if he means business," said Mr.

O'Connor.

"What do you think, Jack?" said Mr. Hynes satirically to the old man.

The old man returned to his seat by the fire, saying:

"It isn't but he has it, anyway. Not like the other tinker."

"What other tinker?" said Mr. Hynes.

"Colgan," said the old man scornfully.

"It is because Colgan's a working--man you say that? What's the

difference between a good honest bricklayer and a publican--eh?

Hasn't the working-man as good a right to be in the Corporation as

anyone else--ay, and a better right than those shoneens that are

always hat in hand before any fellow with a handle to his name?

Isn't that so, Mat?" said Mr. Hynes, addressing Mr. O'Connor.

"I think you're right," said Mr. O'Connor.

"One man is a plain honest man with no hunker-sliding about him.

He goes in to represent the labour classes. This fellow you're working for only wants to get some job or other."

"Of course, the working-classes should be represented," said the

old man.

"The working-man," said Mr. Hynes, "gets all kicks and no halfpence. But it's labour produces everything. The workingman is

not looking for fat jobs for his sons and nephews and cousins. The

working-man is not going to drag the honour of Dublin in the mud

to please a German monarch."

"How's that?" said the old man.

"Don't you know they want to present an address of welcome to

Edward Rex if he comes here next year? What do we want



kowtowing to a foreign king?"

"Our man won't vote for the address," said Mr. O'Connor.

"He goes

in on the Nationalist ticket."

"Won't he?" said Mr. Hynes. "Wait till you see whether he will  
or

not. I know him. Is it Tricky Dicky Tierney?"

"By God! perhaps you're right, Joe," said Mr. O'Connor.

"Anyway,

I wish he'd turn up with the spondulics."

The three men fell silent. The old man began to rake more  
cinders

together. Mr. Hynes took off his hat, shook it and then  
turned

down the collar of his coat, displaying, as he did so, an ivy  
leaf in

the lapel.

"If this man was alive," he said, pointing to the leaf, "we'd  
have no

talk of an address of welcome."

"That's true," said Mr. O'Connor.

"Musha, God be with them times!" said the old man. "There was  
some life in it then."

The room was silent again. Then a bustling little man with a  
snuffling nose and very cold ears pushed in the door. He  
walked  
over quickly to the fire, rubbing his hands as if he intended to  
produce a spark from them.

"No money, boys," he said.

"Sit down here, Mr. Henchy," said the old man, offering him  
his  
chair.

"O, don't stir, Jack, don't stir," said Mr. Henchy

He nodded curtly to Mr. Hynes and sat down on the chair  
which  
the old man vacated.

"Did you serve Aungier Street?" he asked Mr. O'Connor.

"Yes," said Mr. O'Connor, beginning to search his pockets for memoranda.

"Did you call on Grimes?"

"I did."

"Well? How does he stand?"

"He wouldn't promise. He said: 'I won't tell anyone what way I'm going to vote.' But I think he'll be all right."

"Why so?"

"He asked me who the nominators were; and I told him. I mentioned Father Burke's name. I think it'll be all right."

Mr. Henchy began to snuffle and to rub his hands over the fire at a terrific speed. Then he said:

"For the love of God, Jack, bring us a bit of coal. There must be some left."

The old man went out of the room.

"It's no go," said Mr. Henchy, shaking his head. "I asked the little

shoeboy, but he said: 'Oh, now, Mr. Henchy, when I see work going on properly I won't forget you, you may be sure.' Mean little

tinker! 'Usha, how could he be anything else?'"

"What did I tell you, Mat?" said Mr. Hynes. "Tricky Dicky Tierney."

"O, he's as tricky as they make 'em," said Mr. Henchy. "He hasn't

got those little pigs' eyes for nothing. Blast his soul! Couldn't he

pay up like a man instead of: 'O, now, Mr. Henchy, I must speak to

Mr. Fanning.... I've spent a lot of money'? Mean little schoolboy of

hell! I suppose he forgets the time his little old father kept the

hand-me-down shop in Mary's Lane."

"But is that a fact?" asked Mr. O'Connor.

"God, yes," said Mr. Henchy. "Did you never hear that? And the

men used to go in on Sunday morning before the houses were open

to buy a waistcoat or a trousers--moya! But Tricky Dicky's little

old father always had a tricky little black bottle up in a corner. Do

you mind now? That's that. That's where he first saw the light."

The old man returned with a few lumps of coal which he placed

here and there on the fire.

"That's a nice how-do-you-do," said Mr. O'Connor. "How does he

expect us to work for him if he won't stump up?"

"I can't help it," said Mr. Henchy. "I expect to find the bailiffs in

the hall when I go home."

Mr. Hynes laughed and, shoving himself away from the mantelpiece with the aid of his shoulders, made ready to leave.

"It'll be all right when King Eddie comes," he said. "Well boys, I'm

off for the present. See you later. 'Bye, 'bye."

He went out of the room slowly. Neither Mr. Henchy nor the old

man said anything, but, just as the door was closing, Mr. O'Connor,

who had been staring moodily into the fire, called out suddenly:

"Bye, Joe."

Mr. Henchy waited a few moments and then nodded in the direction of the door.

"Tell me," he said across the fire, "what brings our friend in here?"

What does he want?"

"Usha, poor Joe!" said Mr. O'Connor, throwing the end of his cigarette into the fire, "he's hard up, like the rest of us."

Mr. Henchy snuffled vigorously and spat so copiously that he nearly put out the fire, which uttered a hissing protest.

"To tell you my private and candid opinion," he said, "I think he's a

man from the other camp. He's a spy of Colgan's, if you ask me.

Just go round and try and find out how they're getting on. They

won't suspect you. Do you twig?"

"Ah, poor Joe is a decent skin," said Mr. O'Connor.

"His father was a decent, respectable man," Mr. Henchy admitted.

"Poor old Larry Hynes! Many a good turn he did in his day!  
But I'm

greatly afraid our friend is not nineteen carat. Damn it, I can  
understand a fellow being hard up, but what I can't  
understand is a

fellow sponging. Couldn't he have some spark of manhood  
about

him?"

"He doesn't get a warm welcome from me when he comes,"  
said

the old man. "Let him work for his own side and not come  
spying

around here."

"I don't know," said Mr. O'Connor dubiously, as he took out  
cigarette-papers and tobacco. "I think Joe Hynes is a straight  
man.

He's a clever chap, too, with the pen. Do you remember that  
thing

he wrote...?"



"Some of these hillsiders and fenians are a bit too clever if ask

me," said Mr. Henchy. "Do you know what my private and candid

opinion is about some of those little jokers? I believe half of them

are in the pay of the Castle."

"There's no knowing," said the old man.

"O, but I know it for a fact," said Mr. Henchy. "They're Castle hacks.... I don't say Hynes.... No, damn it, I think he's a stroke

above that.... But there's a certain little nobleman with a cock-eye

--you know the patriot I'm alluding to?"

Mr. O'Connor nodded.

"There's a lineal descendant of Major Sirr for you if you like! O,

the heart's blood of a patriot! That's a fellow now that'd sell his

country for fourpence--ay--and go down on his bended knees

and thank the Almighty Christ he had a country to sell."

There was a knock at the door.

"Come in!" said Mr. Henchy.

A person resembling a poor clergyman or a poor actor appeared in

the doorway. His black clothes were tightly buttoned on his short

body and it was impossible to say whether he wore a clergyman's

collar or a layman's, because the collar of his shabby frock-coat,

the uncovered buttons of which reflected the candlelight, was

turned up about his neck. He wore a round hat of hard black felt.

His face, shining with raindrops, had the appearance of damp

yellow cheese save where two rosy spots indicated the cheekbones.

He opened his very long mouth suddenly to express

disappointment and at the same time opened wide his very bright

blue eyes to express pleasure and surprise.

"O Father Keon!" said Mr. Henchy, jumping up from his chair.

"Is

that you? Come in!"

"O, no, no, no!" said Father Keon quickly, pursing his lips as if he

were addressing a child.

"Won't you come in and sit down?"

"No, no, no!" said Father Keon, speaking in a discreet, indulgent,

velvety voice. "Don't let me disturb you now! I'm just looking for

Mr. Fanning...."

"He's round at the Black Eagle," said Mr. Henchy. "But won't you

come in and sit down a minute?"

"No, no, thank you. It was just a little business matter," said Father

Keon. "Thank you, indeed."

He retreated from the doorway and Mr. Henchy, seizing one of the

candlesticks, went to the door to light him downstairs.

"O, don't trouble, I beg!"

"No, but the stairs is so dark."

"No, no, I can see.... Thank you, indeed."

"Are you right now?"

"All right, thanks.... Thanks."

Mr. Henchy returned with the candlestick and put it on the table.

He sat down again at the fire. There was silence for a few moments.

"Tell me, John," said Mr. O'Connor, lighting his cigarette with another pasteboard card.

"Hm? "

"What he is exactly?"

"Ask me an easier one," said Mr. Henchy.

"Fanning and himself seem to me very thick. They're often in

Kavanagh's together. Is he a priest at all?"

"Mmmyes, I believe so.... I think he's what you call black sheep.

We haven't many of them, thank God! but we have a few.... He's an

unfortunate man of some kind...."

"And how does he knock it out?" asked Mr. O'Connor.

"That's another mystery."

"Is he attached to any chapel or church or institution or---"

"No," said Mr. Henchy, "I think he's travelling on his own account.... God forgive me," he added, "I thought he was the dozen of stout."

"Is there any chance of a drink itself?" asked Mr. O'Connor.

"I'm dry too," said the old man.

"I asked that little shoeboy three times," said Mr. Henchy,  
"would

he send up a dozen of stout. I asked him again now, but he  
was

leaning on the counter in his shirt-sleeves having a deep  
goster

with Alderman Cowley."

"Why didn't you remind him?" said Mr. O'Connor.

"Well, I couldn't go over while he was talking to Alderman  
Cowley. I just waited till I caught his eye, and said: 'About  
that

little matter I was speaking to you about....' 'That'll be all  
right, Mr.

H.,' he said. Yerra, sure the little hop-o'- my-thumb has  
forgotten

all about it."

"There's some deal on in that quarter," said Mr. O'Connor  
thoughtfully. "I saw the three of them hard at it yesterday at

Suffolk Street corner."

"I think I know the little game they're at," said Mr. Henchy.

"You

must owe the City Fathers money nowadays if you want to be

made Lord Mayor. Then they'll make you Lord Mayor. By God!

I'm thinking seriously of becoming a City Father myself. What do

you think? Would I do for the job?"

Mr. O'Connor laughed.

"So far as owing money goes...."

"Driving out of the Mansion House," said Mr. Henchy, "in all my

vermin, with Jack here standing up behind me in a powdered wig

--eh?"

"And make me your private secretary, John."

"Yes. And I'll make Father Keon my private chaplain. We'll have a

family party."

"Faith, Mr. Henchy," said the old man, "you'd keep up better style

than some of them. I was talking one day to old Keegan, the porter.

'And how do you like your new master, Pat?' says I to him. 'You

haven't much entertaining now,' says I. 'Entertaining!' says he. 'He'd

live on the smell of an oil- rag.' And do you know what he told

me? Now, I declare to God I didn't believe him."

"What?" said Mr. Henchy and Mr. O'Connor.

"He told me: 'What do you think of a Lord Mayor of Dublin sending out for a pound of chops for his dinner? How's that for

high living?' says he. 'Wisha! wisha,' says I. 'A pound of chops,'

says he, 'coming into the Mansion House.' 'Wisha!' says I, 'what

kind of people is going at all now?"



At this point there was a knock at the door, and a boy put in his head.

"What is it?" said the old man.

"From the Black Eagle," said the boy, walking in sideways and depositing a basket on the floor with a noise of shaken bottles.

The old man helped the boy to transfer the bottles from the basket to the table and counted the full tally. After the transfer the boy put his basket on his arm and asked:

"Any bottles?"

"What bottles?" said the old man.

"Won't you let us drink them first?" said Mr. Henchy.

"I was told to ask for the bottles."

"Come back tomorrow," said the old man.

"Here, boy!" said Mr. Henchy, "will you run over to O'Farrell's and

ask him to lend us a corkscrew--for Mr. Henchy, say. Tell him we

won't keep it a minute. Leave the basket there."

The boy went out and Mr. Henchy began to rub his hands cheerfully, saying:

"Ah, well, he's not so bad after all. He's as good as his word, anyhow."

"There's no tumblers," said the old man.

"O, don't let that trouble you, Jack," said Mr. Henchy.

"Many's the

good man before now drank out of the bottle."

"Anyway, it's better than nothing," said Mr. O'Connor.

"He's not a bad sort," said Mr. Henchy, "only Fanning has such a

loan of him. He means well, you know, in his own tinpot way."

The boy came back with the corkscrew. The old man opened three

bottles and was handing back the corkscrew when Mr. Henchy said

to the boy:

"Would you like a drink, boy?"

"If you please, sir," said the boy.

The old man opened another bottle grudgingly, and handed it to

the boy.

"What age are you?" he asked.

"Seventeen," said the boy.

As the old man said nothing further, the boy took the bottle. said:

"Here's my best respects, sir, to Mr. Henchy," drank the contents,

put the bottle back on the table and wiped his mouth with his

sleeve. Then he took up the corkscrew and went out of the door

sideways, muttering some form of salutation.

"That's the way it begins," said the old man.

"The thin edge of the wedge," said Mr. Henchy.

The old man distributed the three bottles which he had opened and

the men drank from them simultaneously. After having drunk each

placed his bottle on the mantelpiece within hand's reach and drew

in a long breath of satisfaction.

"Well, I did a good day's work today," said Mr. Henchy, after a

pause.

"That so, John?"

"Yes. I got him one or two sure things in Dawson Street, Crofton

and myself. Between ourselves, you know, Crofton (he's a decent

chap, of course), but he's not worth a damn as a canvasser. He

hasn't a word to throw to a dog. He stands and looks at the people

while I do the talking."

Here two men entered the room. One of them was a very fat man

whose blue serge clothes seemed to be in danger of falling from

his sloping figure. He had a big face which resembled a young ox's

face in expression, staring blue eyes and a grizzled moustache. The

other man, who was much younger and frailer, had a thin, clean-shaven face. He wore a very high double collar and a wide-brimmed bowler hat.

"Hello, Crofton!" said Mr. Henchy to the fat man. "Talk of the devil..."

"Where did the booze come from?" asked the young man.

"Did the

cow calve?"

"O, of course, Lyons spots the drink first thing!" said Mr. O'Connor, laughing.

"Is that the way you chaps canvass," said Mr. Lyons, "and Crofton and I out in the cold and rain looking for votes?"

"Why, blast your soul," said Mr. Henchy, "I'd get more votes in five minutes than you two'd get in a week."

"Open two bottles of stout, Jack," said Mr. O'Connor.

"How can I?" said the old man, "when there's no corkscrew?"

"Wait now, wait now!" said Mr. Henchy, getting up quickly. "Did you ever see this little trick?"

He took two bottles from the table and, carrying them to the fire,

put them on the hob. Then he sat down again by the fire and took

another drink from his bottle. Mr. Lyons sat on the edge of the

table, pushed his hat towards the nape of his neck and began to

swing his legs.

"Which is my bottle?" he asked.

"This, lad," said Mr. Henchy.

Mr. Crofton sat down on a box and looked fixedly at the other

bottle on the hob. He was silent for two reasons. The first reason,

sufficient in itself, was that he had nothing to say; the second

reason was that he considered his companions beneath him. He

had been a canvasser for Wilkins, the Conservative, but when the

Conservatives had withdrawn their man and, choosing the lesser of

two evils, given their support to the Nationalist candidate, he had

been engaged to work for Mr. Tiemey.

In a few minutes an apologetic "Pok!" was heard as the cork flew

out of Mr. Lyons' bottle. Mr. Lyons jumped off the table, went to

the fire, took his bottle and carried it back to the table.

"I was just telling them, Crofton," said Mr. Henchy, that we got a

good few votes today."

"Who did you get?" asked Mr. Lyons.

"Well, I got Parkes for one, and I got Atkinson for two, and got

Ward of Dawson Street. Fine old chap he is, too--regular old toff,

old Conservative! 'But isn't your candidate a Nationalist?' said he.

'He's a respectable man,' said I. 'He's in favour of whatever will

benefit this country. He's a big ratepayer,' I said. 'He has extensive

house property in the city and three places of business and isn't it

to his own advantage to keep down the rates? He's a prominent and

respected citizen,' said I, 'and a Poor Law Guardian, and he doesn't



belong to any party, good, bad, or indifferent.' That's the way to

talk to 'em."

"And what about the address to the King?" said Mr. Lyons, after

drinking and smacking his lips.

"Listen to me," said Mr. Henchy. "What we want in this country,

as I said to old Ward, is capital. The King's coming here will mean

an influx of money into this country. The citizens of Dublin will

benefit by it. Look at all the factories down by the quays there,

idle! Look at all the money there is in the country if we only worked the old industries, the mills, the ship-building yards and

factories. It's capital we want."

"But look here, John," said Mr. O'Connor. "Why should we welcome the King of England? Didn't Parnell himself..."

"Parnell," said Mr. Henchy, "is dead. Now, here's the way I look at

it. Here's this chap come to the throne after his old mother keeping

him out of it till the man was grey. He's a man of the world, and he

means well by us. He's a jolly fine decent fellow, if you ask me,

and no damn nonsense about him. He just says to himself: 'The old

one never went to see these wild Irish. By Christ, I'll go myself and

see what they're like.' And are we going to insult the man when he

comes over here on a friendly visit? Eh? Isn't that right, Crofton?"

Mr. Crofton nodded his head.

"But after all now," said Mr. Lyons argumentatively, "King Edward's life, you know, is not the very..."

"Let bygones be bygones," said Mr. Henchy. "I admire the man

personally. He's just an ordinary knockabout like you and me. He's

fond of his glass of grog and he's a bit of a rake, perhaps,  
and he's a

good sportsman. Damn it, can't we Irish play fair?"

"That's all very fine," said Mr. Lyons. "But look at the case of  
Parnell now."

"In the name of God," said Mr. Henchy, "where's the analogy  
between the two cases?"

"What I mean," said Mr. Lyons, "is we have our ideals. Why,  
now,

would we welcome a man like that? Do you think now after  
what

he did Parnell was a fit man to lead us? And why, then,  
would we

do it for Edward the Seventh?"

"This is Parnell's anniversary," said Mr. O'Connor, "and don't  
let us

stir up any bad blood. We all respect him now that he's dead  
and

gone--even the Conservatives," he added, turning to Mr.  
Crofton.

Pok! The tardy cork flew out of Mr. Crofton's bottle. Mr. Crofton

got up from his box and went to the fire. As he returned with his

capture he said in a deep voice:

"Our side of the house respects him, because he was a gentleman."

"Right you are, Crofton!" said Mr. Henchy fiercely. "He was the

only man that could keep that bag of cats in order. 'Down, ye dogs!

Lie down, ye curs!' That's the way he treated them. Come in, Joe!

Come in!" he called out, catching sight of Mr. Hynes in the doorway.

Mr. Hynes came in slowly.

"Open another bottle of stout, Jack," said Mr. Henchy. "O, I forgot

there's no corkscrew! Here, show me one here and I'll put it at the

fire."

The old man handed him another bottle and he placed it on the

hob.

"Sit down, Joe," said Mr. O'Connor, "we're just talking about the

Chief."

"Ay, ay!" said Mr. Henchy.

Mr. Hynes sat on the side of the table near Mr. Lyons but said

nothing.

"There's one of them, anyhow," said Mr. Henchy, "that didn't renege him. By God, I'll say for you, Joe! No, by God, you stuck to

him like a man!"

"O, Joe," said Mr. O'Connor suddenly. "Give us that thing you wrote--do you remember? Have you got it on you?"

"O, ay!" said Mr. Henchy. "Give us that. Did you ever hear that.

Crofton? Listen to this now: splendid thing."

"Go on," said Mr. O'Connor. "Fire away, Joe."

Mr. Hynes did not seem to remember at once the piece to which

they were alluding, but, after reflecting a while, he said:

"O, that thing is it.... Sure, that's old now."

"Out with it, man!" said Mr. O'Connor.

"'Sh, 'sh," said Mr. Henchy. "Now, Joe!"

Mr. Hynes hesitated a little longer. Then amid the silence he took

off his hat, laid it on the table and stood up. He seemed to be

rehearsing the piece in his mind. After a rather long pause he

announced:

## THE DEATH OF PARNELL

6th October, 1891

He cleared his throat once or twice and then began to recite:

He is dead. Our Uncrowned King is dead.

O, Erin, mourn with grief and woe

For he lies dead whom the fell gang

Of modern hypocrites laid low.

He lies slain by the coward hounds

He raised to glory from the mire;

And Erin's hopes and Erin's dreams

Perish upon her monarch's pyre.

In palace, cabin or in cot

The Irish heart where'er it be

Is bowed with woe--for he is gone

Who would have wrought her destiny.

He would have had his Erin famed,

The green flag gloriously unfurled,

Her statesmen, bards and warriors raised

Before the nations of the World.

He dreamed (alas, 'twas but a dream!)

Of Liberty: but as he strove  
To clutch that idol, treachery  
Sundered him from the thing he loved.  
Shame on the coward, caitiff hands  
That smote their Lord or with a kiss  
Betrayed him to the rabble-rout  
Of fawning priests--no friends of his.  
May everlasting shame consume  
The memory of those who tried  
To befoul and smear the exalted name  
Of one who spurned them in his pride.  
He fell as fall the mighty ones,  
Nobly undaunted to the last,  
And death has now united him  
With Erin's heroes of the past.  
No sound of strife disturb his sleep!  
Calmly he rests: no human pain  
Or high ambition spurs him now  
The peaks of glory to attain.  
They had their way: they laid him low.



But Erin, list, his spirit may  
Rise, like the Phoenix from the flames,  
When breaks the dawning of the day,  
The day that brings us Freedom's reign.  
And on that day may Erin well  
Pledge in the cup she lifts to Joy  
One grief--the memory of Parnell.

Mr. Hynes sat down again on the table. When he had finished his

recitation there was a silence and then a burst of clapping: even

Mr. Lyons clapped. The applause continued for a little time. When

it had ceased all the auditors drank from their bottles in silence.

Pok! The cork flew out of Mr. Hynes' bottle, but Mr. Hynes remained sitting flushed and bare-headed on the table. He did not

seem to have heard the invitation.

"Good man, Joe!" said Mr. O'Connor, taking out his cigarette

papers and pouch the better to hide his emotion.

"What do you think of that, Crofton?" cried Mr. Henchy. "Isn't that fine? What?"

Crofton said that it was a very fine piece of writing.

## A MOTHER

MR HOLOHAN, assistant secretary of the Eire Abu Society, had

been walking up and down Dublin for nearly a month, with his

hands and pockets full of dirty pieces of paper, arranging about the

series of concerts. He had a game leg and for this his friends called

him Hoppy Holohan. He walked up and down constantly, stood by

the hour at street corners arguing the point and made notes; but in

the end it was Mrs. Kearney who arranged everything.

Miss Devlin had become Mrs. Kearney out of spite. She had been

educated in a high-class convent, where she had learned French

and music. As she was naturally pale and unbending in manner she

made few friends at school. When she came to the age of marriage

she was sent out to many houses, where her playing and ivory

manners were much admired. She sat amid the chilly circle of her

accomplishments, waiting for some suitor to brave it and offer her

a brilliant life. But the young men whom she met were ordinary

and she gave them no encouragement, trying to console her

romantic desires by eating a great deal of Turkish Delight in

secret. However, when she drew near the limit and her friends

began to loosen their tongues about her, she silenced them by

marrying Mr. Kearney, who was a bootmaker on Ormond Quay.

He was much older than she. His conversation, which was serious,

took place at intervals in his great brown beard. After the first year

of married life, Mrs. Kearney perceived that such a man would

wear better than a romantic person, but she never put her own

romantic ideas away. He was sober, thrifty and pious; he went to

the altar every first Friday, sometimes with her, oftener by himself.

But she never weakened in her religion and was a good wife to

him. At some party in a strange house when she lifted her eyebrow

ever so slightly he stood up to take his leave and, when his cough

troubled him, she put the eider-down quilt over his feet and made a

strong rum punch. For his part, he was a model father. By paying a

small sum every week into a society, he ensured for both his

daughters a dowry of one hundred pounds each when they came to

the age of twenty-four. He sent the older daughter, Kathleen, to a

good convent, where she learned French and music, and afterward

paid her fees at the Academy. Every year in the month of July Mrs.

Kearney found occasion to say to some friend:

"My good man is packing us off to Skerries for a few weeks."

If it was not Skerries it was Howth or Greystones.

When the Irish Revival began to be appreciable Mrs. Kearney

determined to take advantage of her daughter's name and brought

an Irish teacher to the house. Kathleen and her sister sent Irish

picture postcards to their friends and these friends sent back other

Irish picture postcards. On special Sundays, when Mr. Kearney

went with his family to the pro-cathedral, a little crowd of people

would assemble after mass at the corner of Cathedral Street. They

were all friends of the Kearneys--musical friends or Nationalist

friends; and, when they had played every little counter of gossip,

they shook hands with one another all together, laughing at the

crossing of so many hands, and said good-bye to one another in

Irish. Soon the name of Miss Kathleen Kearney began to be heard

often on people's lips. People said that she was very clever at

music and a very nice girl and, moreover, that she was a believer

in the language movement. Mrs. Kearney was well content at this.

Therefore she was not surprised when one day Mr. Holohan came

to her and proposed that her daughter should be the accompanist at

a series of four grand concerts which his Society was going to give

in the Antient Concert Rooms. She brought him into the

drawing-room, made him sit down and brought out the decanter

and the silver biscuit-barrel. She entered heart and soul into the

details of the enterprise, advised and dissuaded: and finally a

contract was drawn up by which Kathleen was to receive eight

guineas for her services as accompanist at the four grand concerts.

As Mr. Holohan was a novice in such delicate matters as the wording of bills and the disposing of items for a programme, Mrs.

Kearney helped him. She had tact. She knew what artistes should

go into capitals and what artistes should go into small type. She

knew that the first tenor would not like to come on after Mr.

Meade's comic turn. To keep the audience continually diverted she

slipped the doubtful items in between the old favourites. Mr.

Holohan called to see her every day to have her advice on some

point. She was invariably friendly and advising--homely, in fact.

She pushed the decanter towards him, saying:

"Now, help yourself, Mr. Holohan!"

And while he was helping himself she said:

"Don't be afraid! Don't be afraid of it! "

Everything went on smoothly. Mrs. Kearney bought some lovely

blush-pink charmeuse in Brown Thomas's to let into the front of

Kathleen's dress. It cost a pretty penny; but there are occasions

when a little expense is justifiable. She took a dozen of

two-shilling tickets for the final concert and sent them to those

friends who could not be trusted to come otherwise. She forgot

nothing, and, thanks to her, everything that was to be done was

done.

The concerts were to be on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and

Saturday. When Mrs. Kearney arrived with her daughter at the



Antient Concert Rooms on Wednesday night she did not like the

look of things. A few young men, wearing bright blue badges in

their coats, stood idle in the vestibule; none of them wore evening

dress. She passed by with her daughter and a quick glance through

the open door of the hall showed her the cause of the stewards'

idleness. At first she wondered had she mistaken the hour. No, it

was twenty minutes to eight.

In the dressing-room behind the stage she was introduced to the

secretary of the Society, Mr. Fitzpatrick. She smiled and shook his

hand. He was a little man, with a white, vacant face. She noticed

that he wore his soft brown hat carelessly on the side of his head

and that his accent was flat. He held a programme in his hand, and,

while he was talking to her, he chewed one end of it into a moist

pulp. He seemed to bear disappointments lightly. Mr. Holohan

came into the dressingroom every few minutes with reports from

the box-office. The artistes talked among themselves nervously,

glanced from time to time at the mirror and rolled and unrolled

their music. When it was nearly half-past eight, the few people in

the hall began to express their desire to be entertained. Mr. Fitzpatrick came in, smiled vacantly at the room, and said:

"Well now, ladies and gentlemen. I suppose we'd better open the

ball."

Mrs. Kearney rewarded his very flat final syllable with a quick

stare of contempt, and then said to her daughter encouragingly:

"Are you ready, dear?"

When she had an opportunity, she called Mr. Holohan aside and

asked him to tell her what it meant. Mr. Holohan did not know

what it meant. He said that the committee had made a mistake in

arranging for four concerts: four was too many.

"And the artistes!" said Mrs. Kearney. "Of course they are doing

their best, but really they are not good."

Mr. Holohan admitted that the artistes were no good but the

committee, he said, had decided to let the first three concerts go as

they pleased and reserve all the talent for Saturday night. Mrs.

Kearney said nothing, but, as the mediocre items followed one

another on the platform and the few people in the hall grew fewer

and fewer, she began to regret that she had put herself to any

expense for such a concert. There was something she didn't like in

the look of things and Mr. Fitzpatrick's vacant smile irritated her

very much. However, she said nothing and waited to see how it

would end. The concert expired shortly before ten, and everyone

went home quickly.

The concert on Thursday night was better attended, but Mrs.

Kearney saw at once that the house was filled with paper. The

audience behaved indecorously, as if the concert were an informal

dress rehearsal. Mr. Fitzpatrick seemed to enjoy himself; he was

quite unconscious that Mrs. Kearney was taking angry note of his

conduct. He stood at the edge of the screen, from time to time

jutting out his head and exchanging a laugh with two friends in the

corner of the balcony. In the course of the evening, Mrs. Kearney

learned that the Friday concert was to be abandoned and that the

committee was going to move heaven and earth to secure a

bumper house on Saturday night. When she heard this, she sought

out Mr. Holohan. She buttonholed him as he was limping out quickly with a glass of lemonade for a young lady and asked him

was it true. Yes. it was true.

"But, of course, that doesn't alter the contract," she said. "The

contract was for four concerts."

Mr. Holohan seemed to be in a hurry; he advised her to speak to

Mr. Fitzpatrick. Mrs. Kearney was now beginning to be alarmed.

She called Mr. Fitzpatrick away from his screen and told him that

her daughter had signed for four concerts and that, of course,

according to the terms of the contract, she should receive the sum

originally stipulated for, whether the society gave the four concerts

or not. Mr. Fitzpatrick, who did not catch the point at issue very

quickly, seemed unable to resolve the difficulty and said that he

would bring the matter before the committee. Mrs. Kearney's anger

began to flutter in her cheek and she had all she could do to keep

from asking:

"And who is the Cometty pray?"

But she knew that it would not be ladylike to do that: so she was

silent.

Little boys were sent out into the principal streets of Dublin early

on Friday morning with bundles of handbills. Special puffs

appeared in all the evening papers, reminding the music loving

public of the treat which was in store for it on the following

evening. Mrs. Kearney was somewhat reassured, but she thought

well to tell her husband part of her suspicions. He listened

carefully and said that perhaps it would be better if he went with

her on Saturday night. She agreed. She respected her husband in

the same way as she respected the General Post Office, as

something large, secure and fixed; and though she knew the small

number of his talents she appreciated his abstract value as a male.

She was glad that he had suggested coming with her. She thought

her plans over.

The night of the grand concert came. Mrs. Kearney, with her

husband and daughter, arrived at the Antient Concert Rooms

three-quarters of an hour before the time at which the concert was

to begin. By ill luck it was a rainy evening. Mrs. Kearney placed

her daughter's clothes and music in charge of her husband and

went all over the building looking for Mr. Holohan or Mr.

Fitzpatrick. She could find neither. She asked the stewards was any

member of the committee in the hall and, after a great deal of

trouble, a steward brought out a little woman named Miss Beirne

to whom Mrs. Kearney explained that she wanted to see one of the

secretaries. Miss Beirne expected them any minute and asked

could she do anything. Mrs. Kearney looked searchingly at the

oldish face which was screwed into an expression of trustfulness

and enthusiasm and answered:

"No, thank you!"

The little woman hoped they would have a good house. She looked

out at the rain until the melancholy of the wet street effaced all the

trustfulness and enthusiasm from her twisted features. Then she

gave a little sigh and said:

"Ah, well! We did our best, the dear knows."

Mrs. Kearney had to go back to the dressing-room.



The artistes were arriving. The bass and the second tenor had

already come. The bass, Mr. Duggan, was a slender young man

with a scattered black moustache. He was the son of a hall porter

in an office in the city and, as a boy, he had sung prolonged bass

notes in the resounding hall. From this humble state he had raised

himself until he had become a first-rate artiste. He had appeared in

grand opera. One night, when an operatic artiste had fallen ill, he

had undertaken the part of the king in the opera of Maritana at the

Queen's Theatre. He sang his music with great feeling and volume

and was warmly welcomed by the gallery; but, unfortunately, he

marred the good impression by wiping his nose in his gloved hand

once or twice out of thoughtlessness. He was unassuming and

spoke little. He said yours so softly that it passed unnoticed and he

never drank anything stronger than milk for his voice's sake.  
Mr.

Bell, the second tenor, was a fair-haired little man who  
competed

every year for prizes at the Feis Ceoil. On his fourth trial he  
had

been awarded a bronze medal. He was extremely nervous  
and

extremely jealous of other tenors and he covered his  
nervous

jealousy with an ebullient friendliness. It was his humour to  
have

people know what an ordeal a concert was to him. Therefore  
when

he saw Mr. Duggan he went over to him and asked:

"Are you in it too? "

"Yes," said Mr. Duggan.

Mr. Bell laughed at his fellow-sufferer, held out his hand and  
said:

"Shake!"

Mrs. Kearney passed by these two young men and went to the edge

of the screen to view the house. The seats were being filled up

rapidly and a pleasant noise circulated in the auditorium. She came

back and spoke to her husband privately. Their conversation was

evidently about Kathleen for they both glanced at her often as she

stood chatting to one of her Nationalist friends, Miss Healy, the

contralto. An unknown solitary woman with a pale face walked

through the room. The women followed with keen eyes the faded

blue dress which was stretched upon a meagre body. Someone said

that she was Madam Glynn, the soprano.

"I wonder where did they dig her up," said Kathleen to Miss Healy.

"I'm sure I never heard of her."

Miss Healy had to smile. Mr. Holohan limped into the

dressing-room at that moment and the two young ladies asked him

who was the unknown woman. Mr. Holohan said that she was

Madam Glynn from London. Madam Glynn took her stand in a

corner of the room, holding a roll of music stiffly before her and

from time to time changing the direction of her startled gaze. The

shadow took her faded dress into shelter but fell revengefully into

the little cup behind her collar-bone. The noise of the hall became

more audible. The first tenor and the baritone arrived together.

They were both well dressed, stout and complacent and they

brought a breath of opulence among the company.

Mrs. Kearney brought her daughter over to them, and talked to

them amiably. She wanted to be on good terms with them but,

while she strove to be polite, her eyes followed Mr. Holohan in his

limping and devious courses. As soon as she could she excused

herself and went out after him.

"Mr. Holohan, I want to speak to you for a moment," she said.

They went down to a discreet part of the corridor. Mrs Kearney

asked him when was her daughter going to be paid. Mr. Holohan

said that Mr. Fitzpatrick had charge of that. Mrs. Kearney said that

she didn't know anything about Mr. Fitzpatrick. Her daughter had

signed a contract for eight guineas and she would have to be paid.

Mr. Holohan said that it wasn't his business.

"Why isn't it your business?" asked Mrs. Kearney. "Didn't you yourself bring her the contract? Anyway, if it's not your business

it's my business and I mean to see to it."

"You'd better speak to Mr. Fitzpatrick," said Mr. Holohan

distantly.

"I don't know anything about Mr. Fitzpatrick," repeated Mrs. Kearney. "I have my contract, and I intend to see that it is carried out."

When she came back to the dressing-room her cheeks were slightly suffused. The room was lively. Two men in outdoor dress had taken possession of the fireplace and were chatting familiarly with

Miss Healy and the baritone. They were the Freeman man and Mr.

O'Madden Burke. The Freeman man had come in to say that he

could not wait for the concert as he had to report the lecture which

an American priest was giving in the Mansion House. He said they

were to leave the report for him at the Freeman office and he

would see that it went in. He was a grey-haired man, with a plausible voice and careful manners. He held an extinguished cigar

in his hand and the aroma of cigar smoke floated near him.  
He had

not intended to stay a moment because concerts and  
artistes bored

him considerably but he remained leaning against the  
mantelpiece.

Miss Healy stood in front of him, talking and laughing. He  
was old

enough to suspect one reason for her politeness but young  
enough

in spirit to turn the moment to account. The warmth,  
fragrance and

colour of her body appealed to his senses. He was  
pleasantly

conscious that the bosom which he saw rise and fall slowly  
beneath him rose and fell at that moment for him, that the  
laughter

and fragrance and wilful glances were his tribute. When he  
could

stay no longer he took leave of her regretfully.

"O'Madden Burke will write the notice," he explained to Mr.  
Holohan, "and I'll see it in."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Hendrick," said Mr. Holohan.  
you'll

see it in, I know. Now, won't you have a little something  
before

you go?"

"I don't mind," said Mr. Hendrick.

The two men went along some tortuous passages and up a  
dark

staircase and came to a secluded room where one of the  
stewards

was uncorking bottles for a few gentlemen. One of these  
gentlemen was Mr. O'Madden Burke, who had found out the  
room

by instinct. He was a suave, elderly man who balanced his  
imposing body, when at rest, upon a large silk umbrella. His  
magniloquent western name was the moral umbrella upon  
which

he balanced the fine problem of his finances. He was widely  
respected.

While Mr. Holohan was entertaining the Freeman man Mrs.



Kearney was speaking so animatedly to her husband that he had to

ask her to lower her voice. The conversation of the others in the

dressing-room had become strained. Mr. Bell, the first item, stood

ready with his music but the accompanist made no sign. Evidently

something was wrong. Mr. Kearney looked straight before him,

stroking his beard, while Mrs. Kearney spoke into Kathleen's ear

with subdued emphasis. From the hall came sounds of

encouragement, clapping and stamping of feet. The first tenor and

the baritone and Miss Healy stood together, waiting tranquilly, but

Mr. Bell's nerves were greatly agitated because he was afraid the

audience would think that he had come late.

Mr. Holohan and Mr. O'Madden Burke came into the room In a

moment Mr. Holohan perceived the hush. He went over to Mrs.

Kearney and spoke with her earnestly. While they were speaking

the noise in the hall grew louder. Mr. Holohan became very red

and excited. He spoke volubly, but Mrs. Kearney said curtly at

intervals:

"She won't go on. She must get her eight guineas."

Mr. Holohan pointed desperately towards the hall where the audience was clapping and stamping. He appealed to Mr Kearney

and to Kathleen. But Mr. Kearney continued to stroke his beard

and Kathleen looked down, moving the point of her new shoe: it

was not her fault. Mrs. Kearney repeated:

"She won't go on without her money."

After a swift struggle of tongues Mr. Holohan hobbled out in haste.

The room was silent. When the strain of the silence had become

somewhat painful Miss Healy said to the baritone:

"Have you seen Mrs. Pat Campbell this week?"

The baritone had not seen her but he had been told that she was

very fine. The conversation went no further. The first tenor bent

his head and began to count the links of the gold chain which was

extended across his waist, smiling and humming random notes to

observe the effect on the frontal sinus. From time to time everyone

glanced at Mrs. Kearney.

The noise in the auditorium had risen to a clamour when Mr.

Fitzpatrick burst into the room, followed by Mr. Holohan who was

panting. The clapping and stamping in the hall were punctuated by

whistling. Mr. Fitzpatrick held a few banknotes in his hand. He

counted out four into Mrs. Kearney's hand and said she would get

the other half at the interval. Mrs. Kearney said:

"This is four shillings short."

But Kathleen gathered in her skirt and said: "Now. Mr. Bell,"  
to

the first item, who was shaking like an aspen. The singer  
and the

accompanist went out together. The noise in hall died away.  
There

was a pause of a few seconds: and then the piano was  
heard.

The first part of the concert was very successful except for  
Madam

Glynn's item. The poor lady sang Killarney in a bodiless  
gasping

voice, with all the old-fashioned mannerisms of intonation  
and

pronunciation which she believed lent elegance to her  
singing. She

looked as if she had been resurrected from an old stage-  
wardrobe

and the cheaper parts of the hall made fun of her high  
wailing

notes. The first tenor and the contralto, however, brought down the

house. Kathleen played a selection of Irish airs which was generously applauded. The first part closed with a stirring patriotic

recitation delivered by a young lady who arranged amateur theatricals. It was deservedly applauded; and, when it was ended,

the men went out for the interval, content.

All this time the dressing-room was a hive of excitement. In one

corner were Mr. Holohan, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Miss Beirne, two of the

stewards, the baritone, the bass, and Mr. O'Madden Burke. Mr.

O'Madden Burke said it was the most scandalous exhibition he had

ever witnessed. Miss Kathleen Kearney's musical career was ended

in Dublin after that, he said. The baritone was asked what did he

think of Mrs. Kearney's conduct. He did not like to say anything.

He had been paid his money and wished to be at peace with men.

However, he said that Mrs. Kearney might have taken the artistes

into consideration. The stewards and the secretaries debated hotly

as to what should be done when the interval came.

"I agree with Miss Beirne," said Mr. O'Madden Burke. "Pay her

nothing."

In another corner of the room were Mrs. Kearney and her husband,

Mr. Bell, Miss Healy and the young lady who had to recite the

patriotic piece. Mrs. Kearney said that the Committee had treated

her scandalously. She had spared neither trouble nor expense and

this was how she was repaid.

They thought they had only a girl to deal with and that therefore,

they could ride roughshod over her. But she would show them

their mistake. They wouldn't have dared to have treated her like

that if she had been a man. But she would see that her daughter got

her rights: she wouldn't be fooled. If they didn't pay her to the last

farthing she would make Dublin ring. Of course she was sorry for

the sake of the artistes. But what else could she do? She appealed

to the second tenor who said he thought she had not been well

treated. Then she appealed to Miss Healy. Miss Healy wanted to

join the other group but she did not like to do so because she was a

great friend of Kathleen's and the Kearneys had often invited her to

their house.

As soon as the first part was ended Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr.

Holohan went over to Mrs. Kearney and told her that the other four

guineas would be paid after the committee meeting on the

following Tuesday and that, in case her daughter did not play for

the second part, the committee would consider the contract broken

and would pay nothing.

"I haven't seen any committee," said Mrs. Kearney angrily.  
"My

daughter has her contract. She will get four pounds eight into her

hand or a foot she won't put on that platform."

"I'm surprised at you, Mrs. Kearney," said Mr. Holohan. "I never

thought you would treat us this way."

"And what way did you treat me?" asked Mrs. Kearney.

Her face was inundated with an angry colour and she looked as if

she would attack someone with her hands.

"I'm asking for my rights." she said.

You might have some sense of decency," said Mr. Holohan.



"Might I, indeed?... And when I ask when my daughter is going to

be paid I can't get a civil answer."

She tossed her head and assumed a haughty voice:

"You must speak to the secretary. It's not my business. I'm a great

fellow fol-the-diddle-I-do."

"I thought you were a lady," said Mr. Holohan, walking away from

her abruptly.

After that Mrs. Kearney's conduct was condemned on all hands:

everyone approved of what the committee had done. She stood at

the door, haggard with rage, arguing with her husband and daughter, gesticulating with them. She waited until it was time for

the second part to begin in the hope that the secretaries would

approach her. But Miss Healy had kindly consented to play one or

two accompaniments. Mrs. Kearney had to stand aside to allow the

baritone and his accompanist to pass up to the platform. She stood

still for an instant like an angry stone image and, when the first

notes of the song struck her ear, she caught up her daughter's cloak

and said to her husband:

"Get a cab!"

He went out at once. Mrs. Kearney wrapped the cloak round her

daughter and followed him. As she passed through the doorway

she stopped and glared into Mr. Holohan's face.

"I'm not done with you yet," she said.

"But I'm done with you," said Mr. Holohan.

Kathleen followed her mother meekly. Mr. Holohan began to pace

up and down the room, in order to cool himself for he his skin on

fire.

"That's a nice lady!" he said. "O, she's a nice lady!"

You did the proper thing, Holohan," said Mr. O'Madden Burke,

poised upon his umbrella in approval.

GRACE

TWO GENTLEMEN who were in the lavatory at the time tried to

lift him up: but he was quite helpless. He lay curled up at the foot

of the stairs down which he had fallen. They succeeded in turning

him over. His hat had rolled a few yards away and his clothes were

smeared with the filth and ooze of the floor on which he had lain,

face downwards. His eyes were closed and he breathed with a

grunting noise. A thin stream of blood trickled from the corner of

his mouth.

These two gentlemen and one of the curates carried him up the

stairs and laid him down again on the floor of the bar. In two minutes he was surrounded by a ring of men. The manager of the

bar asked everyone who he was and who was with him. No one

knew who he was but one of the curates said he had served the

gentleman with a small rum.

"Was he by himself?" asked the manager.

"No, sir. There was two gentlemen with him."

"And where are they?"

No one knew; a voice said:

"Give him air. He's fainted."

The ring of onlookers distended and closed again elastically. A

dark medal of blood had formed itself near the man's head on the

tessellated floor. The manager, alarmed by the grey pallor of the

man's face, sent for a policeman.

His collar was unfastened and his necktie undone. He opened eyes

for an instant, sighed and closed them again. One of gentlemen

who had carried him upstairs held a dinged silk hat in his hand.

The manager asked repeatedly did no one know who the injured

man was or where had his friends gone. The door of the bar opened and an immense constable entered. A crowd which had

followed him down the laneway collected outside the door, struggling to look in through the glass panels.

The manager at once began to narrate what he knew. The constable,

a young man with thick immobile features, listened. He moved his

head slowly to right and left and from the manager to the person

on the floor, as if he feared to be the victim some delusion.  
Then

he drew off his glove, produced a small book from his waist,  
licked the lead of his pencil and made ready to indite. He  
asked in

a suspicious provincial accent:

"Who is the man? What's his name and address?"

A young man in a cycling-suit cleared his way through the  
ring of

bystanders. He knelt down promptly beside the injured man  
and

called for water. The constable knelt down also to help. The  
young

man washed the blood from the injured man's mouth and  
then

called for some brandy. The constable repeated the order in  
an

authoritative voice until a curate came running with the  
glass. The

brandy was forced down the man's throat. In a few seconds  
he

opened his eyes and looked about him. He looked at the  
circle of

faces and then, understanding, strove to rise to his feet.

"You're all right now?" asked the young man in the cycling-suit.

"Sha,'s nothing," said the injured man, trying to stand up.

He was helped to his feet. The manager said something about a

hospital and some of the bystanders gave advice. The battered silk

hat was placed on the man's head. The constable asked:

"Where do you live?"

The man, without answering, began to twirl the ends of his moustache. He made light of his accident. It was nothing, he said:

only a little accident. He spoke very thickly.

"Where do you live" repeated the constable.

The man said they were to get a cab for him. While the point was

being debated a tall agile gentleman of fair complexion, wearing a

long yellow ulster, came from the far end of the bar. Seeing the

spectacle, he called out:

"Hallo, Tom, old man! What's the trouble?"

"Sha,'s nothing," said the man.

The new-comer surveyed the deplorable figure before him and

then turned to the constable, saying:

"It's all right, constable. I'll see him home."

The constable touched his helmet and answered:

"All right, Mr. Power!"

"Come now, Tom," said Mr. Power, taking his friend by the arm.

"No bones broken. What? Can you walk?"

The young man in the cycling-suit took the man by the other arm

and the crowd divided.



"How did you get yourself into this mess?" asked Mr. Power.

"The gentleman fell down the stairs," said the young man.

"I 'ery 'uch o'liged to you, sir," said the injured man.

"Not at all."

"'ant we have a little...?"

"Not now. Not now."

The three men left the bar and the crowd sifted through the doors

in to the laneway. The manager brought the constable to the stairs

to inspect the scene of the accident. They agreed that the gentleman must have missed his footing. The customers returned

to the counter and a curate set about removing the traces of blood

from the floor.

When they came out into Grafton Street, Mr. Power whistled for

an outsider. The injured man said again as well as he could.

"I'm very much obliged to you, sir. I hope we'll meet again. My name is Kernan."

The shock and the incipient pain had partly sobered him.

"Don't mention it," said the young man.

They shook hands. Mr. Kernan was hoisted on to the car and,

while Mr. Power was giving directions to the carman, he expressed

his gratitude to the young man and regretted that they could not

have a little drink together.

"Another time," said the young man.

The car drove off towards Westmoreland Street. As it passed

Ballast Office the clock showed half-past nine. A keen east wind

hit them, blowing from the mouth of the river. Mr. Kernan was

huddled together with cold. His friend asked him to tell how the

accident had happened.

"I'an't 'an," he answered, "'y 'ongue is hurt."

"Show."

The other leaned over the well of the car and peered into Mr.

Kernan's mouth but he could not see. He struck a match and,

sheltering it in the shell of his hands, peered again into the mouth

which Mr. Kernan opened obediently. The swaying movement of

the car brought the match to and from the opened mouth. The

lower teeth and gums were covered with clotted blood and a minute piece of the tongue seemed to have been bitten off. The

match was blown out.

"That's ugly," said Mr. Power.

"Sha, 's nothing," said Mr. Kernan, closing his mouth and pulling

the collar of his filthy coat across his neck.

Mr. Kernan was a commercial traveller of the old school which

believed in the dignity of its calling. He had never been seen in the

city without a silk hat of some decency and a pair of gaiters. By

grace of these two articles of clothing, he said, a man could always

pass muster. He carried on the tradition of his Napoleon, the great

Blackwhite, whose memory he evoked at times by legend and

mimicry. Modern business methods had spared him only so far as

to allow him a little office in Crowe Street, on the window blind of

which was written the name of his firm with the address-- London,

E. C. On the mantelpiece of this little office a little leaden

battalion of canisters was drawn up and on the table before the

window stood four or five china bowls which were usually half

full of a black liquid. From these bowls Mr. Kernan tasted tea. He

took a mouthful, drew it up, saturated his palate with it and then

spat it forth into the grate. Then he paused to judge.

Mr. Power, a much younger man, was employed in the Royal Irish

Constabulary Office in Dublin Castle. The arc of his social rise

intersected the arc of his friend's decline, but Mr. Kernan's decline

was mitigated by the fact that certain of those friends who had

known him at his highest point of success still esteemed him as a

character. Mr. Power was one of these friends. His inexplicable

debts were a byword in his circle; he was a debonair young man.

The car halted before a small house on the Glasnevin road and Mr.

Kernan was helped into the house. His wife put him to bed while

Mr. Power sat downstairs in the kitchen asking the children where

they went to school and what book they were in. The children--

two girls and a boy, conscious of their father helplessness and of

their mother's absence, began some horseplay with him. He was

surprised at their manners and at their accents, and his brow grew

thoughtful. After a while Mrs. Kernan entered the kitchen, exclaiming:

"Such a sight! O, he'll do for himself one day and that's the holy

alls of it. He's been drinking since Friday."

Mr. Power was careful to explain to her that he was not responsible, that he had come on the scene by the merest accident.

Mrs. Kernan, remembering Mr. Power's good offices during domestic quarrels, as well as many small, but opportune loans,

said:

"O, you needn't tell me that, Mr. Power. I know you're a friend of

his, not like some of the others he does be with. They're all right so

long as he has money in his pocket to keep him out from his wife

and family. Nice friends! Who was he with tonight, I'd like to know?"

Mr. Power shook his head but said nothing.

"I'm so sorry," she continued, "that I've nothing in the house to

offer you. But if you wait a minute I'll send round to Fogarty's, at

the corner."

Mr. Power stood up.

"We were waiting for him to come home with the money. He never seems to think he has a home at all."

"O, now, Mrs. Kernan," said Mr. Power, "we'll make him turn over

a new leaf. I'll talk to Martin. He's the man. We'll come here one of

these nights and talk it over."

She saw him to the door. The carman was stamping up and down

the footpath, and swinging his arms to warm himself.

"It's very kind of you to bring him home," she said.

"Not at all," said Mr. Power.

He got up on the car. As it drove off he raised his hat to her gaily.

"We'll make a new man of him," he said. "Good-night, Mrs. Kernan."

Mrs. Kernan's puzzled eyes watched the car till it was out of sight.



Then she withdrew them, went into the house and emptied her

husband's pockets.

She was an active, practical woman of middle age. Not long before

she had celebrated her silver wedding and renewed her intimacy

with her husband by waltzing with him to Mr. Power's

accompaniment. In her days of courtship, Mr. Kernan had seemed

to her a not ungallant figure: and she still hurried to the chapel

door whenever a wedding was reported and, seeing the bridal pair,

recalled with vivid pleasure how she had passed out of the Star of

the Sea Church in Sandymount, leaning on the arm of a jovial

well-fed man, who was dressed smartly in a frock-coat and

lavender trousers and carried a silk hat gracefully balanced upon

his other arm. After three weeks she had found a wife's life

irksome and, later on, when she was beginning to find it

unbearable, she had become a mother. The part of mother presented to her no insuperable difficulties and for twenty-five

years she had kept house shrewdly for her husband. Her two eldest

sons were launched. One was in a draper's shop in Glasgow and

the other was clerk to a tea-merchant in Belfast. They were good

sons, wrote regularly and sometimes sent home money. The other

children were still at school.

Mr. Kernan sent a letter to his office next day and remained in bed.

She made beef-tea for him and scolded him roundly. She accepted

his frequent intemperance as part of the climate, healed him

dutifully whenever he was sick and always tried to make him eat a

breakfast. There were worse husbands. He had never been violent

since the boys had grown up, and she knew that he would walk to

the end of Thomas Street and back again to book even a small order.

Two nights after, his friends came to see him. She brought them up

to his bedroom, the air of which was impregnated with a personal

odour, and gave them chairs at the fire. Mr. Kernan's tongue, the

occasional stinging pain of which had made him somewhat irritable during the day, became more polite. He sat propped up in

the bed by pillows and the little colour in his puffy cheeks made

them resemble warm cinders. He apologised to his guests for the

disorder of the room, but at the same time looked at them a little

proudly, with a veteran's pride.

He was quite unconscious that he was the victim of a plot which

his friends, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. M'Coy and Mr. Power had disclosed to Mrs. Kernan in the parlour. The idea been Mr.

Power's, but its development was entrusted to Mr. Cunningham.

Mr. Kernan came of Protestant stock and, though he had been

converted to the Catholic faith at the time of his marriage, he had

not been in the pale of the Church for twenty years. He was fond,

moreover, of giving side-thrusts at Catholicism.

Mr. Cunningham was the very man for such a case. He was an

elder colleague of Mr. Power. His own domestic life was very

happy. People had great sympathy with him, for it was known that

he had married an unpresentable woman who was an incurable

drunkard. He had set up house for her six times; and each time she

had pawned the furniture on him.

Everyone had respect for poor Martin Cunningham. He was a

thoroughly sensible man, influential and intelligent. His blade of

human knowledge, natural astuteness particularised by long association with cases in the police courts, had been tempered by

brief immersions in the waters of general philosophy. He was well

informed. His friends bowed to his opinions and considered that

his face was like Shakespeare's.

When the plot had been disclosed to her, Mrs. Kernan had said:

"I leave it all in your hands, Mr. Cunningham."

After a quarter of a century of married life, she had very few illusions left. Religion for her was a habit, and she suspected that a

man of her husband's age would not change greatly before death.

She was tempted to see a curious appropriateness in his accident

and, but that she did not wish to seem bloody-minded, would have

told the gentlemen that Mr. Kernan's tongue would not suffer by

being shortened. However, Mr. Cunningham was a capable man;

and religion was religion. The scheme might do good and, at least,

it could do no harm. Her beliefs were not extravagant. She

believed steadily in the Sacred Heart as the most generally useful

of all Catholic devotions and approved of the sacraments. Her faith

was bounded by her kitchen, but, if she was put to it, she could

believe also in the banshee and in the Holy Ghost.

The gentlemen began to talk of the accident. Mr. Cunningham said

that he had once known a similar case. A man of seventy had

bitten off a piece of his tongue during an epileptic fit and the

tongue had filled in again, so that no one could see a trace of the

bite.

"Well, I'm not seventy," said the invalid.

"God forbid," said Mr. Cunningham.

"It doesn't pain you now?" asked Mr. M'Coy.

Mr. M'Coy had been at one time a tenor of some reputation. His

wife, who had been a soprano, still taught young children to play

the piano at low terms. His line of life had not been the shortest

distance between two points and for short periods he had been

driven to live by his wits. He had been a clerk in the Midland Railway, a canvasser for advertisements for The Irish Times and

for The Freeman's Journal, a town traveller for a coal firm on commission, a private inquiry agent, a clerk in the office of the

Sub-Sheriff, and he had recently become secretary to the City

Coroner. His new office made him professionally interested in Mr.

Kernan's case.

"Pain? Not much," answered Mr. Kernan. "But it's so sickening. I

feel as if I wanted to retch off."

"That's the booze," said Mr. Cunningham firmly.

"No," said Mr. Kernan. "I think I caught cold on the car. There's

something keeps coming into my throat, phlegm or----"

"Mucus." said Mr. M'Coy.

"It keeps coming like from down in my throat; sickening."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. M'Coy, "that's the thorax."

He looked at Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Power at the same time

with an air of challenge. Mr. Cunningham nodded his head rapidly

and Mr. Power said:

"Ah, well, all's well that ends well."

"I'm very much obliged to you, old man," said the invalid.



Mr. Power waved his hand.

"Those other two fellows I was with----"

"Who were you with?" asked Mr. Cunningham.

"A chap. I don't know his name. Damn it now, what's his name?"

Little chap with sandy hair...."

"And who else?"

"Harford."

"Hm," said Mr. Cunningham.

When Mr. Cunningham made that remark, people were silent. It

was known that the speaker had secret sources of information. In

this case the monosyllable had a moral intention. Mr. Harford

sometimes formed one of a little detachment which left the city

shortly after noon on Sunday with the purpose of arriving as soon

as possible at some public-house on the outskirts of the city where

its members duly qualified themselves as bona fide travellers. But

his fellow-travellers had never consented to overlook his origin.

He had begun life as an obscure financier by lending small sums of

money to workmen at usurious interest. Later on he had become

the partner of a very fat, short gentleman, Mr. Goldberg, in the

Liffey Loan Bank. Though he had never embraced more than the

Jewish ethical code, his fellow-Catholics, whenever they had smarted in person or by proxy under his exactions, spoke of him

bitterly as an Irish Jew and an illiterate, and saw divine

disapproval of usury made manifest through the person of his idiot

son. At other times they remembered his good points.

"I wonder where did he go to," said Mr. Kernan.

He wished the details of the incident to remain vague. He wished

his friends to think there had been some mistake, that Mr. Harford

and he had missed each other. His friends, who knew quite well

Mr. Harford's manners in drinking were silent. Mr. Power said again:

"All's well that ends well."

Mr. Kernan changed the subject at once.

"That was a decent young chap, that medical fellow," he said.

"Only for him----"

"O, only for him," said Mr. Power, "it might have been a case of

seven days, without the option of a fine."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Kernan, trying to remember. "I remember now

there was a policeman. Decent young fellow, he seemed. How did

it happen at all?"

"It happened that you were peloothered, Tom," said Mr. Cunningham gravely.

"True bill," said Mr. Kernan, equally gravely.

"I suppose you squared the constable, Jack," said Mr. M'Coy.

Mr. Power did not relish the use of his Christian name. He was not

straight-laced, but he could not forget that Mr. M'Coy had recently

made a crusade in search of valises and portmanteaus to enable

Mrs. M'Coy to fulfil imaginary engagements in the country. More

than he resented the fact that he had been victimised he resented

such low playing of the game. He answered the question, therefore, as if Mr. Kernan had asked it.

The narrative made Mr. Kernan indignant. He was keenly conscious of his citizenship, wished to live with his city on terms

mutually honourable and resented any affront put upon him by

those whom he called country bumpkins.

"Is this what we pay rates for?" he asked. "To feed and clothe these

ignorant bostooms... and they're nothing else."

Mr. Cunningham laughed. He was a Castle official only during

office hours.

"How could they be anything else, Tom?" he said.

He assumed a thick, provincial accent and said in a tone of command:

"65, catch your cabbage!"

Everyone laughed. Mr. M'Coy, who wanted to enter the conversation by any door, pretended that he had never heard the

story. Mr. Cunningham said:

"It is supposed--they say, you know--to take place in the depot

where they get these thundering big country fellows, omdhauns,

you know, to drill. The sergeant makes them stand in a row against

the wall and hold up their plates."

He illustrated the story by grotesque gestures.

"At dinner, you know. Then he has a bloody big bowl of cabbage

before him on the table and a bloody big spoon like a shovel. He

takes up a wad of cabbage on the spoon and pegs it across the

room and the poor devils have to try and catch it on their plates:

65, catch your cabbage."

Everyone laughed again: but Mr. Kernan was somewhat indignant

still. He talked of writing a letter to the papers.

"These yahoos coming up here," he said, "think they can boss the

people. I needn't tell you, Martin, what kind of men they are."

Mr. Cunningham gave a qualified assent.

"It's like everything else in this world," he said. "You get some bad

ones and you get some good ones."

"O yes, you get some good ones, I admit," said Mr. Kernan, satisfied.

"It's better to have nothing to say to them," said Mr. M'Coy.

"That's

my opinion!"

Mrs. Kernan entered the room and, placing a tray on the table,

said:

"Help yourselves, gentlemen."

Mr. Power stood up to officiate, offering her his chair. She declined it, saying she was ironing downstairs, and, after having

exchanged a nod with Mr. Cunningham behind Mr. Power's back,

prepared to leave the room. Her husband called out to her:

"And have you nothing for me, duckie?"

"O, you! The back of my hand to you!" said Mrs. Kernan tartly.

Her husband called after her:

"Nothing for poor little hubby!"

He assumed such a comical face and voice that the distribution of

the bottles of stout took place amid general merriment.

The gentlemen drank from their glasses, set the glasses again on

the table and paused. Then Mr. Cunningham turned towards Mr.

Power and said casually:

"On Thursday night, you said, Jack "

"Thursday, yes," said Mr. Power.



"Righto!" said Mr. Cunningham promptly.

"We can meet in M'Auley's," said Mr. M'Coy. "That'll be the most convenient place."

"But we mustn't be late," said Mr. Power earnestly, "because it is sure to be crammed to the doors."

"We can meet at half-seven," said Mr. M'Coy.

"Righto!" said Mr. Cunningham.

"Half-seven at M'Auley's be it!"

There was a short silence. Mr. Kernan waited to see whether he would be taken into his friends' confidence. Then he asked:

"What's in the wind?"

"O, it's nothing," said Mr. Cunningham. "It's only a little matter

that we're arranging about for Thursday."

"The opera, is it?" said Mr. Kernan.

"No, no," said Mr. Cunningham in an evasive tone, "it's just a little... spiritual matter."

"O," said Mr. Kernan.

There was silence again. Then Mr. Power said, point blank:

"To tell you the truth, Tom, we're going to make a retreat."

"Yes, that's it," said Mr. Cunningham, "Jack and I and M'Coy here

--we're all going to wash the pot."

He uttered the metaphor with a certain homely energy and, encouraged by his own voice, proceeded:

"You see, we may as well all admit we're a nice collection of scoundrels, one and all. I say, one and all," he added with gruff

charity and turning to Mr. Power. "Own up now!"

"I own up," said Mr. Power.

"And I own up," said Mr. M'Coy.

"So we're going to wash the pot together," said Mr. Cunningham.

A thought seemed to strike him. He turned suddenly to the invalid

and said:

"D'ye know what, Tom, has just occurred to me? You might join in

and we'd have a four-handed reel."

"Good idea," said Mr. Power. "The four of us together."

Mr. Kernan was silent. The proposal conveyed very little meaning

to his mind, but, understanding that some spiritual agencies were

about to concern themselves on his behalf, he thought he owed it

to his dignity to show a stiff neck. He took no part in the conversation for a long while, but listened, with an air of calm

enmity, while his friends discussed the Jesuits.

"I haven't such a bad opinion of the Jesuits," he said, intervening at

length. "They're an educated order. I believe they mean well, too."

"They're the grandest order in the Church, Tom," said Mr.

Cunningham, with enthusiasm. "The General of the Jesuits stands

next to the Pope."

"There's no mistake about it," said Mr. M'Coy, "if you want a thing

well done and no flies about, you go to a Jesuit. They're the boyos

have influence. I'll tell you a case in point...."

"The Jesuits are a fine body of men," said Mr. Power.

"It's a curious thing," said Mr. Cunningham, "about the Jesuit

Order. Every other order of the Church had to be reformed at some

time or other but the Jesuit Order was never once reformed. It

never fell away."

"Is that so?" asked Mr. M'Coy.

"That's a fact," said Mr. Cunningham. "That's history."

"Look at their church, too," said Mr. Power. "Look at the congregation they have."

"The Jesuits cater for the upper classes," said Mr. M'Coy.

"Of course," said Mr. Power.

"Yes," said Mr. Kernan. "That's why I have a feeling for them. It's

some of those secular priests, ignorant, bumptious----"

"They're all good men," said Mr. Cunningham, "each in his own

way. The Irish priesthood is honoured all the world over."

"O yes," said Mr. Power.

"Not like some of the other priesthoods on the continent," said Mr.

M'Coy, "unworthy of the name."

"Perhaps you're right," said Mr. Kernan, relenting.

"Of course I'm right," said Mr. Cunningham. "I haven't been in the

world all this time and seen most sides of it without being a judge

of character."

The gentlemen drank again, one following another's example. Mr.

Kernan seemed to be weighing something in his mind. He was

impressed. He had a high opinion of Mr. Cunningham as a judge

of character and as a reader of faces. He asked for particulars.

"O, it's just a retreat, you know," said Mr. Cunningham. "Father

Purdon is giving it. It's for business men, you know."

"He won't be too hard on us, Tom," said Mr. Power persuasively.

"Father Purdon? Father Purdon?" said the invalid.

"O, you must know him, Tom," said Mr. Cunningham stoutly.

"Fine, jolly fellow! He's a man of the world like ourselves."

"Ah,... yes. I think I know him. Rather red face; tall."

"That's the man."

"And tell me, Martin.... Is he a good preacher?"

"Munno.... It's not exactly a sermon, you know. It's just kind of a

friendly talk, you know, in a common-sense way."

Mr. Kernan deliberated. Mr. M'Coy said:

"Father Tom Burke, that was the boy!"

"O, Father Tom Burke," said Mr. Cunningham, "that was a born

orator. Did you ever hear him, Tom?"

"Did I ever hear him!" said the invalid, nettled. "Rather! I heard

him...."

"And yet they say he wasn't much of a theologian," said Mr Cunningham.

"Is that so?" said Mr. M'Coy.

"O, of course, nothing wrong, you know. Only sometimes, they

say, he didn't preach what was quite orthodox."

"Ah!... he was a splendid man," said Mr. M'Coy.

"I heard him once," Mr. Kernan continued. "I forget the subject of

his discourse now. Crofton and I were in the back of the... pit, you

know... the----"

"The body," said Mr. Cunningham.

"Yes, in the back near the door. I forget now what.... O yes, it was

on the Pope, the late Pope. I remember it well. Upon my word it



was magnificent, the style of the oratory. And his voice!  
God!

hadn't he a voice! The Prisoner of the Vatican, he called  
him. I

remember Crofton saying to me when we came out----"

"But he's an Orangeman, Crofton, isn't he?" said Mr. Power.

"Course he is," said Mr. Kernan, "and a damned decent  
Orangeman too. We went into Butler's in Moore Street--faith,  
was

genuinely moved, tell you the God's truth--and I remember  
well

his very words. Kernan, he said, we worship at different  
altars, he

said, but our belief is the same. Struck me as very well put."

"There's a good deal in that," said Mr. Power. "There used  
always

be crowds of Protestants in the chapel where Father Tom  
was

preaching."

"There's not much difference between us," said Mr. M'Coy.

"We both believe in----"

He hesitated for a moment.

"... in the Redeemer. Only they don't believe in the Pope and in the

mother of God."

"But, of course," said Mr. Cunningham quietly and effectively,

"our religion is the religion, the old, original faith."

"Not a doubt of it," said Mr. Kernan warmly.

Mrs. Kernan came to the door of the bedroom and announced:

"Here's a visitor for you!"

"Who is it?"

"Mr. Fogarty."

"O, come in! come in!"

A pale, oval face came forward into the light. The arch of its fair

trailing moustache was repeated in the fair eyebrows looped above

pleasantly astonished eyes. Mr. Fogarty was a modest grocer. He

had failed in business in a licensed house in the city because his

financial condition had constrained him to tie himself to

second-class distillers and brewers. He had opened a small shop on

Glasnevin Road where, he flattered himself, his manners would

ingratiate him with the housewives of the district. He bore himself

with a certain grace, complimented little children and spoke with a

neat enunciation. He was not without culture.

Mr. Fogarty brought a gift with him, a half-pint of special whisky.

He inquired politely for Mr. Kernan, placed his gift on the table

and sat down with the company on equal terms. Mr. Kernan

appreciated the gift all the more since he was aware that there was

a small account for groceries unsettled between him and Mr. Fogarty. He said:

"I wouldn't doubt you, old man. Open that, Jack, will you?"

Mr. Power again officiated. Glasses were rinsed and five small

measures of whisky were poured out. This new influence enlivened the conversation. Mr. Fogarty, sitting on a small area of

the chair, was specially interested.

"Pope Leo XIII," said Mr. Cunningham, "was one of the lights of

the age. His great idea, you know, was the union of the Latin and

Greek Churches. That was the aim of his life."

"I often heard he was one of the most intellectual men in Europe,"

said Mr. Power. "I mean, apart from his being Pope."

"So he was," said Mr. Cunningham, "if not the most so. His motto,

you know, as Pope, was Lux upon Lux--Light upon Light."

"No, no," said Mr. Fogarty eagerly. "I think you're wrong there. It

was Lux in Tenebris, I think--Light in Darkness."

"O yes," said Mr. M'Coy, "Tenebrae."

"Allow me," said Mr. Cunningham positively, "it was Lux upon

Lux. And Pius IX his predecessor's motto was Crux upon Crux--

that is, Cross upon Cross--to show the difference between their

two pontificates."

The inference was allowed. Mr. Cunningham continued.

"Pope Leo, you know, was a great scholar and a poet."

"He had a strong face," said Mr. Kernan.

"Yes," said Mr. Cunningham. "He wrote Latin poetry."

"Is that so?" said Mr. Fogarty.

Mr. M'Coy tasted his whisky contentedly and shook his head with

a double intention, saying:

"That's no joke, I can tell you."

"We didn't learn that, Tom," said Mr. Power, following Mr.

M'Coy's example, "when we went to the penny-a-week school."

"There was many a good man went to the penny-a-week school

with a sod of turf under his oxter," said Mr. Kernan sententiously.

"The old system was the best: plain honest education. None of

your modern trumpery...."

"Quite right," said Mr. Power.

"No superfluities," said Mr. Fogarty.

He enunciated the word and then drank gravely.

"I remember reading," said Mr. Cunningham, "that one of Pope

Leo's poems was on the invention of the photograph--in Latin, of course."

"On the photograph!" exclaimed Mr. Kernan.

"Yes," said Mr. Cunningham.

He also drank from his glass.

"Well, you know," said Mr. M'Coy, "isn't the photograph wonderful when you come to think of it?"

"O, of course," said Mr. Power, "great minds can see things."

"As the poet says: Great minds are very near to madness," said Mr.

Fogarty.

Mr. Kernan seemed to be troubled in mind. He made an effort to

recall the Protestant theology on some thorny points and in the end

addressed Mr. Cunningham.

"Tell me, Martin," he said. "Weren't some of the popes--of course, not our present man, or his predecessor, but some of the old popes--not exactly ... you know... up to the knocker?"

There was a silence. Mr. Cunningham said

"O, of course, there were some bad lots... But the astonishing thing

is this. Not one of them, not the biggest drunkard, not the most...

out-and-out ruffian, not one of them ever preached ex cathedra a

word of false doctrine. Now isn't that an astonishing thing?"

"That is," said Mr. Kernan.

"Yes, because when the Pope speaks ex cathedra," Mr. Fogarty

explained, "he is infallible."

"Yes," said Mr. Cunningham.



"O, I know about the infallibility of the Pope. I remember I was

younger then.... Or was it that----?"

Mr. Fogarty interrupted. He took up the bottle and helped the

others to a little more. Mr. M'Coy, seeing that there was not enough to go round, pleaded that he had not finished his first

measure. The others accepted under protest. The light music of

whisky falling into glasses made an agreeable interlude.

"What's that you were saying, Tom?" asked Mr. M'Coy.

"Papal infallibility," said Mr. Cunningham, "that was the greatest

scene in the whole history of the Church."

"How was that, Martin?" asked Mr. Power.

Mr. Cunningham held up two thick fingers.

"In the sacred college, you know, of cardinals and archbishops and

bishops there were two men who held out against it while the

others were all for it. The whole conclave except these two was

unanimous. No! They wouldn't have it!"

"Ha!" said Mr. M'Coy.

"And they were a German cardinal by the name of Dolling... or

Dowling... or----"

"Dowling was no German, and that's a sure five," said Mr. Power,

laughing.

"Well, this great German cardinal, whatever his name was, was

one; and the other was John MacHale."

"What?" cried Mr. Kernan. "Is it John of Tuam?"

"Are you sure of that now?" asked Mr. Fogarty dubiously. "I thought it was some Italian or American."

"John of Tuam," repeated Mr. Cunningham, "was the man."

He drank and the other gentlemen followed his lead. Then he

resumed:

"There they were at it, all the cardinals and bishops and archbishops from all the ends of the earth and these two fighting

dog and devil until at last the Pope himself stood up and declared

infallibility a dogma of the Church ex cathedra. On the very moment John MacHale, who had been arguing and arguing against

it, stood up and shouted out with the voice of a lion:  
'Credo!'"

"I believe!" said Mr. Fogarty.

"Credo!" said Mr. Cunningham "That showed the faith he had. He

submitted the moment the Pope spoke."

"And what about Dowling?" asked Mr. M'Coy.

"The German cardinal wouldn't submit. He left the church."

Mr. Cunningham's words had built up the vast image of the church

in the minds of his hearers. His deep, raucous voice had thrilled

them as it uttered the word of belief and submission. When Mrs.

Kernan came into the room, drying her hands she came into a

solemn company. She did not disturb the silence, but leaned over

the rail at the foot of the bed.

"I once saw John MacHale," said Mr. Kernan, "and I'll never forget

it as long as I live."

He turned towards his wife to be confirmed.

"I often told you that?"

Mrs. Kernan nodded.

"It was at the unveiling of Sir John Gray's statue. Edmund Dwyer

Gray was speaking, blathering away, and here was this old fellow,

crabbed-looking old chap, looking at him from under his bushy

eyebrows."

Mr. Kernan knitted his brows and, lowering his head like an angry

bull, glared at his wife.

"God!" he exclaimed, resuming his natural face, "I never saw such

an eye in a man's head. It was as much as to say: I have you properly taped, my lad. He had an eye like a hawk."

"None of the Grays was any good," said Mr. Power.

There was a pause again. Mr. Power turned to Mrs. Kernan and

said with abrupt joviality:

"Well, Mrs. Kernan, we're going to make your man here a good

holy pious and God-fearing Roman Catholic."

He swept his arm round the company inclusively.

"We're all going to make a retreat together and confess our sins--

and God knows we want it badly."

"I don't mind," said Mr. Kernan, smiling a little nervously.

Mrs. Kernan thought it would be wiser to conceal her satisfaction.

So she said:

"I pity the poor priest that has to listen to your tale."

Mr. Kernan's expression changed.

"If he doesn't like it," he said bluntly, "he can... do the other thing.

I'll just tell him my little tale of woe. I'm not such a bad fellow----"

Mr. Cunningham intervened promptly.

"We'll all renounce the devil," he said, "together, not forgetting his

works and pomps."

"Get behind me, Satan!" said Mr. Fogarty, laughing and looking at  
the others.

Mr. Power said nothing. He felt completely out-generalled.  
But a  
pleased expression flickered across his face.

"All we have to do," said Mr. Cunningham, "is to stand up  
with  
lighted candles in our hands and renew our baptismal  
vows."

"O, don't forget the candle, Tom," said Mr. M'Coy, "whatever  
you  
do."

"What?" said Mr. Kernan. "Must I have a candle?"

"O yes," said Mr. Cunningham.

"No, damn it all," said Mr. Kernan sensibly, "I draw the line  
there.

I'll do the job right enough. I'll do the retreat business and

confession, and... all that business. But... no candles! No, damn it

all, I bar the candles!"

He shook his head with farcical gravity.

"Listen to that!" said his wife.

"I bar the candles," said Mr. Kernan, conscious of having created

an effect on his audience and continuing to shake his head to and

fro. "I bar the magic-lantern business."

Everyone laughed heartily.

"There's a nice Catholic for you!" said his wife.

"No candles!" repeated Mr. Kernan obdurately. "That's off!"

The transept of the Jesuit Church in Gardiner Street was almost



full; and still at every moment gentlemen entered from the side

door and, directed by the lay-brother, walked on tiptoe along the

aisles until they found seating accommodation. The gentlemen

were all well dressed and orderly. The light of the lamps of the

church fell upon an assembly of black clothes and white collars,

relieved here and there by tweeds, on dark mottled pillars of green

marble and on lugubrious canvases. The gentlemen sat in the

benches, having hitched their trousers slightly above their knees

and laid their hats in security. They sat well back and gazed

formally at the distant speck of red light which was suspended

before the high altar.

In one of the benches near the pulpit sat Mr. Cunningham and Mr.

Kernan. In the bench behind sat Mr. M'Coy alone: and in the bench

behind him sat Mr. Power and Mr. Fogarty. Mr. M'Coy had tried

unsuccessfully to find a place in the bench with the others, and,

when the party had settled down in the form of a quincunx, he had

tried unsuccessfully to make comic remarks. As these had not been

well received, he had desisted. Even he was sensible of the decorous atmosphere and even he began to respond to the religious

stimulus. In a whisper, Mr. Cunningham drew Mr. Kernan's attention to Mr. Harford, the moneylender, who sat some distance

off, and to Mr. Fanning, the registration agent and mayor maker of

the city, who was sitting immediately under the pulpit beside one

of the newly elected councillors of the ward. To the right sat old

Michael Grimes, the owner of three pawnbroker's shops, and Dan

Hogan's nephew, who was up for the job in the Town Clerk's office. Farther in front sat Mr. Hendrick, the chief reporter of The

Freeman's Journal, and poor O'Carroll, an old friend of Mr.

Kernan's, who had been at one time a considerable commercial

figure. Gradually, as he recognised familiar faces, Mr. Kernan

began to feel more at home. His hat, which had been rehabilitated

by his wife, rested upon his knees. Once or twice he pulled down

his cuffs with one hand while he held the brim of his hat lightly,

but firmly, with the other hand.

A powerful-looking figure, the upper part of which was draped

with a white surplice, was observed to be struggling into the pulpit.

Simultaneously the congregation unsettled, produced

handkerchiefs and knelt upon them with care. Mr. Kernan

followed the general example. The priest's figure now stood

upright in the pulpit, two-thirds of its bulk, crowned by a massive

red face, appearing above the balustrade.

Father Purdon knelt down, turned towards the red speck of light

and, covering his face with his hands, prayed. After an interval, he

uncovered his face and rose. The congregation rose also and settled again on its benches. Mr. Kernan restored his hat to its

original position on his knee and presented an attentive face to the

preacher. The preacher turned back each wide sleeve of his surplice with an elaborate large gesture and slowly surveyed the

array of faces. Then he said:

"For the children of this world are wiser in their generation than

the children of light. Wherefore make unto yourselves friends out

of the mammon of iniquity so that when you die they may receive

you into everlasting dwellings."

Father Purdon developed the text with resonant assurance. It was

one of the most difficult texts in all the Scriptures, he said, to

interpret properly. It was a text which might seem to the casual

observer at variance with the lofty morality elsewhere preached by

Jesus Christ. But, he told his hearers, the text had seemed to him

specially adapted for the guidance of those whose lot it was to lead

the life of the world and who yet wished to lead that life not in the

manner of worldlings. It was a text for business men and

professional men. Jesus Christ with His divine understanding of

every cranny of our human nature, understood that all men were

not called to the religious life, that by far the vast majority were

forced to live in the world, and, to a certain extent, for the world:

and in this sentence He designed to give them a word of counsel,

setting before them as exemplars in the religious life those very

worshippers of Mammon who were of all men the least solicitous

in matters religious.

He told his hearers that he was there that evening for no terrifying,

no extravagant purpose; but as a man of the world speaking to his

fellow-men. He came to speak to business men and he would

speak to them in a businesslike way. If he might use the metaphor,

he said, he was their spiritual accountant; and he wished each and

every one of his hearers to open his books, the books of his spiritual life, and see if they tallied accurately with conscience.

Jesus Christ was not a hard taskmaster. He understood our little

failings, understood the weakness of our poor fallen nature, understood the temptations of this life. We might have had, we all

had from time to time, our temptations: we might have, we all had,

our failings. But one thing only, he said, he would ask of his hearers. And that was: to be straight and manly with God. If their

accounts tallied in every point to say:

"Well, I have verified my accounts. I find all well."

But if, as might happen, there were some discrepancies, to admit

the truth, to be frank and say like a man:

"Well, I have looked into my accounts. I find this wrong and this

wrong. But, with God's grace, I will rectify this and this. I will set

right my accounts."

## THE DEAD

LILY, the caretaker's daughter, was literally run off her feet.

Hardly had she brought one gentleman into the little pantry behind

the office on the ground floor and helped him off with his overcoat

than the wheezy hall-door bell clanged again and she had to

scamper along the bare hallway to let in another guest. It was well

for her she had not to attend to the ladies also. But Miss Kate and

Miss Julia had thought of that and had converted the bathroom

upstairs into a ladies' dressing-room. Miss Kate and Miss Julia

were there, gossiping and laughing and fussing, walking after each

other to the head of the stairs, peering down over the banisters and

calling down to Lily to ask her who had come.

It was always a great affair, the Misses Morkan's annual dance.

Everybody who knew them came to it, members of the family, old

friends of the family, the members of Julia's choir, any of Kate's

pupils that were grown up enough, and even some of Mary Jane's

pupils too. Never once had it fallen flat. For years and years it had

gone off in splendid style, as long as anyone could remember; ever



since Kate and Julia, after the death of their brother Pat, had left

the house in Stoney Batter and taken Mary Jane, their only niece,

to live with them in the dark, gaunt house on Usher's Island, the

upper part of which they had rented from Mr. Fulham, the corn-factor on the ground floor. That was a good thirty years ago if

it was a day. Mary Jane, who was then a little girl in short clothes,

was now the main prop of the household, for she had the organ in

Haddington Road. She had been through the Academy and gave a

pupils' concert every year in the upper room of the Antient Concert

Rooms. Many of her pupils belonged to the better-class families on

the Kingstown and Dalkey line. Old as they were, her aunts also

did their share. Julia, though she was quite grey, was still the

leading soprano in Adam and Eve's, and Kate, being too feeble to

go about much, gave music lessons to beginners on the old square

piano in the back room. Lily, the caretaker's daughter, did housemaid's work for them. Though their life was modest, they

believed in eating well; the best of everything: diamond-bone

sirloins, three-shilling tea and the best bottled stout. But Lily seldom made a mistake in the orders, so that she got on well with

her three mistresses. They were fussy, that was all. But the only

thing they would not stand was back answers.

Of course, they had good reason to be fussy on such a night. And

then it was long after ten o'clock and yet there was no sign of

Gabriel and his wife. Besides they were dreadfully afraid that

Freddy Malins might turn up screwed. They would not wish for

worlds that any of Mary Jane's pupils should see him under the

influence; and when he was like that it was sometimes very hard to

manage him. Freddy Malins always came late, but they wondered

what could be keeping Gabriel: and that was what brought them

every two minutes to the banisters to ask Lily had Gabriel or Freddy come.

"O, Mr. Conroy," said Lily to Gabriel when she opened the door

for him, "Miss Kate and Miss Julia thought you were never coming. Good-night, Mrs. Conroy."

"I'll engage they did," said Gabriel, "but they forget that my wife

here takes three mortal hours to dress herself."

He stood on the mat, scraping the snow from his goloshes, while

Lily led his wife to the foot of the stairs and called out:

"Miss Kate, here's Mrs. Conroy."

Kate and Julia came toddling down the dark stairs at once.  
Both of

them kissed Gabriel's wife, said she must be perished alive,  
and

asked was Gabriel with her.

"Here I am as right as the mail, Aunt Kate! Go on up. I'll  
follow,"

called out Gabriel from the dark.

He continued scraping his feet vigorously while the three  
women

went upstairs, laughing, to the ladies' dressing-room. A light  
fringe

of snow lay like a cape on the shoulders of his overcoat and  
like

toecaps on the toes of his goloshes; and, as the buttons of  
his

overcoat slipped with a squeaking noise through the

snow-stiffened frieze, a cold, fragrant air from out-of-doors

escaped from crevices and folds.

"Is it snowing again, Mr. Conroy?" asked Lily.

She had preceded him into the pantry to help him off with his

overcoat. Gabriel smiled at the three syllables she had given his

surname and glanced at her. She was a slim; growing girl, pale in

complexion and with hay-coloured hair. The gas in the pantry

made her look still paler. Gabriel had known her when she was a

child and used to sit on the lowest step nursing a rag doll.

"Yes, Lily," he answered, "and I think we're in for a night of it."

He looked up at the pantry ceiling, which was shaking with the

stamping and shuffling of feet on the floor above, listened for a

moment to the piano and then glanced at the girl, who was folding

his overcoat carefully at the end of a shelf.

"Tell me. Lily," he said in a friendly tone, "do you still go to school?"

"O no, sir," she answered. "I'm done schooling this year and more."

"O, then," said Gabriel gaily, "I suppose we'll be going to your

wedding one of these fine days with your young man, eh? "

The girl glanced back at him over her shoulder and said with great

bitterness:

"The men that is now is only all palaver and what they can get out

of you."

Gabriel coloured, as if he felt he had made a mistake and, without

looking at her, kicked off his goloshes and flicked actively with his

muffler at his patent-leather shoes.

He was a stout, tallish young man. The high colour of his cheeks

pushed upwards even to his forehead, where it scattered itself in a

few formless patches of pale red; and on his hairless face  
there

scintillated restlessly the polished lenses and the bright gilt  
rims of

the glasses which screened his delicate and restless eyes.  
His

glossy black hair was parted in the middle and brushed in a  
long

curve behind his ears where it curled slightly beneath the  
groove

left by his hat.

When he had flicked lustre into his shoes he stood up and  
pulled

his waistcoat down more tightly on his plump body. Then he  
took

a coin rapidly from his pocket.

"O Lily," he said, thrusting it into her hands, "it's  
Christmastime,

isn't it? Just... here's a little...."

He walked rapidly towards the door.

"O no, sir!" cried the girl, following him. "Really, sir, I  
wouldn't

take it."

"Christmas-time! Christmas-time!" said Gabriel, almost trotting to

the stairs and waving his hand to her in deprecation.

The girl, seeing that he had gained the stairs, called out after him:

"Well, thank you, sir."

He waited outside the drawing-room door until the waltz should

finish, listening to the skirts that swept against it and to the



shuffling of feet. He was still discomposed by the girl's bitter and

sudden retort. It had cast a gloom over him which he tried to dispel

by arranging his cuffs and the bows of his tie. He then took from

his waistcoat pocket a little paper and glanced at the headings he

had made for his speech. He was undecided about the lines from

Robert Browning, for he feared they would be above the heads of

his hearers. Some quotation that they would recognise from

Shakespeare or from the Melodies would be better. The indelicate

clacking of the men's heels and the shuffling of their soles

reminded him that their grade of culture differed from his. He

would only make himself ridiculous by quoting poetry to them

which they could not understand. They would think that he was

airing his superior education. He would fail with them just as he

had failed with the girl in the pantry. He had taken up a wrong

tone. His whole speech was a mistake from first to last, an utter

failure.

Just then his aunts and his wife came out of the ladies' dressing-room. His aunts were two small, plainly dressed old women. Aunt Julia was an inch or so the taller. Her hair, drawn

low over the tops of her ears, was grey; and grey also, with darker

shadows, was her large flaccid face. Though she was stout in build

and stood erect, her slow eyes and parted lips gave her the appearance of a woman who did not know where she was or where

she was going. Aunt Kate was more vivacious. Her face, healthier

than her sister's, was all puckers and creases, like a shrivelled red

apple, and her hair, braided in the same old-fashioned way, had not

lost its ripe nut colour.

They both kissed Gabriel frankly. He was their favourite nephew

the son of their dead elder sister, Ellen, who had married T. J.

Conroy of the Port and Docks.

"Gretta tells me you're not going to take a cab back to Monkstown

tonight, Gabriel," said Aunt Kate.

"No," said Gabriel, turning to his wife, "we had quite enough of

that last year, hadn't we? Don't you remember, Aunt Kate, what a

cold Gretta got out of it? Cab windows rattling all the way, and the

east wind blowing in after we passed Merrion. Very jolly it was.

Gretta caught a dreadful cold."

Aunt Kate frowned severely and nodded her head at every word.

"Quite right, Gabriel, quite right," she said. "You can't be too careful."

"But as for Gretta there," said Gabriel, "she'd walk home in the

snow if she were let."

Mrs. Conroy laughed.

"Don't mind him, Aunt Kate," she said. "He's really an awful bother, what with green shades for Tom's eyes at night and making

him do the dumb-bells, and forcing Eva to eat the stirabout. The

poor child! And she simply hates the sight of it!... O, but you'll

never guess what he makes me wear now!"

She broke out into a peal of laughter and glanced at her husband,

whose admiring and happy eyes had been wandering from her

dress to her face and hair. The two aunts laughed heartily, too, for

Gabriel's solicitude was a standing joke with them.

"Goloshes!" said Mrs. Conroy. "That's the latest. Whenever it's wet

underfoot I must put on my galoshes. Tonight even, he wanted me

to put them on, but I wouldn't. The next thing he'll buy me will be

a diving suit."

Gabriel laughed nervously and patted his tie reassuringly, while

Aunt Kate nearly doubled herself, so heartily did she enjoy the

joke. The smile soon faded from Aunt Julia's face and her

mirthless eyes were directed towards her nephew's face. After a

pause she asked:

"And what are goloshes, Gabriel?"

"Goloshes, Julia!" exclaimed her sister "Goodness me, don't you

know what goloshes are? You wear them over your... over your

boots, Gretta, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Conroy. "Guttapercha things. We both have a pair

now. Gabriel says everyone wears them on the Continent."

"O, on the Continent," murmured Aunt Julia, nodding her head

slowly.

Gabriel knitted his brows and said, as if he were slightly angered:

"It's nothing very wonderful, but Gretta thinks it very funny because she says the word reminds her of Christy Minstrels."

"But tell me, Gabriel," said Aunt Kate, with brisk tact. "Of course,

you've seen about the room. Gretta was saying..."

"O, the room is all right," replied Gabriel. "I've taken one in the

Gresham."

"To be sure," said Aunt Kate, "by far the best thing to do. And the

children, Gretta, you're not anxious about them?"

"O, for one night," said Mrs. Conroy. "Besides, Bessie will look

after them."

"To be sure," said Aunt Kate again. "What a comfort it is to have a

girl like that, one you can depend on! There's that Lily, I'm sure I

don't know what has come over her lately. She's not the girl she

was at all."

Gabriel was about to ask his aunt some questions on this point, but

she broke off suddenly to gaze after her sister, who had wandered

down the stairs and was craning her neck over the banisters.

"Now, I ask you," she said almost testily, "where is Julia going?

Julia! Julia! Where are you going?"

Julia, who had gone half way down one flight, came back and

announced blandly:

"Here's Freddy."

At the same moment a clapping of hands and a final flourish of the

pianist told that the waltz had ended. The drawing-room door was

opened from within and some couples came out. Aunt Kate drew

Gabriel aside hurriedly and whispered into his ear:

"Slip down, Gabriel, like a good fellow and see if he's all right, and

don't let him up if he's screwed. I'm sure he's screwed. I'm sure he

is."

Gabriel went to the stairs and listened over the banisters. He could

hear two persons talking in the pantry. Then he recognised Freddy

Malins' laugh. He went down the stairs noisily.

"It's such a relief," said Aunt Kate to Mrs. Conroy, "that Gabriel is



here. I always feel easier in my mind when he's here.... Julia, there's Miss Daly and Miss Power will take some refreshment.

Thanks for your beautiful waltz, Miss Daly. It made lovely time."

A tall wizen-faced man, with a stiff grizzled moustache and swarthy skin, who was passing out with his partner, said:

"And may we have some refreshment, too, Miss Morkan?"

"Julia," said Aunt Kate summarily, "and here's Mr. Browne and

Miss Furlong. Take them in, Julia, with Miss Daly and Miss Power."

"I'm the man for the ladies," said Mr. Browne, pursing his lips until

his moustache bristled and smiling in all his wrinkles. "You know,

Miss Morkan, the reason they are so fond of me is----"

He did not finish his sentence, but, seeing that Aunt Kate was out

of earshot, at once led the three young ladies into the back room.

The middle of the room was occupied by two square tables placed

end to end, and on these Aunt Julia and the caretaker were

straightening and smoothing a large cloth. On the sideboard were

arrayed dishes and plates, and glasses and bundles of knives and

forks and spoons. The top of the closed square piano served also as

a sideboard for viands and sweets. At a smaller sideboard in one

corner two young men were standing, drinking hop-bitters.

Mr. Browne led his charges thither and invited them all, in jest, to

some ladies' punch, hot, strong and sweet. As they said they never

took anything strong, he opened three bottles of lemonade for

them. Then he asked one of the young men to move aside, and,

taking hold of the decanter, filled out for himself a goodly measure

of whisky. The young men eyed him respectfully while he took a

trial sip.

"God help me," he said, smiling, "it's the doctor's orders."

His wizened face broke into a broader smile, and the three young

ladies laughed in musical echo to his pleasantry, swaying their

bodies to and fro, with nervous jerks of their shoulders. The

boldest said:

"O, now, Mr. Browne, I'm sure the doctor never ordered anything

of the kind."

Mr. Browne took another sip of his whisky and said, with sidling

mimicry:

"Well, you see, I'm like the famous Mrs. Cassidy, who is reported

to have said: 'Now, Mary Grimes, if I don't take it, make me take it,

for I feel I want it."

His hot face had leaned forward a little too confidentially and he

had assumed a very low Dublin accent so that the young ladies,

with one instinct, received his speech in silence. Miss Furlong,

who was one of Mary Jane's pupils, asked Miss Daly what was the

name of the pretty waltz she had played; and Mr. Browne, seeing

that he was ignored, turned promptly to the two young men who

were more appreciative.

A red-faced young woman, dressed in pansy, came into the room,

excitedly clapping her hands and crying:

"Quadrilles! Quadrilles!"

Close on her heels came Aunt Kate, crying:

"Two gentlemen and three ladies, Mary Jane!"

"O, here's Mr. Bergin and Mr. Kerrigan," said Mary Jane. "Mr. Kerrigan, will you take Miss Power? Miss Furlong, may I get you a partner, Mr. Bergin. O, that'll just do now."

"Three ladies, Mary Jane," said Aunt Kate.

The two young gentlemen asked the ladies if they might have the pleasure, and Mary Jane turned to Miss Daly.

"O, Miss Daly, you're really awfully good, after playing for the last two dances, but really we're so short of ladies tonight."

"I don't mind in the least, Miss Morkan."

"But I've a nice partner for you, Mr. Bartell D'Arcy, the tenor. I'll get him to sing later on. All Dublin is raving about him."

"Lovely voice, lovely voice!" said Aunt Kate.

As the piano had twice begun the prelude to the first figure Mary

Jane led her recruits quickly from the room. They had hardly gone

when Aunt Julia wandered slowly into the room, looking behind

her at something.

"What is the matter, Julia?" asked Aunt Kate anxiously. "Who is

it?"

Julia, who was carrying in a column of table-napkins, turned to her

sister and said, simply, as if the question had surprised her:

"It's only Freddy, Kate, and Gabriel with him."

In fact right behind her Gabriel could be seen piloting Freddy

Malins across the landing. The latter, a young man of about forty,

was of Gabriel's size and build, with very round shoulders. His face

was fleshy and pallid, touched with colour only at the thick

hanging lobes of his ears and at the wide wings of his nose. He had

coarse features, a blunt nose, a convex and receding brow, tumid

and protruded lips. His heavy-lidded eyes and the disorder of his

scanty hair made him look sleepy. He was laughing heartily in a

high key at a story which he had been telling Gabriel on the stairs

and at the same time rubbing the knuckles of his left fist backwards and forwards into his left eye.

"Good-evening, Freddy," said Aunt Julia.

Freddy Malins bade the Misses Morkan good-evening in what seemed an offhand fashion by reason of the habitual catch in his

voice and then, seeing that Mr. Browne was grinning at him from

the sideboard, crossed the room on rather shaky legs and began to

repeat in an undertone the story he had just told to Gabriel.

"He's not so bad, is he?" said Aunt Kate to Gabriel.

Gabriel's brows were dark but he raised them quickly and

answered:

"O, no, hardly noticeable."

"Now, isn't he a terrible fellow!" she said. "And his poor mother

made him take the pledge on New Year's Eve. But come on, Gabriel, into the drawing-room."

Before leaving the room with Gabriel she signalled to Mr. Browne

by frowning and shaking her forefinger in warning to and fro. Mr.

Browne nodded in answer and, when she had gone, said to Freddy

Malins:

"Now, then, Teddy, I'm going to fill you out a good glass of lemonade just to buck you up."

Freddy Malins, who was nearing the climax of his story, waved the

offer aside impatiently but Mr. Browne, having first called Freddy



Malins' attention to a disarray in his dress, filled out and handed

him a full glass of lemonade. Freddy Malins' left hand accepted the

glass mechanically, his right hand being engaged in the

mechanical readjustment of his dress. Mr. Browne, whose face

was once more wrinkling with mirth, poured out for himself a

glass of whisky while Freddy Malins exploded, before he had well

reached the climax of his story, in a kink of high-pitched

bronchitic laughter and, setting down his untasted and overflowing

glass, began to rub the knuckles of his left fist backwards and

forwards into his left eye, repeating words of his last phrase as

well as his fit of laughter would allow him.

Gabriel could not listen while Mary Jane was playing her Academy

piece, full of runs and difficult passages, to the hushed

drawing-room. He liked music but the piece she was playing had

no melody for him and he doubted whether it had any melody for

the other listeners, though they had begged Mary Jane to play

something. Four young men, who had come from the refreshment-room to stand in the doorway at the sound of the

piano, had gone away quietly in couples after a few minutes. The

only persons who seemed to follow the music were Mary Jane

herself, her hands racing along the key-board or lifted from it at

the pauses like those of a priestess in momentary imprecation, and

Aunt Kate standing at her elbow to turn the page.

Gabriel's eyes, irritated by the floor, which glittered with beeswax

under the heavy chandelier, wandered to the wall above the piano.

A picture of the balcony scene in Romeo and Juliet hung there and

beside it was a picture of the two murdered princes in the Tower

which Aunt Julia had worked in red, blue and brown wools when

she was a girl. Probably in the school they had gone to as girls that

kind of work had been taught for one year. His mother had worked

for him as a birthday present a waistcoat of purple tabinet, with

little foxes' heads upon it, lined with brown satin and having round

mulberry buttons. It was strange that his mother had had no musical talent though Aunt Kate used to call her the brains carrier

of the Morkan family. Both she and Julia had always seemed a

little proud of their serious and matronly sister. Her photograph

stood before the pierglass. She held an open book on her knees and

was pointing out something in it to Constantine who, dressed in a

man-o-war suit, lay at her feet. It was she who had chosen the

name of her sons for she was very sensible of the dignity of family

life. Thanks to her, Constantine was now senior curate in Balbrigan and, thanks to her, Gabriel himself had taken his degree in the Royal University. A shadow passed over his face as he remembered her sullen opposition to his marriage. Some slighting phrases she had used still rankled in his memory; she had once spoken of Gretta as being country cute and that was not true of Gretta at all. It was Gretta who had nursed her during all her last long illness in their house at Monkstown.

He knew that Mary Jane must be near the end of her piece for she was playing again the opening melody with runs of scales after every bar and while he waited for the end the resentment died down in his heart. The piece ended with a trill of octaves in the treble and a final deep octave in the bass. Great applause greeted

Mary Jane as, blushing and rolling up her music nervously, she

escaped from the room. The most vigorous clapping came from

the four young men in the doorway who had gone away to the

refreshment-room at the beginning of the piece but had come back

when the piano had stopped.

Lancers were arranged. Gabriel found himself partnered with Miss

Ivors. She was a frank-mannered talkative young lady, with a

freckled face and prominent brown eyes. She did not wear a

low-cut bodice and the large brooch which was fixed in the front

of her collar bore on it an Irish device and motto.

When they had taken their places she said abruptly:

"I have a crow to pluck with you."

"With me?" said Gabriel.

She nodded her head gravely.

"What is it?" asked Gabriel, smiling at her solemn manner.

"Who is G. C.?" answered Miss Ivors, turning her eyes upon him.

Gabriel coloured and was about to knit his brows, as if he did not

understand, when she said bluntly:

"O, innocent Amy! I have found out that you write for The Daily

Express. Now, aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

"Why should I be ashamed of myself?" asked Gabriel, blinking his

eyes and trying to smile.

"Well, I'm ashamed of you," said Miss Ivors frankly. "To say you'd

write for a paper like that. I didn't think you were a West Briton."

A look of perplexity appeared on Gabriel's face. It was true that he

wrote a literary column every Wednesday in The Daily Express,

for which he was paid fifteen shillings. But that did not make him

a West Briton surely. The books he received for review were

almost more welcome than the paltry cheque. He loved to feel the

covers and turn over the pages of newly printed books. Nearly

every day when his teaching in the college was ended he used to

wander down the quays to the second-hand booksellers, to

Hickey's on Bachelor's Walk, to Web's or Massey's on Aston's

Quay, or to O'Clohissey's in the bystreet. He did not know how to

meet her charge. He wanted to say that literature was above

politics. But they were friends of many years' standing and their

careers had been parallel, first at the University and then as

teachers: he could not risk a grandiose phrase with her. He

continued blinking his eyes and trying to smile and murmured

lame that he saw nothing political in writing reviews of books.

When their turn to cross had come he was still perplexed and

inattentive. Miss Ivors promptly took his hand in a warm grasp and

said in a soft friendly tone:

"Of course, I was only joking. Come, we cross now."

When they were together again she spoke of the University question and Gabriel felt more at ease. A friend of hers had shown

her his review of Browning's poems. That was how she had found

out the secret: but she liked the review immensely. Then she said

suddenly:

"O, Mr. Conroy, will you come for an excursion to the Aran Isles

this summer? We're going to stay there a whole month. It will be

splendid out in the Atlantic. You ought to come. Mr. Clancy is



coming, and Mr. Kilkelly and Kathleen Kearney. It would be splendid for Gretta too if she'd come. She's from Connacht, isn't she?"

"Her people are," said Gabriel shortly.

"But you will come, won't you?" said Miss Ivors, laying her arm

hand eagerly on his arm.

"The fact is," said Gabriel, "I have just arranged to go----"

"Go where?" asked Miss Ivors.

"Well, you know, every year I go for a cycling tour with some fellows and so----"

"But where?" asked Miss Ivors.

"Well, we usually go to France or Belgium or perhaps Germany,"

said Gabriel awkwardly.

"And why do you go to France and Belgium," said Miss Ivors,

"instead of visiting your own land?"

"Well," said Gabriel, "it's partly to keep in touch with the languages and partly for a change."

"And haven't you your own language to keep in touch with-- Irish?" asked Miss Ivors.

"Well," said Gabriel, "if it comes to that, you know, Irish is not my language."

Their neighbours had turned to listen to the cross-examination.

Gabriel glanced right and left nervously and tried to keep his good

humour under the ordeal which was making a blush invade his

forehead.

"And haven't you your own land to visit," continued Miss Ivors,

"that you know nothing of, your own people, and your own country?"

"O, to tell you the truth," retorted Gabriel suddenly, "I'm sick of my

own country, sick of it!"

"Why?" asked Miss Ivors.

Gabriel did not answer for his retort had heated him.

"Why?" repeated Miss Ivors.

They had to go visiting together and, as he had not answered her,

Miss Ivors said warmly:

"Of course, you've no answer."

Gabriel tried to cover his agitation by taking part in the dance with

great energy. He avoided her eyes for he had seen a sour expression on her face. But when they met in the long chain he

was surprised to feel his hand firmly pressed. She looked at him

from under her brows for a moment quizzically until he smiled.

Then, just as the chain was about to start again, she stood on tiptoe

and whispered into his ear:

"West Briton!"

When the lancers were over Gabriel went away to a remote corner

of the room where Freddy Malins' mother was sitting. She was a

stout feeble old woman with white hair. Her voice had a catch in it

like her son's and she stuttered slightly. She had been told that

Freddy had come and that he was nearly all right. Gabriel asked

her whether she had had a good crossing. She lived with her

married daughter in Glasgow and came to Dublin on a visit once a

year. She answered placidly that she had had a beautiful crossing

and that the captain had been most attentive to her. She spoke also

of the beautiful house her daughter kept in Glasgow, and of all the

friends they had there. While her tongue rambled on Gabriel tried

to banish from his mind all memory of the unpleasant incident

with Miss Ivors. Of course the girl or woman, or whatever she was,

was an enthusiast but there was a time for all things. Perhaps he

ought not to have answered her like that. But she had no right to

call him a West Briton before people, even in joke. She had tried

to make him ridiculous before people, heckling him and staring at

him with her rabbit's eyes.

He saw his wife making her way towards him through the waltzing

couples. When she reached him she said into his ear:

"Gabriel. Aunt Kate wants to know won't you carve the goose as

usual. Miss Daly will carve the ham and I'll do the pudding."

"All right," said Gabriel.

"She's sending in the younger ones first as soon as this waltz is

over so that we'll have the table to ourselves."

"Were you dancing?" asked Gabriel.

"Of course I was. Didn't you see me? What row had you with Molly Ivors?"

"No row. Why? Did she say so?"

"Something like that. I'm trying to get that Mr. D'Arcy to sing. He's full of conceit, I think."

"There was no row," said Gabriel moodily, "only she wanted me to

go for a trip to the west of Ireland and I said I wouldn't."

His wife clasped her hands excitedly and gave a little jump.

"O, do go, Gabriel," she cried. "I'd love to see Galway again."

"You can go if you like," said Gabriel coldly.

She looked at him for a moment, then turned to Mrs. Malins and

said:

"There's a nice husband for you, Mrs. Malins."

While she was threading her way back across the room Mrs.

Malins, without adverting to the interruption, went on to tell

Gabriel what beautiful places there were in Scotland and beautiful

scenery. Her son-in-law brought them every year to the lakes and

they used to go fishing. Her son-in-law was a splendid fisher. One

day he caught a beautiful big fish and the man in the hotel cooked

it for their dinner.

Gabriel hardly heard what she said. Now that supper was coming

near he began to think again about his speech and about the

quotation. When he saw Freddy Malins coming across the room to

visit his mother Gabriel left the chair free for him and retired into

the embrasure of the window. The room had already cleared and

from the back room came the clatter of plates and knives. Those

who still remained in the drawing room seemed tired of dancing

and were conversing quietly in little groups. Gabriel's warm trembling fingers tapped the cold pane of the window. How cool it

must be outside! How pleasant it would be to walk out alone, first

along by the river and then through the park! The snow would be

lying on the branches of the trees and forming a bright cap on the

top of the Wellington Monument. How much more pleasant it

would be there than at the supper-table!

He ran over the headings of his speech: Irish hospitality, sad memories, the Three Graces, Paris, the quotation from Browning.



He repeated to himself a phrase he had written in his review: "One

feels that one is listening to a thought- tormented music."  
Miss

Ivors had praised the review. Was she sincere? Had she really any

life of her own behind all her propagandism? There had never

been any ill-feeling between them until that night. It unnerved him

to think that she would be at the supper-table, looking up at him

while he spoke with her critical quizzing eyes. Perhaps she would

not be sorry to see him fail in his speech. An idea came into his

mind and gave him courage. He would say, alluding to Aunt Kate

and Aunt Julia: "Ladies and Gentlemen, the generation which is

now on the wane among us may have had its faults but for my part

I think it had certain qualities of hospitality, of humour, of humanity, which the new and very serious and hypereducated

generation that is growing up around us seems to me to lack." Very

good: that was one for Miss Ivors. What did he care that his aunts

were only two ignorant old women?

A murmur in the room attracted his attention. Mr. Browne was

advancing from the door, gallantly escorting Aunt Julia, who

leaned upon his arm, smiling and hanging her head. An irregular

musketry of applause escorted her also as far as the piano and

then, as Mary Jane seated herself on the stool, and Aunt Julia, no

longer smiling, half turned so as to pitch her voice fairly into the

room, gradually ceased. Gabriel recognised the prelude. It was that

of an old song of Aunt Julia's--Arrayed for the Bridal. Her voice,

strong and clear in tone, attacked with great spirit the runs which

embellish the air and though she sang very rapidly she did not miss

even the smallest of the grace notes. To follow the voice,  
without

looking at the singer's face, was to feel and share the  
excitement of

swift and secure flight. Gabriel applauded loudly with all the  
others at the close of the song and loud applause was borne  
in

from the invisible supper-table. It sounded so genuine that a  
little

colour struggled into Aunt Julia's face as she bent to replace  
in the

music-stand the old leather-bound songbook that had her  
initials

on the cover. Freddy Malins, who had listened with his head  
perched sideways to hear her better, was still applauding  
when

everyone else had ceased and talking animatedly to his  
mother

who nodded her head gravely and slowly in acquiescence.  
At last,

when he could clap no more, he stood up suddenly and  
hurried

across the room to Aunt Julia whose hand he seized and  
held in

both his hands, shaking it when words failed him or the catch in

his voice proved too much for him.

"I was just telling my mother," he said, "I never heard you sing so

well, never. No, I never heard your voice so good as it is tonight.

Now! Would you believe that now? That's the truth. Upon my

word and honour that's the truth. I never heard your voice sound so

fresh and so... so clear and fresh, never."

Aunt Julia smiled broadly and murmured something about compliments as she released her hand from his grasp. Mr. Browne

extended his open hand towards her and said to those who were

near him in the manner of a showman introducing a prodigy to an

audience:

"Miss Julia Morkan, my latest discovery!"

He was laughing very heartily at this himself when Freddy Malins

turned to him and said:

"Well, Browne, if you're serious you might make a worse discovery. All I can say is I never heard her sing half so well as

long as I am coming here. And that's the honest truth."

"Neither did I," said Mr. Browne. "I think her voice has greatly

improved."

Aunt Julia shrugged her shoulders and said with meek pride:

"Thirty years ago I hadn't a bad voice as voices go."

"I often told Julia," said Aunt Kate emphatically, "that she was

simply thrown away in that choir. But she never would be said by

me."

She turned as if to appeal to the good sense of the others against a

refractory child while Aunt Julia gazed in front of her, a  
vague

smile of reminiscence playing on her face.

"No," continued Aunt Kate, "she wouldn't be said or led by  
anyone,

slaving there in that choir night and day, night and day. Six  
o'clock

on Christmas morning! And all for what?"

"Well, isn't it for the honour of God, Aunt Kate?" asked Mary  
Jane,

twisting round on the piano-stool and smiling.

Aunt Kate turned fiercely on her niece and said:

"I know all about the honour of God, Mary Jane, but I think  
it's not

at all honourable for the pope to turn out the women out of  
the

choirs that have slaved there all their lives and put little

whipper-snappers of boys over their heads. I suppose it is  
for the

good of the Church if the pope does it. But it's not just, Mary  
Jane,

and it's not right."

She had worked herself into a passion and would have continued

in defence of her sister for it was a sore subject with her but Mary

Jane, seeing that all the dancers had come back, intervened pacifically:

"Now, Aunt Kate, you're giving scandal to Mr. Browne who is of

the other persuasion."

Aunt Kate turned to Mr. Browne, who was grinning at this allusion

to his religion, and said hastily:

"O, I don't question the pope's being right. I'm only a stupid old

woman and I wouldn't presume to do such a thing. But there's such

a thing as common everyday politeness and gratitude. And if I

were in Julia's place I'd tell that Father Healey straight up to his

face..."

"And besides, Aunt Kate," said Mary Jane, "we really are all hungry and when we are hungry we are all very quarrelsome."

"And when we are thirsty we are also quarrelsome," added Mr.

Browne.

"So that we had better go to supper," said Mary Jane, "and finish

the discussion afterwards."

On the landing outside the drawing-room Gabriel found his wife

and Mary Jane trying to persuade Miss Ivors to stay for supper. But

Miss Ivors, who had put on her hat and was buttoning her cloak,

would not stay. She did not feel in the least hungry and she had

already overstayed her time.

"But only for ten minutes, Molly," said Mrs. Conroy. "That won't



delay you."

"To take a pick itself," said Mary Jane, "after all your dancing."

"I really couldn't," said Miss Ivors.

"I am afraid you didn't enjoy yourself at all," said Mary Jane hopelessly.

"Ever so much, I assure you," said Miss Ivors, "but you really must

let me run off now."

"But how can you get home?" asked Mrs. Conroy.

"O, it's only two steps up the quay."

Gabriel hesitated a moment and said:

"If you will allow me, Miss Ivors, I'll see you home if you are really obliged to go."

But Miss Ivors broke away from them.

"I won't hear of it," she cried. "For goodness' sake go in to your

suppers and don't mind me. I'm quite well able to take care of

myself."

"Well, you're the comical girl, Molly," said Mrs. Conroy frankly.

"Beannacht libh," cried Miss Ivors, with a laugh, as she ran down

the staircase.

Mary Jane gazed after her, a moody puzzled expression on her

face, while Mrs. Conroy leaned over the banisters to listen for the

hall-door. Gabriel asked himself was he the cause of her abrupt

departure. But she did not seem to be in ill humour: she had gone

away laughing. He stared blankly down the staircase.

At the moment Aunt Kate came toddling out of the supper-room,

almost wringing her hands in despair.

"Where is Gabriel?" she cried. "Where on earth is Gabriel?  
There's

everyone waiting in there, stage to let, and nobody to carve  
the

goose!"

"Here I am, Aunt Kate!" cried Gabriel, with sudden  
animation,

"ready to carve a flock of geese, if necessary."

A fat brown goose lay at one end of the table and at the  
other end,

on a bed of creased paper strewn with sprigs of parsley, lay  
a great

ham, stripped of its outer skin and peppered over with crust  
crumbs, a neat paper frill round its shin and beside this was  
a

round of spiced beef. Between these rival ends ran parallel  
lines of

side-dishes: two little minsters of jelly, red and yellow; a  
shallow

dish full of blocks of blancmange and red jam, a large green

leaf-shaped dish with a stalk-shaped handle, on which lay  
bunches

of purple raisins and peeled almonds, a companion dish on which

lay a solid rectangle of Smyrna figs, a dish of custard topped with

grated nutmeg, a small bowl full of chocolates and sweets wrapped

in gold and silver papers and a glass vase in which stood some tall

celery stalks. In the centre of the table there stood, as sentries to a

fruit-stand which upheld a pyramid of oranges and American apples, two squat old-fashioned decanters of cut glass, one containing port and the other dark sherry. On the closed square

piano a pudding in a huge yellow dish lay in waiting and behind it

were three squads of bottles of stout and ale and minerals, drawn

up according to the colours of their uniforms, the first two black,

with brown and red labels, the third and smallest squad white, with

transverse green sashes.

Gabriel took his seat boldly at the head of the table and, having

looked to the edge of the carver, plunged his fork firmly into the

goose. He felt quite at ease now for he was an expert carver and

liked nothing better than to find himself at the head of a well-laden

table.

"Miss Furlong, what shall I send you?" he asked. "A wing or a slice

of the breast?"

"Just a small slice of the breast."

"Miss Higgins, what for you?"

"O, anything at all, Mr. Conroy."

While Gabriel and Miss Daly exchanged plates of goose and plates

of ham and spiced beef Lily went from guest to guest with a dish

of hot floury potatoes wrapped in a white napkin. This was Mary

Jane's idea and she had also suggested apple sauce for the goose

but Aunt Kate had said that plain roast goose without any apple

sauce had always been good enough for her and she hoped she

might never eat worse. Mary Jane waited on her pupils and saw

that they got the best slices and Aunt Kate and Aunt Julia opened

and carried across from the piano bottles of stout and ale for the

gentlemen and bottles of minerals for the ladies. There was a great

deal of confusion and laughter and noise, the noise of orders and

counter-orders, of knives and forks, of corks and glass-stoppers.

Gabriel began to carve second helpings as soon as he had finished

the first round without serving himself. Everyone protested loudly

so that he compromised by taking a long draught of stout for he

had found the carving hot work. Mary Jane settled down quietly to

her supper but Aunt Kate and Aunt Julia were still toddling round

the table, walking on each other's heels, getting in each other's way

and giving each other unheeded orders. Mr. Browne begged of

them to sit down and eat their suppers and so did Gabriel but they

said there was time enough, so that, at last, Freddy Malins stood up

and, capturing Aunt Kate, plumped her down on her chair amid

general laughter.

When everyone had been well served Gabriel said, smiling:

"Now, if anyone wants a little more of what vulgar people call

stuffing let him or her speak."

A chorus of voices invited him to begin his own supper and Lily

came forward with three potatoes which she had reserved for him.

"Very well," said Gabriel amiably, as he took another preparatory

draught, "kindly forget my existence, ladies and gentlemen, for a

few minutes."

He set to his supper and took no part in the conversation with

which the table covered Lily's removal of the plates. The subject of

talk was the opera company which was then at the Theatre Royal.

Mr. Bartell D'Arcy, the tenor, a dark- complexioned young man

with a smart moustache, praised very highly the leading contralto

of the company but Miss Furlong thought she had a rather vulgar

style of production. Freddy Malins said there was a Negro

chieftain singing in the second part of the Gaiety pantomime who

had one of the finest tenor voices he had ever heard.

"Have you heard him?" he asked Mr. Bartell D'Arcy across the



table.

"No," answered Mr. Bartell D'Arcy carelessly.

"Because," Freddy Malins explained, "now I'd be curious to hear

your opinion of him. I think he has a grand voice."

"It takes Teddy to find out the really good things," said Mr. Browne familiarly to the table.

"And why couldn't he have a voice too?" asked Freddy Malins

sharply. "Is it because he's only a black?"

Nobody answered this question and Mary Jane led the table back

to the legitimate opera. One of her pupils had given her a pass for

Mignon. Of course it was very fine, she said, but it made her think

of poor Georgina Burns. Mr. Browne could go back farther still, to

the old Italian companies that used to come to Dublin--Tietjens,

Ilma de Murzka, Campanini, the great Trebelli, Giuglini,  
Ravelli,

Aramburo. Those were the days, he said, when there was  
something like singing to be heard in Dublin. He told too of  
how

the top gallery of the old Royal used to be packed night  
after night,

of how one night an Italian tenor had sung five encores to  
Let me

like a Soldier fall, introducing a high C every time, and of  
how the

gallery boys would sometimes in their enthusiasm unyoke  
the

horses from the carriage of some great prima donna and  
pull her

themselves through the streets to her hotel. Why did they  
never

play the grand old operas now, he asked, Dinorah, Lucrezia

Borgia? Because they could not get the voices to sing them:  
that

was why.

"Oh, well," said Mr. Bartell D'Arcy, "I presume there are as  
good

singers today as there were then."

"Where are they?" asked Mr. Browne defiantly.

"In London, Paris, Milan," said Mr. Bartell D'Arcy warmly. "I suppose Caruso, for example, is quite as good, if not better than any of the men you have mentioned."

"Maybe so," said Mr. Browne. "But I may tell you I doubt it strongly."

"O, I'd give anything to hear Caruso sing," said Mary Jane.

"For me," said Aunt Kate, who had been picking a bone, "there was only one tenor. To please me, I mean. But I suppose none of you ever heard of him."

"Who was he, Miss Morkan?" asked Mr. Bartell D'Arcy politely.

"His name," said Aunt Kate, "was Parkinson. I heard him when he

was in his prime and I think he had then the purest tenor voice that

was ever put into a man's throat."

"Strange," said Mr. Bartell D'Arcy. "I never even heard of him."

"Yes, yes, Miss Morkan is right," said Mr. Browne. "I remember

hearing of old Parkinson but he's too far back for me."

"A beautiful, pure, sweet, mellow English tenor," said Aunt Kate

with enthusiasm.

Gabriel having finished, the huge pudding was transferred to the

table. The clatter of forks and spoons began again. Gabriel's wife

served out spoonfuls of the pudding and passed the plates down

the table. Midway down they were held up by Mary Jane, who

replenished them with raspberry or orange jelly or with

blancmange and jam. The pudding was of Aunt Julia's making and

she received praises for it from all quarters She herself said that it

was not quite brown enough.

"Well, I hope, Miss Morkan," said Mr. Browne, "that I'm brown

enough for you because, you know, I'm all brown."

All the gentlemen, except Gabriel, ate some of the pudding out of

compliment to Aunt Julia. As Gabriel never ate sweets the celery

had been left for him. Freddy Malins also took a stalk of celery and

ate it with his pudding. He had been told that celery was a capital

thing for the blood and he was just then under doctor's care. Mrs.

Malins, who had been silent all through the supper, said that her

son was going down to Mount Melleray in a week or so. The table

then spoke of Mount Melleray, how bracing the air was down

there, how hospitable the monks were and how they never asked

for a penny-piece from their guests.

"And do you mean to say," asked Mr. Browne incredulously,  
"that

a chap can go down there and put up there as if it were a  
hotel and

live on the fat of the land and then come away without  
paying

anything?"

"O, most people give some donation to the monastery when  
they

leave." said Mary Jane.

"I wish we had an institution like that in our Church," said  
Mr.

Browne candidly.

He was astonished to hear that the monks never spoke, got  
up at

two in the morning and slept in their coffins. He asked what  
they

did it for.

"That's the rule of the order," said Aunt Kate firmly.

"Yes, but why?" asked Mr. Browne.

Aunt Kate repeated that it was the rule, that was all. Mr. Browne

still seemed not to understand. Freddy Malins explained to him, as

best he could, that the monks were trying to make up for the sins

committed by all the sinners in the outside world. The explanation

was not very clear for Mr. Browne grinned and said:

"I like that idea very much but wouldn't a comfortable spring bed

do them as well as a coffin?"

"The coffin," said Mary Jane, "is to remind them of their last end."

As the subject had grown lugubrious it was buried in a silence of

the table during which Mrs. Malins could be heard saying to her

neighbour in an indistinct undertone:

"They are very good men, the monks, very pious men."

The raisins and almonds and figs and apples and oranges  
and

chocolates and sweets were now passed about the table  
and Aunt

Julia invited all the guests to have either port or sherry. At  
first Mr.

Bartell D'Arcy refused to take either but one of his  
neighbours

nudged him and whispered something to him upon which he  
allowed his glass to be filled. Gradually as the last glasses  
were

being filled the conversation ceased. A pause followed,  
broken

only by the noise of the wine and by unsettlings of chairs.  
The

Misses Morkan, all three, looked down at the tablecloth.  
Someone

coughed once or twice and then a few gentlemen patted the  
table

gently as a signal for silence. The silence came and Gabriel  
pushed

back his chair.



The patting at once grew louder in encouragement and then ceased

altogether. Gabriel leaned his ten trembling fingers on the tablecloth and smiled nervously at the company. Meeting a row of

upturned faces he raised his eyes to the chandelier. The piano was

playing a waltz tune and he could hear the skirts sweeping against

the drawing-room door. People, perhaps, were standing in the

snow on the quay outside, gazing up at the lighted windows and

listening to the waltz music. The air was pure there. In the distance

lay the park where the trees were weighted with snow. The

Wellington Monument wore a gleaming cap of snow that flashed

westward over the white field of Fifteen Acres.

He began:

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"It has fallen to my lot this evening, as in years past, to perform a

very pleasing task but a task for which I am afraid my poor powers

as a speaker are all too inadequate."

"No, no!" said Mr. Browne.

"But, however that may be, I can only ask you tonight to take the

will for the deed and to lend me your attention for a few moments

while I endeavour to express to you in words what my feelings are

on this occasion.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, it is not the first time that we have gathered together under this hospitable roof, around this hospitable

board. It is not the first time that we have been the recipients--or

perhaps, I had better say, the victims--of the hospitality of certain

good ladies."

He made a circle in the air with his arm and paused.  
Everyone

laughed or smiled at Aunt Kate and Aunt Julia and Mary Jane  
who

all turned crimson with pleasure. Gabriel went on more  
boldly:

"I feel more strongly with every recurring year that our  
country has

no tradition which does it so much honour and which it  
should

guard so jealously as that of its hospitality. It is a tradition  
that is

unique as far as my experience goes (and I have visited not  
a few

places abroad) among the modern nations. Some would say,  
perhaps, that with us it is rather a failing than anything to  
be

boasted of. But granted even that, it is, to my mind, a  
princely

failing, and one that I trust will long be cultivated among us.  
Of

one thing, at least, I am sure. As long as this one roof  
shelters the

good ladies aforesaid--and I wish from my heart it may do so  
for

many and many a long year to come--the tradition of genuine

warm-hearted courteous Irish hospitality, which our forefathers

have handed down to us and which we in turn must hand down to

our descendants, is still alive among us."

A hearty murmur of assent ran round the table. It shot through

Gabriel's mind that Miss Ivors was not there and that she had gone

away discourteously: and he said with confidence in himself:

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"A new generation is growing up in our midst, a generation actuated by new ideas and new principles. It is serious and enthusiastic for these new ideas and its enthusiasm, even when it is

misdirected, is, I believe, in the main sincere. But we are living in

a sceptical and, if I may use the phrase, a thought-tormented age:

and sometimes I fear that this new generation, educated or

hypereducated as it is, will lack those qualities of humanity,  
of

hospitality, of kindly humour which belonged to an older  
day.

Listening tonight to the names of all those great singers of  
the past

it seemed to me, I must confess, that we were living in a  
less

spacious age. Those days might, without exaggeration, be  
called

spacious days: and if they are gone beyond recall let us  
hope, at

least, that in gatherings such as this we shall still speak of  
them

with pride and affection, still cherish in our hearts the  
memory of

those dead and gone great ones whose fame the world will  
not

willingly let die."

"Hear, hear!" said Mr. Browne loudly.

"But yet," continued Gabriel, his voice falling into a softer  
inflection, "there are always in gatherings such as this  
sadder

thoughts that will recur to our minds: thoughts of the past,  
of

youth, of changes, of absent faces that we miss here  
tonight. Our

path through life is strewn with many such sad memories:  
and

were we to brood upon them always we could not find the  
heart to

go on bravely with our work among the living. We have all of  
us

living duties and living affections which claim, and rightly  
claim,

our strenuous endeavours.

"Therefore, I will not linger on the past. I will not let any  
gloomy

moralising intrude upon us here tonight. Here we are  
gathered

together for a brief moment from the bustle and rush of our  
everyday routine. We are met here as friends, in the spirit of  
good-fellowship, as colleagues, also to a certain extent, in  
the true

spirit of camaraderie, and as the guests of--what shall I call  
them?

--the Three Graces of the Dublin musical world."

The table burst into applause and laughter at this allusion.  
Aunt

Julia vainly asked each of her neighbours in turn to tell her  
what

Gabriel had said.

"He says we are the Three Graces, Aunt Julia," said Mary  
Jane.

Aunt Julia did not understand but she looked up, smiling, at  
Gabriel, who continued in the same vein:

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

"I will not attempt to play tonight the part that Paris played  
on

another occasion. I will not attempt to choose between  
them. The

task would be an invidious one and one beyond my poor  
powers.

For when I view them in turn, whether it be our chief hostess  
herself, whose good heart, whose too good heart, has  
become a

byword with all who know her, or her sister, who seems to be

gifted with perennial youth and whose singing must have been a

surprise and a revelation to us all tonight, or, last but not least,

when I consider our youngest hostess, talented, cheerful, hard-working and the best of nieces, I confess, Ladies and

Gentlemen, that I do not know to which of them I should award the

prize."

Gabriel glanced down at his aunts and, seeing the large smile on

Aunt Julia's face and the tears which had risen to Aunt Kate's eyes,

hastened to his close. He raised his glass of port gallantly, while

every member of the company fingered a glass expectantly, and

said loudly:

"Let us toast them all three together. Let us drink to their health,



wealth, long life, happiness and prosperity and may they long

continue to hold the proud and self-won position which they hold

in their profession and the position of honour and affection which

they hold in our hearts."

All the guests stood up, glass in hand, and turning towards the

three seated ladies, sang in unison, with Mr. Browne as leader:

For they are jolly gay fellows,

For they are jolly gay fellows,

For they are jolly gay fellows,

Which nobody can deny.

Aunt Kate was making frank use of her handkerchief and even

Aunt Julia seemed moved. Freddy Malins beat time with his

pudding-fork and the singers turned towards one another, as if in

melodious conference, while they sang with emphasis:

Unless he tells a lie,

Unless he tells a lie,

Then, turning once more towards their hostesses, they sang:

For they are jolly gay fellows,

For they are jolly gay fellows,

For they are jolly gay fellows,

Which nobody can deny.

The acclamation which followed was taken up beyond the door of

the supper-room by many of the other guests and renewed time

after time, Freddy Malins acting as officer with his fork on high.

The piercing morning air came into the hall where they were standing so that Aunt Kate said:

"Close the door, somebody. Mrs. Malins will get her death of

cold."

"Browne is out there, Aunt Kate," said Mary Jane.

"Browne is everywhere," said Aunt Kate, lowering her voice.

Mary Jane laughed at her tone.

"Really," she said archly, "he is very attentive."

"He has been laid on here like the gas," said Aunt Kate in the same

tone, "all during the Christmas."

She laughed herself this time good-humouredly and then added

quickly:

"But tell him to come in, Mary Jane, and close the door. I hope to

goodness he didn't hear me."

At that moment the hall-door was opened and Mr. Browne came in

from the doorstep, laughing as if his heart would break. He was

dressed in a long green overcoat with mock astrakhan cuffs and

collar and wore on his head an oval fur cap. He pointed down the

snow-covered quay from where the sound of shrill prolonged whistling was borne in.

"Teddy will have all the cabs in Dublin out," he said.

Gabriel advanced from the little pantry behind the office, struggling into his overcoat and, looking round the hall, said:

"Gretta not down yet?"

"She's getting on her things, Gabriel," said Aunt Kate.

"Who's playing up there?" asked Gabriel.

"Nobody. They're all gone."

"O no, Aunt Kate," said Mary Jane. "Bartell D'Arcy and Miss O'Callaghan aren't gone yet."

"Someone is fooling at the piano anyhow," said Gabriel.

Mary Jane glanced at Gabriel and Mr. Browne and said with a shiver:

"It makes me feel cold to look at you two gentlemen muffled up

like that. I wouldn't like to face your journey home at this hour."

"I'd like nothing better this minute," said Mr. Browne stoutly, "than

a rattling fine walk in the country or a fast drive with a good spanking goer between the shafts."

"We used to have a very good horse and trap at home," said Aunt

Julia sadly.

"The never-to-be-forgotten Johnny," said Mary Jane, laughing.

Aunt Kate and Gabriel laughed too.

"Why, what was wonderful about Johnny?" asked Mr. Browne.

"The late lamented Patrick Morkan, our grandfather, that is,"

explained Gabriel, "commonly known in his later years as the old

gentleman, was a glue-boiler."

"O, now, Gabriel," said Aunt Kate, laughing, "he had a starch mill."

"Well, glue or starch," said Gabriel, "the old gentleman had a horse

by the name of Johnny. And Johnny used to work in the old gentleman's mill, walking round and round in order to drive the

mill. That was all very well; but now comes the tragic part about

Johnny. One fine day the old gentleman thought he'd like to drive

out with the quality to a military review in the park."

"The Lord have mercy on his soul," said Aunt Kate compassionately.

"Amen," said Gabriel. "So the old gentleman, as I said, harnessed

Johnny and put on his very best tall hat and his very best stock

collar and drove out in grand style from his ancestral mansion

somewhere near Back Lane, I think."

Everyone laughed, even Mrs. Malins, at Gabriel's manner and Aunt

Kate said:

"O, now, Gabriel, he didn't live in Back Lane, really. Only the mill

was there."

"Out from the mansion of his forefathers," continued Gabriel, "he

drove with Johnny. And everything went on beautifully until

Johnny came in sight of King Billy's statue: and whether he fell in

love with the horse King Billy sits on or whether he thought he

was back again in the mill, anyhow he began to walk round the

statue."

Gabriel paced in a circle round the hall in his goloshes amid the

laughter of the others.

"Round and round he went," said Gabriel, "and the old gentleman,

who was a very pompous old gentleman, was highly indignant. 'Go

on, sir! What do you mean, sir? Johnny! Johnny! Most extraordinary conduct! Can't understand the horse!"

The peal of laughter which followed Gabriel's imitation of the

incident was interrupted by a resounding knock at the hall door.

Mary Jane ran to open it and let in Freddy Malins. Freddy Malins,

with his hat well back on his head and his shoulders humped with

cold, was puffing and steaming after his exertions.

"I could only get one cab," he said.

"O, we'll find another along the quay," said Gabriel.

"Yes," said Aunt Kate. "Better not keep Mrs. Malins standing in



the draught."

Mrs. Malins was helped down the front steps by her son and Mr.

Browne and, after many manoeuvres, hoisted into the cab. Freddy

Malins clambered in after her and spent a long time settling her on

the seat, Mr. Browne helping him with advice. At last she was

settled comfortably and Freddy Malins invited Mr. Browne into the

cab. There was a good deal of confused talk, and then Mr. Browne

got into the cab. The cabman settled his rug over his knees, and

bent down for the address. The confusion grew greater and the

cabman was directed differently by Freddy Malins and Mr.

Browne, each of whom had his head out through a window of the

cab. The difficulty was to know where to drop Mr. Browne along

the route, and Aunt Kate, Aunt Julia and Mary Jane helped the

discussion from the doorstep with cross-directions and contradictions and abundance of laughter. As for Freddy Malins he was speechless with laughter. He popped his head in and out of the window every moment to the great danger of his hat, and told his mother how the discussion was progressing, till at last Mr. Browne shouted to the bewildered cabman above the din of everybody's laughter:

"Do you know Trinity College?"

"Yes, sir," said the cabman.

"Well, drive bang up against Trinity College gates," said Mr. Browne, "and then we'll tell you where to go. You understand now?"

"Yes, sir," said the cabman.

"Make like a bird for Trinity College."

"Right, sir," said the cabman.

The horse was whipped up and the cab rattled off along the quay

amid a chorus of laughter and adieus.

Gabriel had not gone to the door with the others. He was in a dark

part of the hall gazing up the staircase. A woman was standing

near the top of the first flight, in the shadow also. He could not see

her face but he could see the terra-cotta and salmon-pink panels of

her skirt which the shadow made appear black and white. It was

his wife. She was leaning on the banisters, listening to something.

Gabriel was surprised at her stillness and strained his ear to listen

also. But he could hear little save the noise of laughter and dispute

on the front steps, a few chords struck on the piano and a few

notes of a man's voice singing.

He stood still in the gloom of the hall, trying to catch the air that

the voice was singing and gazing up at his wife. There was grace

and mystery in her attitude as if she were a symbol of something.

He asked himself what is a woman standing on the stairs in the

shadow, listening to distant music, a symbol of. If he were a painter he would paint her in that attitude. Her blue felt hat would

show off the bronze of her hair against the darkness and the dark

panels of her skirt would show off the light ones. Distant Music he

would call the picture if he were a painter.

The hall-door was closed; and Aunt Kate, Aunt Julia and Mary

Jane came down the hall, still laughing.

"Well, isn't Freddy terrible?" said Mary Jane. "He's really terrible."

Gabriel said nothing but pointed up the stairs towards where his

wife was standing. Now that the hall-door was closed the voice

and the piano could be heard more clearly. Gabriel held up his

hand for them to be silent. The song seemed to be in the old Irish

tonality and the singer seemed uncertain both of his words and of

his voice. The voice, made plaintive by distance and by the singer's

hoarseness, faintly illuminated the cadence of the air with words

expressing grief:

O, the rain falls on my heavy locks

And the dew wets my skin,

My babe lies cold...

"O," exclaimed Mary Jane. "It's Bartell D'Arcy singing and he wouldn't sing all the night. O, I'll get him to sing a song before he goes."

"O, do, Mary Jane," said Aunt Kate.

Mary Jane brushed past the others and ran to the staircase, but

before she reached it the singing stopped and the piano was closed

abruptly.

"O, what a pity!" she cried. "Is he coming down, Gretta?"

Gabriel heard his wife answer yes and saw her come down towards

them. A few steps behind her were Mr. Bartell D'Arcy and Miss

O'Callaghan.

"O, Mr. D'Arcy," cried Mary Jane, "it's downright mean of you to

break off like that when we were all in raptures listening to you."

"I have been at him all the evening," said Miss O'Callaghan, "and

Mrs. Conroy, too, and he told us he had a dreadful cold and couldn't sing."

"O, Mr. D'Arcy," said Aunt Kate, "now that was a great fib to tell."

"Can't you see that I'm as hoarse as a crow?" said Mr. D'Arcy roughly.

He went into the pantry hastily and put on his overcoat. The others,

taken aback by his rude speech, could find nothing to say. Aunt

Kate wrinkled her brows and made signs to the others to drop the

subject. Mr. D'Arcy stood swathing his neck carefully and frowning.

"It's the weather," said Aunt Julia, after a pause.

"Yes, everybody has colds," said Aunt Kate readily, "everybody."

"They say," said Mary Jane, "we haven't had snow like it for thirty

years; and I read this morning in the newspapers that the snow is

general all over Ireland."

"I love the look of snow," said Aunt Julia sadly.

"So do I," said Miss O'Callaghan. "I think Christmas is never really

Christmas unless we have the snow on the ground."

"But poor Mr. D'Arcy doesn't like the snow," said Aunt Kate, smiling.

Mr. D'Arcy came from the pantry, fully swathed and buttoned, and

in a repentant tone told them the history of his cold. Everyone gave

him advice and said it was a great pity and urged him to be very

careful of his throat in the night air. Gabriel watched his wife, who

did not join in the conversation. She was standing right under the

dusty fanlight and the flame of the gas lit up the rich bronze of her

hair, which he had seen her drying at the fire a few days before.

She was in the same attitude and seemed unaware of the talk about



her. At last she turned towards them and Gabriel saw that there was

colour on her cheeks and that her eyes were shining. A sudden tide

of joy went leaping out of his heart.

"Mr. D'Arcy," she said, "what is the name of that song you were

singing?"

"It's called The Lass of Aughrim," said Mr. D'Arcy, "but I couldn't

remember it properly. Why? Do you know it?"

"The Lass of Aughrim," she repeated. "I couldn't think of the name."

"It's a very nice air," said Mary Jane. "I'm sorry you were not in

voice tonight."

"Now, Mary Jane," said Aunt Kate, "don't annoy Mr. D'Arcy. I won't have him annoyed."

Seeing that all were ready to start she shepherded them to the door,

where good-night was said:

"Well, good-night, Aunt Kate, and thanks for the pleasant evening."

"Good-night, Gabriel. Good-night, Gretta!"

"Good-night, Aunt Kate, and thanks ever so much.  
Goodnight,  
Aunt Julia."

"O, good-night, Gretta, I didn't see you."

"Good-night, Mr. D'Arcy. Good-night, Miss O'Callaghan."

"Good-night, Miss Morkan."

"Good-night, again."

"Good-night, all. Safe home."

"Good-night. Good night."

The morning was still dark. A dull, yellow light brooded over the

houses and the river; and the sky seemed to be descending. It was

slushy underfoot; and only streaks and patches of snow lay on the

roofs, on the parapets of the quay and on the area railings. The

lamps were still burning redly in the murky air and, across the

river, the palace of the Four Courts stood out menacingly against

the heavy sky.

She was walking on before him with Mr. Bartell D'Arcy, her shoes

in a brown parcel tucked under one arm and her hands holding her

skirt up from the slush. She had no longer any grace of attitude,

but Gabriel's eyes were still bright with happiness. The blood went

bounding along his veins; and the thoughts went rioting through

his brain, proud, joyful, tender, valorous.

She was walking on before him so lightly and so erect that he

longed to run after her noiselessly, catch her by the shoulders and

say something foolish and affectionate into her ear. She seemed to

him so frail that he longed to defend her against something and

then to be alone with her. Moments of their secret life together

burst like stars upon his memory. A heliotrope envelope was lying

beside his breakfast-cup and he was caressing it with his hand.

Birds were twittering in the ivy and the sunny web of the curtain

was shimmering along the floor: he could not eat for happiness.

They were standing on the crowded platform and he was placing a

ticket inside the warm palm of her glove. He was standing with her

in the cold, looking in through a grated window at a man making

bottles in a roaring furnace. It was very cold. Her face, fragrant in

the cold air, was quite close to his; and suddenly he called out to

the man at the furnace:

"Is the fire hot, sir?"

But the man could not hear with the noise of the furnace. It was

just as well. He might have answered rudely.

A wave of yet more tender joy escaped from his heart and went

coursing in warm flood along his arteries. Like the tender fire of

stars moments of their life together, that no one knew of or would

ever know of, broke upon and illumined his memory. He longed to

recall to her those moments, to make her forget the years of their

dull existence together and remember only their moments of

ecstasy. For the years, he felt, had not quenched his soul or hers.

Their children, his writing, her household cares had not quenched

all their souls' tender fire. In one letter that he had written to her

then he had said: "Why is it that words like these seem to me so

dull and cold? Is it because there is no word tender enough to be

your name?"

Like distant music these words that he had written years before

were borne towards him from the past. He longed to be alone with

her. When the others had gone away, when he and she were in the

room in the hotel, then they would be alone together. He would

call her softly:

"Gretta!"

Perhaps she would not hear at once: she would be undressing.

Then something in his voice would strike her. She would turn and

look at him....

At the corner of Winetavern Street they met a cab. He was glad of

its rattling noise as it saved him from conversation. She was looking out of the window and seemed tired. The others spoke

only a few words, pointing out some building or street. The horse

galloped along wearily under the murky morning sky, dragging his

old rattling box after his heels, and Gabriel was again in a cab with

her, galloping to catch the boat, galloping to their honeymoon.

As the cab drove across O'Connell Bridge Miss O'Callaghan said:

"They say you never cross O'Connell Bridge without seeing a

white horse."

"I see a white man this time," said Gabriel.

"Where?" asked Mr. Bartell D'Arcy.

Gabriel pointed to the statue, on which lay patches of snow.  
Then

he nodded familiarly to it and waved his hand.

"Good-night, Dan," he said gaily.

When the cab drew up before the hotel, Gabriel jumped out  
and, in

spite of Mr. Bartell D'Arcy's protest, paid the driver. He gave  
the

man a shilling over his fare. The man saluted and said:

"A prosperous New Year to you, sir."

"The same to you," said Gabriel cordially.

She leaned for a moment on his arm in getting out of the  
cab and

while standing at the curbstone, bidding the others good-  
night.

She leaned lightly on his arm, as lightly as when she had  
danced

with him a few hours before. He had felt proud and happy  
then,

happy that she was his, proud of her grace and wifely  
carriage. But



now, after the kindling again of so many memories, the first touch

of her body, musical and strange and perfumed, sent through him a

keen pang of lust. Under cover of her silence he pressed her arm

closely to his side; and, as they stood at the hotel door, he felt that

they had escaped from their lives and duties, escaped from home

and friends and run away together with wild and radiant hearts to a

new adventure.

An old man was dozing in a great hooded chair in the hall. He lit a

candle in the office and went before them to the stairs. They followed him in silence, their feet falling in soft thuds on the thickly carpeted stairs. She mounted the stairs behind the porter,

her head bowed in the ascent, her frail shoulders curved as with a

burden, her skirt girt tightly about her. He could have flung his

arms about her hips and held her still, for his arms were trembling

with desire to seize her and only the stress of his nails against the

palms of his hands held the wild impulse of his body in check. The

porter halted on the stairs to settle his guttering candle. They

halted, too, on the steps below him. In the silence Gabriel could

hear the falling of the molten wax into the tray and the thumping

of his own heart against his ribs.

The porter led them along a corridor and opened a door. Then he

set his unstable candle down on a toilet-table and asked at what

hour they were to be called in the morning.

"Eight," said Gabriel.

The porter pointed to the tap of the electric-light and began a

muttered apology, but Gabriel cut him short.

"We don't want any light. We have light enough from the street.

And I say," he added, pointing to the candle, "you might remove

that handsome article, like a good man."

The porter took up his candle again, but slowly, for he was surprised by such a novel idea. Then he mumbled good-night and

went out. Gabriel shot the lock to.

A ghastly light from the street lamp lay in a long shaft from one

window to the door. Gabriel threw his overcoat and hat on a couch

and crossed the room towards the window. He looked down into

the street in order that his emotion might calm a little. Then he

turned and leaned against a chest of drawers with his back to the

light. She had taken off her hat and cloak and was standing before

a large swinging mirror, unhooking her waist. Gabriel paused for a

few moments, watching her, and then said:

"Gretta!"

She turned away from the mirror slowly and walked along the

shaft of light towards him. Her face looked so serious and weary

that the words would not pass Gabriel's lips. No, it was not the

moment yet.

"You looked tired," he said.

"I am a little," she answered.

"You don't feel ill or weak?"

"No, tired: that's all."

She went on to the window and stood there, looking out. Gabriel

waited again and then, fearing that diffidence was about to conquer him, he said abruptly:

"By the way, Gretta!"

"What is it?"

"You know that poor fellow Malins?" he said quickly.

"Yes. What about him?"

"Well, poor fellow, he's a decent sort of chap, after all,"  
continued

Gabriel in a false voice. "He gave me back that sovereign I  
lent

him, and I didn't expect it, really. It's a pity he wouldn't keep  
away

from that Browne, because he's not a bad fellow, really."

He was trembling now with annoyance. Why did she seem  
so

abstracted? He did not know how he could begin. Was she  
annoyed, too, about something? If she would only turn to  
him or

come to him of her own accord! To take her as she was  
would be

brutal. No, he must see some ardour in her eyes first. He  
longed to

be master of her strange mood.

"When did you lend him the pound?" she asked, after a pause.

Gabriel strove to restrain himself from breaking out into brutal

language about the sottish Malins and his pound. He longed to cry

to her from his soul, to crush her body against his, to overmaster

her. But he said:

"O, at Christmas, when he opened that little Christmas-card shop

in Henry Street."

He was in such a fever of rage and desire that he did not hear her

come from the window. She stood before him for an instant,

looking at him strangely. Then, suddenly raising herself on tiptoe

and resting her hands lightly on his shoulders, she kissed him.

"You are a very generous person, Gabriel," she said.

Gabriel, trembling with delight at her sudden kiss and at the quaintness of her phrase, put his hands on her hair and began

smoothing it back, scarcely touching it with his fingers. The washing had made it fine and brilliant. His heart was brimming

over with happiness. Just when he was wishing for it she had come

to him of her own accord. Perhaps her thoughts had been running

with his. Perhaps she had felt the impetuous desire that was in

him, and then the yielding mood had come upon her. Now that she

had fallen to him so easily, he wondered why he had been so

diffident.

He stood, holding her head between his hands. Then, slipping one

arm swiftly about her body and drawing her towards him, he said

softly:

"Gretta, dear, what are you thinking about?"

She did not answer nor yield wholly to his arm. He said again,

softly:

"Tell me what it is, Gretta. I think I know what is the matter. Do I

know?"

She did not answer at once. Then she said in an outburst of tears:

"O, I am thinking about that song, The Lass of Aughrim."

She broke loose from him and ran to the bed and, throwing her

arms across the bed-rail, hid her face. Gabriel stood stockstill for a

moment in astonishment and then followed her. As he passed in

the way of the cheval-glass he caught sight of himself in full

length, his broad, well-filled shirt-front, the face whose expression

always puzzled him when he saw it in a mirror, and his



glimmering gilt-rimmed eyeglasses. He halted a few paces from

her and said:

"What about the song? Why does that make you cry?"

She raised her head from her arms and dried her eyes with the

back of her hand like a child. A kinder note than he had intended

went into his voice.

"Why, Gretta?" he asked.

"I am thinking about a person long ago who used to sing that

song."

"And who was the person long ago?" asked Gabriel, smiling.

"It was a person I used to know in Galway when I was living with

my grandmother," she said.

The smile passed away from Gabriel's face. A dull anger began to

gather again at the back of his mind and the dull fires of his lust

began to glow angrily in his veins.

"Someone you were in love with?" he asked ironically.

"It was a young boy I used to know," she answered, "named Michael Furey. He used to sing that song, The Lass of Aughrim.

He was very delicate."

Gabriel was silent. He did not wish her to think that he was interested in this delicate boy.

"I can see him so plainly," she said, after a moment. "Such eyes as

he had: big, dark eyes! And such an expression in them--an expression!"

"O, then, you are in love with him?" said Gabriel.

"I used to go out walking with him," she said, "when I was in Galway."

A thought flew across Gabriel's mind.

"Perhaps that was why you wanted to go to Galway with that Ivors girl?" he said coldly.

She looked at him and asked in surprise:

"What for?"

Her eyes made Gabriel feel awkward. He shrugged his shoulders and said:

"How do I know? To see him, perhaps."

She looked away from him along the shaft of light towards the window in silence.

"He is dead," she said at length. "He died when he was only seventeen. Isn't it a terrible thing to die so young as that?"

"What was he?" asked Gabriel, still ironically.

"He was in the gasworks," she said.

Gabriel felt humiliated by the failure of his irony and by the evocation of this figure from the dead, a boy in the gasworks.

While he had been full of memories of their secret life together,

full of tenderness and joy and desire, she had been comparing him

in her mind with another. A shameful consciousness of his own

person assailed him. He saw himself as a ludicrous figure, acting

as a pennyboy for his aunts, a nervous, well-meaning

sentimentalist, orating to vulgarians and idealising his own

clownish lusts, the pitiable fatuous fellow he had caught a glimpse

of in the mirror. Instinctively he turned his back more to the light

lest she might see the shame that burned upon his forehead.

He tried to keep up his tone of cold interrogation, but his voice

when he spoke was humble and indifferent.

"I suppose you were in love with this Michael Furey, Gretta,"  
he  
said.

"I was great with him at that time," she said.

Her voice was veiled and sad. Gabriel, feeling now how vain  
it

would be to try to lead her whither he had purposed,  
caressed one

of her hands and said, also sadly:

"And what did he die of so young, Gretta? Consumption, was  
it?"

"I think he died for me," she answered.

A vague terror seized Gabriel at this answer, as if, at that  
hour

when he had hoped to triumph, some impalpable and  
vindictive

being was coming against him, gathering forces against him  
in its

vague world. But he shook himself free of it with an effort of

reason and continued to caress her hand. He did not question her

again, for he felt that she would tell him of herself. Her hand was

warm and moist: it did not respond to his touch, but he continued

to caress it just as he had caressed her first letter to him that spring

morning.

"It was in the winter," she said, "about the beginning of the winter

when I was going to leave my grandmother's and come up here to

the convent. And he was ill at the time in his lodgings in Galway

and wouldn't be let out, and his people in Oughterard were written

to. He was in decline, they said, or something like that. I never

knew rightly."

She paused for a moment and sighed.

"Poor fellow," she said. "He was very fond of me and he was such

a gentle boy. We used to go out together, walking, you know,

Gabriel, like the way they do in the country. He was going to study

singing only for his health. He had a very good voice, poor Michael Furey."

"Well; and then?" asked Gabriel.

"And then when it came to the time for me to leave Galway and

come up to the convent he was much worse and I wouldn't be let

see him so I wrote him a letter saying I was going up to Dublin and

would be back in the summer, and hoping he would be better

then."

She paused for a moment to get her voice under control, and then

went on:

"Then the night before I left, I was in my grandmother's house in

Nuns' Island, packing up, and I heard gravel thrown up against the

window. The window was so wet I couldn't see, so I ran downstairs

as I was and slipped out the back into the garden and there was the

poor fellow at the end of the garden, shivering."

"And did you not tell him to go back?" asked Gabriel.

"I implored of him to go home at once and told him he would get

his death in the rain. But he said he did not want to live. I can see

his eyes as well as well! He was standing at the end of the wall

where there was a tree."

"And did he go home?" asked Gabriel.

"Yes, he went home. And when I was only a week in the convent

he died and he was buried in Oughterard, where his people came

from. O, the day I heard that, that he was dead!"



She stopped, choking with sobs, and, overcome by emotion,  
flung

herself face downward on the bed, sobbing in the quilt.  
Gabriel

held her hand for a moment longer, irresolutely, and then,  
shy of

intruding on her grief, let it fall gently and walked quietly to  
the

window.

She was fast asleep.

Gabriel, leaning on his elbow, looked for a few moments  
unresentfully on her tangled hair and half-open mouth,  
listening to

her deep-drawn breath. So she had had that romance in her  
life: a

man had died for her sake. It hardly pained him now to think  
how

poor a part he, her husband, had played in her life. He  
watched her

while she slept, as though he and she had never lived together as

man and wife. His curious eyes rested long upon her face and on

her hair: and, as he thought of what she must have been then, in

that time of her first girlish beauty, a strange, friendly pity for her

entered his soul. He did not like to say even to himself that her

face was no longer beautiful, but he knew that it was no longer the

face for which Michael Furey had braved death.

Perhaps she had not told him all the story. His eyes moved to the

chair over which she had thrown some of her clothes. A petticoat

string dangled to the floor. One boot stood upright, its limp upper

fallen down: the fellow of it lay upon its side. He wondered at his

riot of emotions of an hour before. From what had it proceeded?

From his aunt's supper, from his own foolish speech, from the wine

and dancing, the merry-making when saying good-night in the hall,

the pleasure of the walk along the river in the snow. Poor Aunt

Julia! She, too, would soon be a shade with the shade of Patrick

Morkan and his horse. He had caught that haggard look upon her

face for a moment when she was singing Arrayed for the Bridal.

Soon, perhaps, he would be sitting in that same drawing-room,

dressed in black, his silk hat on his knees. The blinds would be

drawn down and Aunt Kate would be sitting beside him, crying

and blowing her nose and telling him how Julia had died. He

would cast about in his mind for some words that might console

her, and would find only lame and useless ones. Yes, yes: that

would happen very soon.

The air of the room chilled his shoulders. He stretched himself

cautiously along under the sheets and lay down beside his wife.

One by one, they were all becoming shades. Better pass boldly into

that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and

wither dismally with age. He thought of how she who lay beside

him had locked in her heart for so many years that image of her

lover's eyes when he had told her that he did not wish to live.

Generous tears filled Gabriel's eyes. He had never felt like that

himself towards any woman, but he knew that such a feeling must

be love. The tears gathered more thickly in his eyes and in the

partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man

standing under a dripping tree. Other forms were near. His soul

had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead.

He was conscious of, but could not apprehend, their  
wayward and

flickering existence. His own identity was fading out into a  
grey

impalpable world: the solid world itself, which these dead  
had one

time reared and lived in, was dissolving and dwindling.

A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the  
window. It

had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes,  
silver

and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time  
had

come for him to set out on his journey westward. Yes, the  
newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It  
was

falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the  
treeless hills,

falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward,  
softly

falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling,  
too,

upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where  
Michael

Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses  
and

headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren  
thorns.

His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly  
through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of  
their

last end, upon all the living and the dead.

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