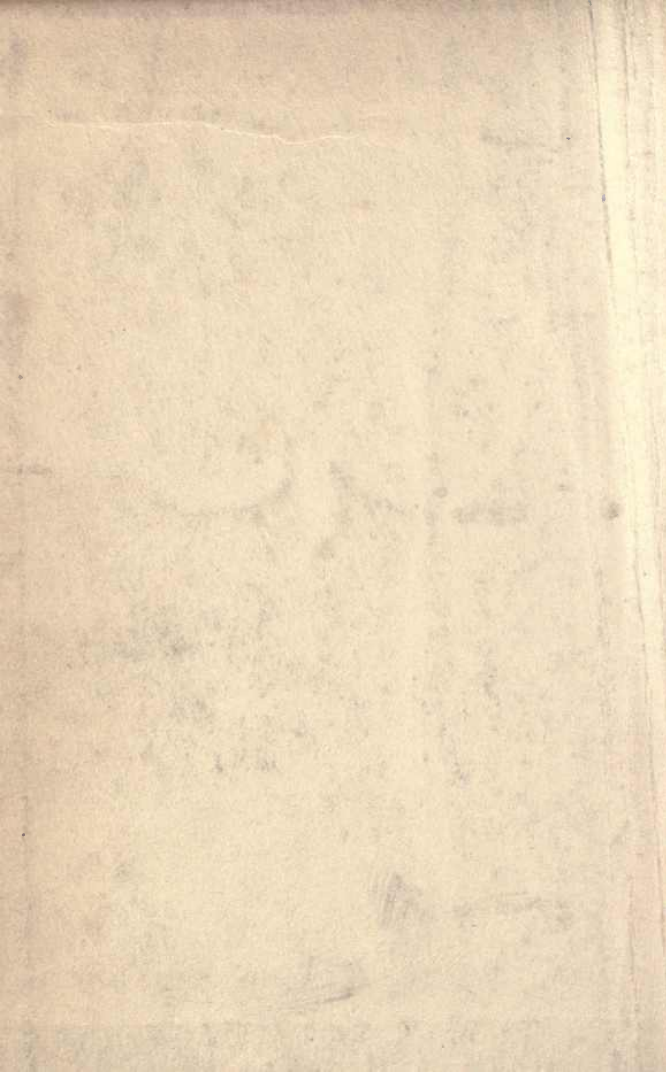




*The  
Fair Irish  
Maid*

Justin Huntly McCarthy



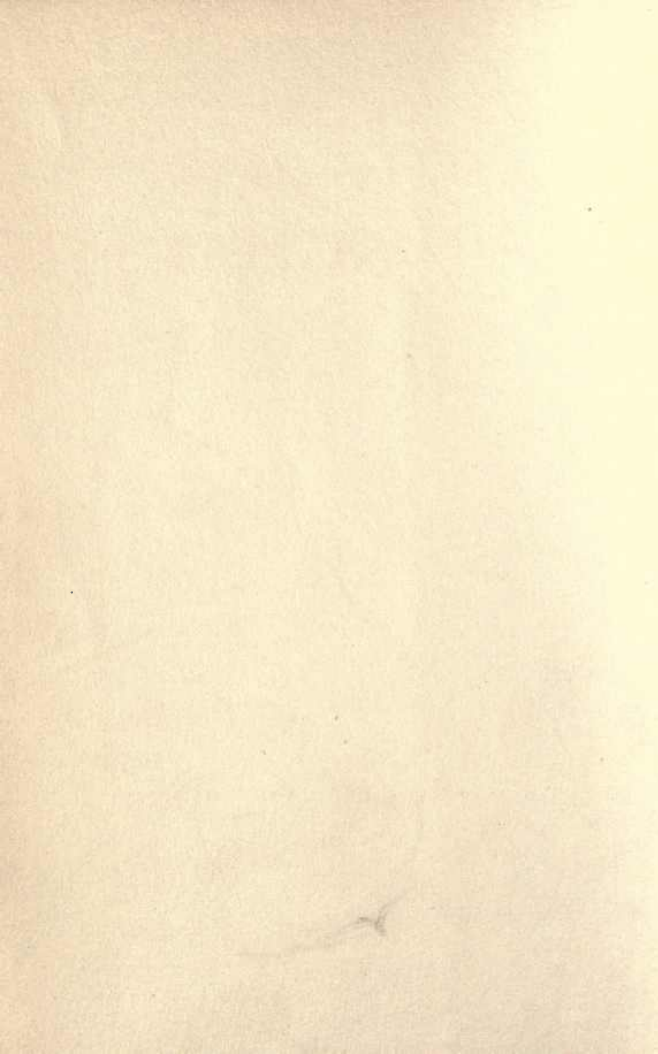
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# THE FAIR IRISH MAID

BY  
JUSTIN HUNTLY McCARTHY

AUTHOR OF  
"IF I WERE KING" "SERAPHICA"  
"THE GORGEOUS BORGIA" ETC.



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# CONTENTS

## BOOK I

### THE KINGDOM OF DREAMS IN THE KINGDOM OF KERRY

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	THE MAID IN THE MIST . . . . .	I
II.	VOICES . . . . .	8
III.	MY LORD CLOYNE . . . . .	16
IV.	THE PARLIAMENT-MAN . . . . .	24
V.	"BARREN, BARREN, BEGGARS ALL" . . . . .	41
VI.	SOME STATISTICS . . . . .	52
VII.	THE MAN WITH THE FIDDLE . . . . .	59
VIII.	THE TIROWENS . . . . .	68
IX.	JOURNEYS START IN LOVERS' PARTING . . . . .	79
X.	THE SOUL OF ERIN . . . . .	91
XI.	THE DOUBBLES—BARON ET FEMME . . . . .	97
XII.	THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS . . . . .	107
XIII.	LORD CLOYNE IS SURPRISED . . . . .	124
XIV.	METAMORPHOSIS . . . . .	136

## BOOK II

### THE SOUL OF ERIN IN ST. JAMES'S SQUARE

I.	BUTTERFLY-BIRTH . . . . .	143
II.	THE COMET OF FIFTEEN . . . . .	147
III.	THE LITTLE QUEEN . . . . .	152

# CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
IV.	A PRIVATE SECRETARY . . . . .	160
V.	FEASTS AND SUPPERS OF THE GODS . .	167
VI.	THE GREAT MR. HERITAGE . . . . .	174
VII.	A POSSIBLE CLUE . . . . .	184
VIII.	MUSIC THE FOOD OF LOVE . . . . .	191
IX.	MOODY FOOD . . . . .	198
X.	I WON'T MARRY YOU, MY PRETTY MAID	210
XI.	A TALE OF A WAGER . . . . .	218
XII.	A CHANGE OF CLOTHES . . . . .	226
XIII.	THE DINNER PARTY . . . . .	235
XIV.	THE UNBURIED CITY . . . . .	247
XV.	RECOGNITION OF GENIUS . . . . .	252
XVI.	MR. RUBIE SAYS HIS SAY . . . . .	259
XVII.	CAPTAIN CURTIUS PROPOSES . . . . .	266
XVIII.	WISDOM IN THE CAN . . . . .	274

## BOOK III

### THE PLAY'S THE THING

I.	IN THE ROTUNDO . . . . .	291
II.	PAR NOBILE FRATRUM . . . . .	297
III.	TOWN TALK . . . . .	304
IV.	THE INSULT TO POET CRINCH . . . . .	314
V.	A ROMAN HOLIDAY . . . . .	323
VI.	MR. HERITAGE'S VISITOR . . . . .	330
VII.	NEWS INDEED . . . . .	336
VIII.	MR. POINTDEXTER'S "HEY, PRESTO!" . .	344

THE FAIR IRISH MAID



# THE FAIR IRISH MAID

## I

### THE MAID IN THE MIST

OVER the soft greenness of the Kerry headlands, over the sober grayness of the Atlantic sea, a thick mist prevailed. Its fine whiteness blurred all things out of custom, tempering harsh and familiar objects, as cabin shoulder or haystack hump, to a subtle tenuity of texture and outline that gave them a sweetness and strangeness akin to the rare visions of delicate dreams, melting them into castle and palace and pagoda of fairy-land with an elfish ease. In that mother-of-pearl atmosphere the islands that jeweled the waves between the horns of the bay and flamed with splendor of emeralds whenever the glow of sunlight quickened them, now faded, like waning lamps, one after another, into the enmeshing dimness, were, as it seemed, absorbed into the wanness of the lost kingdom that was supposed to lie beneath those waters. Shore and ocean alike surrendered vitality and

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

vividness to the pensive, dissimulating pall of vapor. Ship and boat and sea-bird, stock and stone and tree yielded to its smooth, irresistible persistence, allowing it to muffle the hunger and thirst of the land and the loneliness of the Way of the Wild Geese in clinging, shifting films of mystery. Nothing could resist the lulling, obliterating influence of the mist. It flung final destruction on the gaunt remains of the ancient church, the church that in its greatness of the long ago had sent the treasure of its eloquence and the splendor of its wisdom to uplift and civilize England and Germany and Gaul, the church that had been harried by the Dane and harried by the Norman, and that had rallied from each harrying to fall at last before the Ironsides of Cromwell. Stealthily now the haze absorbed it, licking up crumbling arch and shattered chancel, leaving nothing visible of the little that man had suffered to stand. Even the Round Tower, the high, white Round Tower, that watched by the ruins of the church as erect a sentinel as it had watched over its glories, the Round Tower that was the pride of the country-side, even the Round Tower seemed to thaw, to dissolve, to melt, to cease a fierce age-long, firmly defined existence, and to become slender and pendulous as the waving, airy dwelling of the impalpable fairies that poise on the swaying heads of hoary dandelions or float on the flying thistledown and glide along the shining strings of gossamer.



## THE MAID IN THE MIST

Slowly, steadily, surely, the gloom deepened. It could not be said to darken, because it was so steadily white, but the blackest night that ever brooded over a sleeping world could not have been more triumphant in its obliteration of the things that mean life to the living. Here was one of Nature's conquests, one of her assertions of her final supremacy over the pride and the desire of man. In the awe of its quietude, in the hush of its certainty, it seemed to envelop and control the earth with the finality of the Dusk of Gods. Surely it would seem that when that veil lifted, if ever it did lift, it would reveal nothing better than a world returned to the tragedy of the arctic past. Kingdoms and civilizations, imperial cities, and thrifty villages must surely be reduced, one and all, to a little glacial dust; nothing remaining of all the pomp and luxury and ardor and hot blood but a frozen sea shuddering against a frozen land, the sea and the land alike no more than the cemetery of the ages, the grave of the tale of man.

The mist was the most ruthless of conquerors. It seemed to annihilate the body, it seemed to dissipate the soul. Its chill impenetrability was more triumphant than any swords that could slay the flesh, than any words that could kill the mind.

You might have the hand of a master, the heart of a hero, the brain of a genius, but in the controlling nullity of that gloom hand, heart and brain alike seemed helpless. To be caught in the toils of such

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

an atmosphere was to feel lost forever to warmth and color and cheer, to mirth and passion and appetite, to become, as it were, a formless prisoner in a formless prison, doomed to such an eternity of grayness as the ancients imagined to hover over the weary fields of Dis.

A philosopher sitting on that hilltop and peering through the encircling drifts might very well shiver at such dreary images and seek to reassure himself by an insistent recollection of the realities that lay beyond the milky clouds that shifted about him. Somewhere behind him in the obscurity lay the dominant island, presumably proud of the still raw-new union, no more than fifteen years wasted since the infancy of its birth; presumably pleased with its plump and periwigged Prince Regent; very certainly rejoicing to have held its own, and more than held its own, with that living incarnation of the Prince of the Power of the Air, who now sulked, a tethered eagle, diminished to the empire of the island called Elba. Away to the sage's left stretches the acreage of the kingdom that had been so lately the dominion of the same Prince of the Power of the Air, the land that had once been France and that had sought to swell immeasurably and name itself the world under the spur of a short, stout, pale Italianate adventurer that carried the crown of Charlemagne on his high forehead; and that now was France again and Bourbon—nothing changed, only one Frenchman the more. Straightaway in

## THE MAID IN THE MIST

front, thousands of salt miles away, Utopia lies hidden; Utopia, Atlantis, the Land East of the Sun, West of the Moon, Cogaigue Country, Lubberland, the Country of Youth, the Realm of Heart's Desire, where all men were free and ate hominy, where all men were equal and munched pumpkin-pie, where all men had a like chance to be chosen President of the greatest republic since Rome, and where all men were supposed to find delight in the whittling of sticks and the chewing of niggerhead. At the hour the philosopher might consider that very likely the drums of war were still rolling and the flags of war still flying even in that enchanted land, though the hands of peace had been clasped at Ghent and the second struggle between mother and child was diplomatically at an end. The philosopher, the dreamer, might well be tempted to believe that with Cæsar caged in Elba and such amends as might be made for a Washington in flames, the mist when it lifted would be as the curtain disclosing a well-staged allegory of perpetual peace.

As it happened, there was no philosopher on that headland, but there was indeed a dreamer lying on the soft, wet grass, dreaming tinted dreams in the thick of the mist. Yet the dreamer was no man, but a fair maid. The girl lay flat on the ground, with her chin propped in the cup of her jointed palms, staring out seaward as she had been staring when the wings of the sea-mist swooped over her and inclosed her, and with her all the world. She did not shift her

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

attitude, she did not quit her couch for its coming; she was a true child of the open air, and took sun, wind, mist, snow, each as it came and made the best of each. She had liked lying on the grass in the sun and seeing all that was to be seen so clearly; the smooth sea whose waves lapped over the spires and citadels of the buried city, the city whose bells you could hear of a still morning or evening ringing their matins and vespers to the sea-changed citizens. She liked now the lying on the turf in the mist and seeing nothing at all, or seeing, it may be, all the marvels and the mysteries that by the paradox of existence are more vivid in obscurity. In the darkness of mist as in the darkness of sleep the liberated mind may enter the kingdom of dreams, may meet on even terms with kings and queens and heroes, may sit at ease in the palace of the prince and the garret of the poet and the shelter of the star-gazer, may love and desire and achieve with a fierceness, a tenderness and a zest denied to the waker, to the walker in the light of day.

The girl was young, newly one and twenty, newly mistress of her heritage of woe; the girl was beautiful, with a beauty of black hair and purple-colored eyes, and soft, warm skin and clean, strong limbs and finely molded flesh. Health and strength flew their red flags in her smooth cheeks; love of the land and the sea and the day and the night shone in her eyes; she was such a one as you might expect to see stepping, short-kirtled, down some mountain-

## THE MAID IN THE MIST

glade in Thessaly, with a boar-spear in her hand, and seeing, wonder if you beheld mere girl or sheer goddess. For this girl had a curious quality of composition. Robust as she was and nobly made, there was an elusiveness about her vigor which hinted at divinity. If you could bring yourself to believe in the persistence of some of those exquisite half-gods of the ancient world, beings whose mortality was leavened with some privilege of Olympian power, you might be willing to admit that here was indeed a Dryad or an Oread that had abandoned the hills of Hellas for the hills of Ireland.

The girl thought none of these thoughts about herself; she would have laughed to hear such thought thrust into the formality of words and laid at her feet. She took herself as she found herself, with her youth, and her fairness and courage, and for all her poverty she loved the life she lived and the wretched folk that loved her, and the songs that the winds of Ireland sing. She was as sturdy as a savage and as healthy as a savage, and in a way she was as simple as a savage, for she followed an ancient faith frankly, and yet she held out both hands to the fairies. But there was a strong heart in that gracious body and a shrewd brain behind those glorious eyes.

## II

### VOICES

VOICES came up out of the vapor, voices clear, brisk and cheerful for the most part, but with the major briskness maimed here and there with petulance and querulousness that whined and sighed its way through the twisting sweeps of sea-fog. So might the voices of ancient prophets have sounded rumbling through the clouds to their worshipers. But these were no prophetic voices; they were the voices of men and women groping their way toward the place where the ruins of ancient ecclesiastical glories still faced wind and weather, toward the place where the great white obelisk of the Round Tower stood self-assertive, stalwart in its challenge to time, to the place on the sweet-scented, breezy headland overlooking the misted waters and the city buried beneath them, where the girl lay. All of the voices, clear, brisk, and cheerful, petulant and querulous, were familiar to the girl's keen ears, and she frowned a little as she heard them, tightening her lips. She liked the speakers well enough, and she knew that they loved her dearly, but she did not want them or any one just then.

## VOICES

Very certainly she did not want the company of Larry Flanagan, of Patsy Doolan, of old Molly Maloney, that was credited by popular superstition with the weight of a century of years, or of impudent little Biddy Sheehan, that for sheer devilment of word and deed could beat any child in the baronies that might be two years her senior. There was not the slightest doubt in the girl's mind as to who the invaders of her wrack-swathed solitude might be. She had the savage's simplicity of natural gifts, the simple certainty that never forgot a face, never forgot a voice. With a little shiver of impatience at the disturbance of her solitude, the girl sundered herself unwillingly from the soft, moist grass and rose to her feet. Already the rule of the opaque sea-fog was beginning to fail. A little wind stirred, dividing its folds, sending them adrift in curving wisps and trailing laniments. As she peered through the lifting curtains of dimness she could faintly discern a number of forms slowly ascending the slope, and her eyes confirmed the witness of her ears as to the identity of the intruders.

She felt an almost animal resentment at their coming. She had been so happy in her loneliness, in her queer day-dreams. She had forgotten the folk with the familiar voices; she had forgotten everything that was real and practical and pathetic; she had become for the hour unhuman, untroubled by mortality, poverty, care; unfretted by her daily sorrow for others, even for such others as those

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

that now by their coming had banished her visions.

She had been for the hour a fairy, or as good as a fairy, in that mist which is the kingdom of such spirits. She had been Meave the magnificent marshaling her army against Cuchulin, the hero of heroes; she had been the wonder woman that had lured Oisín to Tirn'an Oge; she had been her namesake laying her spell upon the great-hearted envoy of Finn, the son of Coul, and now she must shake herself free from her reverie because of the sound of voices that roused her from her waking sleep, that reminded her of life and the cruel things that were incidental or essential to life—hunger and cold, and servitude.

She had been dwelling in the kingdom of dreams, seeing enchanted sights, thinking ecstatic thoughts, and still she wished to linger there; but she might do so no longer, for the voices of the world were upon her, and the sound of them dissipated her visions, and brought her back to the world she knew so well, the world that was watered with tears and fanned with lamentations. Even while she regretted she chided herself for regretting, for the love of her heart was given to the unhappy children of her race; but even while she chided she continued to regret, for the dream had been sweet, and sweet dreams are swift to fly. Even as she stood erect the capricious morning began to change, asserting itself in sudden sunlight, scattering its mists and



## VOICES

rending their remnants into long, pale pennons, dissipating them over the sea. She knew that in a few seconds the world would be flooded with clear air; she knew that in a few seconds she would be robbed of her secrecy and delivered visible to those that were mounting the hill-road. She knew them well, knew them with affection, but she did not want speech with them just then. She turned and ran swiftly with the ease of one to whom running is as native as walking toward the Round Tower. The Tower, like all of its kind, had, in accordance with the defensive purposes for which it was erected, its only entrance at a distance from the ground. In this instance the doorway was only some six feet from the soil, and in old days the opening had been reached by a ladder which was lowered down when needed by some applicant for admission, and withdrawn again thereafter. In later days, however, when the Round Tower ceased to be of any use as a stronghold, and became instead an object of interest to the curious, some one had been at the pains to construct a rude flight of brickwork steps to the entrance, and up this stairway the occasional antiquary and casual traveler ascended at rare intervals to peer knowingly up the long shaft of the Tower, denuded long since of all the woodwork that divided it into floors, and murmur something foolish about the ancient world.

Up these steps the girl now sprang nimbly and plunged into the dark, cool recess of the antique

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

fortress. It was a familiar spot to her. It had been, as it were, the nursery and playground of her childhood. Here in the company of her nurse she had passed dazzling hours as the pair crouched together, sheltered from the insistent rain, while the oldster told the youngster wonderful tales of Finn and the Feni, of the Gilla Dacker, and the little weaver that killed threescore and ten at a blow, and of Gilla na Chreck, and the great doings of Lawn Dyarrig. For her that dark, damp, elongated vault was more fragrant than a rose-garden, more radiant than a terrace overlooking the sea, for it had been for her, and, indeed, still was, the cage that contained marvels. There were none now to share her taste, for the peasantry believed the Tower to be haunted and made testimony of their faith in a rigid abstention. Wherefore the girl had the place to herself whenever she wanted it, on wet days and windy days and infrequent days of snow when, even to her hardened out-of-doors body it seemed pleasant for a while to sit snug and warm and pass the time of day with ghosts and goblins, spooks and fairies. The girl glided into the familiar dusk and squatted on the ground with her hands clasped about her knees, waiting on the time when she would be free to go forth again.

The small company of peasants whose voices had disturbed Grania's solitude and driven her to take refuge in her Round Tower were slowly making their way up the hill-road. The party was composed of two elderly men, Larry Flanagan and Patsy Doolan,

## VOICES

one quite old and witch-like woman, Molly Maloney, and Biddy Sheehan, a little bare-legged girl about twelve years old. They were all miserably dressed and all appeared to be the victims of extreme want. They were indeed as poor as they seemed to be, and their way of life was extremely squalid and wretched, but their native vivacity asserted itself in the eagerness of their speech and gestures.

As they reached the summit Larry Flanagan stretched out his arms as if to greet the reassuring sunlight. He was a small man with red hair that flamed out from a round red face that shone like an apple. "The saints be praised!" he ejaculated, "for the blessed sunlight. I thought the mist would never lift, and then the Parliament-man wouldn't come."

The old woman, Molly, turned to him eagerly her ancient, wrinkled face, puckered with new lines of excitement. "Are you certain sure 'twas for this morning?" she questioned.

Patsy Doolan, who was as tall as Larry was short and as pale as Larry was red, answered for him.

"Sure it is," he cried. "Wasn't Foxy Conaher in the room making the punch, and didn't he hear every word the gentleman said? It was this very morning that he was coming to look at the old Tower, bless it!"

At this moment the little bare-legged girl gave a little whoop of triumph. "Hooroo!" she cried. "I see him on the hill-road!"

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Larry gave her an approving pat on the shoulder. "Bless your quick eyes!" he said, and turned to look down the hillside in the direction of the girl's extended finger.

What he expected to see was the sturdy, well-set-up form of the English stranger walking all alone on the road. That was what Foxy Conaher's words had led him to expect. It was in that expectation that the little company had rallied on the hilltop. Well, the English stranger was there sure enough, but the English stranger was not walking alone. He was accompanied by another, who moved with an easy grace of carriage that was markedly different from the bluff and somewhat uncompromising demeanor of the stranger. Larry knew well enough who the other man was, and the knowledge was not agreeable to him. Instantly the hopeful enthusiasm faded from his face, and he turned back to his companion with his hands lifted in tribulation. "Oh, murder, we're done for!" he wailed, as tragically as if he lamented the fall of empires. "His Lordship is with him."

At the sound of that simple sentence all his hearers groaned dismally, rocking themselves slowly backward and forward with every appearance of the deepest woe.

The old woman was the first to find speech for her grief. "'Tis he that has the hard hand and the hard heart for the poor people," she said, bit-

## VOICES

terly. "There'll be no chance to beg off the Parliament-man with my lord by his side."

The man Patsy nodded his long head in agreement. "True for you, Molly," he sighed.

Larry moaned inarticulately, finding his sorrow too profound for words.

The little girl seemed to be first to recover from the general depression. "Don't talk so much," she said, sharply, her pretty little face all puckered with a grin of impish intelligence. "Maybe his Lordship is only showing him the way. What is the matter with us that we couldn't hide behind the ruins a minute and see what happens?"

Here was a case of wisdom issuing from the lips of babes. Although the advice came from the youngest of the company, it found favor with the others, and was acted upon at once. The little company of beggars moved slowly into the ruins of the ancient church, where they easily concealed themselves very effectively from the pair that were now ascending the hill, the pair one of whom had been so anxiously expected, the other of whom was so religiously shunned.

### III

#### MY LORD CLOYNE

WHILE the mendicants are skulking in the cover of the ruins, while the girl is hiding in the Round Tower, while the two gentlemen are leisurely ascending the hill, there will be time for the presentation of a few pages of family history essential to the tale.

Marcus Loveless was the fifth Earl of Cloyne, in the kingdom of Kerry, which has nothing whatever to do with Cloyne in the County of Cork. The creation dated from the year 1688, the year of the great and glorious Revolution, when Sir Lupus Loveless, that had been equery to his Gracious Majesty King James the Second, seeing treachery eaten and drunk and inhaled on all sides of him, felt, with the sagacity of the rat, that it would be well for him also to turn renegade. The thought once entertained was promptly minted into action, and in reality none too soon, for the Prince of Orange was dealing out honors and rewards with so free a hand—the free hand of those that thrust their fingers in another's exchequer—that if he had come a little later Lupus Loveless might have found

## MY LORD CLOYNE

nothing left worth the sale of what he, having no saving sense of humor, called his allegiance. As, however, his belated infamy dated from the brief Stuart rule in Dublin, Sir Lupus was able to give to the Prince of Orange some particulars of information which aided materially the victory of the Dutch in the Battle of the Boyne, and earned the giver a richer reward than his mere personal adhesion could have hoped to command. He was promptly endowed with the estate of Sir Nicholas O'Hara, and also with the title of Lord Cloyne, which had just been conferred upon O'Hara by King James by Letters Royal Patent.

Thus there was a Lord Cloyne at St.-Germain in France in attendance upon exiled majesty and supporting with difficulty his empty dignity, and there was a Lord Cloyne occasionally in Kerry but more frequently in London that always proclaimed the orange to be the most exquisite of the fruits of the earth. The Lord Cloyne of Kerry and of London throve in the royal favor and laid by a pretty penny for the benefit of his heirs. These heirs proved extravagant, and extravagance was the characteristic of the succeeding generations, which was the reason why Marcus Loveless, the present Lord Cloyne, was more in Kerry than in London, and bemoaned the fact and his hard fate. His lucky brother Curtius had been left a small fortune by a distant aunt that had seen him in his youth and thought him a pretty boy, as indeed he was. This blessed bequest was

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

large enough to allow that engaging young gentleman to live, if not quite at his ease, at least at something very closely resembling ease, in London, and to taste daily those pleasures of environment and association which were denied to his elder brother for what seemed to him an intolerable and well-nigh interminable portion of the year.

The generation which witnessed the steady diminution of the fortunes of the Cloynes witnessed also a proportionate diminution in the fortunes, if the terms can be so used, of the O'Haras. Nicholas O'Hara, that went to France with his king, had a brother, Connor, that, by a timely subservience to the usurper, gained this much grace that he was allowed to retain the use and comfort of an old house and some farm-lands on the estate that has now passed into alien hands. His brother never forgave him for it, but the times were desperately hard, and Connor O'Hara had a family and no inclination for exile. Little good, however, came to the O'Haras from the act. If their holding of a few pitiful acres was tolerated by disdainful powers, that toleration would not give O'Hara after O'Hara the gift of keeping a tight grip on the meager property. Little by little it drifted in exchange for broad pieces into the possession of the successive lords of Cloyne, until toward the end of the eighteenth century the two brothers who represented the house—the French O'Hara blood persisted only on the distaff side—had a very pitiful patrimony to share.



## MY LORD CLOYNE

It was a curious fact that through all those hundred years between the fall of King James and the rise of the United Irishmen, the two families that belonged to Cloyne, the Lovelesses and the O'Haras, had kindred tastes; good hunters both, gamblers both; wild open-air men, good eaters and drinkers. So long as the pretense was possible, so the Lovelesses that were lords of Cloyne and the O'Haras that fasted upon a petty farm made good terms together and played at equality, the Lovelesses amiably ignoring the penal laws. Then came the upheaval, the desperate effort to destroy the unendurable, and that desperate effort swept the two boys of the O'Haras with it as running water sweeps a cork. Ninety-eight called to the O'Haras as it called to thousands of their countrymen, and they answered frankly and valiantly to the call, as the thousands of their fellow-countrymen did, and they paid the penalty for their patriotism as the other thousands did, the penalty of death or the penalty of exile. Now the O'Haras were represented by a girl named Grania, who lived, thanks to the tolerance of Cloyne Hall, rent-free in a little cottage with an old woman that had been her nurse before the bitter days of Ninety-eight and that had clung to her when the child was left alone in the world.

More of this child hereafter. Consider again, my Lord Cloyne, leisurely ascending that Kerry hillside in the company of Mr. Rubie, M.P., who

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

was plying him with questions about Ireland, which my lord answered with very little show of interest. My Lord Cloyne hated Ireland cordially, not, indeed, from any political feeling toward the native population, whom he neither liked nor disliked nor concerned himself about in any way. He disliked the country because his limited means compelled him to live for a large part of the year upon his estate, which was, of course, encumbered, and he envied the better fortunes of his two brothers whom fate permitted to dwell in the only place which my lord considered the proper spot for a gentleman—namely, London. He did his best, however, during his months of exile from the Mecca of his pleasures to recall to himself the conditions of his beloved capital by habiting himself after a fashion very unlike that of the majority of his neighbors. He rode and drove and walked abroad dressed in the latest mode of London, the latest mode that his London tailor was able to despatch. Fashions changed so swiftly in those brave days of high dandyism that it was impossible for any gentleman who was not at the same time a magician to appear in the wilds of Kerry in precisely the fashion of the moment of the demigods of St. James' Street. But my lord regarded himself with great approval in the exquisite arrangement of color and adjustment of stuff and symmetry of proportions that constituted the armor of the impeccable dandy. His taste was good; and he knew it, and groaned to think that its influence

## MY LORD CLOYNE

could not be eternally impressed upon the capital, and he astonished his ragged, hungry tenantry by the cunning harmonies and veiled graces of his attire.

He was never of the school that affects a loud coloring, a strident assertion, a touch of proclamation to admire. Delicate demi-tints were his delight, a suavity of muted tones. His eye admired and his body carried subtle relationships of cool color so happily interrelated that the sense of any individual predominance of hue was lost in the cunning variegation of the blend. My lord was admittedly the best-dressed man in Dublin, where he might if he pleased have reigned king of fops. But Dublin was not to my lord's taste; it was ever London or nothing with him. It is true you can play as hard, drink as hard, make love as persistently in Dublin as in London, and if you were of a belligerent temper you could calculate on far more opportunities of going out than on the English side of St. George's Channel. But though my lord liked gaming and drinking and love-making as well as any man of his time, he liked them, speaking broadly, only in London. Elsewhere they lacked for him the atmosphere, the sting, the stimulus. To his mind to get drunk in Dublin was just to get drunk; to get drunk in London was an ecstasy.

My lord would not have called it that—my lord never troubled to find elaborate explanations of his moods or tastes. But for him London was the

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

nearest approach to an idea of heaven that my lord's brain could formulate. He was hoping now, as he walked the hill-road, that the tender beauty of his blues and grays and silver did not appear to his companion to carry an air of belated splendor.

His companion, had he thought at all about my lord's dress, at all seriously, which indeed he did not, being a serious man with practical purposes guiding all his thoughts, would have pronounced him very gentlemanly attired, and there an end. For his own part, Mr. Rubie, M.P., affected the austerity of garb which to his mind became a strenuous politician, faithful to a great tradition and anxious to carry it on. His own attire in the dark-blue of his coat and decided yellow of his waistcoat recalled, as it was intended to recall, the days when Charles James Fox and certain Whig bloods, his companions, delighted to flaunt their sympathy with revolution in the eyes of scandalized and staggering ascendancy by clothing themselves in the blue and buff of Mr. Washington's Continental Army. A generation had passed since the American Republic had started on its strenuous career; General Washington had lain in Mount Vernon earth these fifteen years, and Mr. Fox had lain in Westminster these nine years; and yet the passions and the partisanship of the long past days seemed to be renewed. Once again the Republic and the Kingdom had closed in combat, and once again there were Englishmen who thought that the Republic was in the

## MY LORD CLOYNE

right, and did not conceal their opinions. Mr. Rubie was of this inclining, and though his attire was quite in accordance with the demands of contemporary fashion, though there was nothing in the blue on his back or the yellow on his stomach to affront the critical and fastidious, it served at the same time to assert a conviction, to recall a tradition. It pleased Mr. Rubie to think that while he went about decorous he discreetly enrolled the mode in the service of his political principles. Beyond this, all that Mr. Rubie asked of garments was that they should cover him from the weather, make him simply presentable, and should not cost too much.

## IV

### THE PARLIAMENT-MAN

MY lord came to a halt with his companion and pointed with his cane to the Round Tower. "There," he said, "inquisitive visitor, there is the Round Tower you fuss about."

Mr. Rubie regarded the Tower with great attention and an air of profound wisdom. The Round Tower was a fact to him, a fact to be estimated and tabulated in his compilation of Irish statistics. It was no more than that. "How interesting! how excessively interesting!" he protested, in a voice that seemed to challenge any question of his assertion. "Opinions differ as to its origin, I understand. Pray tell me your theory."

He turned a very grave face on his host as he questioned, but in contrast to the gravity of Mr. Rubie my lord seemed inclined to be hilarious. He laughed and took snuff and buried his snuff-box again in a pocket of his dove-colored waistcoat and laughed again as he swung his cane. "My dear fellow," he answered, gaily, "I have no theory about the damned thing. I have neither the leisure nor the inclination for the study of antiquities. Some

## THE PARLIAMENT-MAN

of the learned explain it whimsically enough. Phallic worship, you know." My lord made a fencing pass with his rattan at his companion as he spoke, which Mr. Rubie avoided with an air of dignity.

Mr. Rubie seemed pained at his air of levity. "My interest is serious," he answered solemnly.

Cloyne agreed with him, still laughing. "So is mine," he insisted. "It may perhaps surprise you to hear that the thing has a great interest for me just now."

Rubie seemed pleased at this apparent change of front on my lord's part. "Why, pray?" he asked.

"It never occurred to me," Cloyne explained, "that the Tower had any value, but it seems that it has, and I have actually got a purchaser for the silly thing."

"Surely," cried Rubie, "you would not be willing to part with so curious a relic of the past?"

"I would, indeed," Lord Cloyne answered, "and to do so this very day to Sir William Double, no less."

"Double, the banker?" Rubie questioned, with a note of surprise in his voice.

"Double, the banker," Cloyne echoed. "When he shuts his bank he becomes an antiquary and he has a house at Muswell Hill, with acres of grounds which are, as it were, the circus for his hobby-horse."

"What is his hobby-horse?" Rubie asked, politely.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

He knew very little about Sir William except the fact that he was rich and had a pretty wife.

Sir William took no part in politics, and therefore, from Mr. Rubie's point of view, he could scarcely be considered to exist. Still as the subject seemed to interest Lord Cloyne, Mr. Rubie was considerably attentive.

"The old put collects monuments," Cloyne answered, with a strong note of contempt in his voice.

Mr. Rubie was really surprised at the statement. "Monuments!" he repeated, with astonishment.

"Why, yes," Cloyne continued; "he has not only the itch to collect, but the ambition to make a museum of religious architecture, and he studs his park with all the buildings he can beg, borrow, or steal from all the countries of the world. Grecian temples, Roman temples, Hindu temples, Druidic temples, Mohammedan temples, anything of the kind delights him, and he pays high prices for the privilege of transplanting them from the places where they belong to the incongruous atmosphere of Muswell Hill. I am told the appearance of the place is as ridiculous as dismal."

Mr. Rubie looked and was horrified. This whimsical spirit of transplantation offended his sense of the fitness of things. "What a vandal!" he protested.

Cloyne went on, unheeding. "This is the way that he comes into my concerns. He and my brother Curtius were talking in White's the other day,



## THE PARLIAMENT-MAN

and Curtius, somehow or other, happened to speak of the Round Tower. Instantly my banking madman was agog. He scented a new trophy, and now nothing will serve him but that he must have my Round Tower to set up in that bedlam of a back garden of his, for himself and the madmen who envy him to gloat over, and for his sane friends to laugh at."

Rubie disapproved of Sir William's action. It seemed to him both tasteless and unfair to despoil Ireland of an ancient monument in this fashion. But for a moment his thoughts wandered from the Round Tower. "I have met Lady Double," Rubie said, "an amiable lady"—Lord Cloyne smiled faintly at the phrase—"but I know less of Sir William. Your tale does not tempt me to like him."

Cloyne clapped him on the shoulder. "Damn it, man," he cried, with the vehemence of desire in his voice, the fierceness of desire in his voice, "it means a thousand pounds in my pocket, and a thousand pounds means a devil of a lot to me. It means a London season for my lady—balls, routs, levees and all the rest that the poor soul longs for. It means St. James's and the Mall, Watier's, and Carlton House, and everything that makes life livable for me."

My lord's voice trembled a little with very genuine emotion as he thus enumerated some of the joys that his beloved London held for him. He thought of London as a lover thinks of his lass; he yearned for

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

London as the soldier of fortune yearns for conquest. He was standing in a place of amazing beauty, and he hated it, longed to exchange it for a smoky city and the gambling-rooms of clubs. Mr. Rubie listened to his avowal with a mixture of pity and contempt, which he strove not to exhibit. It was not that he disliked London. London meant as much to him in one way as it meant to Lord Cloyne in another. It was not that he had any much keener appreciation of the loveliness around him than my lord had. He would not have bartered Westminster for the Vale of Cashmere. It was Lord Cloyne's reasons for liking London that earned his disapproval. He could understand passionate enthusiasm for the extension of the franchise, for the abolition of slavery, for the promotion of international peace. But clubs, cards, debauchery, the company of the Prince Regent's set, that a man should sigh for these things disgusted him. It was, therefore, in sign of comprehension rather than of sympathy that Rubie nodded. "I see," he said, sourly.

"Of course," Cloyne admitted, "it will make a bit of a noise in the neighborhood, for it stands on a bit of land that belongs, or I should say belonged, to the O'Haras."

The name that was so familiar to Lord Cloyne conveyed nothing to his hearer.

"Who are the O'Haras?" Rubie questioned.

"A race of rebels and wreckers," Cloyne ex-

## THE PARLIAMENT-MAN

plained, "that used to live like little princes here till Orange Billy put us in their place a hundred years ago." His lordship spoke approximately. "Thanks to the good nature of my worthy predecessors, the O'Haras were allowed to hold a bit of their old domain on sufferance, as it were, and the thing has gone on, a case of toleration on our part and acceptance on theirs, from father to son."

"I see," Rubie said, with the manner of a man who is prepared to accept anything in the country he was visiting.

"But, of course," Cloyne continued, "they can't hold it in law."

"Why not?" Rubie asked, indifferently enough, for he was feeling no great interest in these unknown O'Haras, but his companion's reply sharply took from him his indifference.

"My dear fellow," Cloyne explained, "they are Papists."

Instantly Rubie was indignant, and showed his indignation with an angry cry of "Shameful!" as he recalled the rigors and tyrannies of the penal laws. He paused for an instant, as if to find word in which to express his emotion, and then went on, "When shall we in England have the decency, the justice to put all beliefs on an equality?"

Cloyne shrugged his shoulders. "Keep your philanthropy for Westminster," he said, lightly. "If you were an Irish landlord you'd whistle a different tune, I promise you."

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Rubie was annoyed at the complacency with which Cloyne accepted a condition of affairs which appeared to him to be odious. He believed very sincerely in his principles, and was absolutely honest in his ardors for reform and his zeal for religious and political liberty. "I have never been able to whistle any tune," he answered, stiffly, "and I hope that under no conceivable conditions would I ever forget the principles inculcated by Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox."

Cloyne laughed derisively. "Damn Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox for a pair of Whig hypocrites," he said. Then, noticing the frown that was gathering on Rubie's brow, and remembering that he was the host of this gentleman that cherished such strenuous opinions, he made him a little bow and continued in a voice that courteously suggested apology without being markedly apologetic. "No offense, sir; every man to his opinions. You call yourself a Whig, and I make no doubt that you are a good one, but I would wager a guinea you would grow out of it if you lived in Ireland."

Rubie looked displeased. "With your permission we will change the subject," he said, coldly. Then, as Cloyne's face expressed smiling agreement with his wish, he reflected that it was unreasonable of him to expect an Irish landlord of Lord Cloyne's type to appreciate those laws of conduct established by the immortal utterances of Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox. He looked to the Round Tower to fur-

## THE PARLIAMENT-MAN

nish a new theme of conversation. "I should like to make a sketch of that Tower," he declared. As he spoke he produced from a breast-pocket a small sketch-book and a pencil.

Cloyne looked at him with much surprise. "Good Lord! sir," he asked, "do you trifle with the arts as well as with politics?"

Rubie, fluttering the sheets of his sketch-book, answered with modest complacency. "I can do enough with the pencil to illustrate my notes and remind me of the objects of curiosity that I meet on my travels."

My Lord Cloyne had no hostility to the arts. His father had been considered a connoisseur in his day, a member of the Dilettanti Society, and had enriched the Hall with various pictures and antiquities, which, to his son's extreme annoyance, he had by a clause in his will prevented that son from selling. How often had my lord regarded with a malevolent scowl those torsos and altars and bustos, those Corregios and Pinturiccios and Murillos, which represented to him so much unavailable gold mines. Converted into cash, what pleasures might they not have provided; into what exquisite arrangements of coats and waistcoats and pantaloons might they not have been transmogrified! My lord had certainly a sense of color; my lord had certainly a sense of form; but he disdained the medium of canvas and the medium of marble; he aimed at the medium of raiment artfully adapted by a master

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

to the plastic body of man. So, by virtue of his judgment of cut and his subtlety in adjusting the harmonious relations of garment to garment, Lord Cloyne considered himself an artist, and felt no disdain for the Parliament-man with his brandished pencil.

Cloyne smiled compassionately. "Make your sketch by all means," he said, "but excuse me while you make it. My banker antiquary is traveling from Dublin with his wife and my brother Curtius." He drew out his watch as he spoke and consulted it. "He may be here at any time now, and I must be at the Hall to meet him." He made as if to go, but paused watching Rubie, who was brandishing his pencil in the air and making measurements of the Tower preliminary to putting point to paper.

"I wonder," he said, and there was a note of amusement in his voice, "if you will get a glimpse of the girl."

Rubie, who had got his measurements settled to his satisfaction and had already been putting in the first strokes of his sketch, paused in his work. "What girl?" he asked.

Cloyne explained. "The last of the O'Haras. Didn't I say that there was only a girl left of them now?"

Rubie shook his head and suspended the business of his pencil. "You made no mention of any girl," he asserted.

Lord Cloyne whistled. "Then I should have,"

## THE PARLIAMENT-MAN

he said, "for she is very well worth mentioning. She is the daughter of Martin O'Hara that was killed in the Ninety-eight. My revered parent, who was, if I may say so, without disrespect, a bit of a whim—witness our classical names, Marcus, Curtius, good Lord!—seems to have had a great kindness for the O'Haras, so he let this orphan babe and the old nurse that took charge of her live on here rent-free in a cottage on the sole conditions of showing the ruins to casual travelers."

Mr. Rubie's pencil paused in a moment of what appeared to him to be happy reproduction. "Very considerate, I am sure," he murmured.

My lord laughed softly. "I wonder," he said, "if he had any idea of making provision for his children. The girl is a beauty, but I advise you not to make love to her if you do see her."

Mr. Rubie resumed his sketching with a great air of dignity. "It is not my habit to make love to strange young ladies," he said drily.

Cloyne laughed. It was evident he was amused by some memory, but it was also evident, or would have been to some more attentive observer than Mr. Rubie, that was so busy with his sketch, that a mordant element of annoyance was blended with the ostentatious show of amusement.

"It is mine," he asserted, "and when I found one day that the wild child I had noticed indifferently in the neighborhood of the Round Tower had grown as it seemed all of a sudden into a most ador-

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

able woman, I naturally showed that I was inclined to be kind to her."

He paused, with a chuckle that tailed off into what seemed remarkably like a snarl, and the sudden change of tone had the effect of distracting Mr. Rubie for a moment from his painstaking reproduction of the venerable monument.

"How so?" Rubie asked, feeling somewhat curious in spite of himself at the persistence with which my Lord Cloyne seemed to dwell upon the history of this daughter of a fallen house, whose mission in life appeared to be to take charge of the very tower that he was then in the act of enshrining in his sketch-book. The answer came quite frankly. "I wanted to make her my mistress," Cloyne said, airily. He had no sooner uttered the words than the appearance of a deep flush upon the ruddy cheeks of Mr. Rubie warned him that he was tilting anew against some of the prejudices of his guest. Inwardly he cursed the puritanical rascal. Outwardly he condescended to explain.

"Oh, with all the honors, begad," he vowed. "I offered to take her to Dublin for a month, fine dresses, theatres, suppers, and all the compliments of the season, with an honorable assurance that I would provide some presentable gentleman to take her off my hands and keep her in comfort at the end of our little holiday. I ask you, could I say or do fairer than that?"

The expression on Mr. Rubie's face would have



## THE PARLIAMENT-MAN

shown to any one less heedless than My Lord Cloyne that he did not think my lord's conduct was anything but discreditable. When Mr. Rubie sighed over the vagaries of Mr. Fox he was, as it were, restored and solaced by reflecting upon the virtue of Mr. Burke, but My Lord Cloyne had nothing in Mr. Rubie's eyes to counterbalance his proclaimed licentiousness. Wherefore, Mr. Rubie frowned, and My Lord Cloyne, embarked upon his narrative, took no notice of his frown.

"The damned little baggage," he continued, thoughtfully. "She might have been a queen, the way she took me." Mr. Rubie felt a growing interest in this unknown girl. "How did she take you?" Rubie asked.

"Devilish uncivil, I can tell you," Cloyne answered, with an acrid smile of reminiscence. "I made my proposal as a man of honor should, and by Jove! I was quite prepared to make good all that I promised, if it cost me another farm. But bless your heart! I found that I had run up against a very amazon of virtue. Egad! I was staggered. Lord! she had a tongue. It was not that she got angry—a fine woman in a fury is a pretty sight, you know"—here Mr. Rubie, by an indignant shake of the head and a protesting wave of his pencil, seemed to proclaim that he knew nothing of the kind—"flaming cheeks, blazing eyes, tousled hair, heaving bosom, and the rest of the accessories. I know them well enough; I like them well enough;

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

but this girl was not a bit of that kidney. She does not rage, but she has such a cursed unpleasant way of laughing and keeping cool while she laughs, and staring you out of countenance for all your rank in the grand army of gallantry, and jeering and sneering, that, begad! she made me feel uncommonly like a fool."

Mr. Rubie felt, and, indeed, showed, a strong disapproval of my lord's narrative. His gorge rose—as he would have expressed it—at the libertine spirit of his lordship's speech, of his lordship's demeanor toward the great sexual problems of life. But even while he condemned, he was honest enough to wonder vaguely whether or no a certain wicked spirit of envy ladled the salt into his condemnation in tablespoonfuls. The uncomfortable doubt charged his disapproval with spitefulness when he spoke.

"As bad as that?" Rubie asked, with a faint touch of malice in his voice.

"Worse," Cloyne admitted, with the cheerfulness of a schoolboy. "When I tried to redeem the situation by action, to prove my passion 'more by deed than word,' as Byron says, I protest the encounter showed no better result for me. Naturally, I did what any one in my position would have done. I saw that the preliminaries of courtship, the skirmishings, had failed, and I sought to redeem the situation by a general attack."

My lord paused, apparently overcome by the rec-

## THE PARLIAMENT-MAN

ollection of his wrongs. Mr. Rubie, inclined to be malicious in the strength of his integrity, and conscious that my lord confessed defeat, pressed for particulars of the disaster. "What did the young lady do then?" he inquired.

My lord grinned at the memory. "Why," he said, "the vixen picked up a pitchfork and threatened to stick it into me if I didn't mend my manners. Begad! she'd have done it, too, I believe, and I was wearing a waistcoat that day that I wouldn't have had scratched for the world. It was a dream that came to me after a careless study in a case of minerals in the library. The cool smoothness, the calm coloring of some of the stones, inspired me. Nature, believe me, is our best guide in our attire, and I evolved a waistcoat with subtly blended hints of agate and jade and bloodstone that was a masterpiece of tact. I swear, I trembled for it when the child brandished her trident."

"Only your waistcoat?" Rubie questioned, slyly.

My lord took up the implied challenge briskly. "Oh, I'd have risked my skin for a kiss," he insisted, "but, damn me, not Catford's latest."

Mr. Rubie was no authority in the sartorial world, and allowed himself to be tailored by an honest fellow in Bloomsbury, but even he could not be ignorant of the genius of Catford, the tailor of the great, and he nodded a reluctant recognition of his fame.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Cloyne continued. "No girl in the world is worth such a masterpiece."

Mr. Rubie shook his head. "I cannot believe," he said, "that any human being really feels like that about his clothes."

Cloyne regarded him with an expression of pity. "You never had any imagination, my dear fellow. But who are you to preach, anyhow. Why do you wear that blue coat and that yellow waistcoat, for instance?" my lord asked, with knowledge of the answer, for he was aware of the fact that certain English sympathizers with the United States were pleased to do as Mr. Rubie was doing, were pleased to do what Mr. Fox had done.

"That is very different," Rubie answered, pompously. "They represent a political tradition."

Cloyne laughed mockingly. "Because your idol Fox chose to sport blue and buff to show his sympathy with the late Mr. Washington and his rebels, you choose to show your sympathy with the present generation of Yankees by wearing a crude and assertive combination of hues. My dear sir, if you will allow me to say so, you blaspheme, you confuse political opinions, which are of no importance, with questions of tint and shade and tone and match, which are of overwhelming importance. In a word, as regards the mode, you are hopeless. You have no appreciation of the beautiful."

"Pardon me," Rubie answered, solemnly, "I am

## THE PARLIAMENT-MAN

impregnated with the principles of Mr. Burke's great treatise on the Sublime and the Beautiful."

Cloyne held out his hands in a gesture of comic despair. "Good Lord, Burke again!" he wailed. "Between Burke and Fox, I protest, you are fit for bedlam."

"You know not what you say," Rubie said, and resumed his sketch.

"Well, I must hasten to meet my coming guests," Cloyne answered. "But once again let me warn you, if you do happen to come across Miss O'Hara, to leave love-making on one side."

Mr. Rubie made a gesture of impatient protest, of which my lord took no notice. "Not only is she desperately well able to take care of herself," he continued, "but I hear now that she has a swain in these parts, a certain Dennis Tirowen—a small farmer of the kind that would like to be a gentleman"—my lord said this with a certain show of contempt. "He is big and strong and reported to be quarrelsome."

"He shall have no cause to pick a quarrel with me," Mr. Rubie asserted, sententiously, busily plying his pencil.

Cloyne laughed again. "Well," he said, "you are warned against maid and man, and so I leave you to destiny."

Gaily My Lord Cloyne waved his hand, gaily My Lord Cloyne twirled his cane as he started on his

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

descent of the hill, leaving Mr. Rubie with pursed mouth and puckered eyebrows, busy with his sketch, and busy, too, though very much against his will and judgment, with the thoughts that Lord Cloyne's talk had called into being.

## V

“BARREN, BARREN, BEGGARS ALL”

MR. RUBIE felt a sense of relief at the departure of Lord Cloyne. While he recognized the politeness of his host, his lordship's lack of seriousness grated upon the nature of the man, who took life very seriously. Mr. Rubie considered it shocking that a man could think and talk of trivialities while there existed grave problems to engage the mind, and he felt himself ill at ease in the company of a person who wanted to talk of coats and waistcoats while he wanted to talk of affairs and economics.

All the same, Mr. Rubie might not have felt so elated at the absence of Lord Cloyne if he could have guessed at the consequences which that same absence was to entail. While he plied his pencil briskly, putting in the strokes with a firmness that proved him a fairly competent draftsman, he was peacefully unaware of the assault that was now to be made upon his principles and his pocket. Heads peeped cautiously from the shelter of various fragments of the shattered church; when these heads were satisfied that the coast was clear and

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

my lord out of sight they, with their pertaining bodies, emerged from their lair and descended upon the stranger. Suddenly Mr. Rubie, busily working, found himself environed by importunity.

The beggars clustered around him, naked, as it were, hyperbolically, and practically unashamed. Gaunt, haggard faces glowered at him; gaunt, haggard hands entreated, demanded; hoarse voices supplicated, whining, cajoling, detestable. The perturbed senses of the astonished traveler, thus rudely taken unawares, multiplied their numbers, multiplied their voices; he seemed at first to be the centre of a very mob, and it was not for some few seconds that he was able to resolve his tormentors into their actual numbers.

They gabbled and chuckled about him; he found them like the misshapen specters of an uneasy dream, and he was vehemently and vainly eager to be rid of them. He was to learn that their importunities were not to be easily dissipated. They had not ventured to assert themselves while his lordship was present, for they knew and feared his heavy hand. But the strange gentleman was another matter. He looked amiable, might, surely must, prove amenable to solicitations; the attempt was worth the making.

Larry postured before him with extended hands and features twisted into a grin of supplication. "Sure it is the kind face your Honor has," he whined.

Biddy, the little bare-legged girl, pushed her way



## “BARREN, BARREN, BEGGARS ALL”

impudently in front of him and stared up with a roguish smile. “And the kind face means the kind hand,” she said, emphatically.

The man Patsy pawed the air as if he were trying to soothe the stranger with amiable gestures. “Sure your Honor will spare a shilling,” he said, coaxingly, “to drink your Honor’s health.”

The old woman Molly hobbled up close to him, peering at him with her wrinkled face. “Give me the price of the tay, agra,” she implored.

The politician resented the interruption of his task, and he had the economist’s dislike for mendicinity. He tried to go on with his task without paying any heed to the petitionings of the beggars, but the beggars were not to be put off with indifference, and persisted in their entreaties. “Confound you, go away!” Rubie vociferated. “Don’t you see I’m busy?” But he might as well have hoped to see the ruins disappear before the sound of his voice as the determined supplicants that environed him.

“Sure,” said the old woman, whose voice of entreaty now seemed to be slightly blended with menace, “a gentleman with such a kind face on him would never be too busy to find an old woman her tay money.”

“Or a pint of porter for a poor old man,” Larry insinuated, “and maybe a paper of shag to put in his pipe.”

As Molly begged so Bidy begged; as Larry implored so Patsy implored. Then all four voices

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

roared together, a confused chorus of clamorous demand. It seemed a pandemonium to the bewildered and indignant politician.

Mr. Rubie closed his pocket-book with a snap, thrust it into his pocket, and addressed his assailants in his best House of Commons manner. "I am firmly opposed to mendicity," he declared, "and disapprove of indiscriminate charity."

The little bare-legged girl applauded him lustily. "Listen to the fine words that flow from him," she cried, "the beautiful turns of his speech."

The man Patsy came close to Mr. Rubie and entreated, "Just a pint of porter, your Honor," in a wheedling voice.

The old woman thrust her claw-like hand close to Mr. Rubie's face. "Only the price of the tay," she demanded, fiercely.

Wherever Mr. Rubie turned, one of the crowd faced him—now the old witch, now the girlish imp, now the red, short Larry, now the long, pale Patsy. Mr. Rubie felt that it would be undignified to take to his heels, and he plainly saw that any slower mode of progress would mean the escort of the beggars for all the length of his return journey. Yet he was obdurate in his resolve not to be cajoled into satisfying their demands, and so he grew hotter and angrier as the noise increased, and those that made it showed no sign of willingness to take their dismissal at Mr. Rubie's command.

While the din was at its worst it was suddenly

## “BARREN, BARREN, BEGGARS ALL”

silenced as if by magic, and the Englishman, turning to see what had worked this wonder, found himself face to face with a beautiful girl who seemed to have come upon the scene by enchantment. The noise of the beggars petitioning had risen to Grania's retreat in the Round Tower and brought the girl to the door, whence she saw, and must needs smile, a little at the sight, the stranger being badgered. But if she smiled at the scene, she would by no means allow it to continue. Swiftly she descended the ladder, and, flinging herself into the thick of the little mob, scattered its members apart with fierce words of reproof, to which the beggars listened in silence.

Grania was really angry, for all that she had been amused by the plight of the beleaguered visitor. “For shame!” she cried, “for shame!” as she addressed in turn each of the offenders by name. Mr. Rubie, all amazement, listening to and staring at this divine fairy that had so suddenly hurled herself upon his enemies, heard so much and understood it. He heard much more, but understood no word. For Grania, who had begun her scolding in English, in order that the Sassenach might appreciate her disavowal and disapproval of the conduct of her friends, became instantly unwilling to berate her compatriots in a speech intelligible to the stranger, and so slipped swiftly into the Gaelic. In the Gaelic she upbraided them with a vehemence that impressed the uncomprehending Rubie and that reduced the beggars to abject subjection.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Mr. Rubie was far from being an impressionable man, but what he now witnessed impressed him as he had never been impressed since the night, now long ago, when he had been taken to the playhouse and had seen a famous actress in the part of Portia. He gaped at the glorious girl who was clad like a beggar and who carried herself like a queen; he observed with dazzled gaze the color of her lips and eyes and hair, the suave symmetry of her figure, the buoyancy of her youth; he listened with bewitched ear to the fluent music, like the music of running water, of that to him unknown tongue. Mr. Rubie in his enchantment would have been content to be denounced by such a lovely creature. To be defended by her was a rapture akin to the winning of a close division.

The old woman, speaking the first, and speaking in English, with a view to touching the heart of the Parliament-man, addressed Grania apologetically, as reverently as if she were addressing a queen. "Sure, Miss Grania, darling," she pleaded, "there's no harm in asking a gentleman with a benevolent face on him, for a poor little bit of a sixpence."

There was a murmur from the others which implied, under submission to Grania's better judgment, agreement with Molly's plea, but it faded into silence before Grania's instant disapproval. "Yes, there is, great harm," the girl answered, severely; and the old woman and the old woman's companions accepted the reproof humbly, shrinking into them-

## “BARREN BARREN, BEGGARS ALL”

selves before the anger of one that was little more than a girl, but who was a girl of the O’Haras, the child of a hero of Ninety-eight.

Mr. Rubie meanwhile, honestly amazed at all that was happening, had stood open-mouthed and dumfounded, gaping and staring at the altercation between his late opponents and the beautiful girl who seemed to dominate them so completely. All his confidence, his composure, his cocksureness had momentarily vanished. His House of Commons manner had fallen from him like a cloak; he was just an ordinary, commonplace looker-on. With an effort he rallied, pulled himself together, assured himself that this would never do. Spurring himself to action, Mr. Rubie advanced toward Grania, raising his hat and assuming something of the manner that was wont to impress St. Stephen’s. “Have I the honor,” he said, with what he believed to be a happy blend of suavity and dignity, “of addressing Miss O’Hara?”

Grania nodded and smiled, and it seemed to the astonished politician as if he had never seen a woman smile before. “You have that,” she said, simply.

The Member of Parliament made her another bow and presented himself formally. “My name is Rubie,” he said, “John Rubie, Member of Parliament. I am Lord Cloyne’s guest at the Hall. I was engaged in making a sketch of yonder Round Tower when these good people came upon me, and, I must confess, took me by surprise. You

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

must not think me close-fisted, Miss O'Hara, or callous to distress, but I have strong views about indiscriminate charity."

Had Mr. Rubie been addressing the assembled Parliament, had he been delivering himself to a meeting of some earnest society for the promotion of this and the propagation of that, had he been exchanging ideas at a tea party in one of the elegant villas of South London that sheltered so much philanthropy and aimed at so much reform, his manner would have been admired, his words would have been esteemed and his sentiments would have been applauded. But the wisest of economists is at a disadvantage when he expounds his views to an audience that knows nothing whatever of economics, that knows, indeed, of little more than the fact that it is always hungry, always ill-clad, often cold and often wet. What the Parliament-man denounced as indiscriminate charity was to those poor wretches as the unexpected manna, as the rare favor of fate that flung for an instant, capriciously, some pitiful share of the good and desirable things of the world into their lean hands and their drawn stomachs.

Therefore the little fellowship of wretchedness listened to the expression of Mr. Rubie's economic theories with a manifest disapproval for which Bidy alone ventured to find voice. "Sure you said that before, darlin'," the bare-legged girl said, with a chuckle.

## “BARREN, BARREN, BEGGARS ALL”

Her companions grinned their satisfaction, and Mr. Rubie endeavored with no great measure of success to look as if he had not heard and to conceal his annoyance. Grania lifted a reproving finger and reduced Bidly to silence. Then she turned to the irritated politician, and the sound of her voice soothed his exasperated nerves.

“You are quite in the right of it, Mr. Rubie,” she said, “and I hate to see my country-people begging of strangers.”

Rubie protested. He was himself again, and as ready to be pompous on the soil of Kerry as on the floor of St. Stephen’s. “Please don’t call me a stranger, Miss O’Hara,” he entreated. “We are all one people now under the Union—sharing common hopes, common interests, common purposes—” The swell of his eloquence was suddenly stayed.

“Are we that same?” Grania interrupted, ironically. “Why, it’s fine news you’d be telling me if it only chanced to be true. Would you be saying that we have common laws, too?”

Mr. Rubie thought of the penal laws and changed his note. He began on a fresh tack. “If these poor creatures are really in want,” he said, indicating with a forensic gesture the little riot of beggars who huddled together in manifest dejection, with their gaze fixed wistfully on the girl whom they so faithfully obeyed, though her coming had shattered their hopes.

Again Grania interrupted him. “Do you think,

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Mr. Rubie," pointing to the four people whose rags would have been disdained by any self-respecting scarecrow, and whose faces were pinched with hunger and suffering, "they dress like that for the pleasure of the thing?"

"Well, you know," Mr. Rubie suggested, "we have professional beggars in England." Mr. Rubie felt and looked embarrassed. The misery of the mendicants was patent enough, and he felt remorseful for his economic sternness. He tried to justify himself.

"These troubles are genuine enough," Grania said, sadly, and for a moment the bitter water filled her eyes.

The beggars heard her, the beggars saw her. They raised a little wail like a keen.

Mr. Rubie was touched to a degree that would have surprised him if he had had time to analyze his emotions. "Then pray allow me to offer some small relief," he said, earnestly. He put his hand in his breeches pocket as he spoke and pulled out a handful of silver. He turned to the beggars whose presence he had resented so hotly a few minutes before. "Here!" he cried, and held out his hands with its generous contents toward the poor creatures who hurried eagerly forward with gleaming eyes and clawing fingers.

But Grania again intervened between them and the stranger. "Don't run from one extreme to the other, Mr. Rubie," she said, quietly, as with one



## “BARREN, BARREN, BEGGARS ALL”

extended hand she restrained the advance of the beggars and with the other she waved aside the proffered bounty. “If you mean to be generous I will make bold to borrow this crown.” She took out a crown piece delicately from the little pile of silver that lay on Mr. Rubie’s broad, expanded palm and held it out to Larry, who shambled hurriedly toward her. “Here, Larry,” she said, and her voice was as gentle now as it had been stern a while ago; “here is a crown for you all from this kind gentleman. Take it and divide it fair among the lot of you; divide it fair, I say, for if you don’t I shall hear of it, and have a small word of my own to say to you.”

Larry touched his forehead respectfully, first to the girl and then to the Englishman. “Yes, Miss Grania,” he said, humbly. Inwardly he reflected that after all they had not done so badly. The crown divided up would amount to more than a shilling apiece, and they could scarcely have dared to hope for more than a sixpence each from the stranger, so the morning had not been unprofitable.

At a gesture from Grania the little crowd of beggars, after much shuffling and scraping, trooped off in the direction of the village, and Grania and Mr. Rubie were left face to face.

## VI

### SOME STATISTICS

**M**R. RUBIE gave a little apologetic cough. "I hope you do not think me stingy—" he began.

But Grania stayed him, smiling. "You have just proved the contrary," she asserted. As she spoke she seated herself comfortably on the hillside, and invited Rubie with a gesture to do the like. As he obeyed he felt, to his surprise, like a subject in the presence of his queen.

Seated, he pursued his theme. "But on principle I detest mendicity," he continued, with the air of one who was accustomed to have his principles and his expositions thereof respected.

Grania only shrugged her shoulders. "If you make slaves of people," she said, quietly, "they will acquire the vices of slaves."

Rubie protested, pawing the air, against such extravagances of thought and speech. "Really, Miss O'Hara," he cried, "slaves! What an expression. I admit to errors in the past, but now, the Union—our best intentions—"

Grania showed a decided determination to change the subject. "It's no use our talking politics, Mr.

## SOME STATISTICS

Rubie," she said, emphatically. Then seeing that Mr. Rubie looked somewhat crestfallen at her abruptness, she continued, more amiably. "What are you doing in Ireland, if I may make so bold as to ask?"

Rubie beamed anew at this suggestion of interest in his doings, though he was inwardly astonished at his pleasure in the girl's condescension. "Why, Miss O'Hara," Rubie explained, "I have crossed St. George's Channel to see something of Ireland for myself, that I may be the better equipped to speak with authority in the House. I conceive that Irish affairs are worthy of the pains of a personal inspection."

Grania was vastly amused by the self-importance of the traveler, but she kept her amusement sedulously to herself. "They are so," Grania agreed, cordially.

Mr. Rubie leaned forward and addressed the girl in a low, confidential voice, the low, confidential voice that he used on occasions when he made his way to the Treasury Bench to breathe some wisdom into a minister's ear.

"I want to know Ireland," he said seriously, "to absorb Ireland, to exhaust Ireland. I mean to be the one man in the House of Commons that knows all about Ireland."

Grania looked at the stolid face, whose solidity was now slightly shaken by the earnestness of his purpose. He was scarcely less of a marvel to her

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

than she was to him. There were many types of men in the kingdom of Kerry, from my Lord Cloyne to Larry, but there was never one of them that bore the least resemblance to the serious and pompous personage who seemed convinced that it was his mission to set the world in order. There was no shadow of a smile upon her face as she asked him quietly, "Is that all you are after?"

Mr. Rubie nodded agreement. It seemed, after all, a little thing for a man of his power and standing.

"So," he continued confidently, "I have come over to collect all the statistics I can about the country."

Grania looked at him thoughtfully, clasping her hands about her knees. The word was not a familiar one to her. "What do you mean by statistics?" she asked.

Mr. Rubie stared at her in amazement. What, he asked himself, could a young woman have been doing with her life to be unaware of the very meaning of statistics, to say nothing of their vast range and economical value? He consented graciously to explain. "Oh, you know, acreage, mileage, crops, population, crime, emigration, religions, factions, and so on and so on." His explanation trailed off, because he felt vaguely and uncomfortably conscious of a certain quizzical expression on Grania's face and a certain mocking light in Grania's eyes, which decidedly disconcerted him.

Grania leaned a little nearer to him and smiled.

## SOME STATISTICS

“If you like,” she said, “I can give you some statistics about Ireland.”

Mr. Rubie, who had unwillingly shrunk a little before that quizzical expression which he believed he had detected, expanded again under the influence of this offer. After all, the young lady might prove more sensible than she seemed. She certainly was lovelier than any of the young ladies he used to meet in the houses of the philanthropists and politicians of the Clapham School. But that was no reason for regretting that her views of life appeared so hopelessly impractical. Perhaps, after all, he might get some valuable facts from the girl. “Can you?” he cried, briskly. “That will be very obliging of you.”

“I can give you some of the real statistics,” she said, “the statistics that mean things.” She paused for a moment, to let her words sink into the mind of her listener and to note the ripples of satisfaction they raised on that round face. Then she asked, softly, “Do you know what a merrow is?”

Mr. Rubie shook his head. He was one of those persons who do not like to have to admit that there was anything they did not know, but in this instance he was wholly at a loss. A merrow might be some article of commerce or a member of a secret society or some piece of wearing apparel, for all that he could tell. “I fear I do not,” he admitted, shaking his head.

Grania expounded unto him, and as she spoke her

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

voice had a lilt in it as if she were singing a song. "A merrow is a sea-maiden, a mermaid, a beautiful creature half woman, half fish, that swims in the still water among the cliff-caves and sings songs that make men mad. I have heard her a thousand times."

Mr. Rubie was perplexed. He did not quite know whether to be amused or indignant. This was not the kind of answer he had expected when he avowed his thirst for knowledge. Yet the girl did not seem to be laughing. Her face was grave and her eyes were shining and she seemed to find a pleasure in her words. "I am afraid I do not follow you," he said, rather stiffly.

Grania did not seem to heed what he said. She went on with her theme, and her voice still had in it the ripple of singing. "Then there is the banshee—it is most important that you should know all about the banshee, the gray, wan woman that waits on a great house and wails for the death of its darlings."

Mr. Rubie looked and was extremely puzzled. He smoothed his chin dubiously. "Very interesting, I'm sure," he said, very politely, but his politeness had no effect in staying the stream of Grania's eloquence.

"And then there is the leprechaun," she went on, "with his green coat and his red cap, that can make your fortune if you catch him. And the pooka, the goblin that goes like a horse and rides across your path to your undoing. And all the rest of the little people, the only Irish you can't drive out of Ireland."

## SOME STATISTICS

Mr. Rubie felt that it was time to assert himself if he was to retain any of his sense of the dignity of a self-respecting Member of Parliament engaged upon a self-appointed mission. "You are making game of me," he said, emphatically.

Grania swung back in an instant to her every-day way of speech and shook her head vigorously. "Making game of you! Bless you! no, I am telling you true things. You want to know all about the Irish, and I am telling you of the things that the Irish see, that the Irish believe in, that the Irish understand better than you understand your facts and your figures."

Rubie protested in a shocked voice. "Really, Miss O'Hara, I fear these are not the facts I left London to seek."

"But these are the facts you left London to find," Grania replied, vehemently, "if you have only the eye that can see and the ear that can hear. The fairies, the wonder-world, the Land of Youth. If you go away knowing nothing of them and what they mean to us you have only wasted your time. Better have remained at home talking nonsense in Westminster."

Mr. Rubie could scarcely believe his ears when he heard such blasphemy. "Good God! madam," he cried, "you don't mean to tell me that you believe in fairies and mermaids and goblins like horses!"

Grania grinned at him mischievously. "What

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

harm if I do?" she asked. "They are more real to me than laws of Parliament or Acts of Union. There are times when they seem to me the only real things in the world, they and what they mean to me."

Mr. Rubie looked at her thoughtfully for some moments without speaking, rubbing his chin the while. Then he said, slowly, "I wonder what Mr. Burke or Mr. Fox would have said to such an astonishing statement."

Grania did not seem to be much impressed by Mr. Rubie's speculation. "From what I've heard tell of the pair of them," she said, "I believe they would have understood it better than you seem to do. On, man in the blue coat and the buff waistcoat, do try to see that there are things undreamed of in your philosophy that are no less than the breath of life to others. There is more of God's real truth in a fairy tale told by a turf fire than in all the debates at Westminster."



## VII

### THE MAN WITH THE FIDDLE

MR. RUBIE, as he watched the girl's animated face and listened to the girl's animated words, began to find that his situation was very enjoyable indeed, if a trifle unusual and perplexing to a methodical economist of plain habit of life and mind. He had certainly come to Ireland with the settled intention of amassing a quantity of fact which should prove invaluable to him in the course of Irish debate in Parliament, and might afterward form the substance of a handsome volume of personal impressions and philosophical reflections upon the country. But he certainly had not, when he set out prosaically upon his travels, any idea that his experiences would include such a meeting and such a talk as this present. Here he was, a grave and sober member of Parliament, with an established position in the House, with Treasury Bench ambitions and a profound belief in the authority of statistics, seated on an Irish hillside under the shadow of an Irish ruin and talking familiarly with a beautiful girl that was dressed like a peasant, a girl whom he had never seen or

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

heard of before that hour, about fairies and gnomes and goblins and the like.

Mr. Rubie had not talked of fairies, he had not given goblins a thought since his earliest childhood. Even as a child he had been practical, inclined rather to records of voyages and explorations, and the advantages commercial and territorial that they brought to England, than of those voyages which poets and dreamers make in their enchanted shallops over the moonlit waters of fantasy to the Fortunate Islands and the kingdoms of romance. It is probable that if such a conversation could have arisen in his own country, if any of the many estimable young ladies he was wont to encounter in the refined society of Clapham Common had attempted to turn the talk to fairy-land, he would have resisted it more stubbornly and scornfully. But he was compelled to admit, against his better judgment, but, oddly enough, not altogether against his wish, that there was something in the atmosphere around him—the smell of the grass and the smell of the sea, and the faint smell of burning turf blown toward his nostrils by the mild December wind from the distant village—that seemed to exercise a narcotic influence upon his mind and make it ready to accept the seemingly incredible, unready to protest against the fantastical propositions of Grania.

He looked at the girl's flushed face and her bright eyes, and he listened to the enthusiasm with which

## THE MAN WITH THE FIDDLE

she defended the veritability of those many-shaped dwellers in the dominions of dreams, and as he looked and listened he felt less and less like the formal politician that it was his pride to be, and more and more like one that drifts into a dangerous mood of acquiescence. Under the influence of such a mood he might, were he taken unawares, be ready to admit that a ballad might be as useful as a Blue Book, a fairy tale as precious as a Parliamentary Report. If the mood was unusual to Mr. Rubie it certainly was far from unpleasant, and he permitted himself to yield to it and would have been glad if it had persisted, but it was not to persist. Even at the moment, when Mr. Rubie was most ready to recognize the sovereignty of Oberon and the hierarchy of his imps, interruption came with a new-comer who emerged from the ruins of the old church.

The new-comer was a young man of a good height, a sturdy carriage, a handsome countenance, and a pleasing appearance. Though he was habited little better than a peasant, he had not the peasant's bearing, with its time-enforced suggestion of servility. On the contrary, this youth in his overworn, faded raiment bore himself with an air of surly independence that was wholly untainted by any appearance of a desire to curry favor. The frieze he was clad in might be worn to the thread, but the body it veiled bore itself with an assertion of equality with all the world that was frankly arrogant and patently

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

native. Mr. Rubie noticed that the intruder carried a fiddle under his arm, and took him to be what he was not. He believed that he saw before him one of those itinerant musicians of whom he had heard from all those that professed to know anything of Ireland, those fiddlers that drift from village to village, from wedding to wedding, from wake to wake, striving here to accentuate hilarity, seeking there to dissimulate grief, and are content to be paid for their pains with a little food, drink, a few pence, and much applause.

Mr. Rubie found somewhat to his surprise that he resented the interruption to his conversation with a feeling of disapproval quite unworthy of a disciple of Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox. Although he regarded the conversation he had just been having with Grania as undoubtedly nonsensical, he had discovered to his amazement that there might be, even for a promising Member of Parliament, a certain amount of satisfaction to be derived from the talking of nonsense. Certainly it would have pleased him to continue talking nonsense on that Irish hillside with that Irish girl for an indefinite period of time, and he would not have exchanged the grotesque information that Grania had given him of the ways of fairy-land for the most important communications on agriculture that he could have received from the chairmen of a hundred Boards of Guardians. He found now, on awakening, as it were, from his dream, that he had felt surpris-

## THE MAN WITH THE FIDDLE

ingly young as he listened to Grania's legends. Mr. Speaker and the Opposition and the Treasury Bench and the philanthropists and the ladies of Clapham Common had faded into vagueness, and for the moment Mr. Rubie was a child again, a child in the nursery, and enraptured by a nursery rhyme. Now, suddenly, the spell was broken by the appearance of this stalwart intruder whose coming so much displeased Mr. Rubie.

If, however, Mr Rubie resented the coming of the young man, the young man seemed to resent quite as keenly the presence of Mr. Rubie. He stared at him steadfastly with an air of unamiable surprise, and then sent to Grania a questioning glance. The girl had turned eagerly toward the young man the moment that he made his appearance, and Mr. Rubie noticed with a feeling of resentment as extreme as it was unreasonable that the presence of the young man gave the young woman a gratification that she was at no pains to conceal. It did not take the active young man a long time to ascend the hill-slope from the ruins to the spot where Grania and Mr. Rubie were standing, but it was long enough to allow Mr. Rubie to experience and to cherish feelings which if he had been aware of their existence in another breast he would have described and condemned as jealousy. In himself he sought to justify them as the natural emotion consequent upon the interruption of an original and unconventional conversation.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

“Good-day to you, Grania,” the young man said, directly looking at the girl.

Rubie instantly noticed that the young man, for all his humble appearance, spoke in an educated voice whose tones were very melodious.

The girl greeted the youth joyously. “Good-day to you, Dennis,” she said, but the warmth of her greeting did not succeed in dissipating the cloud of gloom that had overshadowed the young man’s comely countenance from the first moment that he had discovered the girl in talk with a stranger. He was evidently a young man who gave no thought to the concealing of any emotions he might entertain.

“Is it spoiling conversation I’m doing, coming this way?” he asked.

Grania shook her head emphatically. “Never fear,” she protested. “I was just talking of nothing whatever with this gentleman, that is Mr. Rubie by name, an English Member of Parliament, and a guest of My Lord Cloyne.” She turned to the Member of Parliament and introduced the newcomer. “This,” she said, “is Mr. Dennis Tirowen, my very dear friend.” She turned again to the youth and continued: “Mr. Rubie is making a study of Ireland. He is pleased to profess an interest in the welfare of our country, and I have been giving him some particulars which will, as I hope, enlighten him, and, through him, his countrymen.” All this was said without the least suggestion of a malicious smile on the fair face.

## THE MAN WITH THE FIDDLE

Mr. Rubie, thus directly referred to, made one bow to the maid and another to the man, and felt himself called upon to say something at once just and happy that should sum up his present impressions of Ireland. Unfortunately, however, his mind was so confused by the course of recent events that the man who aspired to command the House of Commons could find nothing better to say than a murmured "Indeed, indeed." He felt the helpless inadequacy of the words as soon as he had uttered them, and he endeavored to assume an air of magnificent sagacity blended with comprehensive benevolence.

The young man did not seem to be at all favorably impressed by Mr. Rubie. He still regarded him with a steady air of unflinching disapproval, and the lines around his handsome mouth were decidedly aggressive when he opened it to speak. "That is very condescending of you, sir," he said, and he said it with a surliness of manner that irritated the politician, who felt that he had been traveling very far indeed along the path of affability in forcing his voice and his features into a show of liking for the interloper—for so Mr. Rubie regarded Tirowen—which their owner was very far from feeling. The affability vanished instantly.

"Not at all," Mr. Rubie asserted, stiffly. "My interest is simple and straightforward. I wish, as a representative Englishman, to learn all that is to be learned about Ireland. I come without precon-

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

ceived views, and, as I hope, without prejudices, in the pursuit of what I believe to be my duty." He turned, as he spoke, to Grania, and made her another bow. "With your permission," he said, "I will take my leave, Miss O'Hara."

Grania saw that the good man was offended; Grania extended a detaining hand. If she had seemed charming before in fairy mood, she seemed, if possible, still more charming now with her pretty air of regal graciousness. "Don't think of it," she entreated. "You'll be wanting to finish your sketch, and Dennis and I have the whole of the kingdom of Kerry to walk in and talk in."

In spite of the suavity of Grania's manner, Mr. Rubie was not to be persuaded to remain. He saw that the young man was anxious to be rid of him, which would have affected him but little in spurring his departure, would, rather, thanks to the sturdy pugnacity of his disposition, have urged him to remain and see which would prove to be the best man in the lady's favor, but Mr. Rubie also saw, with vision sharpened by the stress of unexpected emotions, that the girl was plainly anxious for the company of the young man, and that if he did decide to remain in the neighborhood of the Round Tower and continue to use his pencil the young lady would incontinently wander into the other world of some distant field or headland. As he was, to his surprise, already eager to please this Milesian enchantress, he put a good face upon his disappoint-



## THE MAN WITH THE FIDDLE

ment and his discomfiture. "Indeed, I will not suffer you to move," he protested. "I am very little of a draftsman, and my poor sketch is already as good as I can make it. I have the honor to wish you good-day." Again he bowed to Grania, and as he did so he found, to his vexation, that he was recalling and renewing a long-forgotten mood of early boyhood when it had needed all his fortitude to accept some disappointment and refrain from tears. Checking an unwelcome and resented sigh, he turned to Dennis with a cold inclination of the head. It was such a salutation as antagonist gives to antagonist before an encounter in the arena of debate, or say, rather, in the arena of arms. "Good-day, sir," he said.

Dennis gave him back a sour "Good-day," and Mr. Rubie, without further parley, proceeded to retrace his steps to the Hall.

## VIII

### THE TIROWENS

DENNIS TIROWEN was the son of a peasant farmer in a small way of farming, one Hugh Tirowen, a fellow with a big body that housed a small mind. This same Hugh was himself a descendant of a line of gentlemen farmers in a large way that had gradually run to seed, as it were, and degenerated from a petty principality to a garth. The century of calamity that had ravaged Ireland since the disaster of Boyne River had greatly reduced the possessions of the Tirowens. The greed of the intruders and the severity of the penal laws had steadily reduced the broad acres that had made their dominion to a very small part of their original extent. There still remained, however, at the time when Dennis Tirowen's father was a young man, in the fall of the eighteenth century, enough of the original estate to make a very desirable holding for a man of moderate desires and moderate abilities. There came a point in the elder Tirowen's fortune when he had to decide between sacrificing the remnant of the land of his ancestors or sacrificing his conscience and his faith. He chose, as others like

## THE TIROWENS

him had here and there chosen in the harassed south and west to sacrifice his conscience and his faith, and he thereby obtained a secure tenure of the diminished domain which otherwise he had no right to hold in law and of which he might at any moment be deprived. The Cloynes, who were dominant in that part of Kerry, had no such liking for the humble Tirowens that they showed for the fallen greatness of the O'Haras, and their claws would have closed upon the last poor leavings of Tirowen land if their intention had not been met and defeated by what the more steadfast of the oppressed regarded as the apostasy of Hugh Tirowen.

Hugh Tirowen, a man of a sullen natural, soured by a long tradition of unmerited misfortune, confided to no one the course of the mental and moral struggle which ended in his public declaration of his change of creed, and no one ever knew how far he justified the change to himself or was afterward contented with the change. Love of the land would count for much, maybe love of the son would count for more, his son Dennis, for whose welfare he might justify his deed. Having made the change, he was scrupulously careful to fulfil all the outward obligations due to the ascendant faith, and he was regarded by his fellows in that faith, with that lukewarm degree of approval usually accorded to a convert who gains something more than spiritual advantages by his conversion.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

But there were those during his lifetime who said and believed that the elder Tirowen's conscience was not at ease. It was said and believed that at times his heart was heavy within him for the cause he had abandoned. There were strange stories told in whispers behind lifted hands of how the man would sometimes rise early in the morning and creep unobserved to within seeing distance of one of those lonely spots where fearful and faithful congregations assembled in defiance of the law before the little movable wooden shed that had to serve the persecuted for a chapel to celebrate and participate in the mysteries of their religion. Some one, it was said, once saw the haggard, ghastly face of Tirowen staring through a bush at the edge of a little hollow place in which a number of people were kneeling before a proscribed priest. The beholder thought it seemed at first that Tirowen was spying upon the worshipers with a view to denouncing them to authority, but another glance at the man's working face, wet forehead, and staring eyes was enough to convince him that there was no such danger. All he could read on that writhen countenance was a look of inextinguishable remorse. Very certainly no denunciation of the secret meeting followed.

Though Tirowen's conversion allowed him to hold in law the land which was his by right, it did not bring any special prosperity in its train. Hugh Tirowen did well enough, indeed well enough to be able to send his son Dennis to Dublin and give him

## THE TIROWENS

what he called the education of a gentleman. Dennis was entered at Trinity College as a member of the state religion, although it had always been plain that such religious inclinations as the young man had, and they were neither very strong nor very strenuously avowed, were in favor of the ancient faith. The old man never made any attempt to guide his son's spiritual inclinations nor to check in the slightest degree any tendency in his mind toward the prohibited creed. But he was believed to be glad when his son was in Dublin, and it was unnecessary for him to share in his father's display of sympathy to the ruling dogma.

In Dublin Dennis Tirowen showed himself little inclined to follow the prescribed lines of education and conventional laws of conduct. He did not associate himself with the sincerely studious, whose passion, if passion it may be called, seems to be the acquirement of knowledge for acquirement's sake. On the other hand, he did not ally himself with those wilder spirits of whom there were so many within the walls of old Trinity, to whom learning was a bogy to be avoided as long as there was a bowl of punch to brew, a horse to ride, or a girl to kiss. Dennis moved on a way apart. The desire of Dennis's heart was for music, for music as expressed in words and for music as expressed in song. As a boy he had, like the artificial poet of the dawning eighteenth century, lisped in numbers, for the numbers came, but unlike Mr. Pope, young Tirowen

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

followed a muse who was a ruddy wench of the country-side, who could speak the ancient speech and had been the true inspiration of popular music for centuries back. Young Dennis went to Dublin with a brain stored with an incredible treasury of songs that he had learned from the peasants with whom he had loved to play and with a heart that seemed ever to beat time to the rhythm of the fiddle and pipes.

Loving these songs and loving that music, it was natural for the boy to imitate both. One consequence of his experiments was that he was brought into connection with Mr. Edward Bunting, who was then engaged in making his collection of old Irish ballads. Mr. Bunting gained not a little aid from Dennis's extensive knowledge of folk-song, and being grateful for the younger man's help, and pleased at the young man's enthusiasm, made him acquainted with Dr. George Petrie, a young man whose ardor in pursuit of Irish ballad-lore was as much keener than Bunting's as his knowledge was more extensive. With Petrie the young man made many excursions in the neighborhood of Dublin collecting songs from the lips of the peasants, and noting down the music which accompanied the words.

In these pleasant, peaceful ways young Dennis spent the most of his Dublin days in these pleasant, peaceful ways and in the furtherance of the great work. For Dennis conceived himself con-

## THE TIROWENS

secreted to a great work—to the writing of a play which was to be a great play, maybe the great play of his day. To the elaboration of this masterpiece he looked with a simple confidence for fame and fortune. It was to be called “The Buried City,” and it dealt with the legend of the ancient kingdom that was supposed to be hidden under the waters of Cloyne Bay. He loved this work of his for its own sake, but in truth he loved it most for the sake of a girl named Grania, to whom he used to read it when he was home for his holidays, and in whose sincere praise he found a reward beyond rubies.

These occupations were interrupted suddenly by the death of Dennis’s father, who was found lifeless one morning in a field not far from the farm; and to Dennis, as his only child, the whole of his property descended. It was not very much, yet the farm was snug enough to afford Dennis a sufficient livelihood if he were willing to throw himself heart and soul into the business of a farmer’s life. But this was just what Dennis was most unwilling to do. He hated what he called the monotony of a farmer’s life; he disdained the small returns that such a life could promise. Ambition bubbled within him like water in a red-hot caldron. He wanted the world’s praise, the world’s homage, the red of the world’s gold, as well as the green of the world’s laurels. He was ambitious for himself; ambitious for ambition’s sake; but he was also ambitious for the sake of another, for Dennis Tirowen was in love.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

In the eyes of the country-side there yawned a gulf as great as the Gap of Dunluce between Grania and Dennis. In the eyes of the ordinary foreigner, Mr. Rubie or another, the girl in her well-worn peasant's dress would have seemed to be, from the point of view of a social world as the foreigner understood it, the inferior of the young farmer. But to the children of the kingdom of Kerry Grania was the last of the O'Haras of Cloyne, the last of a race of ancient name, the last of a line of gentleness that had led their people time and time again in vain resistance to oppression and that had freely given their blood for the cause. The O'Haras belonged to the essential aristocracy of Ireland. This was one of the many things that were simplicity itself to the native, and an unsolvable mystery to the stranger. Dennis Tirowen was well enough in his way; he had ox in stall, money in poke, barn and byre. He had even the smack of a remote gentility in his blood. But for all that he was no more than a workaday farmer in a small way, and a workaday farmer in a small way was one that must kneel in humility at the lowest step of the dais whereon the last daughter of the O'Haras of Cloyne metaphorically sat enthroned.

These were the simple facts that would on the face of it have seemed to sunder Grania from Dennis and Dennis from Grania with the stroke of a social ax. It is true that the legends of Kerry, told by



## THE TIROWENS

the peat on the hearth, whispered under the hedge in the lee of the wind, included many a brave tale of the low-born lad that by a courage worthy of Achilles and a cunning worthy of Odysseus, and generally by the timely aid of the fairies, had won the heart and the hand of some king's daughter. But what was truth in legend was not truth in life in Ireland in the disillusioning dawn of the nineteenth century. Moreover, there hung over Dennis a cloud not unlike to that which in Celtic belief sometimes envelops one that is doomed to ill fortune—the cloud of dislike and distrust of the changer of faiths. What Dennis's faith actually might be none of his neighbors could precisely affirm. They took it for granted that he would continue to hold his farm on the same conditions as those on which his father had held it, by persisting in at least the outward show of devotion to the alien creed. But since Dennis's final return from Dublin to take possession of his inheritance he had not shown himself in any place of worship, either church or chapel, and there were those who hinted that Dennis Tirowen had gone a step farther than his father, and had shaken off allegiance to any faith at all.

It was notably to Dennis's advantage in the popular mind that he could make music, that he could make songs, that he knew by heart of heart every ballad that had ever been blown from God knows where to Kerry, and every tune that had

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

ever been scraped on a fiddle or squeezed from the pipes, or fingered from the harp since the days of Duncad Mor. Moreover, he could rhyme his own ballads and make his own music, playing it on the little fiddle that Edward Bunting, the publisher, had given him, and playing it in a way that made his hearers, people to whom the love of music is as natural an appetite as the need for food and drink, wild with delight while they listened. Dennis of the Sweet Mouth they named him in a rapture as he drifted hither and thither through the kingdom when he came back from Dublin for his holiday, and Dennis of the Sweet Mouth he was to them still now that he was back from Dublin, as it seemed for good, with his farm to keep him comfortable, and whatever the old man had saved and left, and with nothing in the world to do but to enjoy himself stringing songs and making music and conquering all things animate and inanimate with the sounds he could win from the strings of his fiddle, even as Orpheus of old time did with his lute. Dennis Tirowen was a man to be admired, a man to be envied, but neither his admirers nor his enviers would for one moment have thought of regarding him as the equal of Grania O'Hara.

To do Dennis Tirowen justice, he knew this as well as any of his admirers or his enviers. Neighborhood and the fallen estate of Grania had allowed the boy and girl to become playmates in a way that would not, of course, have been possible in the days

## THE TIROWENS

when the O'Haras were indeed the O'Haras, the brave days before Boyne, the days even before Ninety-eight. But if fantastic fortune sanctioned a friendship between Dennis Tirowen, the prosperous farmer's son, and Grania O'Hara, the great lady, that lived in a cabin on her old-time estate by favor of the lords of Cloyne, and earned her sustenance by knitting and lace-making, and the showing of the ruins to casual travelers, the farmer's son was well aware of the gulf that sundered them. He grew more and not less aware of it as time went on, and he began to know better his own mind and his own heart. The growing knowledge haunted him—seemed like a shadowy presence, making a third in those excursions of his in company with George Petrie to gather songs and tunes; seemed to blend itself insistently with the long-drawn wailing beauty of ancient music, to take possession of all the love lyrics of Ireland, and make them the pipes of its meaning. When Dennis returned to Cloyne as his own master that secret knowledge had come to its full growth. Dennis looked at it steadily, understood it and himself, saw what he had to do, and made up his mind to do it. There was a gulf to be bridged, but a man of genius could build the bridge.

A man of the temperament of Dennis Tirowen is always strangely exalted when he tunes his mind to some high resolve. He feels like another Hannibal, swearing his unchangeable oath that he will conquer Rome or perish in the attempt. The danger is

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

with such a one that the resolve to achieve may satisfy the stimulated fancy to the abandonment of achievement. But, fortunately or unfortunately, the ambition of Dennis was no less strong than his fancy and his belief in himself was prodigious. He took the enthusiasm of the country-side as so much earnest of his power, and he assured himself time and again, in those communings with his spirit which had resulted in his present determination, that he was made for greatness, that his was the heart, the hand, the brain to win the trophies of the world and make of them so high a mountain as should lift him to the level of his lady's lips. Had he known that he could win his love in that present hour he would not have accepted the gift. The thought of any condescension galled him. He must make himself the equal of the woman of his dreams, he would make himself the equal of the woman of his dreams, and then, and then alone, he would utter the truth that was in him with the proud consciousness of peer addressing peer.

## IX

### JOURNEYS START IN LOVERS' PARTING

FOR a short while the pair, young man and young maid, stood looking after Mr. Rubie in silence. When the politician was out of sight round the bend in the road Grania turned and gazed steadily at her companion, and there was banter in her eyes and banter on her lips as she noted his sullen bearing and sour regard. "I'm thinking," she said, slowly, with a teasing tang in her voice, "you've got out of bed on the wrong side this morning."

The frown on the face of Dennis deepened, and his whole bearing, stiff enough already, seemed to grow stiffer. "There was nothing the matter with me or my bed or the morning," he answered, doggedly. "I came over here blithely enough in the thought of sight and speech of you. But you can't be surprised if I don't like to see you philandering with strangers."

Grania burst out laughing as she recalled the image of the solemn foreigner in blue and buff whose business in life it appeared to be to acquire statistics. "Bless your heart!" she declared, "we

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

were not philandering. He was seeking for statistics, if you know what they may be"—Dennis nodded glumly—"and I gave him some of my own which bewildered him a little, I think. The good man is as grave as an owl, and if he were as gay as a linnet he would never be the bird for my cage."

There seemed to Grania as she spoke something especially and refreshingly diverting in the thought of Mr. Rubie as a possible philanderer. The earnest stranger from England, in his blue coat and buff waistcoat, somewhat stout, somewhat florid, very sturdy and solid and solemn, with an insatiable hunger for information and an unquenchable thirst for statistics, seemed to her a very unlikely personage to convert into a prosperous or even a promising philanderer. So thinking, she looked at Dennis, appraising and admiring the easy poise of his strong body, the proud carriage of the comely head, and as she looked she marveled a little at the drollness of the nature of men. Here was handsome Dennis, than whom no better built and better favored lad trod the grass of Kerry, wearing a very sulky frown on his fine face because he had found Grania talking with a pompous and commonplace foreigner that sought to carry with him into the freedom of the country the heavy air of the House of Commons. So, while she merrily repudiated any suggestion of philandering as concerned her conversation with Mr. Rubie, she could not help thinking that Dennis was rather silly to make the suggestion.

## JOURNEYS START

Dennis's only reply was a grunt.

"Don't look so sour," Grania expostulated, with a smile that should have dissipated the ill temper of the youth as the sun a while back had dissipated the enfolding mist. "It is foolish you are to behave so, spoiling the fair day that way." She paused for a moment, and then as Dennis still said nothing, she went on again. "Isn't it a beautiful day? Who would ever believe that it was winter with the grass so green and the sea so blue and the sun so bright. Oh, Dennis, this is one of those days when I always have a feeling in my bones as if something wonderful were going to happen."

She clasped her hands as she spoke in the ardor of her enjoyment of the beauty about her. The young man looked curiously at her, and the curiosity happily banished the fretfulness from his face. Evidently there was something in the words she had uttered, those words in which she breathed her expectation of something wonderful about to happen, which touched some responsive chord in his mind. All his ill humor had disappeared now as he spoke. "What makes you say that?" he asked, with an eagerness that surprised Grania.

She laughed into his handsome, confident face, a roguish spirit danced in her eyes and dimpled the corners of her mouth. She beckoned to Dennis to draw nearer, with the air of one that has a great secret to impart. "Sure, I saw a fairy this morning," Grania said, impressively.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Dennis gaped at her, suddenly startled from the sense of his own importance by the oddity of her statement. "A fairy!" he ejaculated. The occasion, his purpose, his determination, all these were so grave that though he knew Grania well, and her fairy-talk, it surprised him at the moment almost as much as it had surprised the Englishman a while back.

Grania nodded. "A leprechaun, no less. I was walking along a bit of a valley that shone as bright as spring, and there he was, a little wee shee of a fellow, sitting on a stone, with his little green coat on his body, and his little red cap on his head, and a little shoe between his knees, and a little hammer in his hand, and there he was cobbling away for the dear life of him."

Dennis grinned. "It's funning you are," he said. "Is it some dream you are telling me?"

Grania went on without resenting his skepticism. "Maybe I was dreaming," she answered, "or maybe I was waking. It is hard enough sometimes to tell which are the true things—the things we dream about or the things we know waking. Anyhow, whether I saw with my eyes open or saw with my eyes shut, I saw my little fairy-man, and my little fairy-man never saw me. You know it's the best of luck to come on a leprechaun unawares. So I popped out my hand and caught him between finger and thumb and held him fast. He struggled and tussled, but it was all no good, for I would not



## JOURNEYS START

let him go. When he saw that there was no escape the little rogue took off his cap with a flourish and said, as clear as a whistle, 'Grania, my girl, if you will give me my liberty it is myself will give you the good luck.' So of course I set him free, and now I am waiting for him to keep his word to me."

The girl laughed gaily as she finished her tale, but Dennis seemed inclined to resent the light-hearted turn the conversation had taken. "I don't believe in dreams. Give me the real world to deal with and the real people in it."

Grania looked shocked. "And you the poet!" she said, reproachfully.

So might Diana have gazed reprovably upon Orion when she found him unworthy of her esteem.

The young man shrugged his shoulders impatiently. "Poets don't want to see fairies," he asserted, defiantly. "They want to make other people see them."

Grania nodded. "It's yourself can do that same," she said, "with the words of your lips and the strings of your fiddle. Dennis of the Sweet Mouth. That's your name all over the kingdom of Kerry."

Dennis looked at her thoughtfully, with the air of a man that has come to an earnest resolution and yet finds it hard to put into effect. "I hope," he said at length, "it will stand to me elsewhere than in Kerry."

Grania stared at him amazed. Something in the

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

sound of his voice troubled her suddenly, though the words he uttered were scarcely troubling.

Dennis read her wonder, and spoke hurriedly.

“I’m going away, Grania; that’s what I’ve come to tell you. I’m going away.”

Grania gave a little cry of astonishment. “Going away!” she repeated, and Dennis echoed her.

“Going away!”

The girl looked anxiously at him. “Is it to Dublin?” she asked.

Dennis shook his head. “Dublin be damned,” he said, fiercely. “I’ve eaten and drunk all that Dublin can give me. I’m too big for Dublin, I’m thinking.” He paused for a moment to give due effect to the announcement he was about to make, and then spoke with dramatic emphasis. “It’s to London I’m going.”

Grania looked at him in amazement, and it seemed to her of a sudden as if her heart grew red-hot, as a coulter under the hammer, and then ice-cold, as the coulter when it is plunged hissing hot into chill water. “What do you want to go to London for, in the name of the crows?” she faltered, striving to carry her question off with an air of careless interest.

Dennis looked mighty wise, but in his heart he was a trifle vexed, for he only heard the carelessness in Grania’s question. For all that he was so fine a musician, his ear did not catch the veiled grief. “Just to make my fortune, no less,” he answered; and he felt very big indeed as he spoke the simple

## JOURNEYS START

words that have been the Jack O'Lanthorn to so many and the Star of Destiny to so few.

Grania looked at him dubiously. She hoped it was not her reluctance to part with him that prompted her to think with less certainty of his success than he seemed to entertain. "Are you sure you can do that same in the great, cold city?" she asked, anxiously. She felt toward this big, comely boy, aggressive in his self-confidence, as the mother duck feels when its ducklings make their first essay upon the smooth waters of the pond.

Dennis didn't seem to entertain any doubt. He had thought it all out; he had made his decision; he had burned his bridges, though as yet Grania was ignorant of this. So he threw back his handsome head with a great air of disdain for her dubiety, and answered her with a gallant air that foretokened victory. "Didn't Tom Moore make money over there, bags of it?" he asked, in a ringing voice; "and didn't he have all the grand folks hanging on his lips, and wasn't he hobanob with dukes and earls and princes, and didn't he wind up with a snug place in the customs, or some such like?" Dennis paused for a moment to watch the effect of his words upon Grania, who did not seem to be as much impressed as he could have wished, and then resumed the course of his argument. "What Tom Moore could do I can do. I hope you will not be denying that, Grania?"

Grania shook her head. Why should she deny

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

it. After all there was something in what Dennis said. Mr. Moore's chances could have seemed scarcely brighter when he crossed the Irish Sea to fame and fortune. There was a moment's silence between the pair, and then Dennis spoke, and his voice had another and a deeper note in it than the clarion-call of self-confidence.

"I want to make my fortune," he said, "for there is something I want more than any fortune in the world, something that only a fortune can help me to."

Grania smiled faintly, with a sudden tugging at her heart-strings. She felt in a twink as she had felt on hot summer days when everything on earth and in air conspired to warn her of the coming rush of the storm. She knew that what she had waited for was coming, coming at last. She did not know what to say, yet knew that she must give some answer to the challenge in Dennis's speech. "What is it?" she asked, "that you want more than any fortune in the world."

Dennis seemed newly embarrassed, eager to speak, and yet uncertain what to say. His lips moved and gave forth no sound. Desperately he rallied his self-command.

"It is the wise woman you are, Grania," he said, with an attempt to be playful that was pathetically a failure; "but for all your wisdom there is one secret that you have never guessed."

Grania looked steadfastly at him, sadness in her

## JOURNEYS START

eyes. "What may that secret be, Dennis of the Sweet Mouth?" she questioned.

Dennis answered her and there was no gaiety now in his voice, only the strength of a fierce sweet passion surrendering itself to confession.

"You have never guessed that I love you, that I have loved you for this many a day, that you are all the world to me, that I shall love you all the hours of my life."

He shook as he spoke, his hands trembled, and there were tears in his eyes. Grania fetched a little sigh over the astounding density of men; then she found a smile for her proclaimed lover. She went up to him and rested her hand for a minute upon his shoulder.

"My poor boy," she said, in a tone of infinite tenderness that would have told Dennis much if he had been Dennis of the wise head as well as Dennis of the sweet mouth, "it is well I know that you have been in love with me this long year and more, and it is often and often that I have wondered that you didn't ease your heart; but it is better late than never, and I am glad to hear you speak this day."

Dennis looked at her in wonder. "Heaven's name," he cried, "why didn't you give me an inkling!"

Grania looked at him with playful reproach. "There's a fine way of talking," she said. "Would you have me go trapesing after a man that hasn't the kick in him to speak for himself?"

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Dennis hung his head. "What was the good of my speaking," he asked, "me with my bit of a farm, me with my fiddle and my jingles, and you the lady born, one of the O'Haras, no less? What kind of a gossoon would I be to say to you, biting my heart while I say it, 'Grania, Grania, I love you.'"

Grania had listened to him with a pleased smile on her face. When he had made an end she answered him eagerly. "Of course I'm glad to be an O'Hara; who could help that? But any man has the right to tell any woman he loves her, just as any woman has the right to say yes or no to him. And it's never 'no' that I would have said to you, Dennis of the Sweet Mouth, if you had spoken yesterday or any of the yesterdays."

Dennis shook his head sadly. "I couldn't speak, Grania. What have I to give? Is it you would be feeding the pig and washing the linen and mending the clothes and cooking the dinner? I have no small opinion of myself, but I couldn't ask that—of you."

"I could be happy enough in the little farm with you," Grania said, softly; but the soft words brought no smile to Dennis's face.

"That's all very pretty and poetic," he said.

"But you are a poet," Grania protested.

"I'm not poet enough," Dennis affirmed, "to make you a poor man's wife. So I'll tell you what I have done. I have sold the farm and the land, and I've got the price of them in my pocket to carry me

## JOURNEYS START

to London and keep me going till I've made my fortune."

His words sounded tragic in Grania's ears. "Sold the farm and the land!" she echoed. "You have never done that, Dennis?"

"That is just what I have done," he answered; "and it was wise of me to do it anyway, for I am not going to deny the old faith any longer, for all that my father did so, and it's the poor holding I'd have in that case. So it is to England I'll be journeying this very day, and I'll come back to you with a fortune."

Grania was silent for a moment; then she asked, slowly, "But if you don't make a fortune, would you be leaving me to die an old maid?"

"I shall make the fortune, never fear it," Dennis replied, briskly. "Haven't I got the play in my pocket that any London manager will be crazy to set on his stage?"

"Is it 'The Buried City'?" Grania asked.

And Dennis answered, "What else would it be but 'The Buried City'?"

Grania's face glowed as she spoke. "The city that lies down there under the waters of the bay, the city where the princess sits asleep on her golden throne, with the water washing about her and the fishes butting their blunt noses against her face and folded hands and her knees. There she will sit till her lover leaps from his ship to the bottom of the sea and kisses the salt from her lips as she wakes and says, 'Dennis, I love you.'"

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

She drew a little nearer to him as she spoke, her kind eyes bright with sweet fire, and her extended hands seemed to seek for his hands. But Dennis did not move toward her; rather he seemed almost to shrink away. It was the traditional awe of the great lady that restrained him; also it was the fierce pride in him that forbade him to take favor or grace from her till he could do so with the sense of equality that success alone could confer.

“You may say that to me if you will,” Dennis said, clumsily, “when I come back with my guineas from London. For I shall come back with them, never fear. I know that my play is good, but my play isn’t the only string to my bow. I’ve made up a bit of a tune these last days, which shall be my royal march to victory. Would it please you to hear it? I call it ‘The Soul of Erin.’”

Grania’s eyes still shone kindness, though the sweet face had waned. She understood her lover, guessed, without admitting it, at the awe, realized and half approved the pride. She might have wished him to forget the one and the other in that hour, but since he could not she was ready to forgive. She smiled at him as if life could offer nothing better just then than the sound of a bit of a tune. “Dearly I’d love to hear it,” she said, and settled herself comfortably on the grass.



## X

### THE SOUL OF ERIN

DENNIS picked up his fiddle and bow, that he had laid on the grass beside him at the beginning of his talk with Grania. He handled the instrument tenderly, as one that understood and loved its power; he nursed it lovingly as he tuned the strings. Grania watched him with her heart in her mouth. Her thoughts were all in such a whirl that she found it hard to disentangle them, to follow one clean clue of emotion to a natural conclusion. She was sorry, tragically sorry, that Dennis was going away. For long enough, as she had said, she had known his secret, for long enough she had been waiting for him to speak. To her in her simplicity the life that it was in her lover's power to offer her seemed exceeding sweet and pleasant. To a child that had never known anything but poverty the life that Dennis lived, the life that the wife of Dennis would live, was kind in its promises of peace and comfort. Grania was too shrewd not to realize that the comfort and the peace were relative. She was well aware that the life of my lord and my lady at the Hall, for all that they were straitened in means

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

for their station, was lived according to a very different standard of peace and of comfort, and she had heard, though she did not know this of her own knowledge, that there were few gentlefolk elsewhere who were as superior in ease to the Cloynes as the Cloynes were to Dennis Tirowen. But the important thing was that Grania did not love Lord Cloyne, would not have loved him had he been a free man and able to approach her in honor, instead of with offers that had to be repelled at the point of a pitchfork, and that she did love Dennis with all her heart. So her spirit was a little wistful to think that she was so willing to accept what Dennis had decided not to offer. On the other hand, she could not help admiring the courage of the man in going out thus into the wide, strange world for her sake, the pride that wished to approach her on terms of something like equality; the boy of the Tirowens coming back from beyond seas to lay the laurels of victory at the feet of the daughter of the O'Haras; the high resolve that led him to stake his all on the hazard.

And while she waited and wondered Dennis was busy tuning his fiddle, and now all was ready to his pleasure, and he lifted the instrument to his shoulder and poised the bow in the air. Then, after a few cautious sweeps to convince himself that all was as it should be, Dennis surrendered himself to the spell of his inspiration, and began to play, directing his fingers with all the strength of his soul.

As she listened she found the music good. In the

## THE SOUL OF ERIN

beginning delight danced on its chords, the delight of the Dawn of the World, the joy of the ancient gods, the happiness of the heroes in battle, of the hunters on the track. In a little the primal delight was drowned in a wave of sadness, like the fabled city beneath the waters of the bay, to emerge again in mirth and splendor, and again to be submerged. So the wild strain shifted, but still at the end of all the sorrow remained delight. It seemed to the girl as she sat and heard that the bow of the player as he swept over the strings was playing upon her heart, and that her single heart was the heart of all her race. The magic music appeared to her to have all Ireland for its theme, the Ireland which she knew so well, with its burden of misery and its tribute of tears, and the Ireland of which she dreamed with the glory of its past and the greater glory of its future. All her homeland was in those wailing notes. The falling of soft rain, the lowing of kine, the carol of the black-bird on the thorn-tree, the leap of the fish in the purling river, the cry of the cuckoo, the ripple of waves about a boat, the heart-ache of the west wind softly singing its melancholy song, the mists that girded the summits of mysterious hills, the sharp, sweet smell of the burning peat, and the blue-gray veils of peat-smoke—all these dear common sights and sounds and scents were in it, all these and many more that lived with the living music too swiftly even for her nimble fancy to image. All these things she seemed to hear and see and smell as Dennis plied

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

his bow. Swiftly the themes of the tune shifted, alternated, flying like the shuttle from dusk to dawn and from dawn to night. As the strings shrilled to a fiercer measure her fancy conjured up the images of the island's youth—Finn, the mighty hunter, with his Feni at his heels; Meave, the queen, with her mane of yellow hair; Cuchulin, the unconquerable. Slowly the strain slipped down into the holy peace of the monasteries, echoing the call of the saints and the sweet voices of the scholars. Slowly it waned from the ancient days, through ages dizzy with the drums of war, renewing the battle-shouts of the Norsemen and the clash of Saxon steel and the march of Norman knights. Slowly it sobbed over the blood-stained centuries, wailing its way to the tragedy of Ninety-eight; a snatch of "Croppies, Lie Down" screaming hideously and insistently between the valiant clamor of the rebel songs.

The girl's eyes were shining with tears when Dennis lowered his bow and looked at her anxiously, his forehead wet with sweat. "Well," he said, proudly, "what do you think of it? Is it not good?"

"It is beautiful," she answered, "very beautiful. Well may you call it 'The Soul of Erin,'" she said. "As I listened I seemed to see the old Gods of the Mist, and the Golden Kings, and the Knights of the Red Branch, and the faces of the faithful—"

Dennis's face flushed with pleasure. "You

## THE SOUL OF ERIN

understand, Grania, you understand," he said, slowly.

Grania went on. "And I seemed to hear the tramp of the enemies and the noise of the weary wars, and the running of Boyne River, and the sadness of the 'Wearing of the Green,' and the piping of pipers, and the jiggling of feet, and the laughter of fairies. Well may you call it 'The Soul of Erin.'"

Dennis glowed at her praise. "I should have the world at my feet with that same," he said, and did not say it boastfully, but as one that quickly states some unquestionable fact.

But Grania shook her head and looked wistful. "The world does not always welcome beautiful things," she said, sadly, "and though you seem to have snared the very soul of our country into your tune, I have it in my mind that they are not very fond of our country over yonder, and care little for the soul of her."

"I'll make them care," Dennis affirmed, sturdily. "There's the air shall play me to my fortune, and bring me home with pockets full of guineas to build a fine house and yourself the queen of it."

Grania gave a little sigh, and then smiled. "Please God!" she said, cheerfully. "And I like you finely, Dennis, for going like a brave man to the battle." She rose from the grass and came quite close to him, looking into his eyes and speaking very softly. "Dennis," she said, "you may give me a kiss."

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Dennis made for a moment as if he would clasp her in his embrace; then his extended arms fell to his sides; he moved back a step and looked awkward. "I'm fearing," he said, "the touch of your lips would melt all the strength in me as sugar melts in hot punch."

In a moment Grania was close to him again, with her hands on his shoulders and her lips near to his. Her cheeks flamed with sweet shame, but she was resolved that he should not part from her like this. She spoke imperiously. "When a girl asks for a kiss the boy has got to give it," she cried. She halted, as if frightened at the word she spoke; then, half weeping, half laughing, she commanded, "Kiss me this instant, you villain!"

For a wonderful moment their lips met and their arms clasped, and the world was forgotten in the marvel of the first kiss of fond lovers. Then swiftly came back to Dennis the consciousness of his great resolve. He released himself from Grania's clinging arms, caught up his fiddle, and stood apart, staring in fierce passion at the girl's loveliness. Then like one that flies from the mightiest temptation he sprang down the slope of the hill. "Good-by, Grania," he cried, "good-by!" He waved her one last salute, and then, turning, ran at full speed, without once looking back, through the ruins toward the highway that was to guide him to fortune.

## XI

### THE DOUBBLES—BARON ET FEMME

MY lord's tale to Rubie was true. He had got a potential purchaser for the Round Tower. That potential purchaser was, as Mr. Rubie had been told, My Lord Cloyne's very good friend, Sir William Double, the great London banker, whose wife, Lady Double, was the very good friend of My Lady Cloyne, and thereafter—or it may be earlier, or more likely both earlier and thereafter—the very good friend of My Lord Cloyne and of My Lord Cloyne's brother, the honorable Curtius Loveless. The business of the buying of the Round Tower had had its beginning in some clatter and chatter at White's, where the honorable Curtius Loveless, sometime invalided home from the war in America and now newly convalescent, was taking his ease. In the course of the chatter and clatter the Honorable Curtius Loveless had somehow or other happened to mention the great white-pillar building on the Kerry coast, that stood on ground belonging to his brother's estate, and Sir William, hearing, had pricked up his ears. He plied the young soldier with sudden and staggering questions,

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

which at once amazed and amused Curtius, who was scarcely familiar with Sir William Double's hobby. Yes, the Round Tower was there, had been there for ever so long, since the days of Cromwell, perhaps, or even earlier—Mr. Curtius Loveless's ideas of archæology were of the crudest—it was very certainly his brother Cloyne's property, and also, no less certainly, it was his to do as he pleased with, being in no sense in the nature of an heirloom. Sir William's blood boiled with desire as he listened to the young gentleman's artless prattle. He had, as it were, discovered a new world to conquer. As a consequence of this chance conversation it came to pass that Sir William and Lady Double decided to pay a visit to Ireland under the careful escort of Curtius Loveless, and to be for a few days the guests of Lord and Lady Cloyne at the Hall. Thus Sir William would be able to inspect the Round Tower, the Honorable Curtius Loveless would get change of air for the betterment of his health, and Lady Double, while proving herself a devoted wife by accompanying her husband to the wilds of Ireland, would also be able to prove the charity of her disposition by looking after the Honorable Curtius Loveless.

Lady Double and her husband—that was the order in which they were usually thought of—were people of note in the social world of London. Lady Double was a woman whom nature had endowed



## BARON ET FEMME

with many appetites. She never felt the sting of any appetite without instantly seeking to gratify its demand, and as she was wealthy, comely, and still looked young, much younger than her years, she had generally no difficulty in gaining the desired gratification. She had wealth in both hands, as it were; her Pactolus ran in two ruddy streams. A rich banker's wife, she was also a rich banker's daughter, and when she married Sir William Double she brought with her a fortune. She brought it with her and she kept it with her.

There was a kind of generalship in the woman that scanned the future warily and made plans long ahead. She entered upon matrimony as upon a campaign wherein she hoped with good confidence to march to victory, but wherein also she wished to insure safety in case of a necessary retreat. Her money was settled on herself very surely, very tightly. Thus, if ever, by any unlucky and unlikely chance, Sir William were to find out anything that Lady Double did not wish him to find out, and should prove quarrelsome in the knowledge, Lady Double had the satisfaction of certainty as to her own comfort. Not that she entertained any serious fear of such a contingency. In the first place, she was very careful, very methodical in the adjustment of her passions, very shrewd and guileful in her wildest flightiness. In the second place, Sir William was not of an inquisitive disposition, nor was his temperament choleric, and he was, it would seem,

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

as little likely to interfere with his wife's tastes as she to interfere with his.

In his very different way and with his very different tastes Sir William was as practical as Lady Double. He had married his wife because she pleased him; but had she been fairer than she was he would not have favored her if she had not been a banker's daughter. It was the time-honored tradition in the house of Double that as kingdoms only seek to marry kingdoms so the bank only married with other banks, and the time-honored tradition was invariably respected. Sir William could have afforded, if he had pleased, to bid for a duke's daughter; he could have afforded also to play the Cophetua part and elevate a beggar-girl to his ledger, but such eccentricities were not to his mind, though his mind was inclined to other and less commendable eccentricities. It was a law of life for him that the magnates of finance should wed among their own caste, and, acting in obedience to this law, and questing for a spouse within the limits it laid down, the woman for Sir William's money was Emily Goring with her money.

Equally Sir William with his money was the man for Emily Goring's money. She found the match as suitable as he did, and what the pair approved in theory proved satisfactory in practice. Emily Double liked fashionable society, and had commanded the attentions of much of its best for a good many years. She was hard on forty, but she did not

## BARON ET FEMME

look much more than thirty, for the forethought which characterized in all her actions had made her take unusual pains to preserve her looks. To this end she groomed herself scrupulously, washed more and exercised more than most of the fine ladies she knew, and if she denied herself no pleasure that tempted her, she had a system of compensating recuperation that carried her safely through experiments and experiences that would have wrecked the constitutions of the majority of her fair contemporaries. For her the purpose of life was to enjoy herself as much as possible. But she was wise enough to realize that for the prolongation of enjoyment the element of intermittent temperance was essential, and therefore she was intermittently and reluctantly, but for the time being resolutely, temperate.

Sir William carried himself excellently in his part of the matrimonial enterprise. He was neither patently cynical nor covertly suspicious. He took all that Emily had to give him, but for the rest he minded his own business, and, to do him no more than historical justice, he minded it uncommonly well. His Emily knew very clearly that a flagrant failure in decorum would find him a severe judge, but up to the threshold of flagrancy he was like to be leniency incarnate. He liked to be well fed, well kept, well housed, well wived, and Emily Double, thanks to her upbringing, welded the gifts of a housewife with the instincts of a wanton; wherefore Sir William's mansions were well served. For the rest

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

the pair went their own ways in complacent tranquillity. Lady Double's pleasure lay in the saloons of fashion, where she was ever welcome, where she played deep, ate and drank valiantly, and made such assignations as soothed her when her nerves were overstrung. Sir William's hobby, after business hours, was the indulgence of a somewhat singular form of the collector's art, a form which had earned him not a little notoriety in those limited circles where collectors and collections are seriously discussed.

If Sir William was in the first place a banker, he was only in the third place, as it were, the husband of his Emily. He was in the second place an antiquary, and his whimsical ambition, as Lord Cloyne had told Mr. Rubie, was nothing less magnificent than the collection of monuments. Other men might gather about them pictures, statues, busts, cameos, coins, china, medals, bronzes, books, engravings, etchings, manuscripts, miniatures, snuff-boxes, rings—Sir William's hobby rode a wilder course. It was his dream to display on the acres of his great estate at Muswell Hill specimens—genuine specimens, to be sure, and no paltry copies, however costly to construct—of the religious or semi-religious edifices with which mankind has milestoned its march across a wheeling world and striven to eternize the memory of its varying faiths.

Sir William's vast wealth favored his pursuit and populated his park with oddities. Thanks to his influence with the Ottoman merchants, he had been

## BARON ET FEMME

permitted by firman to pilfer a shrine of Apollo from Corinthian soil. His friendship with the British Resident in Florence had allowed him to denude Italy of a small but fairly perfect temple of Diana. By the favor of the East India Company he had transported a Hindu fane from Calcutta to London, and a mosque from one of the Mohammedan provinces. He had lately acquired a Druidic monument from a bankrupt farmer in Kent, which he declared and believed to be older than Kit's Coy House and more interesting than Stonehenge.

All these contrasting buildings, at a cost that would have been intolerable to any but the most opulent of financiers, he had plucked ruthlessly, but with scrupulous care, from the spots to which they belonged, from the environment which was essential to their interest. Skilled workmen dismembered them, carefully numbered the fragments with red paint, carefully packed them when numbered, and escorted them over land or sea to the Muswell Hill open-air museum, where they were unpacked and fitted together under the delighted eyes of the antiquarian banker.

No child fiddling with its first box of bricks—nay, to range in a bolder simile, no Egyptian Isis gathering together the scattered bones of her son—was half so eager and exultant as Sir William piecing together his transplanted treasures. He glowed as the degraded edifices took shape in their unfamiliar, uncongenial surroundings. He rubbed his hands

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

over the incongruous juxtaposition of Aztec and Saracenic architecture; it pleased him to behold in his suburban spaces the wigwam of a Blackfoot Indian witch-doctor encamped beside a Buddhist shrine, and a wayside oratory from Andalusia cheek by jowl with some obscene idol from the Solomon Islands. Such were the relaxations of the great and good man; absorbed in these whimsies, his leisure from business was untroubled by speculations as to the whereabouts or the conduct of Lady Emily. A man with such a mania has not time nor thought for jealousy.

To the Cloynes, in their straits, Lady Double was little less than a godsend. She was well-bred enough to meet any one, but had she been as ill-mannered as a fishwife her wealth would have buttered the dish. The splendid Cloynes when they lent their splendor to London could give Lady Double what she desired, the best of good company, the entry to great houses, a more than merely bowing acquaintance with the excessively great. Lady Double could feed, insidiously, the lean exchequer of the Cloynes, could give great parties at which the Cloynes presided and for which the Cloynes took the social credit, could entertain the Cloynes and all the friends that the Cloynes wished to pleasure at vast banquets at Berkeley Square.

It was small wonder, therefore, that the Cloynes, in response to the somewhat staggering letter which Curtius wrote to his brother after the conversation

## BARON ET FEMME

in the club, were only too delighted to extend the hospitality of Cloyne Hall to the fantastic banker and the fantastic banker's gallantish wife, and that my Lord Cloyne awaited with some pleasurable impatience the arrival of the pair from Dublin, under the escort of brother Curtius, whose expenses, incidentally, the banker paid, and paid willingly.

It was not surprising that Lady Double found Captain Loveless's society agreeable, for he was just the kind of man to attract her. Captain the Honorable Curtius Loveless was a fine example of a type that will always persist and flourish so long as man retains his resemblance to the primordial ape. When humanity's ancestors swung prehensile from tree-boughs and chattered in the branches there was such a one as Curtius Loveless among the simians; so long as mankind still abides by the canon of Pheidias and carries such a body as is worn by, say, Theseus, so long will a Curtius Loveless continue to adorn the tale. He had the right male merits of strength, of courage; and there, from the point of view of any student of humanity, his catalogue of virtues came abruptly to a close. The rest of him was no less frankly animal than that imagined ape, his infinitely remote ancestor. He had no principles, but he was not unprincipled upon principle, like many of the rakes of the age; it never occurred to him that there was anything he ought to do if he did not want to do it, or anything he ought not to do if he did want

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

to do it. He just went his way, too entirely unimaginative and unemotional to conceive that there was or could be any other way of living than his own way of life for those that were lucky enough to be able to live it. He knew, of course, that there were beggars in the world, and people who made their living by their hands or their wits, but he knew, also, that they did not count. The world, the real world, was for him and his kind, but especially for him. It would have been impossible for the eloquence of a Bossuet, nay, more, of a Baptist, to have persuaded Curtius Loveless that a world was conceivable which was not mainly concerned with eating and drinking, with horse-racing and card-playing, with the love of woman in its loosest and most liberal sense, with the wearing of fine clothes and the membership of select clubs, where entry was as difficult as through the eye of a needle and play was as high as the Pyramids, a world where honor meant the unquestioned meeting of one kind of debt to the exclusion of all others, and the unquestioned readiness to offer or to face the muzzle of a pistol as the solution of any vexed question of social ethics. The Lovelesses were extremely popular because they knew exactly how to live the kind of life with which they were familiar. Mr. Brummell was reported to have said that none of them knew how to dress, but then Mr. Brummell was given to saying that of a good many people, including, of late, a very exalted personage indeed.



## XII

### THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS

GRANIA could never clearly recall how the hours passed, the immediate hours that followed on the departure of Dennis. She knew dimly that she lay for a long, long time on the green headland overlooking the sea, and that her heart was sorely troubled by conflicting emotions. She was shaken with grief for the going of her lover, and she was torn with longing for his return. She wished, like the Egyptian queen, that she could sleep out the great gap of time between the present and his home-coming, and wake to find him at her side triumphant. She would not allow herself to doubt for a moment that his triumph was certain, that Dennis would come back to her with the laurels and gold for which he yearned, the laurels and the gold which she applauded him for seeking since he sought them for her sake. She would not admit to herself that she might have been better pleased if he had chosen to remain. She had truly meant what she said when she voiced her readiness to be a farmer's wife, but she recognized that it was a man's part to go out and face the world and

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

fight its giant and its dragons and bring back its wreaths and trophies to lay at the feet of his sweetheart.

Somewhere in the depths of Grania's conscience a small voice seemed to be trying to question her confidence. "How if he does not succeed?" the small voice whispered. Grania stifled that small voice resolutely, would not consent to listen to it, would not admit for an instant that she had heard a syllable of its speech. There was no question, there must be no question, there could be no question of Dennis's success. What might not genius accomplish, genius inspired by love, though the way of its victory was among strangers in a strange land. She lay long on the headland staring down into the waters below and wondering if her lover would indeed draw the Buried City from those shining waves and show it again to the eyes of man. She dreamed waking dreams there and she dreamed sleeping dreams, for after a while her own weariness and the stillness all around her lulled the girl into a torpor which soothed her vexed nerves, and presently drifted into slumber. Regret for the going of Dennis, admiration for the courage that prompted his departure, wonder as to what would happen to him in that far-off, implacable city, moved for a little while confusedly through her mind and then ceased to trouble her as sleep deepened and presently shifted into the embroglio of dreams.

It seemed to her that she was awake and lying

## THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS

where she lay—a common experience of the dream state—but it was no longer sunlight, but rather moonlight, though with a stranger radiance than that of any evening she had ever known. It seemed to her as she lay thus and stared at the familiar place so unfamiliarly illuminated that all those fanciful creatures of whom she had discoursed a while ago to the Englishman were flitting hither and thither, shadowless in the shining air. The pooka galloped noiselessly by, his wild mane streaming behind him, his eyes glowing like bright coals. Leprechaun after leprechaun came noiselessly across the grass, each bearing a bag upon his shoulders, the contents of which he disgorged at the girl's feet, and those bags were each full of splendid treasures, great gold pieces and ropes of glorious jewels, and vessels of gold and vessels of silver, and as the fairy creatures continued to empty their sacks the magnificent pile seemed to rise higher and higher before the girl—a mountain of marvels. Far below her, where the waters were rippling upon the sands, she could hear the bells of the buried city faintly chiming, and through the chime came the sound of the mermaids singing, and though she could not distinguish the words of the song, she seemed to derive from the sound of it refreshment and encouragement. Above her in the purple clouds that drifted across the moonlit sky she could trace the majestic shapes of the ancient gods. Around her the voices of the heroes thundered their war-cries down the wind. The

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

mountain of marvels was attaining gigantic proportions, when suddenly it seemed to the girl that a great peal of thunder shattered the whole world, banishing gods, heroes, and fairies, overturning the hill of treasure and burying her under its gorgeous ruins.

With a start and a shiver Grania awoke and sat up. She could still hear the sound of the thunder that had demolished her vision, only it was not thunder at all, but merely the shrill voice of a child that was lustily calling to her by name. The caller, who was running vigorously up the hillside, was no other than the little girl that had helped to plague the Parliament-man with her impertinent importunities. Her sturdy bare legs seemed to twinkle as she ran, spurning the turf and shouting as she sped. When she got to where Grania was sitting Biddy was not a little blown, but she could still gather sufficient breath to tell her message.

“Miss Grania, darling,” she cried, “there is a strange man in the village.” Grania, with the impression of her amazing dream still warm upon her and her brain teeming with images of deities and elves, was not greatly impressed by a statement that seemed so impressive to the child.

“That is no wonder, Biddy,” she said, as she scrambled to her feet and shook herself free from the dregs of sleep. “I hear that my Lord Cloyne has many guests at the Hall at this time.”

Biddy shook her head vigorously, and her red curls bobbed about her ruddy, sunburnt face like

## THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS

little leaping flames. "It is not my Lord Cloyne this one is seeking," she answered, emphatically, "but just your own self." She spoke decisively; then, after a pause, while an anxious expression ruled her usually mirthful countenance, she added hurriedly, "Oh, Miss Grania, I hope there is nothing wrong."

Grania laughed heartily at the child's obvious concern. "Why, what should be wrong, Biddy?" she asked. The girl looked at once troubled and wise. "I do not know at all," she answered, "but it seems a queer thing surely for a man from Heaven knows where to be asking after you."

It did seem not a little queer to Grania that any one should be asking after her—after her, that knew no one in the whole wide world outside the kingdom of Kerry. She was still a little dazed and mazed by her dream, and her sleep, and her parting from Dennis. She questioned Biddy as to the stranger's appearance.

"Sure, but it is a hard face he has," the child answered, "and he carries a small bag in his hand, and I had a thought in my mind that maybe he was a process-server."

"If he were that," said Grania, calmly untroubled by the terror in Biddy's voice, "his business would be more likely with My Lord Cloyne than with me. Did he look like an Englishman?"

The child shook her head again. "Not so bad as that," she answered, and then, pointing down

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

the hill, she added: "See for yourself, for here he comes with that old fool Larry to guide him, bad cess to him! Shall we run away, Miss Grania?"

Grania laughed at the girl's imaginary terrors as she shook her head. "No, Biddy," she answered; "if the gentleman wants to see me I'll not be denying him."

Biddy sighed profoundly. "I hope no harm will come of it," she murmured.

Then the two waited in silence until Larry and the stranger climbed to where they stood. The stranger dismissed Larry with the gift of a small coin, and, advancing, asked if he had the honor to address Miss O'Hara. After Grania's assurance that she was no less than herself, the stranger politely expressed a wish for some private conversation. Thereupon Grania dismissed Biddy in spite of her well-nigh tearful petition to be allowed to remain, "for fear he means harm," and Grania and the stranger were left alone.

Grania looked her seeker over, and found nothing in the stranger to justify Biddy's trepidations. He was a well-built, grave, hard-featured, middle-aged man with a smooth-shaven face which seemed to have been carved out of some dark wood rather than molded out of human flesh. The expression of the features was strewn with the sternness of one that has combatted the world and won his way out after no lazy battle, but it was not forbidding, and the look of the dark eyes was very shrewd

## THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS

and steady. All his actions were slow, precise, and sure.

He opened his little bag, took out a card from it, and handed it to the girl. "That is my name," he said.

The girl took the card and looked at it. It bore the words "Hiram Pointdexter, Attorney-at-Law, Wall Street, New York City." She gave him back the card. "You are Mr. Pointdexter?" she asked.

The man nodded. "I have crossed the Atlantic," he said, "on your account. I was fortunate enough to obtain permission to accompany the Commissioners from the United States sent over to negotiate at Ghent the terms of peace with Great Britain. I shall be glad if you can favor me with your attention."

"Will you come with me to my cabin?" Grania questioned, "or shall we sit here and talk in the open air. I should like that best if you are willing, for I am never within four walls if I can help it."

"You are in the right of it, Miss O'Hara," the lawyer said. "If I had my way I would be camping in the Adirondacks instead of spending my days in a lawyer's office." Indeed, he looked such a man as would prefer, and had preferred, the open to the pent air of cities. He sat down opposite the girl on the smooth grass, and opening the bag again, took out of it a packet of papers neatly tied

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

together with red tape. He unfastened the tape with a brisk, dexterous twist, and laid the various papers beside him on the turf. Then he looked steadily at Grania and questioned her. "Miss O'Hara," he asked, "what do you know of your uncle Phelim O'Hara, of New York City, and of Poughkeepsie, in the same State?"

Grania shook her head. This uncle of hers was a dim tradition in her little book of family history, a man, a mystery, of whom her nurse sometimes at rare intervals spoke darkly. "Little or nothing," she said. "He disappeared when I was a baby after the trouble of Ninety-eight. No one knows what became of him."

As he listened to Grania's words Mr. Pointdexter's impassive countenance became, if possible, a shade more impassive than before. "I know," he said, gravely. "Let me tell you the whole story." He coughed, shuffled his little array of papers anew, and then began in the solemn voice of the storyteller. "In the year 1797, the year immediately preceding your unfortunate revolution, which, unhappily, was not so successful as ours, your father, Patrick O'Hara, and his elder brother, Phelim, were as good friends as brothers can hope to be. They shared the same tastes, pursued the same sports, seemed admirable companions. Then they both fell in love with the same woman, and immediately the union of their lives was ruined, and from being the best of friends the pair became



## THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS

bitter enemies. Your uncle, I regret to say, after a fierce altercation in a public place, tried to kill your father, and was only restrained by the interference of officious bystanders, who parted the unnatural combatants. The young lady whose good graces were thus competed for, naturally annoyed by the incident, promptly married your father and became in due time your mother."

Grania gave a little sigh for the mother she could not remember, the mother who had died when she was but three years old. Mr. Pointdexter made a slight inclination of the head as if in respect to her thoughts and then went on.

"Your uncle was preparing to leave Ireland when the rebellion of Ninety-eight broke out. Both he and your father took part in it. Your father was killed fighting in Wexford—"

Grania interrupted him with sparkling eyes and ringing voice. "God bless him!" she said, eagerly.

Again Mr. Pointdexter bowed his head as if in agreement, then he continued, in the same steady, measured, monotonous tones. "Your uncle, with a price upon his head, was smuggled out of Ireland by the late Lord Cloyne, father of the present earl, who had a great affection for him in spite of the difference in their political and religious opinions. He made his way to New York, found a stimulus for his ambition in the bracing air of the young Republic, and partly by ability, partly by luck, he

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

amassed in a very few years what may fairly be called without exaggeration a colossal fortune."

Grania could not restrain a smile. "I'm thinking," she said, "that must be a queer feeling for an O'Hara."

Mr. Pointdexter consented to soften the ruggedness of his visage with an answering smile. "It was," he said, dryly, "but all that is over and done with. Phelim O'Hara is no more. Before he struck his final balance he seems to have experienced some feeling akin to remorse. He had always practised his religion, though he had never followed it, but in his final illness he seems to have repented of his conduct to his brother and to the woman that became his brother's wife, and with my legal assistance he sought to make amends."

He paused for a moment as if he expected the girl to say something, but Grania was at a loss what to say. "Poor Uncle Phelim!" she murmured. "It is hard to be after trying to cry for an uncle one never saw and almost never heard of."

Mr. Pointdexter smiled again, but this time it was a somewhat sour smile. "My dear young lady," he said, dryly, "your Uncle Phelim was not a man who wanted to be cried over, living or dead. Let us say no more about him than is necessary, no more than it is essential for me to say. In a word, he has made you the heir to his entire fortune."

Mr. Pointdexter paused and looked steadily at the girl, who looked back at him with a puzzled ex-

## THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS

pression on her face. The words he had uttered conveyed little meaning to her mind.

Mr. Pointdexter continued. "You seem to take the news of your sudden affluence very composedly."

Grania felt and looked bewildered. She seemed to realize dimly and laboriously that the death of her uncle meant some solid gain to her. "Am I really comfortably off?" she asked.

"Comfortably is not the word," Mr. Pointdexter commented, with a faint hint of irony in his voice.

Grania clasped her hands and gasped. For the moment she could not speak. She could scarcely think. Almost she could have persuaded herself that the whole thing was a dream, a vision as unsubstantial and illusive as that of the fairies. She closed her eyes and opened them again. She expected to find herself alone on the hillside. But she was not alone. Mr. Pointdexter was sitting beside her with his face that seemed carved out of some dark wood turned toward her, and in his hand he held a number of pieces of folded paper disposed like the cards in some important game. It really was true that the lawyer was sitting there, it really might be true, this marvelous tale he was telling. The tidings were so astonishing, for all that they were told so methodically and formally by the precise lawyer from over seas, that they had almost a stunning effect upon the girl's mind. Only half an hour ago she had been what she had been all her life, a child of extreme poverty, a poverty that

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

was little less stern than the poverty of the humblest beggar on my Lord Cloyne's estate, and in this poverty she had expected to pass the remainder of her days, unless, indeed, Dennis succeeded in making good his brave words and came back from London with his pockets stuffed with guineas. All in a flutter of wonder, Grania stretched out her hands to the lawyer. Her mind was busy with unfamiliar speculation. "Have I," she questioned, "oh, have I as much as two hundred pounds a year?"

"More like two hundred thousand a year," Mr. Pointdexter answered, blandly.

Grania stared at him as one might stare at some amazing apparition. "Sure, you are joking," she said, weakly.

Mr. Pointdexter shook his head. "My dear young lady," he said, seriously, "I have not crossed the Atlantic—although, I admit, handsomely recompensed for my pains—in order to crack jokes on an Irish hillside. You may take my word for it that you are an amazingly wealthy young woman, probably the richest young woman now living in the United Kingdom."

To hear such astounding words issuing from the lips of so grave a countenance was enough to upset the balance of the most well-regulated nature. Grania, who was a very irresponsible child of nature, did not receive them according to any conventional canon of the reception of good news. Her fancy

## THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS

leaped instantly to the incident of the dream that she had told to Dennis, and while its vivid imagery rekindled in her, she clasped her hands together enthusiastically.

“Bless the little fellow’s green coat and red cap!” she cried. “I knew it meant luck.” Something like astonishment for a moment asserted itself on Mr. Pointdexter’s iron countenance. “I beg your pardon,” he questioned, and the solemnity with which he spoke recalled Grania to herself.

“Oh, nothing,” she answered. “I was just thinking of a dream I had.” She kept silent for an instant, then she asked: “And is this money all my own, my very own, to do exactly as I please with?”

“The money has been left to you absolutely,” Mr. Pointdexter replied, “without any condition except this, that if you marry you must marry an Irishman.”

“And who else would I be wanting to marry?” Grania answered. She paused for a moment, and then said, with apparent irrelevance. “His name is Dennis Tirowen.”

“Indeed,” said Mr. Pointdexter, raising his eyebrows; “and who is Dennis Tirowen?”

Grania explained, flushed and enthusiastic. “He is the best fiddler in Kerry, and the greatest poet in all the world, and he has gone off to London to make his fortune, that he may come back and marry me. But there is no need for him to make his fortune now, so let’s go after him and bring him back.”

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Mr. Pointdexter raised a delaying hand. "Gently, young lady, gently," he said. "From my knowledge of the world, I should say that your young friend is likely to return when he hears of your good luck."

Grania was about to protest vigorously at this assumption on the part of the lawyer, but Mr. Pointdexter lifted up his hand as if to command silence, and, somewhat to her surprise, Grania obeyed him. Indeed, she found him a person that was used to obedience, this bringer of strange news. Mr. Pointdexter was silent for a few seconds; then he spoke again.

"My dear young lady," he said, gravely, "I take it for granted that I have surprised you not a little by the news that I have made known to you to-day. But on the other hand, I am bound to admit that you also have surprised me a good deal."

Grania stared at him with raised eyebrows. "Indeed," she said, "and how so?"

Mr. Pointdexter explained. "From what I had heard, I understood that you were reduced to great poverty, and from what I see"—and as he spoke he glanced with a look of commiseration at the girl's clothes—"I learn that what I heard was true. But, and you must pardon me if I appear inquisitive, while you dress like a peasant and live like a peasant, you do not speak like a peasant and you do not carry yourself like a peasant."

Grania laughed pleasantly. "That is easily

## THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS

explained," she answered. "My old nurse, who took charge of me after the rising, was a well-educated woman to start with, and for my sake she bettered her education, that I might benefit by her knowledge. I was a quick child, I believe, and picked up information quickly, and Father O'Keefe, that was a man of great learning, took an interest in me and taught me Latin and French. And the young man I was speaking of, Dennis Tirowen, that I have known since I was so high, why, he has always loved songs and poetry and music, and he taught me some of his arts."

Mr. Pointdexter nodded, and a queer smile played for a moment over his grim face. "You will certainly not be so unfit for your new life as I expected," he said. "You must know that there is a proviso in the will suggesting, although not insisting, that you should commit yourself, for your preparation for the society to which your wealth entitles you, to the tutelage of the Earl and Countess of Cloyne, to whom, in the case that you and they agree, your uncle leaves a very handsome sum. This represents his gratitude to the late earl, who connived at his escape."

Grania burst out laughing. "The Earl and Countess of Cloyne!" she cried. "Oh, Lord, what fun!"

A certain sternness in Mr. Pointdexter's glance arrested Grania's mirth. "May I ask," he said, solemnly, "why you appear to be diverted."

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Instantly Grania was discretion itself. "I was only amused," she said, demurely, "at the thought that it should be worth the while of my lord and my lady to take any notice of me."

Mr. Pointdexter, in spite of his natural gravity, seemed to find something not unentertaining in the situation, for his eyes twinkled in his rigid face.

"The possession of wealth," he said, philosophically, "alters one's relationship to the world in general very considerably."

Mr. Pointdexter's words seemed to move his hearer more than perhaps the speaker expected.

"The possession of wealth," Grania repeated, only as yet vaguely conscious of her changed estate. "If I am wealthy I can save the Round Tower."

Mr. Pointdexter glanced at the great white pillar rising from the green grass. "Save the Round Tower?" he repeated. "I am afraid I do not quite understand. Pray explain."

Whereupon Grania explained. She told her attentive, impassive listener how she loved the Round Tower, how she had served it and tended it since her childhood, how it seemed to her the most sacred of all the sacred things in the sacred soil about her. Then she told him how it was blown abroad, in a rumor spreading from the Hall to the village, and from the village to the country-side, and generally believed, that my Lord Cloyne had promised to sell the Round Tower to some gentleman from England, and to allow the foreigner to transplant



## THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS

it stone by stone from the soil whence it sprang to an alien land. There were tears in Grania's eyes as she told the tale, and hope in her eyes as she asked, eagerly, if, now that she was rich, she had money enough to buy the beloved Round Tower away from the enemy?

Mr. Pointdexter had scarcely finished assuring her that with her command of money it would be well-nigh hopeless for any one to compete with her in a struggle for the possession of the Round Tower, when Grania rose to her feet with a little cry and pointed down the hill-road. Mr. Pointdexter, following the direction of Grania's finger, observed a small company of human beings leisurely ascending the slope. These human beings, Grania told him, hurriedly, certainly included Lord and Lady Cloyne, and probably included the would-be purchaser of the Tower.

"They are coming," she said, fiercely, "to buy it, the beautiful Tower, the glory of the foreland, my dear, dear Tower. But they shall not have it now! Come away before they see us."

Grania in her eagerness almost dragged Mr. Pointdexter from where he stood to the base of the Tower. Then nimbly ascending the flight of steps, she beckoned him to follow, which he did with the leisurely dignity becoming to his years and his profession. Inside the Tower, secure from observation, they could watch the advance of the party from the Hall.

## XIII

### LORD CLOYNE IS SURPRISED

THE party from the Hall came leisurely up the hill. They had dined early; they had dined well, and the cool of the evening was soothing after a liberal indulgence in meats and wines. My Lord Cloyne kept a good table in spite of his straitened means, and he strove to be Lucullus with the Doubbles for his guests. Lady Double, a trifle flushed and vastly vivacious, strolled side by side with Curtius Loveless, whose sallies and gallantries seemed to afford her the highest gratification. Lady Cloyne was escorted by Mr. Rubie, and seemed to listen with attentive ear and interested mien to that worthy gentleman's profound opinions and pregnant postulations. In reality she was not paying the least attention to what he said, but was occupying her mind with speculations as to how Marcus and she should spend the banker's money, if—which, indeed, she could scarcely bring herself to believe—the banker were really fool enough to be willing to waste good money on a foolish and useless Round Tower.

My lord walked with Sir William, and artfully

## LORD CLOYNE IS SURPRISED

contrived to carry on a conversation upon archæology and antiquarianism generally, as if he really knew something about the subjects. What he did know, or, rather, what he appeared to know, he had garnered from a hurried consultation of the necessary volumes of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which formed part of the late lord's library. Such as the knowledge he had thus culled might be, it served his lordship's turn, for it enabled him to give his companion a succession of little judicious spurs and goads which urged him to the delivery of lengthy and elaborate dissertations on his favorite themes. These harangues bored my lord excessively, but he considered lovingly the coming guineas, and carried a smiling face.

The little party, therefore, seemed all in the best spirits and on the best terms with each other when they finished their climb and came to a halt on the summit of the hill. With a wave of his cane my lord indicated the Round Tower. It was for all the world as if he were formally presenting Sir William Double to the ancient monument he had traveled thus far to see.

Sir William's countenance glowed with satisfaction as he surveyed the Tower, and he turned to his host in a rapture of enthusiasm. "My lord," he declared, with the eagerness which he always displayed when there arose any opportunity for adding to the madness of Muswell Hill, "you have not exaggerated the value of your treasure. It is a

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

splendid specimen, and I am delighted to think that it is destined to enrich my collection."

My lord in his heart thought the egregious banker a very foolish personage, but he was far too wary to show any sign of contempt for a folly which promised to put some hundreds of pounds into his own pockets. He suggested that the banker should inspect the Round Tower from within, and the banker, accepting the invitation with alacrity, was about to skip as nimbly as he could up the rude run of steps that now made the entrance to the Tower accessible. But he got no farther in his progress than the placing of one foot upon the first step of the stairway, for at that moment Grania suddenly emerged from the darkness of the interior of the Tower, and, standing on the top of the steps, looked down upon the little company from the Hall.

Sir William gave a little start at the sudden appearance of youthful beauty in a manner so unexpected. The faintest shade of an annoyed frown darkened for a moment the amiability of my lord's face, only to disappear as swiftly as it had come. Lady Cloyne and Lady Double lifted their long-handled eye-glasses and stared at the girl, the first with a disdainful familiarity, the second with a frank, if slightly resentful, admiration. Mr. Rubie felt curiously agitated at seeing Grania again, and disapproved of the agitation. As for Captain Curtius, he stared as if he had never seen a pretty girl before. Indeed, he assured himself that he

## LORD CLOYNE IS SURPRISED

had never before seen one so beautiful, and he had seen many in his day.

Grania came quietly down the steps as Sir William hurriedly renounced his attempt to ascend, and faced the company from the Hall composedly. Behind her, in the darkness of the Tower, Mr. Pointdexter lingered, unnoticed or unheeded. Grania saluted Lady Cloyne, who returned the salutation coldly, and then addressed herself to my lord.

"I hear," she said, "that your lordship has the intention of selling this Tower."

Lord Cloyne nodded briskly, and made a gesture in the direction of Sir William Double.

"That is so," he agreed, "and this is the gentleman that proposes to buy it."

"It has ever been the rule," Grania retorted, "on the Cloyne estate when any portion of the land is to be sold to sell it to the highest bidder."

Lord Cloyne nodded again. "Very true, Miss O'Hara," he said, politely, "and the rule would be observed now if there were the slightest likelihood of any one being desirous to compete with Sir William Double here for the possession of the Round Tower."

He spoke as if his words ended a conversation that was at once needless and meaningless, but Grania's next words staggered him.

"It is not so very unlikely," Grania said, quietly. "I, myself, am wishful to buy the Tower if the Tower is for sale."

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Lord Cloyne could scarcely have been more surprised if Grania had announced her intention of assuming the title of Queen of England. As he had not the slightest doubt of the girl's sanity, he suspected some kind of practical joke and my lord detested practical joking. His surprise was so great that he showed it, which was unusual for him. Lady Cloyne, who had been busily explaining Grania to Lady Double in a half-audible whisper, now tittered. Sir William looked vexed and puzzled. Mr. Rubie wondered if the girl had taken leave of her senses, and Captain Curtius edged nearer to get a better view. He had only been dimly conscious of Grania's existence; he had never seen her since she was a child, for Captain Curtius was wont to congratulate himself that his life had not to be lived in Ireland. Now he was inflamed with admiration of the girl's beauty, and envied his brother his opportunities, and wondered what use he had made of them. In the mean time that brother, for once at a loss, was striving as politely as possible to suggest to Grania that she should go away and not talk nonsense.

Grania smiled. "I suppose you think me insane," she said, good-humoredly, "but, indeed, I am quite rational and quite in earnest." She glanced over her shoulder toward the doorway of the Tower, wherein Mr. Pointdexter now was framed. "This gentleman will explain," she said.

Mr. Pointdexter slowly descended from the

## LORD CLOYNE IS SURPRISED

Tower to the turf. He saluted the two ladies with a rigid courtesy, and then addressed himself to Lord Cloyne. Briefly and pithily he put that astonished nobleman in possession of the facts which had converted Grania from poverty to wealth. My lord and his companions heard and were amazed. My lord questioned shrewdly, but after a few minutes felt that there was no room to doubt the accuracy of the lawyer's narrative. Mr. Pointdexter had with him in his little bag sufficient documentary evidence to satisfy the most skeptical. There was the copy of O'Hara's will, there were unlimited letters of credit on Dublin and London banks. Lord Cloyne surrendered all doubts. He certainly was not unwilling to be convinced, for the proviso in the will which appointed him and his wife as the wardens of the newly enriched girl frankly delighted him. As for Lady Cloyne, she immediately quitted Mr. Rubie to precipitate herself in a paroxysm of enthusiastic congratulations upon Grania, who had never hitherto received more than the most distant civilities of recognition and salutation from the great lady.

Grania was inwardly amused at this vehement effusiveness and outwardly pleased at the extravagant display. Had Lady Cloyne suddenly discovered a long-lost and dearly loved relative she could not have made a greater fuss over the girl, but because she was a clever woman and by no means wanting in shrewdness she contrived to leaven her enthusiasm with a certain frank worldliness which

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

made it seem less impossible. She admitted with a cheery candor that as Grania's position had now entirely changed it was only natural and fitting that Lady Cloyne's attitude and course of conduct should change with it. She vowed that she had always liked Grania, but that the liking could not possibly take any pronounced form as long as Grania was merely a girl who lived in a peasant's cabin and dressed like a peasant girl. Grania, on her side, was prepared to accept the lady's overtures in the spirit in which they were made. She was desirous in the first instance to follow the wishes of the uncle whom she had never seen but whose belated remembrance of her had caused such a change in her fortunes. In the second place, she was well aware of the advantage it would be to her to accept the offered friendship of the Cloynes and to make her entrance into the social world in their company. So that matter was settled without further ado.

Nobody, it may be noted, was more gratified by the arrangement than Captain Curtius. The beauty of the girl had allured him from the first, stimulating pursuit. Now other thoughts came, other hopes kindled, and it was with a great show of eagerness that he pressed forward to be presented by his sister-in-law to the fair heiress, who received him very graciously. Captain Curtius was very good-looking, and had a most gallant carriage. There was no reason why Grania should not smile



## LORD CLOYNE IS SURPRISED

upon him. Lady Double smiled also and thought sourly.

But if the general feeling of the little company on the hillside was one of satisfaction, strong dissatisfaction asserted itself in the person of Sir William Double. He broke in upon the conference between the Cloynes and Grania and Mr. Pointdexter with vehement demands that his lordship should carry out the understanding come to between them and sell him the Round Tower. Lord Cloyne pointed out to the aggrieved banker that the situation was wholly changed, that a new-comer had taken a hand in the game and altered its conditions by announcing an intention to enter the lists as a competitor for the purchase of the Round Tower. My lord pointed out how unfair it would be to him, Cloyne, if he were not to be allowed to take advantage of the sudden opportunity afforded him of getting a better price for his property.

The arguments seemed to be lost upon the banker. He insisted on what he asserted to be his rights, and when Grania amiably but positively assured him that she was determined to outbid any sum he might be persuaded by his passion of collectorship to offer, his zeal of acquisition overcame his decorum, and he eventually so far forgot his urbanity as to remind Grania that as a Catholic she had no power to buy or hold property in Ireland as against a member of the established Church. For a moment Grania's face fell, for she knew well enough the extravagant

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

cruelties of the penal laws, but she recovered her serenity when Mr. Pointdexter, coming forward, blandly explained that though the law might in effect act so, it did not prevent an American citizen from buying any property that was offered for sale in Ireland, and that he as an American citizen was as cheerfully prepared to outbid the antiquary's offers as Grania herself.

Thus frustrated, there was nothing for the antiquary to do but to abandon his claim, which he did with a very ill grace indeed, and to quit the field, which he did very quickly in the company of his spouse, who went with him for the sensible purpose of soothing his ruffled feelings. She was determined that there should be no quarrel with the Cloynes over a silly old building, and she was quite willing to be on friendly terms with the young woman whose fortunes rivaled those of Aladdin. Mr. Rubie, after stammering out a few awkward words of congratulation to Grania, followed the Doubbles in the company of Captain Curtius, and the Cloynes were left to make their arrangements with their new ward and her lawyer. While my Lady Cloyne was volubly announcing her plans and proposals to the quietly attentive American, my lord, with the smiling statement that he left all such matters to his wife, took advantage of the situation to get a few words with Grania apart.

To do my lord justice he was never taken aback and was never known to seem abashed. Another

## LORD CLOYNE IS SURPRISED

man might have found the changed situation embarrassing and might have met it with awkward expressions of regret or a sulky affectation of indifference. My lord did not bother himself so. His face wore its pleasantest smile as he addressed the girl.

“Let me offer you my heartiest congratulations,” he said, “on this sudden change in your fortune. My congratulations are honest, and I hope you will believe that they come from the lips of a friend.”

Grania made as if she would speak, but my lord with a gracefully lifted hand checked her attempt as he continued, still with the same air of courteous good humor.

“Oh!” he protested, “I can guess what you were going to say, that I have not shown myself a friend, and that you do not feel friendly disposed toward me; but I believe that if you reflect for even a few minutes you will say nothing of the kind. You know what we are, we men of the world; we are all given to gallantry, and there never was a Loveless yet who did not seek to excel in the sport. But that is all past and done with as far as you are concerned. I have apologized before, and, if you want me to apologize again, I am ready to do it with my hand on my heart and my knee on the turf.”

He made a suggestion of kneeling as he spoke, though he did not kneel, and his smiling eyes scanned the girl's face steadily. It would have been

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

hard for her, it would have been hard for any woman, to resist the cheerful earnestness of my lord's manner. He was not in the least sincere, but sincerity asserted itself in every sound of his voice and on every line of his frank and handsome features. His carriage, as well as his speech, seemed to protest a genuine desire for reconciliation, a general assurance of amendment. As a matter of fact, my lord knew that that way of his always had a good effect upon those who experienced its influence for the first time. He was really thinking of the value that a reconciliation with the girl would mean to him. St. James's Street seemed suddenly very near at hand. He felt as if he had only to extend an arm to touch the door of Watier's. He could almost see the portly figure of the Prince Regent and glow responsive to his welcoming smile.

Grania was willing to forgive, and so Grania forgave. She had too brisk a sense of humor to cherish the memory of an offense to commit which came as natural to a man of Lord Cloyne's kind as to breathe. She smiled her readiness to forget, and my lord made her a grateful bow. Then Lady Cloyne smiled down upon them, with Mr. Point-dexter in tow. All was settled. Grania was to come at once to the Hall and become a member of the Cloyne household. The next steps in her career as a great lady would be decided later. In quick response to Grania's expression of anxiety as to the welfare of her old nurse, Lady Cloyne prom-

## LORD CLOYNE IS SURPRISED

ised that ease and comfort should henceforth be assured to her. The preliminary lines of the treaty between the high contracting parties thus laid down, the company quitted the hilltop and walked to the Hall.

## XIV

### METAMORPHOSIS

**G**RANIA could never quite recall in after life the exact sequence of events of those first astounding hours or the sensations that those events caused her. It was all so sudden, so swift, so amazing, so like being blended with the delicate impossibilities of a fairy tale being borne on the plummy wings of some Arabian adventure. To-day, as it were, and yesterday, and all the yesterdays that she could remember, she had been poor. She had looked forward without fear as without hope to a life of poverty only a little less abject in that she placed a woman's confidence in Dennis's braggadocio. And lo, to-day again! But she was suddenly translated, and the present was a splendid promise and the future was to go its way upon a path that was all gold and roses. At first she was like the sleeper awakened in the Oriental fantasy, and could not by any means prevail upon herself to credit her astounding shift of fortune. Was it really she who now owned the Round Tower, bought from my Lord Cloyne at a reasonable advance upon Sir William Double's price? Was it really she who

## METAMORPHOSIS

was an heiress and dwelling at the great Hall and on terms of equality with its great ladies? It was only the repeated assurances of Mr. Pointdexter, the persistent assiduities of the Cloynes, and the heavy amiabilities of Sir William Double, now partially reconciled to the loss of the Round Tower by the promise of a new client and enormous deposits, it was only these combined evidences and aids to conviction that dissipated her doubts and allowed her to lift up her heart in serenity and security.

What a wonderful, many-colored phantasmagoria it was to look back upon after the lapse of a few days, after the lapse of a few weeks! First of all, there was her installation at the Hall, and her investment in such of the garments of fashion as could be hurriedly adapted to her need from the somewhat slender wardrobe of my Lady Cloyne and the brimmed capacity of the traveling trunks of my Lady Double. Her beautiful body was for the first time clothed as its slender loveliness deserved. Delicate linen touched her flesh, the suavity of bravely colored silks and ancient lace framed and emphasized the radiancy of her youth and the richness of her beauty. She knew the joy of delicious silk stockings, clinging to the slim leg as tightly as a second skin; the joy of cool, clean lavender-scented smocks, the joy of pretty petticoats and companionable stays, the joy of costly gowns, of feathers in the hair, of jewels on neck and wrist and finger. After the first shock of surprise she accepted the meta-

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

morphosis readily enough, was supple under the touches of dexterous ladies' maids, was newly delighted with each addition to her charms. How glorious was the exposure to a mighty mirror, the beholding in that sheet of glass of the sweet changes which veil upon veil of rich attire wrought in her outward show. Yet she was very quiet throughout that first bewildering ordeal, showing no unnecessary joy, taking her staggering transmutation with a seeming calm that surprised Lady Cloyne and amused Lady Double, both of whom had been used to fine clothes all their lives and would scarcely have been surprised if the peasant girl, as they styled or thought her, had sung or skipped for joy at her change.

That first night in the Hall, what a night that was of revelation in marvels! The richly furnished rooms, the stately staircases, the largeness and the luxury of the life that was displayed on all sides appealed instantly to the child's sense of well-being. To Lady Double the establishment at Cloyne Hall seemed a modest enough affair; her keen sight could discern a thousand telltale things that shrieked aloud the poverty of the Cloynes and the difficulty that they had to keep up the show of ease. But Grania did not discern these things, and influences that were lost upon Lady Double were not lost upon the girl—the influence of beautiful old furniture in a beautiful old dwelling, of an atmosphere created by generations of residence, of the tone that time had slowly given to a dwelling, the



## METAMORPHOSIS

tone and touches that made it a work of art. In the picture-gallery she did not heed as Lady Double heeded the cracked frames and faded gilding of the frames; she recognized by instinct that the portraits of the Cloynes and their kinsfolk, men and women, were true things, admirable creations, calling to her with that voice of command to which kindness of any kind always found her responsive and obedient. The bewildering magnificence of it all took Grania's breath away, and if she had been only by a little less witty than she was, she would have betrayed herself a thousand times in as many seconds. But while she inwardly marveled she was outwardly calm. She took the ministrations of the great ladies, and of their subalterns, the ladies' maids, with a composed indifference which seemed baffling to the subalterns and admirable to the superior officers. In less than a quarter of a day Grania O'Hara sloughed off the skin of her poverty and arose invested by the splendor of her wealth, with no shamefacedness, no hesitation to mark the transition between the chrysalis and the butterfly. When she sailed into the banqueting-room of the Hall for supper on the evening of the day which had begun with the battle of the Round Tower, she seemed astonishingly self-composed in the eyes of the two ladies that were acting, and were mighty pleased to act, as her fairy godmothers. As for the gentlemen, it is free to admit that all four thought her perfection.



BOOK II

THE SOUL OF ERIN IN ST. JAMES'S SQUARE



# I

## BUTTERFLY-BIRTH

IT was decided by the Cloynes, after long and serious consultation with Mr. Pointdexter, that Grania should not be carried at once to London, but should proceed thither by the stepping-stones of Dublin and of Paris. In the capital of her native land Grania should receive the earliest rites of initiation into the mysteries of society and learn the easier rules of its game. In Paris, where the restored Bourbon held his court and welcomed English visitors to his kingdom, the girl might study the stately politeness and splendid etiquette of that old order of things now eagerly reasserting itself after an exile of a quarter of a century. Also, she might acquire a wardrobe worthy of her wealth, her beauty, and her youth, so that when at last she arrived in London she would be fitly equipped for its subjugation.

If the Cloynes and Mr. Pointdexter were unanimous in agreement as to these plans for polishing their precious stone, they were also unanimous in declaring that Grania already wanted very little indeed to make her a great lady. With these

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

schemes for her immediate future Grania was quite content. She had never been in a city in her life, and would have gone to Dublin or to Damascus with an equal ignorance and an equal eagerness. She had always longed to see the world of which she knew so little, but as the realization of her wishes seemed impossible, she had kept her longing to herself, like a sensible young woman, and made the best of what Heaven had given. Now that Heaven had been pleased to increase its bounty, she extended her hands in rapture toward the unknown kingdoms and the wonders and the pleasures that they promised her.

Yet neither the satisfaction nor the desires of her new life had any power to push her lover from his first place in her thoughts and in her heart. Her one regret in her new splendor was that Dennis should be absent in its dawn. Her chief desire was to call him to her side. This she could not do at once, for Dennis had gone away from her giving no address to which she could write. He had promised to write to her as soon as he had settled; but the days came and the days went and brought their tale of great changes into Grania's life, yet brought no message from the absent man. Grania would have rejoiced to share the good news and the good fortune with Dennis at once. She hated the delay which kept them apart when they should be together.

After a while, when the silence continued, Grania began to grow anxious, and while she and

## BUTTERFLY-BIRTH

the Cloynes were in Dublin she begged Mr. Pointdexter, who had business in London, to make such inquiries as he could with a view to finding out Dennis's whereabouts. This Mr. Pointdexter readily promised to do, and Grania was carried to Paris cheered by the hope that she should soon have news of her lover. She had been quite candid with Mr. Pointdexter about Dennis Tirowen, and Mr. Pointdexter had listened with a grave air of sympathy and had expressed no personal opinion on the matter. To the Cloynes Grania had said nothing of Dennis. She knew well enough that they would never understand her feelings, that they would and could only regard a rich woman's affection for a poor man of a lower class than herself as a monstrous madness. Grania meant very steadily to have her own way and to follow her own heart's inclining, but she did not care to waste time and energy in useless disputation, so she shrewdly kept her sweet secret to herself, and Lady Cloyne watching the child's triumphs in Dublin and in Paris never dreamed that she was other than fancy-free.

Grania did indeed triumph in Paris as she had triumphed in Dublin, but the ache at her heart grew daily greater, for Mr. Pointdexter wrote often, but always with no news of Dennis. It was naturally not easy to trace an obscure stranger in a great city like London, but Mr. Pointdexter did his best and preached patience. There was no help for it, and Grania carried a smiling face into the great houses

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

of Paris while care was gnawing at her heart. She was glad when the Cloynes decided that the time had come to quit Paris and to make the memorable descent upon London. Dennis had gone to London; Dennis must be in London; she would be nearer to him, would surely be guided to find him. She was strangely sure that Dennis was alive. Whatever had happened to keep him from writing to her, he lived. This confidence supported her in her anxiety, and in that confidence she came to London.



## II

### THE COMET OF FIFTEEN

IF Grania had risen like a moon upon Dublin and shone like a star upon Paris, she blazed upon London like a comet, a portent beautiful and bewildering, prodigious and magnificent. The bruit of her strange story preceded her arrival and prepared her triumph. Countless paragraphs in the newspapers had related at great length and with staggering inaccuracy the tale of her misfortunes and her fortune. The romantic history of her family was blown abroad in ceaseless whispers along the gossiping corridors of the Temple of Notoriety. All the tongues of rumor tattled, all the ears of credulity pricked, all the mouths of wonder gaped. She was famous for her wealth before she set foot on English soil, famous for her beauty, two things which it was hard even for report to magnify; famous, too, according to report, for the multitude of hearts she had already enslaved in the capital of Ireland and the capital of France. No fantastically capricious heroine of Neapolitan fairy tale or Venetian fairy play had been more adored, or more hopelessly. She was credited with a list of suitors a mile

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

long, and the wildest stories were repeated, amplified, and, when occasion called, invented by Mr. Bowley, of *The Scourge*; Mr. Shadd, of *The Whistle*, and their kind, concerning the extravagancies to which the golden youth of Dublin and the golden youth of Paris resorted in the hope of winning her favor or at least her regard.

All the curiosity—and it was intense—that could be kindled by the pens of the journals—and they were busy—was more than gratified when, as the fitting climax to her resplendent apparitions in Dublin and in Paris, Grania at length made her appearance in London with Lord and Lady Cloyne as her sponsors and introducers. Never in the memory of the oldest man-about-town, or most reminiscent dowager, had any young woman made so instantaneous and so amazing a mark upon society. Her name was never out of the personal paragraphs in the newspapers; her name was never off the lips of those that had only talked of the latest fashions in clothes, in women, and in wine. Her portrait was rapidly painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence, limner to the king, who pretended to be hopelessly in love with his lovely sitter, but who did not allow his passion to prevent him from charging an extravagant price for his canvas.

The picture was exhibited in Bond Street, because public impatience could not wait for the opening of the Royal Academy. It was shown all by itself

## THE COMET OF FIFTEEN

in a room at the back of Longhi's shop, which was hung with green satin in honor of the lady's nationality. The amount of money which the public paid to see the picture was enormous. On the frame of the picture the painter had set no name, only the words, "The Fair Irish Maid," and the title took the fancy of the town and was repeated everywhere. Whenever men and women spoke of Grania O'Hara—and in the fashionable circles just then people spoke of little else—they spoke of her always as "The Fair Irish Maid." Poets wrote verses to "The Fair Irish Maid"; musicians dedicated songs to "The Fair Irish Maid"; enterprising potters reproduced her lineaments on plates and dishes. All sets and cliques of society, however hostile they might have been before, agreed to unite in doing "The Fair Irish Maid" homage. There was no young man who respected himself who did not profess the profoundest passion for the beautiful stranger, and to declare himself heart-broken over the hopelessness of his case. Even the ladies that had believed themselves to be queens of London and peerless in beauty before her coming forbore to be jealous, being so dazzled by the golden atmosphere of Grania's wealth that they could consent to blink at her loveliness.

At first, indeed, there had been those who were inclined to be skeptical as to the vast extent of Grania's fortune, but a very few inquiries judiciously put to Sir William Double and Sir William

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Double's wife soon convinced the most incredulous that rumor, which is generally credited with the tendency to treble or quadruple the fortunes of the rich, for once had underrated rather than overrated the greatness of the wealth that had suddenly been placed at the command of a girl. The most exclusive sets rejoiced to welcome her into their temples, the exacting and imperious committee of Almack's welcomed her with a rapturous cordiality, and the most dignified duchess and most exclusive countess regarded the presence of Grania at her house as a compliment. As for the Prince's set, they were boisterously enthusiastic in their praises of "The Fair Irish Maid." Not a man of them all but paid her the floridest compliments and competed eagerly for a smile. They toasted her beauty early and late. They vied with one another for the favor of her hand at a dance, and declared that to sit next to her at dinner or supper was the most enviable of human privileges. Captain Morris made rhymes about her, of which one verse was very popular:

Cleopatra of Egypt was comely,  
And Helen was handsome, 'tis said,  
But there's one here that makes them look  
homely,  
One angel, "The Fair Irish Maid."

Even my Lord Coleraine emerged from his retirement at Somers Town to get a glimpse of the girl,

## THE COMET OF FIFTEEN

protesting with a flourish of his shillalah to the gatherers in the tap-room of the Sol Arms, in Tottenham Court Road, or to the cognoscenti in the studio of Mr. Nollekens, that "The Fair Irish Maid" was the loveliest thing that had ever come out of Ireland. Carlton House and its royal resident were metaphorically at her feet, and his Royal Highness would have welcomed her daily to his hospitable mansion if he could have persuaded her to come so often. At the Prince Regent's supper parties "The Fair Irish Maid" was always drunk with all the honors at an early season of the evening in order that the company might be sufficiently sober fittingly to honor the occasion.

Many of those that went into raptures over Grania's beauty did so in terms that would have scarcely edified the girl if she had heard them. But she did not hear them, and if any hint of them had been reported to her she was wise enough to know that the language of admiration varies according to its environment. As it was, she went on her way delightfully unspoiled by the incense that was burned so lavishly on her public altars. She was honest enough to admit that it gave her pleasure, but she would have given it all gladly for the sight of one man's face, for the sound of one man's voice.

### III

#### THE LITTLE QUEEN

IT is not to be supposed that Grania, after a visit to Dublin, a visit to Paris, and a visit to London, all under the chaperonage of the inestimable Lady Cloyne, was converted as if by magic into a perfect copy of a typical lady of fashion. No such metamorphosis was possible and no such metamorphosis was desirable. Grania remained herself in London as in Paris, and in Paris as in Dublin. She carried with her everywhere the untutored charm of the free life she had lived, and she carried into crowded drawing-rooms the air of a sylvan goddess. She disdained to train her tongue into a mimicry of the London way of speech, and her admirers one and all protested that her Irish accent was the most delightful thing ever heard. Had Grania been deliberately resolved to play a part in order to gain social success she could not have done better than she did. There was something so naïvely refreshing, so distracting and daintily eccentric, in the sudden appearance in the social world of this beautiful savage—for so some of the wits were pleased to style her—that it insured from the first her triumph.

## THE LITTLE QUEEN

But Grania played no part, acted with no purpose; she simply followed her natural impulses, and remained frankly and gallantly herself.

She was, however, at no such disadvantage in this new world wherein she moved as must have impeded the path of another less curiously situated. For all that Grania had lived the life of a peasant, worn a peasant's wear, and eaten a peasant's bread, she had never forgotten, and, indeed, had never been allowed to forget, that she was an O'Hara, the daughter of an ancient race. The old nurse that had taken charge of her after the ruin of Ninety-eight kept alive in her the sense of the privilege of her birth, and had, as well as she was able, brought her up with that care and deference to which true gentility was entitled. The peasants with whom Grania came in contact from her earliest days, with whom she played as a child, with whom she danced as a girl, never forgot for a moment that the child, the girl, who seemed to be one of themselves was in reality a maiden that if she had her rights would reign like a queen over them. The terms of familiarity on which they lived were always guided by an extreme deference and respect on the part of Grania's companions and by the gracious dignity of Grania herself.

Thus from the first dawn of her consciousness of the world Grania had been accustomed in spite of her poverty to receive and to accept homage. When therefore she was so suddenly and fantastically uplifted from the comradeship of the Cloyne peasantry

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

to the fellowship of the great she took her place among them with a calm, an ease, and a distinction that not a little surprised those who were unacquainted with the circumstances of her upbringing. The homage to which she had always been accustomed troubled her no more because those who paid it bore titles and were lords and ladies than it had troubled her when it was paid by men that wore coats of ragged frieze. The last of the O'Haras had been queen of her little corner of the world and her little handful of companions. "The Fair Irish Maid" that was the toast of London was still the last of the O'Haras, and still found it natural to be a queen, although her kingdom was changed, and changed, too, the condition of her subjects

If Grania was welcomed as a kind of uncrowned queen in London, she certainly carried on the business of her reign in a right regal manner. Acting cheerfully in her interests—and their own—the Cloynes spent her money lavishly, without any check upon their expenditure from either Grania or Mr. Pointdexter. The Cloynes had never known the pleasures and privileges attached to the spending of apparently unlimited money, and they enjoyed their amazing opportunity to the top of their bent. Their instructions as delivered to them by the American lawyer were to do everything possible to place Grania in the best imaginable position in the social world of London, and they obeyed their instructions with a joyous alacrity which was happily governed



## THE LITTLE QUEEN

by a genuine intelligence. Lord Cloyne made an excellent majordomo and his wife an admirable lady of the palace.

Palace was indeed the word to apply to Grania's abode. Lord Cloyne secured, regardless of cost, the great house of the Marquis of Ashford in St. James's Square, which was rightly reputed to be one of the most beautiful houses in the metropolis. Lord Ashford had been playing, as he confessed to Lord Cloyne, who was perfectly aware of the fact, "damnably deep." If Lord Cloyne had not appeared upon the scene with his purse of Fortuna in his fingers there seemed every likelihood of Ashford House being put upon the market and all its accumulated treasures being dispersed. Lord Cloyne prevented that catastrophe. He sent Lord Ashford to the Continent with a small fortune at his command, and he, as it were, formally occupied Ashford House in the name of Her Majesty Queen Grania, and metaphorically ran up her flag there.

The whole matter was arranged very briskly. Lord Cloyne left his wife and her charge in Paris enjoying themselves in the atmosphere of a restored monarchy and came to London and the counsels of Mr. Pointdexter. When my lord returned to Paris it was with the tidings that his mission had been magnificently successful, and that a fairy castle was waiting for the presence of the fairy princess from Erin. Grania on her arrival in London found that his lordship had been as good

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

as his word. She had seen nothing in Dublin or in Paris to compare with Ashford House. She had never dreamed of a habitation so beautiful or so sumptuous. The late Marquis of Ashford, father of the young gentleman who was now merrily engaged in circulating a goodly number of Grania's guineas, was a man of fine taste, whose ambition it had been to own the most glorious home in London. Outside it was no more than a stately and dignified edifice in a stately and dignified square. Inside it was almost unbelievably lovely. Its furniture, its pictures, its statues, its marbles, were all masterpieces arranged and harmonized by a master hand. Though it had cost a king's ransom, it was not the thought of its cost but the thought of its exquisite charm that first came to the mind of any visitor able to appreciate its grace.

To Grania, Ashford House appeared an enchanted mansion, and she moved through its marvels in a rapture. It might have been conceived and constructed—this was my Lord Cloyne's fancy and not Grania's—for no other purpose than to serve as the splendid setting for this girl's beauty. Among its carved and painted goddesses she walked like a living goddess, glowing with delight at the wonder-world in which she found herself. It only lacked one thing for her—companionship, the companionship of her beloved. What bliss it would have been to make the acquaintance of that marvelous house for the first time with Dennis Tirowen by her side!

## THE LITTLE QUEEN

She pleased and grieved herself with thinking how the heart of her poet lover would have throbbed responsive to its appeal, how the soul of her poet lover, inspired by the magic of the place, would have flowed into some noble song.

But there was no Dennis to attend her, and Grania sorrowed for him with a smiling face. It was, of course, impossible for her not to take pleasure, and even much pleasure, in the new life which had come to her. She was young, she was healthy, her nature answered blithely to delight. Yet she longed for Dennis, and never ceased to seek him, and never ceased to mourn for him in secret, and never ceased to wonder why he kept aloof and made no sign, and never ceased to be confident that he lived and would come to her in the fullness of time and share in her fair fortune. Daily and nightly she prayed that the time might be soon, and daily and nightly she saw him in her waking and sleeping dreams.

If Ashford House and all its gear were worthy of its queen, my Lord Cloyne took exemplary care to see that its organization was ordered on truly royal lines. His luxury-loving nature reveled in the task that had so strangely and delightfully been put upon him. He could plunge both hands into money and scatter it abroad without a pang, and he indulged Grania, and, in consequence, Lady Cloyne and himself, in a splendor of service and appointments that made the establishment in St. James's Square re-

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

semble a mimic court. There was a small army of carefully chosen and admirably disciplined servants whose numbers amazed Grania, although she warily and discreetly kept her amazement to herself. Their well-drilled numbers served to console Lord Cloyne for the meager condition of his household at Cloyne Hall, where a petty following was called upon to do duty for a whole horde, and did it very badly. In the semi-royal régime at Ashford House the Cloyne family found agreeable employment.

Not only was Lord Cloyne the majordomo and Lady Cloyne his able lieutenant, but Captain Curtius, too, had a finger in the pie. Captain Curtius, as a recognized authority on good living, cheerfully accepted his brother's suggestion to act as a sort of Minister of the Home Department, and see that the cellar was excellent and the master cook the best in London. This office the gallant captain accepted with the more alacrity, because it not merely excused but justified him in an attendance at Ashford House which was little less than incessant. Lord Cloyne approved this attendance; Captain Curtius agreed heartily, and Grania made no objection, because she found Captain Curtius a very pleasant companion.

Through all the splendor and glitter and brave show of Ashford House, through those rooms always filled with noble works of art, and often crowded with the best of London's wealth and youth and rank and beauty, Mr. Pointdexter moved at his

## THE LITTLE QUEEN

pleasure, a grim, almost sinister, figure against so gorgeous a background. He had a suite of rooms set apart for him in the house which he used as he pleased and when he pleased. He was always consulted by Lord Cloyne in any of the many steps that he took for the enhancing of the grandeur of Grania's residence, and Mr. Pointdexter raised no objection to the most lavish expenditure, and seemed only eager to approve and to encourage any extravagance which might be incurred on behalf of Grania. It was, of course, perfectly obvious to Mr. Pointdexter that Lord Cloyne was a great gainer by his position with regard to his charge, and Lord Cloyne was perfectly aware that it must be perfectly obvious, and made no attempt either to conceal his consciousness or to allow it to express itself too markedly.

## IV

### A PRIVATE SECRETARY

THE officials of Queen Grania's little court included a private secretary, whose work was, to use a slang phrase, cut out for him. When Grania first heard Lord Cloyne suggest that a private secretary was an appointment essential for her well-being she was inclined to laugh at what seemed intended for a jest. But his lordship was most seriously punctilious in all that concerned the administration of Ashford House, and he assured Grania very earnestly that a private secretary was an imperative necessity. Indeed, Grania found soon enough that a secretary had plenty to do in dealing with the inevitable correspondence of a wealthy young lady of fashion. My lord was prompted in his choice of the man by the voice of friendship; but his choice proved judicious.

Mr. Peregrine Fenny was a young gentleman whom faith, with that irony it so often employs at the expense of the human comedians, had equipped with every advantage for shining in the social world, except that of possessing money or the power of making money. The Fennys were too numerous

## A PRIVATE SECRETARY

to be wealthy, and even if old Lord Compton were to quit a scene whereon he had lingered so long, his demise would not advantage Mr. Peregrine. The younger son of a younger son, his actual income was less than that of many a city clerk, which was a meager measure for a sprigal who was endowed with the tastes and desires of a plutocrat. Mr. Fenny found his poverty the more deplorable because he was well aware that his person deserved all that money could do for it. He was tall and well-figured, sufficiently handsome of face to allure, sufficiently gallant of carriage to attract, of a ready wit and graceful deportment. He was excellently self-possessed, convinced by experience of his power to please, and he commanded at times an epigrammatic causticity of expression. He wore his clothes with an air and ease which came to him naturally, and which not a few of the elaborate dandies envied and emulated in vain. There was nothing of elaborate dandyism about Mr. Fenny, who managed to be aptly modish without apparent effort. If he had been compelled to wear old garments, they would have seemed as good as new on this comely person; but there were few that had ever yet seen Peregrine Fenny in anything but the latest moment of the latest mode. How he persuaded tailors and hatters and bootmakers and hosiers to provide for him was one of the many mysteries of his existence. But he did persuade, and was always point-device the beau. There were

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

those who suggested that he was so highly favored because he was so admirable an advertisement for their wares. However that might be, the fact remained that Mr. Fenny was one of the best dressed men in town.

He played, of course, as every gentleman must needs play that was privileged to move in fine society, but he was too cunning to allow the gambler's passion to run away with him. Knowing that he was poor and hating to be poor, he was wisely conscious that he of all men could least afford to run risks at the faro-table. He was wisely conscious that the goddess of fortune had seldom favors for the needy and adventurous unless, indeed, they condescended to employ the arts of the Greek. And, according to the rules of the social game, Mr. Fenny was a man of honor. It was said, indeed, that his code did not prevent him from accepting more substantial gifts than mere smiles and caresses from the ladies—and they were many—to whom he paid his generally welcome attentions. It is true that this way of supplementing a meager income, at one time the accepted and steady standby of a fine gallant, had somewhat fallen from fashion since the days of the Merry Monarch, when Rochester rhymed and Grammont rode away, and handsome Jack Churchill found his handsomeness a financial asset. It was no longer publicly reckoned and approved of as a creditable source of income for a gentleman afflicted with a lean exchequer.



## A PRIVATE SECRETARY

If it had been as certainly known as it was generally believed that Peregrine Fenny owed his fine clothes and his fine linen and his dainty lodgings in Jermyn Street to the generously given guineas of the fair rather than to his patrimony, his industry, or his good fortune at cards, it would not have altered in any appreciable degree his standing in a society of which he considered himself, and was, indeed, largely considered, to be an ornament. But like the gifts of the goddess that presides over the cut of the cards and the cast of the ivories, the gifts of the fair are precarious. Peregrine Fenny sighed, not for more worlds of women to conquer, but more prosaically for some more permanent basis for his exchequer.

A man may always consider himself a lover, but he may not always be considered an accepted lover by a wayward and capricious sex. Mr. Fenny was not so vain of his triumphs as to fail in philosophy, and he yearned for security. He would have liked well enough some comfortable little office such as the ministry in power always had at their disposal to reward greedy place-seekers as eager of insurance as he. But Mr. Fenny could not command much influence with the ministry, for the Compton gang were too poor to be popular or powerful, and though he had uninteresting if influential friends whose good-will, if carefully solicited, might possibly have served him well to his ends, the young man was too incorrigibly idle and too impertinently

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

fastidious to be at the pains of pursuing a tedious acquaintanceship even to his own ultimate advantage.

It was at the moment when Mr. Fenny was thinking most seriously of the future, albeit enjoying most avidly the present, that the appearance in town of Grania, her triumph in society and the throwing open under conditions of unusual opulence and hospitality of the stately house in St. James's Square which Lord Cloyne had obtained for her, seemed to Mr. Fenny like welcome dawn after a weary night. He lost no time in being presented to the reigning beauty by Lord Cloyne, who was his intimate friend, and who was never the man to be reluctant to do a good turn to a boon companion at the expense of some one else. Mr. Peregrine was fortunate enough to please Grania, as he was used to please all women, by his nimble wit, his ready speech, his comely person, his airy carriage, and the slight suggestion of impertinence which gave a salt to his well-studied and seemingly so spontaneous gallantry. Then came to Mr. Fenny's alert ears some words about the fair lady's pressing need of the services of a private secretary. A swift thought kindled in Peregrine's alert mind, and a hint very patently given to my Lord Cloyne had ripened swiftly. In a very short time Mr. Fenny found himself a daily visitor in St. James's Square, not as a merely persistent and tolerated acquaintance, but as a recognized and welcome personage

## A PRIVATE SECRETARY

duly installed in the office of private secretary to Grania.

As a matter of fact Lord Cloyne could scarcely have made a better choice for such a post. Mr. Fenny proved himself an excellent help to the girl. He knew everything and everybody that was considered worth knowing in the world in which Grania now found herself to be the acknowledged queen. There was nothing to be known about the etiquette of entertaining which he did not know. The intricacies of the peerage were child's play to him. He had a consummate knowledge of the whole scandalous history of the Regency, and his scandal-mongering had this advantage over that of many of his rivals in the art that he never made mistakes. He knew who could be known and who could not be known to a nicety, and in the art of bringing to the same table the people who would agree he was a past master.

If he was immeasurably useful to Grania, she also found him immeasurably entertaining, and she accorded him in consequence a degree of intimacy which many would have deemed unwise, but which did not seem at all unwise to Grania, who thoroughly understood Peregrine within ten minutes of the first time of meeting him. If at the beginning a faint hope may have flamed in Mr. Fenny's heart that through his acquaintance with the Irish heiress might come the solution of his difficulties and that satisfactory settlement in life which was now his

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

ever-present dream, he was soon wise enough to see his mistake. The first moment that he allowed any suggestion of earnestness to come into his graceful gallantry he was so promptly and decisively made to feel his blunder that he never erred again. It was quite plain that Grania and her millions were not for him.

Also, my Lord Cloyne, suspecting maybe some such ambitions in his friend's mind, was careful to make it plain to the friend that my Lord Cloyne very emphatically wished that the young Irish girl should become the bride of his gallant brother, Captain Curtius. Having taken the lady's hint, Mr. Fenny was less inclined to resent my lord's wishes, and he resigned himself to the very agreeable conditions in which his new way of life was cast. Yet his real importance in the life of Grania proved to be that he was of a certain height and commanded an extensive wardrobe.

## V

### FEASTS AND SUPPERS OF THE GODS

THIS narrative is no diurnal of the life of Grania O'Hara, no meticulous record of balls, routs, masquerades, banquets, card parties, drums, and all other such high festivities imaginable. She went to these things; she gave these things; they occupied many hours of many days, and they gave her pleasure that would have been greater if they had been shared by the right companion so strangely lost. You will be pleased therefore—or displeased if by chance your taste finds delectation in any and every recital of fashionable follies and solemnities—to take for granted the girl's observance of all the rites and rituals of these ceremonials. The memoirs and reminiscences of the day, and especially the Redacre papers and the Journals of Henry Averill, will meet your need if you hunger and thirst for the refreshment of further particulars.

Our concern is with but certain and few hours out of all those multitudinous hours; our concern is not with the full pageant of Grania's public joys, but with the events that are definitely linked with Grania's private sorrow. These are picked out

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

from the rest; these stand apart with their essential elements emphasized against the glittering background of discarded jollities. For these were the only hours that meant anything to the girl herself; these burned with the conflagration of sunrise and sunset, where those did but glow with the pale flame of candles at a feast. Yet the feast was agreeable enough for a time, though it staled with repetition. For Grania its flowers soon lost their freshness, its fruit their flavors, its lights their luster, its smiles their sweetness, and its jests their salt. The wine of life that was drunk at that board seemed to her to run thin and with a bitter savor, not warm and generous, as the wine of life should flow. No painted mummy was borne to that feast with its message of mortality. Dennis had once told her of this, and she remembered it now, and reflected, that no such symbol was needed in a company of revelers who could scarcely be said to live.

We need not be surprised to learn that Grania thinking such thoughts found life under the care of the Cloynes such an incessant whirl of excitement and entertainment that there came moments when the girl revolted against the ceaseless motion and insisted upon a measure of relaxation from the dust and din of the arduous course. The Cloynes, who were a sharp-witted pair and very much on the alert where their own interests were concerned, had learned from the beginning that though Grania was very amenable to the curious kind of guardian-

## FEASTS OF THE GODS

ship which she had consented to accept and pleasantly yielding to their guidance and tuition, she was still very clearly conscious that she was the head of the fellowship, and that in the end, if she found aught in the conditions of her existence that was irksome or repugnant to her, it was her will that was to prevail. It came about thus that Grania, after the first flush of her interest in the social world of London had faded, made it a habit to have one quiet day in the week. The major part of this day she passed in following her own devices, ever following on a fruitless quest. The evening was given up to the quiet reception of a small company to what was practically a family dinner to the girl who stood so lonely in the world and had no kin.

Here and now this was one of those days, and the company that was to assemble at Ashford House that night numbered only those whom Grania regarded as her oldest friends in the world she now adorned. Mr. Pointdexter, who seldom consented to appear at the more crowded entertainments for which Ashford House had newly become famous, would take his place at the table. Lord and Lady Cloyne were to be present, as a matter of course. Captain Curtius, discreetly assiduous, warily playing his waiting game of how to woo yet never seem to woo, was almost as inevitable, and Mr. Peregrine Fenny would also be there by virtue, as it were, of his office. Grania had also asked Lady Double, partly because Lady Cloyne was fond of her, and

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

partly because Lady Double was in a sense alone, as Sir William was on the Continent on one of his marauding expeditions in search of monumental martyrs.

At the first blush Grania had been inclined to like Lady Double. Her somewhat full-blown comeliness, her free and easy affability, the not ill-hinted tincture of simplicity in the red wine of her worldliness, like the squeeze of lemon in a well-handled punch-bowl, the humor of a girl who, having lost her first shyness of a strange world, was beginning to appraise, to catalogue, to weigh, and after fair deliberation to decide. What she knew from Lady Double's occasional and cheerful frankness, what she guessed and what she was told—and she was told much—of Lady Double's morals did not in the least disconcert her nor seriously distress her. She had swiftly realized that the people amid whom it had pleased Providence to place her were for the most part vehemently immoral, and she was not shocked, because she had not expected to find them angels. She looked upon them very much as Mr. Lamb looked upon the figures of the Restoration comedies; their world seemed unreal to her if not unamusing. Hers was a creed that did not countenance easy judgment of others, that left judgment of others to a higher tribunal than individual opinion.

What Lady Double might be was no affair of Grania's. If she was no better, she was probably



## FEASTS OF THE GODS

no worse than the majority of her contemporaries. All that seemed really to concern Grania was how Lady Double carried herself in the gradually increasing intimacy of a London season, and the one thing certain was that Lady Double diverted Grania. She was, or seemed to be, always good-humored, always lively, always ostensibly kind. No rout or assembly could possibly be dull where Lady Double was a leading figure. Grania, who was quick in learning, had learned quickly the first rule in the game of the world, to take people amiably at their face value so long as there was no reason for taking them otherwise.

To give the gathering a still more intimate association with the days, that now seemed so infinitely remote, when Grania's good fortune first dawned, she had included that stalwart politician and sturdy disciple of Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox, Mr. Rubie, in her company. She had met Mr. Rubie again soon after her appearance in London at one of the great Whig houses, for Grania made no distinction in English politics, regarding each party with equal indifference as factions of an alien race, and being received by each with equal enthusiasm. Mr. Rubie had hastened to present himself to her, had ventured to hope that she had not forgotten him, and seemed amazingly pleased, and for all that was more pleased than he seemed, to learn that she remembered him very well and was glad to meet him again. Indeed, Grania was glad to see him,

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

for she had liked the man in those first days of her stay at Cloyne Hall, and what she had seen of mankind since those days had tended to make her more lenient toward the worthy man's virtues. It really seemed a thing commendable in a man to have some stubborn purpose in life, to be a zealot, even to weariness, of some high principle, to find other interests in existence than the cut of a coat, the choice of a cook, the cast of a card, the muddy joys of intoxication, and the furtive kisses of intrigue. It was, to be sure, a thousand pities that Mr. Rubie, having so many merits to recommend him, should dim those merits by being not a little dull. But Grania had somewhat forgotten the dullness in the interval between now and Cloyne Hall; she only remembered that he had certain human qualities which most of the other men she knew lacked, and were glad to lack. Therefore Grania was glad to meet Mr. Rubie.

In the course of that first conversation of the renewed intimacy Mr. Rubie, with an effort to be jocose, which did not assort very well with his labored speech and native solemnity, asked Grania if she had brought any of her friends the fairies with her from Ireland. Grania smiled and shook her head as she pointed to the crowd about them, a glittering crown of beautiful women and dandies and statesmen and soldiers.

"I think," she said, "the fairies would scarcely take kindly to this atmosphere. If you were to ask

## FEASTS OF THE GODS

me for statistics now, Mr. Rubie, I should say nothing of the little people, but I could tell you everything that has been doing at Almack's."

Mr. Rubie, who had faintly hoped to rekindle the fires of that fantastic conversation on the Kerry hillside, felt a trifle disappointed. "Don't you believe in the fairies any more?" he asked, in a voice that, to his surprise, sounded reproachful. What would the Clapham coteries, what would the committeemen, his colleagues, think of him if they could hear him now?

"Indeed, indeed, I do," Grania answered, emphatically. "But this is never the place for them. All these people are so stubbornly alive, so eager for pleasure, and so stupid in their pursuit of it, that they create an atmosphere too heavy for fairies to breathe. I am sure you understand that, don't you?"

Mr. Rubie assured her that he did, and would have carried on the conversation much longer, but it was seldom given to any one person to be allowed to monopolize much of Grania's society. Others came up, and he presently beat a retreat with a strange and unfamiliar elation swelling his honest breast. From thence onward he devoted himself, much to his surprise, and somewhat against his judgment, to the endeavor to haunt places where he might meet Grania. He succeeded, being stubborn and determined, and Grania was always very pleasant when they met; and now she had asked him to dinner, and Mr. Rubie was unreasonably exultant at the favor.

## VI

### THE GREAT MR. HERITAGE

ON the morning of the day which Grania had set apart for the calm of her family dinner Mr. Peregrine Fenny, exquisitely attired and outwardly imperturbable, however fiercely the fox of care might be nibbling at his vitals, had made his usual appearance at Ashford House and was seated before the stately table which served him for his secretarial battle-field. As usual, he found that there was abundance of work waiting for him, and as usual he attacked it vigorously, with order and with method. He had diminished very considerably the huge pile of letters that daily came to Grania, valiantly stamped by the extravagant, warily franked by the practical, and delivered by agent or by hand by the economical or the needy. He had decisively banished the numerous and untrustworthy begging letters which always made a large part of the morning's business. Having briskly despatched this part of his task, he had set aside such few of the appeals as seemed to deserve some consideration, for Grania always insisted upon being charitable where she could be conscientiously

## THE GREAT MR. HERITAGE

convinced that charity was due, and Mr. Fenny was not unwilling to aid charity when it could be aided at no loss to himself. Already, it may be mentioned, the peasantry of Cloyne had found the world transformed for them from a place of misery to a place of smooth content by the magic of Grania's gold. But Mr. Fenny had nothing to do with the administration of Grania's Irish affairs, and it is not germane to this narrative.

Mr. Fenny was engaged in studying with the eye of a strategist the various cards of invitation to festivities of all kinds for the coming week when a servant entered the room bearing a card upon a golden salver and offered the card to Mr. Fenny. Mr. Fenny paused in his work with the air of a general interrupted in the planning of a stratagem by the arrival of an unexpected despatch. He took the card, looked at it, and read upon the pasteboard the name of Mr. Heritage. He smiled faintly, for the name was familiar and evoked no disagreeable suggestion, laid the card upon the table before him, and told the servant to show Mr. Heritage in. The servant disappeared, and Mr. Fenny resumed his labors with the manner of one to whom even seconds were precious. A few minutes later the door opened again and the expected Mr. Heritage made his appearance.

Mr. Heritage was quite an important person in London. Though he could not claim, however much he might have liked to do so, to be, in the true

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

sense of the cryptic phrase, in society, he yet had a great deal to do with society, was of very great use to society in ministering to one of the most popular of its many pleasures, and he accordingly was tolerated and frequently favored by society. Mr. Heritage was the manager of the Rotundo Theater, and in his own eyes the management of the Rotundo Theater was the most delightful office holdable in the world. If you had questioned him he would have told you as much, and assured you, expecting you to believe him, that he would not have exchanged it for the position of the Prince Regent himself. Mr. Heritage was one of those men of business into the vessel of whose composition a whimsical destiny had not been content to pour only the strong spirit of the business man, but had chosen to mingle that solid liquor with some seemingly inappropriate drops of a finer fluid, drops of genius, poetry, beauty-worship, aspiration, imagination, illumination, fancy, desire.

The result of the blend was the manager of the Rotundo Theater, a shrewd, keen man, somewhat vulgar in his ways, somewhat vulgar in his tastes, and yet behind his shrewdness and his vulgarity dimly conscious of fine things and faintly pricked by fine ambitions. Had he been less shrewd and less vulgar he might have failed to make the Rotundo Theater the success it was, but undoubtedly those dim, half-conscious dreamings and imaginings of his had not a little to do with his success.

## THE GREAT MR. HERITAGE

For undoubtedly he was a success, and people came to him and his theater and spoke of him and his theater with an enthusiasm which was as generous as it was deserved. In person he was short and stout, with a shining face, an alert manner in spite of his obesity, and small bright eyes that seemed to view everybody as a possible player, and to take for his standard of judgment the figure that he or she or they would cut on the boards of his theater.

He saluted Mr. Fenny, who rose, and, after a cordial handclasp, courteously motioned him to a seat. Mr. Heritage did so, and then, with a gesture which was, it may be, not undeliberately dramatic, produced a paper from his breast coat-pocket, opened it with that elaboration of action then considered essential to the display of a letter on the stage, and waved it before Mr. Fenny.

"I received," Mr. Heritage began, "a letter from your Irish beauty. In it she does me the honor to ask me to wait upon her this afternoon."

Mr. Fenny nodded. "Yes," he said; "I read the letter."

"Do you know what she wants?" Mr. Heritage asked; and then, a sudden smile puckering his features as a possible though hitherto unconsidered answer to his question came into his mind, he went on. "You do not mean to tell me that she has written a play? Begad! that wouldn't be at all a bad idea. A play by 'The Fair Irish Maid' might be a very profitable experiment."

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Peregrine shook his head emphatically. "Miss O'Hara," he declared, "has no time for writing plays, I assure you, though I have no doubt that if she were to make an essay in the field of drama she would acquit herself as charmingly in that enterprise as in everything she undertakes."

"What does she want, then?" Mr. Heritage persisted. He was a little annoyed to find that his sudden guess was unsuccessful, and his voice became a trifle peremptory. It was part of Mr. Heritage's attitude toward the world that he was always pressed for time, always very busy, and he enforced this attitude when anything happened to cross him. He adopted a brusque, incisive method of address which might be suited to My Lord Wellesley in the Peninsular, but sat less convincingly on the theatrical manager.

Again Mr. Fenny shook his head. "I really do not know," he protested, with entire truth. "But you need not be long in the dark. I will let her know that you are here, and she will no doubt tell you for herself."

Mr. Fenny rose and pulled the bell to summon a servant, and when the man appeared told him to let his mistress know that Mr. Heritage was waiting upon her. When the pair were alone again Heritage resumed the conversation on its former theme, for his curiosity was too sedulous to be checked.

"I had the privilege," he said, "of meeting the young lady the other night at Carlton House, where



## THE GREAT MR. HERITAGE

I was arranging some characters for His Highness." He paused, and then commented, "She is very dashing."

Mr. Fenny did not seem altogether to agree with him. "My dear sir," he declared, "dashing is not the word. There is no word existing in the English language, so far as the English language is known to me"—and, indeed, Mr. Fenny plumed himself on his curious felicity of speech—"that can properly describe her. There should be a new and wonderful word, some burning star, some splendid jewel of a word invented to do her justice. One day I will think of it, and wake up like My Lord Byron to find myself famous."

Mr. Heritage, after paying the tribute of a gracious smile to the elaborate pleasantry of Mr. Fenny, lowered his voice slightly and leaned a little forward. "Is it really true," he questioned, "that she was once a peasant girl trotting about Kerry with bare feet and a shawl?"

Mr. Fenny denied part of Mr. Heritage's suggestion. "She was never a peasant girl," he declared. "She derives from a good old Irish family, but as poor as Methuselah—was he poor? I forget—because of their creed and their politics. I dare say the bare feet and the shawl are right enough, for she hadn't a penny piece until the old hunks in the American colonies—I beg their pardons, I mean the United States—left her a fortune."

Mr. Heritage raised admiring hands as if he were

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

about to applaud some successful spectacle. "What an astonishing story it all is!" he declared. "There might be the chance for a piece in it. I must talk to one of my authors."

"I don't think Miss O'Hara would greatly care for it," Mr. Fenny answered. "But she undoubtedly is the richest young woman in England at this present."

Mr. Heritage seemed reluctant to surrender his idea for the proposed play. "Where did she get her grand manner from?" he asked. "To see her as I saw her the other night you would think she had been used to a prince's drawing-room all her life. She takes the stage better than any one I have ever seen."

"I think she had the grand manner to start with," Mr. Fenny answered. "Her dignity and simplicity are things you must inherit; you can't acquire. But the native diamond has been polished by clever jewelers."

Mr. Fenny proceeded to explain to his hearer the process by which Lord and Lady Cloyne had enabled the girl from Kerry to carry herself so well. He told him of the season in Dublin, of the great house in Stephen's Green, where Miss O'Hara first learned to preside and to entertain the fashionable world. He told him of the later visit to Paris, where the girl again played the hostess in a stately mansion, in the Faubourg St. Germain, which had seen many of its noblest leave it for the prison and the guillo-

## THE GREAT MR. HERITAGE

tine, and which an impoverished heir, newly restored to his own, was glad to let to the Irish beauty. He told how she was presented to His Majesty King Louis the Eighteenth, and how she greatly annoyed that monarch by displaying some injudicious enthusiasm for the Emperor Napoleon, then reigning reluctantly in obscurity as the Emperor of Elba. The annoyed king had said to her, with as much acrimony as it was possible for a restored Bourbon to display in the presence of a pretty woman, that he thought all English people disliked Bonaparte.

“Your Majesty,” the girl answered, not in the least daunted by the royal displeasure, “I am not English, but Irish, and General Bonaparte promised to be our friend.”

Lady Cloyne, aghast at Grania’s audacity, hurried the girl away; but Grania declined to express any regret for what she had said or to share in Lady Cloyne’s congratulations on the fact that they were leaving Paris so soon that they could scarcely be made to feel socially the effects of the king’s displeasure. As a matter of fact, the king’s displeasure would have had little effect as against the wealth of Grania upon Parisian society. It was in connection with this incident that Grania first began to show what afterward proved that she intended to be her own mistress and not the obedient puppet of my lady. Thus tempered and molded in the fashions and the finesses of Dublin and of Paris, Grania was carried, a perfect work of art, to London, where she

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

instantly swam into success. That Mr. Heritage knew as well as Mr. Fenny.

“He will be a fortunate man who marries her,” Mr. Heritage observed, and mused upon the wonderful work the manager of a great theater could do for dramatic art if he were fortunate enough to win the hand and heart of a lady who commanded such a fortune. But with all his good opinion of himself, Mr. Heritage had no thought of advancing his claims. Mr. Fenny’s handsome face displayed no sign of the regret that he felt that he was not destined to be the fortunate man.

“Between ourselves,” he said, “I think it is pretty well understood that ‘The Fair Irish Maid’ is to marry Lord Cloyne’s younger brother, Captain Curtius.”

Mr. Heritage smiled sourly. “A very excellent arrangement,” he said, dryly, “for Captain Curtius.”

“You suggest—” Fenny questioned slyly with a lifted eyebrow.

Heritage shrugged his shoulders. “Captain Curtius,” he said, acidly, thinking perhaps how much better a match he could suggest if there were likely to be the faintest use in making the suggestion, “is a fine gentleman with an inordinate share of a fine gentleman’s vices. He is never sober, though he never seems drunk. He keeps a colony of women at Bagshot. Were he King Solomon, he would beggar himself at play. If you were a father or brother, would you choose him for your daughter or sister?”

## THE GREAT MR. HERITAGE

Mr. Fenny burst into a fit of hearty laughter at the extravagance of morality suddenly manifested by Mr. Heritage, who was generally understood to pique himself upon being as thorough a man of the world as any of the dandies.

“My dear fellow,” he said, “you are as moral as Socrates. I have no daughter, at least in the sense you mean, and my sisters are frumps, who might marry the devil for all I care. I am agog for the marriage, for I get a cool thousand if it comes off.” That was indeed the precise sum which My Lord Cloyne had promised his young friend if he refrained from any interference with his lordship’s plans and aided and abetted them as artfully as he could.

Mr. Heritage laughed. “Really, Mr. Fenny,” he protested, “I must get one of our authors to write a modish comedy and put you into the list of characters. Your cynicism is magnificent.”

“It seems so to you, no doubt,” Fenny answered, with suave impertinence; “to me it is just ordinary intelligence.”

Mr. Heritage might have resented the manner of Mr. Fenny’s speech, but at that moment the door opened and Grania came into the room.

## VII

### A POSSIBLE CLUE

**B**OTH men sprang to their feet, and Mr. Heritage made the lady a profound bow. His theatrical eye appreciated her loveliness again as he had appreciated it before on the occasion at Carlton House, appreciated also the beauty of her attire. He reflected with a mental sigh that he could not get his actresses to dress as well at that, nor to carry their wear so becomingly.

“Good-morning, gentlemen,” Grania said, as she advanced down the room with a step as easy over the velvet carpet as ever over the Kerry grass. She gave Mr. Heritage her hand, which he kissed ceremoniously, with the studied grace of one that was profoundly aware of the importance of deportment. She gave a glance to Fenny, which that intelligent gentleman rightly interpreted to intimate dismissal.

Mr. Fenny quietly rose, quietly disappeared from the room, and Grania, requesting Mr. Heritage to be seated again, placed herself opposite to him.

“I am much obliged to you for coming, Mr. Heritage,” she said. “I hope you did not think

## A POSSIBLE CLUE

my request very unceremonious; but I earnestly desired a little private talk with you."

Mr. Heritage noted with approval the clear sweetness of her speech, the gracious ease and simple dignity of her bearing, the tranquillity which accepted so readily the state of pomp with which she was surrounded, and again he found himself wishing that he could drill some of his player-women to carry themselves so before the footlights. He inclined toward her anew in polite salutation.

"Madam," he said, "I am your humble servant to command, and I can assure you that I am heartily delighted if I may be of any use to you."

Grania looked at him wistfully. "Do you," she asked, "know anything of the whereabouts of a man named Dennis Tirowen?"

Mr. Heritage shook his head, and it was plain from the blank expression of his face that Grania's question stirred no string of his memory. "No, indeed, madam," he said; "I am sure that I do not know any one of that name, and I do not think that I have ever heard the name before."

"Oh, surely, surely," Grania insisted, for she had pinned her faith to the probability that Mr. Heritage would be able to afford her a clue to her lost lover. "Mr. Dennis Tirowen came to London some time ago from Ireland. I believe that he was going to get into communication with you, for he had a play which he wished to submit to the London managers, and naturally you would be the

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

first he would approach. Do you remember anything of the matter now?"

Mr. Heritage shook his head. He was touched and amused by the simplicity implied in Grania's question. "A play! my dear madam," he protested, feeling indeed a little shocked at Grania's manifest ignorance of the possibilities of his office. "Are you aware that at the Rotundo Theater we are in the habit of receiving as many as ten or twelve plays a week? How could a poor manager possibly carry in his memory the names of so many aspirants for laurels?"

Grania looked very disappointed. "Mr. Tiro-wen was a friend of mine," she said, sadly, "a very great friend." Mr. Heritage scented romance, and his respectful silence sought also to suggest sympathy as Grania continued. "He left Ireland," she said, "some months ago to come to London in the hopes of making his fortune. He had written a play on which he built great hopes. He had composed some music, too, which was to win him favor. He went away very hopeful. He was to have written to me, but he did not write. Since the day that I said good-by to him I have never heard either from or of him. When I came to London I made inquiries, such inquiries as I could, with the assistance of my lawyer, but so far they have all come to nothing. Nobody seems to know anything of my friend. He has vanished completely, without a sound, without a sign."



## A POSSIBLE CLUE

Mr. Heritage was touched by the pathos that underlay Grania's speech. "You don't fear," he began, hesitatingly, "that anything may have happened to him?" He stopped for a second, and then went on in a lowered voice. "You don't apprehend that he may be dead?"

"No, no, no," Grania answered, vehemently. "I am sure he is alive. I should know if he were dead, and I know he is alive—I know it, I know it."

"Then," Mr. Heritage suggested, "he may have had an accident, he may be sick, lying at this moment in some hospital."

"We have tried all the hospitals," Grania replied. "My friend is in no one of them."

"I do not exactly like to suggest it," Mr. Heritage said, "but perhaps this young gentleman—through no fault of his own, of course, through no fault of his own—may have got into some trouble with the law which may have had the result of a temporary seclusion."

Grania interrupted him. "We have tried all the prisons," she said, composedly. She was too familiar with the thought of Irishmen as Englishmen's prisoners to be hurt by Mr. Heritage's suggestion. "We have tried all likely clues. When I saw you the other night at Carlton House it suddenly occurred to me that you might be able to help me. Perhaps I ought to have thought of it sooner."

Mr. Heritage admired dramatically the young lady of fortune who in her hour of glory could seek

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

so eagerly and so persistently for one of the friends of her days of poverty.

"I wish I could help you," he said, sincerely, "but I really cannot in the least recall the name you mention. However, I will make inquiries at the stage-door and I will ask some of my authors if they know any one of that name. Let me see, what exactly was the name?"

Grania gave him the name—Dennis Tirowen—and Mr. Heritage wrote the name down in a notebook which he carried. When this was done there was a slight pause and then Mr. Heritage made as if to take his leave, but Grania suddenly stayed him.

"Wait, please," she said. "If the play had been sent to you it would probably be in the theater."

"It probably would, madam," Mr. Heritage answered, "if it had not been sent back to the author."

"In that case," said Grania, "it would probably carry the address of the author."

"It probably would," Mr. Heritage agreed again. "I will look through some of our recent acquisitions and see if any one of them carries that name, though beginners in dramatic authorship very often send us their wares under a false bill of lading. They choose to make their first venture under a name which is not their own, and in that case I might even have the play in my possession and not be able to assure myself of the fact."

"In that case," Grania said, eagerly, "it would help you, would it not, if I were to tell you some-

## A POSSIBLE CLUE

thing of the subject of the play, with which I happen to be acquainted?"

Mr. Heritage nodded sagaciously. "That certainly would be a help," he said. He was marveling inwardly to find himself so astonishingly complaisant. Had it been foretold to him a few days earlier that he would really and readily consent at the request of a stranger to take the trouble to hunt for a play by an unknown man he would have laughed the prophecy to scorn. Yet here he was preparing to do the very thing, only the stranger happened to be the loveliest, richest, and most popular young woman in all London.

Hurriedly Grania gave him an account of the strange and striking story which Dennis Tirowen had chosen for his play, the story of the ancient city buried by a spell under the waters of the Irish Sea, and of the breaking of the spell by the devotion and daring of a heroic lover. Mr. Heritage, listening and watching with admiration the animated face of the narrator, was good enough to assure her that if the play at all corresponded to her description it seemed to have some good stuff in it. Therewith he made again to take his leave, promising to begin his researches immediately, and to let Grania know if those researches were rewarded with success. Again Grania delayed his departure to request that he would make one at her family dinner party that evening, when he could let her know the result of his search. Mr. Heritage begged to be excused. He

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

had already a dinner engagement, but if Miss O'Hara would permit him he would call after dinner and drink a cup of coffee while he made his report. Permission being gladly given, Mr. Heritage withdrew.

## VIII

### MUSIC THE FOOD OF LOVE

THE interview with Mr. Heritage had, for all it was a short interview, been long enough to bridge over the transition from the chill February afternoon to the chill February evening. When Grania had rung for a servant to conduct Mr. Heritage to the hall the light in the great room had dimmed to a twilight, through which the statues and pictures loomed ghostly. When Mr. Heritage had been ushered forth into the square, which was white with the snow that was still falling, the servant returned, lighted candles, curtained windows, and replenished the waning fire. When he withdrew at the end of his ministrations the great room glowed warm and cheerful in effective contrast with the snow-white world outside.

When Grania found herself alone she began to pace the room restlessly. She had been so long used to the free life in the open air that even still after her experience of three great cities the restraint of town ways and houses irked her, and she missed the liberal exercise that had been her familiar custom in the days that seemed so far away now. She

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

often wished to escape from her strange surroundings, from the vast rooms, with their splendid furniture and gleaming marble and glowing canvases, to the soft green turf and the soft blue skies of her beloved kingdom of Kerry. It was not that she had learned actually to dislike the new life, which still had, in spite of all that she had seen and done, so much of novelty to offer her. Her youth was ready to be amused, and amusement in magnificent excess had been offered to her and still was offered to her from all sides. With a shrewdness as sharp as that of the peasants with whom her youth had been passed, she appreciated very clearly the advantages wealth had brought to her.

All the processes, the Dublin process, the Paris process, the London process, that had finished by making her into a fine lady of the most approved pattern of a society critical to intolerance, had afforded her interest and entertainment. She knew that she had triumphed, and she enjoyed her triumph. She was able whimsically to enjoy it twofold, in the first place for its own sake and for her own sake and the straightforward pleasure it gave her, and in the second place as a spectator of her own enjoyment and the gradual change in her bearing. But she had now lived in three capitals and mixed on equal terms in the best society of each, and the game had lost much of its freshness. Her native wit had enabled her very clearly to read the characters of the men and women with whom she

## MUSIC THE FOOD OF LOVE

came in contact, and she deduced swiftly and accurately the real natures which were hidden by the smooth and smiling exteriors of polite men and fashionable women, unmasking, as it were, with a smile the red savagery, the raw ferocity that postured so urbanely. She would certainly not have been willing, had the choice been offered to her to surrender the wealth which had come to her so unexpectedly, for it afforded her the means of doing a vast amount of good works with which this chronicle has no concern, but she would scarcely have cared to retain it even with that advantage if it entailed with it the necessity always to live the idle, aimless life that she had known since she came under the care of Lord and Lady Cloyne.

Yet if she was sated she was not resentful. For the time that idle life had served a useful purpose. It had helped to relieve her mind from the strain of its great anxiety and forcibly prevented her from brooding over her protracted disappointment. It was with such thoughts as these wistfully reviewing the past and hoping eagerly for the future that Grania paced restlessly up and down. She had given orders that she was not to be disturbed, and she knew that her evening hour of reserve would be respected by all in Ashford House. Outside the wintry wind grew shriller, whipping the great snowflakes into drifts that deadened the footsteps of the few pedestrians, the rumbling of the few carriages that disturbed the quiet of St. James's Square. In-

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

side the fire flamed nobly on the great hearth as on a very altar to the domestic god of comfort. The light from great wax candles illuminated the thousand lovelinesses the spacious place contained, and Grania, loveliest of them all, moving, now swiftly, now slowly, along the entire length of the room like some exquisite wild beast imprisoned in a gilded cage.

All of a sudden Grania stood still, with her hands upon her breast and her head bent forward eagerly. Standing so, she seemed anew like some beautiful wild beast, but this time like some swift hunting animal stiffened into immobility by some swiftly discerned presage of chase. And while she stood so, tense and expectant, the sound that had struck her unprepared senses swelled in volume, note following note with piteous insistence of appeal. In the first few seconds of her listening wonder Grania doubted whether she were dreamer or waker, asking herself, so far as her startled reason had time for self-question, whether she really heard such sounds or only fancied, madly, that she heard them.

Outside in the quiet of the snow-muffled square some one had broken the silence with music, some one down there was playing on a fiddle a plaintive air in a minor key. With the first thrills that quivered from the fiddle-strings all that was about her, the gorgeous room, the great house, the London square, London itself, and all its wonders and



## MUSIC THE FOOD OF LOVE

splendors and woes and sins, seemed to drift away like a drifting mist, and in their stead Grania saw the rich greenness of the Kerry headland and the whiteness of the high Round Tower, snuffed the smell of the turf-smoke on the air, heard the lapping of water, the lowing of kine, the laughter of the village children. There were no fine shoes upon her feet, no silk stockings upon her legs, no fine linen next her skin, no fine clothes upon her body. Her bare feet trod the thick grass, her legs were bare under her peasant's kirtle, her unfettered hair was free for the kisses of the Irish wind. And all this metamorphosis because somebody in the square was playing a tune on a fiddle.

At the first moment Grania had been too enchanted to wonder. She heard the air, and she surrendered to its spell and welcomed Ireland with wide arms. She floated, unresisting, on the flood of memories; she seemed to lie and drift as she had so often lain and drifted in the cool waters of Cloyne Bay, yielding herself wholly to the command of the waves, a willing victim to the influence of sky and sea.

Then swift upon the surrender came question. Had her happy ears truly heard those strange, sweet notes, or was the wasting hunger of her mind cheating her with a dear hallucination? She stood very still, very rigid, her hands pressed against her bosom, listening intently.

The tune continued, the tune was real, the tune

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

was true. The Soul of Erin sang and sobbed and sighed below there in the hollow formed by the square of the great houses. The misty gods brooded over the mountains, and the mighty heroes tramped and battled in the plains; the chivalry of the Red Branch rallied around their chief; the wise and the good, the valiant and the handsome, sat together in council on the Hill of Tara; the invaders skimmed the seas—Dane, Saxon, Norman; the earth trembled beneath the thunder of bloody wars; imps and fairies skipped on green and in ring; the gray banshees wailed for the passing of the famous; the pooka raced on his unearthly course with fiery eyes and flowing mane; the leprechaun hammered away, absorbed in his cobbling; from the sea the song of the merrow rose like an incantation. All that she had heard before she heard again: the pulsing of Boyne River running red with slaughter, the wail of the Wild Geese, the taunt and threat of "Croppies, Lie Down!" answered by the anguish and the courage of "The Wearing of the Green." The Soul of Erin, the Soul of Erin, the Soul of Erin!

It seemed to Grania that she lived long years of life between the time when she first heard the sound of the fiddling and the time, some few seconds later, when she knew for certain that her senses were not cheating her, that there really and truly was some one in the square that was playing the air, the some one that could only be the one.

## MUSIC THE FOOD OF LOVE

Swiftly she ran to the great windows that gave upon the square, fiercely she pulled apart the heavy curtains that hid from her the outer world, eagerly she peered through the glass into the white darkness of the square below. All the open space was carpeted with snow, and snow was falling steadily in great flakes and flying like wild feathers as it fell before the fretful February wind. The square seemed deserted except for one figure, showing very black against the pallor of the snow, the figure of a man that was shuffling slowly across the drifts and plying his bow and fiddle as he went. He was moving from west to east, coming toward Ashford House from the direction of King Street. By now he was about opposite York Street, and still his slow course continued, and still his steady bow rose and fell, discoursing dreams and wonders. The whole scene made a very vivid picture, strangely pathetic, the gaunt houses making a black palisade around that staring field of snow, and on that field of snow the solitary figure of the musician.

## IX

### MOODY FOOD

THE playing figure moved slowly, steadily, through the flying flakes, and the strings of the fiddle laughed and wailed with the Soul of Erin. Grania leaned out into the wintry night. "Dennis!" she cried again and again, "Dennis!" with a passion of joy, with a passion of entreaty. The fiddling figure moved over the snow at the same pace as before. If the cry came to his ears it did not quicken his pace. Then Grania turned from the window, rushed across the room and out of the door and down the great staircase at headlong speed. The tall footmen in the hall, basking sleekly by the comfortable fireplace, were astonished out of all decorum by the sight of the young lady, their mistress, dashing past them in all her indoor finery, tugging the hall door open and plunging into the street. So greatly were they startled out of all customary observance that they actually remained seated while their mistress swept past them, and only rose to their feet as the chill air streaming through the open door checked the stupor of their amazement and permitted them to rise.

## MOODY FOOD

John looked at Thomas with a questioning gaze, to which Thomas replied by an answering stare of blank astonishment. They were too well-bred to shift from their positions to advance to the open door and peer after the vanished young lady. Theirs was a duty, like the duty of the Roman sentinel, to remain at the allotted post. Therefore they stood, fixed and gigantic, outwardly immovable, inwardly wondering what had happened and what would happen next. What did happen was even more profoundly upheaving, revolutionary, and destructive to the cosmic order as conceived by footmen than what had happened. The young lady, their mistress, returned through the open door with the flakes of the February snow melting on her clothes and the rudeness of the February wind made evident in her disheveled hair. But she did not return alone. She was clinging, and clinging fondly, to the arm of a ragged man, a fellow that looked like a tramp or a scarecrow, and one, too, that carried a bow and fiddle sticking from the pocket of his tattered coat. The man was dirty; the man was unkempt; he might have been a crossing-sweeper. The austere correctness of John, the austere correctness of Thomas, judged and summed him in one word—disreputable. But before their astonished eyes, acting without the slightest appearance of consciousness of their presence or regard for their shocked feelings, the rich Miss O'Hara clung to this ragged rascal, and actually led him, tenderly

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

and fondly, up the great stairway and out of their horrified sight. But they knew that she had conducted her impossible guest into the gold drawing-room, where she had passed her afternoon, for they could hear the sound of the door as she closed it behind her. Then John leaned toward Thomas, and Thomas declined toward John, and the magnificent fellows conversed in awed whispers.

Grania was as ignorant of as she was indifferent to the resplendent witnesses of her escapade. Her brain whirled with wonder, her heart drummed with joy; she had found her lover again, a miracle had given him back to her. It was regrettable for the lovers of the unexpected that there was no one of their number present in St. James's Square on that snowy evening to witness the sight of a young and beautiful girl, all besilked and bejeweled, racing bareheaded through the snow to fling herself, with little choking cries of joy, into the arms of one that seemed to be a singularly dilapidated specimen of the vagrant musician and beggar. But the inclemency of the weather had kept the square clean of visitors, and the meeting between Grania and Dennis was seen only by themselves. Little was said, that little chiefly by Grania, and consisting of peremptory commands to the vagabond that he must immediately accompany her to the shelter of Ashford House. So "The Fair Irish Maid" drew with her her beloved prisoner, though that prisoner seemed not a little reluctant to obey and not a little sullen under

## MOODY FOOD

the sweet compulsion. What would not my Lord Coleraine or Mr. Redacre or Captain Morris or Mr. Averill have given to see that sight!

Mr. Bowley, of *The Scourge*, and Mr. Shadd, of *The Whistle*, would also have given much to see that sight, but in a sense they as good as saw it, though it cost them money to show as much. For honest John was a friend of Mr. Bowley's and honest Thomas was a friend of Mr. Shadd's, and the worthy pair of menials had gained many a guinea from the worthy pair of journalists for the scraps they were able to carry from the banquets of fashion to be hashed and spiced and served up piping hot in the columns of the popular journals. Bowley did his cooking one way; Shadd his in another; both pleased and piqued their public; neither wasted the guineas they gave to the gentlemen's gentlemen and ladies' ladies, and their kind. Bowley and Shadd, John and Thomas, were in luck's way this night.

If Grania had had time to think any other thoughts than those of joy and thankfulness beyond all power of human speech to interpret at having found her lover again, she would have been startled and shocked into a sorrow no less wordless by the change she needs now must see in him. Outside there in the shadowed, snow-smoothed square she realized nothing more, understood nothing more, than that her lost was found, that her lover had come back to her from the dominion of Giant

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Despair. But in the clear candlelight of the great room she perceived the plight in which he had come. His clothes were ragged and soiled and squalid. The boots upon his feet seemed to hang together fortuitously, mere fragments of ancient leather through which the naked, mud-stained flesh showed piteously. Grania's heart ached as she saw, and she longed to stoop down over those poor smirched feet and wash them with her tears and dry them with her hair. The miserable hat which he now held in his hand would have seemed shabby in the hand of a beggar, too full of holes to be of any service if extended for the solicitation of alms. The gifts of the generous would have gone through it like sand through a sieve. He seemed to be wearing no body linen at all, for the shapeless old coat that might have once been a brave blue, and that was now mottled and stained to all manner of sickly shades, was buttoned close about his throat, and there was no hint of even the dingiest white about his wrists. Gaunt ruin grinned from every rent and tear, from every seam and smear of those shameful garments. It was evident that the wearer had long since abandoned any effort of a dying pride to preserve a semblance of cleanliness in his miserable tatters.

But it was not the change in his attire, shocking and startling though it was, that seemed the most shocking and startling alteration in Dennis Tirowen. His body that was huddled about by those poor



## MOODY FOOD

clouts, his body that had always worn so valiant a carriage and showed so stalwart, now seemed to stoop beneath the burden of misfortune. From his rounded shoulders his head, that he had always held so high, now drooped in a pitiful way that suggested profound dejection and discouragement. His arms hung listlessly by his sides, as if they had lost all strength to lift themselves in defense or to push a passage through the world. His face was wan and drawn, and pinched with ugly lines traced on it where hunger and thirst had bitten, and uglier lines—the ciphers of debauch. His hair was disordered and overlong and ragged of edge. It looked as if it had long since forgotten all knowledge of the barber's shears. The nails of his long musician's fingers were untended and unpleasing; his hands were grimy, back and palm. His eyes that had been of old so swift and bright and defiant were now weary, lusterless and apathetic, bloodshot and dull. The man, as he stood in the brilliant room, with his shambling carriage, limp limbs and grotesque caricature of human raiment, was a tragic contrast to the high-spirited youth who had set out from the kingdom of Kerry, fiddle under arm and masterpiece in pocket, with so much confidence to seek his fortune only a few short months before. Then he was going to conquer London, to eclipse the triumphs of Mr. Moore, to gather in handfuls of golden guineas, to see the world in worship at his feet. Now, as he shivered there in his rags in

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

the warm drawing-room, a piteous ruin, it was plain that he had failed in the struggle, it was plain that however the struggle had been carried on, with what expense of energy, with what device of strategy, the result to him had been catastrophe, all his rose-colored hopes drowned and damned in black, overmastering disaster.

But it was not at the first blush, and only after a little while, that Grania was able to realize the plight to which the passing of so short a space had had the power to reduce her lover. For the moment she only comprehended that he was there, Dennis Tirowen, Dennis of the Sweet Mouth, her Dennis, that she had found him, that he was alive, and that the aching anxiety of the past months had come to an end. She clung to him closely naming his name again and again in a tender ecstasy of delight, as if the mere sound of those sweet syllables repeated over and over again expressed to the full all the sorrow of which she had drunk so deep and all the joy which she was now so eager to taste. At once fiercely and tenderly she blessed him with caresses, to which very strangely the man seemed almost unwilling to respond, though he murmured her name softly from time to time.

At length Grania released Dennis from her arms and looking steadily upon him, understood the bitter pass to which he had come, saw with clear, sad vision against the glowing background of the

## MOODY FOOD

stately golden room the sorry figure of the poor musician with his drenched and tattered garments, his degraded bearing, his unkempt locks, and his wan, worn features. It was miserably plain that he was hungry; it was miserably plain that he was cold. His soiled hands, his stubbled cheeks and chin were raw-red with the rigor of the night, his clothes were soaked with snow. A fierce pity surged through Grania's heart as her clear gaze showed her mercilessly the miserable truth. She could not bear to think that her lover had come to this, that he had been suffering such cruel buffets, while she had been so favored by fortune, and that he had suffered alone, when, at a word, at a sign, she would have so gladly come to his aid.

What indeed were to her his rags, his squalor? She clung to him, loving, caressing, and he suffered her tenderness listlessly, looking wistfully about him like a scared animal in a strange place. She questioned him eagerly now that she had him to herself, staring passionately into his face and striving to fix his wandering, furtive gaze with her steadfast, eager eyes.

"Oh, Dennis, Dennis," she cried, "it is the happy woman I am to hold you in my arms. What have you been doing all this weary while? Why have you kept silence? Why have you kept hidden from me that have been hunting you so hotly? And, oh, my dear, why are you like this, and on such a night?"

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

The man seemed to struggle with the heaviness of his mood. He was acting as a man might who had lost consciousness and was being slowly recalled to knowledge of the living world. He tried to speak, and failed; then tried again, and succeeded.

“My little Grania,” he said, with a groan, “things have gone ill with me since we parted. I was to make my fortune, wasn’t I? Well, these rags are my fortune.”

He indicated his dismal apparel with a gesture that for all its intended humility had something in it too of vainglory strangely ill-fitting. In his voice, too, even while he made confession, there was a note of sullen defiance against which Grania shut her ears.

“My poor, dear love,” she pleaded. “Tell me all about it. What is the meaning of it all?”

The man gave an ugly shudder, and there was an ugly bitterness in his voice as he answered. “Sure, fortune played leapfrog with me, just to jump into your arms it seems. I was going to win the world and lay it at your feet, no less, and now it’s you that are the great lady and I the beggar at your gate.”

Grania laid a swift hand on his mouth. “Hush! love,” she whispered, “you mustn’t talk like that. What does it matter which of us has got the silly shillings and guineas so long as we have each other again at last.”

## MOODY FOOD

Dennis shook his head wearily. The sullen look on his face had faded to one of extreme fatigue. He shivered, and she saw how his gaze was fixed upon the glowing hearth. Taking Dennis by the arm she drew him, unresisting, toward the fire and made him plump himself down in the most comfortable of the many comfortable chairs that neighbored the blaze. "Warm yourself, Dennis darling," she commanded, "and don't talk for a while, till I have found something to comfort you." Dennis, huddled among the cushions, and extending his grimy fingers greedily toward the glowing hearth, seemed to yield passively to her sweet imperiousness. She watched him for a moment, so changed, so pathetic, so abject, with eyes that threatened to brim with tears.

But Grania was never a one for weeping if there were anything better to do, and here she recognized matter more imperative. She rang the bell, and when the servant came—it may have been John, it may have been Thomas, Mr. Redacre does not enlighten us—she told him to bring a bottle of port and some sandwiches. True to the traditions of his tribe, John—or Thomas—heard the order with unchanged countenance; looked, without seeming to look, at the queer, squalid figure crouching in his rags over the fire, and quitted the room in good order. What he said to Thomas, if he were John—or what he said to John, if he were Thomas—may readily be imagined. Whatever he said he said it

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

with commendable brevity before conveying to the butler Grania's order and its cause. In a very few minutes the port and the sandwiches rested on a table in the great room, Dennis and Grania were alone again, and below stairs the parliament of the servants' hall was in full session.

During the short interval in which the order for food and drink was being obeyed Dennis said nothing, but sat hunched forward, still staring at the fire and the flames, while the heat from the hearth, acting upon his snow-sodden garments, drew from them a mist of steam. Grania, watching him lovingly, respected his silence. She saw nothing repulsive in the shabby wretch that cowered there, his rags mocking the damask; she chose rather to consider that his presence graced the room, bringing with it, as it did into her world of artifice and intrigue, the spirit whose presence had so long been missing, the spirit of love. Grania's heart yearned over her soiled and battered lover; if any thought of all the fine gentlemen she knew, all the fine gentlemen who toasted her and wooed her, came into her mind, it was to the disadvantage of the gang of dandies and their kind, and to the advantage of the poor waif and stray from Kerry. Her flowing sorrow for him had in it no bitter water of scorn. He was her man, was just her thought; he was her man come back to her. What could it matter how he came? He could be no dearer to her if he outvied Mr. Brummell in the exquisite fastidiousness

## MOODY FOOD

of his attire; how could he be less dear though he were garbed after a fashion that would discredit a rag-picker. There were tears in her heart if she suffered none to shine in her eyes, and the pure fountain of her pity flowed only in love for Dennis.

## X

### I WON'T MARRY YOU, MY PRETTY MAID

AS the door closed behind the servant who had brought the wine and food that Grania had ordered, and even as Grania was in the act of pouring out a glass of port, Dennis, that had kept so still for a few minutes, shifted from his crouching position over the fire and turned his face toward her. Firelight was on it, candlelight was on it, and even Grania's affection could not deny that the expression they revealed was far from pleasing. There was a snarling air about the mouth, where the drawn-back lips displayed the teeth almost threateningly; there was a quarrelsome look in the eyes that had suddenly brightened at the sight of food and drink. He made her think for an instant of some fierce, voracious animal that was hungry for its prey. What had he done, she wondered, what had he suffered, what had he endured to bring him to this pass? She shivered in the warm room, feeling suddenly cold with his cold, and famished with his famine, grimly understanding what hunger and cold might do to break down a man. Before she could advance toward him, ministering wine, he spoke, and the sound of his voice was bitter as a taunt,



## I WON'T MARRY YOU

"Won't your fine servants think it strange of you," he sneered, "sheltering and cherishing a poor wretch like me?"

The words were unworthy of his utterance, of her hearing, but she forgave him; rather she took his state of mind for granted, and found that there was nothing for her to forgive. She carried some sandwiches to him on a plate.

"I don't think we need trouble ourselves about that, dear one," she said, gently. She made him eat a couple of the sandwiches, which he did wolfishly, and yet with the kind of difficulty natural to one that has fasted overlong. Then she gave him a glass of wine and waited until he had drunk it in two fierce, feverish gulps. Then she spoke again. "Now tell me all about it, darling."

He reached out his hand for more food, and ate it. He reached out his hand for more drink, and drank it. Then he answered, with a defiance that was meant to be heroic, and that somehow seemed histrionic. "The tale of a failure is easily told. I'm not the first fool that thought the world was his for the winning and found himself in the gutter." He gave another scornful, sweeping gesture over his sordid accoutrements. So might a fallen king call attention to his soiled ermine.

Grania saw and would not see. If it were possible she felt more tender for his tragic-comic woe. "But why didn't you write to me, my love?" she murmured. "Was it kind of you to leave

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

me with the hunger in my heart all this sad while?"

Dennis turned his head away and stared at the fire. He felt that he resembled Napoleon at Elba, felt that he, too, had lost an empire. "I told you," he said, gloomily, "that I was going to be still until I had won my victory. I thought, God help me! I would be soon in the winning it. But I hadn't landed on English soil before my troubles began."

There was a world of indignant pathos in his voice. Grania gave him another glass of port, which he drank more slowly than its predecessors. Then she questioned him tenderly. "How was that, Dennis darling?"

Dennis made a grimace. "Everything went against me from the beginning," he complained. "There was bad company on board the very boat that I took, though it seemed pleasant enough when I made acquaintance with it. Sure, it began with a glass of punch, and it passed to a hand at cards, and by this and by that, before we touched land I had made a big hole in the bag of money that was to keep me going for a year."

Grania gave a little cry. For all she was an O'Hara to begin with, for all that she had lived so queenly this length of time and seen money scattered so lavishly, she shared the peasant's sense of sorrow for a wasted hoard. "Oh, Dennis darling," she wailed, "however did you come to let that happen?"

## I WON'T MARRY YOU

Dennis, hugging his grief, but visibly thawed by the warmth and the wine, wore the air of one that was the fool of fortune. "They were card sharpers, no less," he confessed, sheepishly; "but what could I do. I shook my fist in their faces, and they laughed in mine, and so we parted. And there was I in a strange land, alone and forlorn. I tramped to London—oh, the weary walk it was!—and fell among thieves by the way, in a tavern I put up at, that lightened me of the most of the little I had left. When I stormed in the morning the landlord was for pushing me out of doors and I was for knocking him down, and then they sent for the constable, and I, being a stranger in a strange land, took to my heels. And so, by this and by that I came, in good time or in bad time, to London, heavier of heart, emptier of purse, but still coming to London. I thought that when I would be entering London I would be entering heaven, in a way of speaking. But it proved to be entering hell."

Grania was close beside him now, seated on the elbow of his chair with one arm about his neck and one hand stroking the tangle of his wet, matted hair. "My poor dear!" she sighed.

Dennis, now that he had found his voice, seemed willing enough to use it, as if the sound of it pleased him, as if he found a kind of pleasure in the telling of his pains. He continued his narrative. "After wandering about for Heaven knows how long," he said, "I found a bit of a lodging off a place they call

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Holborn, and I set to work—for I wasn't so broken-spirited then—to make my fortune, save the mark."

Grania caressed him lovingly. "My dear, my dear!" she murmured.

Dennis scarcely seemed to feel the touch of her hand upon his hair, scarcely seemed to hear the sweet music of her speech, as he went on with his tale. "I made fair copies of my play, my poor play, my 'Buried City,' and I sent one to each of the managers. I called myself by an English name to evade their prejudice—John Smith was the name I pitched upon—and I craved the favor of an early answer. But do you think that e'er a word the villains ever answered? Devil a bit."

Grania glowed with anger against such ingratitude. "The shame of it!" she protested.

Dennis went on, apparently indifferent to everything except the record of his wrongs. "I waited at the stage-doors till my legs ached, me that was the most tireless walker in Kerry, but never could get speech with one of the rogues. And I tried the men that publish music, but none of them would so much as listen to me when they found that I couldn't afford to have my tune printed. And my shoes wore out, and my clothes wore out, and my money wore out, and my heart wore out."

Grania could scarcely restrain her tears as she listened to this dreary story. "But how have you lived, darling?" she asked, anxiously. Her swift wit interpreted and intensified all the griefs that he related,

## I WON'T MARRY YOU

and in sharp contrast to them she set up, almost in self-accusation, the wonder of her own condition.

The frown on the face of Dennis deepened. "How have I lived, is it?" he asked, bitterly. "How have I lived? Listen to me and I will tell you. One day I was drifting home to my lodgings, hungry, and cold, and wet with the wicked rain. I had my fiddle under my arm, and as I passed a tavern some fellows that stood at the door called to me to play them a tune. I was ashamed to do it, but I was empty and chill, and I did, and they gave me some pence—my first earnings—and they gave me some drink, which warmed me, and, as I began, so I went on. I play outside taverns for pennies and I sleep in a garret with my fiddle in my arms, my fiddle that keeps my body and soul together."

Grania drew his head close to her bosom and held it there. "Oh, Dennis, Dennis!" she cried. "You wring my heart. But did you never hear of what happened to me?"

Dennis gave a mocking laugh that sounded strangely unpleasant rumbling hollowly from his gaunt cheeks. "Oh, I heard of that sure enough," he said. "It got into the papers, and it made a talk even so low down as the taverns where I served."

Grania twisted and bent where she sat so that without leaving hold of him she could look into his face. "Then why didn't you write to me, darling?" she said. "Wasn't my luck your luck? Wouldn't we share and share alike?"

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Dennis met her tender gaze angrily. "Is it the beggar-man you would be wishing to see me, and me with my pride? Hadn't I come to London to make a home for you, that was waiting for me in Ireland? And if I failed and stayed poor, and it pleased God to make you rich, I was never the man to seek alms of a woman, least of all the woman I was wishful to make my wife."

Grania clung closer to him, crushing her silks against his rags. "You can make me your wife now, Dennis," she whispered. "You shall forget all your tribulations, and you shall be as happy as the days are long."

Dennis answered her appeal more angrily still. "What kind of sense are you talking, Grania, my girl?" he cried. "Never would I wed the girl of my heart if I couldn't afford to keep her decently. Never would I consent to live on the bounty of my wife. Do you think I have no pride, Grania? Do you think my spirit is broken entirely by this wicked city?"

Grania shook her head. "Never ask me such a question, my dear," she murmured, fondly. "But sure it is no sin or shame for two lovers to share a slice of luck that God has been pleased to cut for them from the pudding of good fortune?"

Dennis made a gesture expressive of flagrant impatience. "You are only a woman," he said, sourly; "you wouldn't understand. I don't blame you; but you wouldn't understand my pride."

## I WON'T MARRY YOU

Grania lifted herself a little away from his shoulder and stared at him amazed. "Do you mean to tell me," she asked, "that you won't marry me, Dennis—marry me at once?"

Dennis answered doggedly. "Of course I mean to tell you that. I will never marry you, Grania, until I can afford to keep you as a decent man's wife should be kept."

"But think of it, Dennis, think of it!" Grania pleaded. "Here am I as rich as Cræsus, and with no greater pleasure in my wealth than to put it all into your pockets."

Dennis shook his head, and his face was mulish in its obstinacy. "You are kindness itself, Grania," he said, "but it's no use arguing. Never a penny of your money would I touch, never will I put the ring upon your finger, till I have the right, as I mean the right, to ask you to be my wife."

Grania gazed at him, saw the stubborn purpose in his eyes. "You mean it, Dennis?" she asked.

"I mean it, Grania," Dennis answered, steadily; and there was a kind of dignity in his determination that helped to redeem it in the girl's esteem.

"You are in the wrong," she said, and sighed. "Heaven help us! you are in the wrong. You would have me take your money without question—"

Dennis interrupted her. "Because I am a man. There is the beginning and end of the matter. It's no use, Grania; I know what I must do."

## XI

### A TALE OF A WAGER

GRANIA kept silent for a little while, that seemed a long while to her, thinking thoughts. Presently she spoke. "Dennis dear," she said, "why did you play that air to-night if that is the way you feel?"

"Why did I play that air?" Dennis answered, gloomily. "God knows. Many's the time that I have passed your fine house and looked up at it and thought of you inside with all your great friends, and I expected that I should pass it to-night just the same. But somehow in the cold and the wet and the darkness there came a great longing into my heart to see you again, and a great wonder into my mind as to whether you would be glad to see me again, or whether you had forgotten all about me. So I pulled my fiddle out of my pocket and set to playing, scarcely knowing what I did, but thinking, at least, that if you heard it you would know that I was there."

"I am glad you did," Grania said, tenderly.

Dennis shook his head angrily. "I'm not so sure that I am glad," he said, gruffly. "What is



## A TALE OF A WAGER

the good of it? You are on the heights and I am in the depths; there is a great gulf between us."

"You might bridge it with a word," Grania whispered.

"Don't talk like that," Dennis said, fiercely. "I have said my say, and I mean it."

Grania sighed again wearily. "'Tis the proud spirit you have, Dennis," she said; "but, at least, I suppose you won't be too proud to let me help you to your end?"

Dennis shook himself fretfully. "What can you do for me?" he asked.

"Will you dine with me to-night?" Grania answered. She asked the question as if it were the most natural one in the world.

Dennis sat up a little in his chair and gaped. "Sure, you are laughing at me and my rags," he said, querulously.

"Don't say such words, heart," Grania protested. "But I have the manager of the Rotundo Theater coming here this evening, and it would be grand for you to meet him."

Dennis was plainly agitated by her words. "The manager of the Rotundo Theater—Mr. Heritage?" he questioned.

Grania nodded. "Himself. I have told him all about you, and he is crazy mad to meet you, and it will be the surprise of his life to find you here this very evening as ever is. And I have some fine guests that maybe you could play your air to, and

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

they would take your name all over town and make you famous in a week. In a week, is it? What am I saying? You'd be famous in a day."

Dennis, as he listened to Grania's words of cheer, had gradually slipped out of his sullen lethargy as a snake slips out of its skin. He gripped the arms of the chair in which he lay supine and forced himself to sit bolt upright, staring at Grania. In his new alertness, his new eagerness, he seemed as if he had wakened out of some long sleep to a sudden and pleasurable consciousness. Then the clouds of doubt and disappointment darkened his face again. "Oh, Grania, how splendid!" he cried, in obedience to his first impulse. Then, obeying his second, he added, "But how can I sit at your table like this?" And he pointed with more irritation now than pride at his rags.

Grania smiled encouragement and confidence. "Just do as I tell you," she said, "and all will be well. Now, Dennis, to please me you must put a bit of your pride in your pocket, for this way of mine is the way to try for your fortune and to win it."

Dennis aped her uplifted mood with his own new-born enthusiasm. "Show me the road, sweetheart," he promised, cheerfully, "and I'll do the rest."

Grania looked at him a little wistfully. His easily shifting mood disquieted her, yet she believed that if he would fall in with her scheme and carry

## A TALE OF A WAGER

it out to the best of his ability it had a rare chance to end well. To be sure it seemed a little bit like a fancy in a fairy tale, but what then? There was a deal of truth in a fairy tale.

“Dennis,” she said, “you will give me your promise to do as I wish, however strange it may seem to you, and this will be a great evening for both of us.”

Dennis nodded, puzzled and wondering, and Grania, taking his acquiescence for granted, rang the bell and told the answering servant that she wished to speak with Mr. Fenny. When they were again alone Grania spoke quickly, anticipating the question that she knew Dennis was sure to put.

“Mr. Fenny,” she said, “acts as my private secretary, which is of no importance; but he is about your size, which is of great importance. I am going to get him to take you home with him and to lend you a suit of clothes that will set you off becomingly, and then you shall dine with me to-night and win all hearts.”

Dennis began instantly to make objections. He would not have been himself if he had not proved ready to make objections to any plan proposed for his welfare. But Grania, who saw that he was really eager to be convinced, overruled his objections one after another. Of course he could not put fine clothes on a soiled body, but he could wash himself as clean as a new pin at Mr. Fenny's. Of

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

course he was miserably tired, but he could have at least an hour's sleep at Mr. Fenny's after his bath before he need think of dressing for the dinner. Of course Mr. Fenny would be delighted to render such a small service to a man of genius, and equally, of course, when Dennis was the idol of London he could easily work off his obligation to Mr. Fenny in a dozen ways that would be highly satisfactory to that gentleman.

By the time that Mr. Fenny made his appearance Dennis had been won over to consent, albeit none too graciously, to Grania's proposals. The wine and meat had brisked him not a little, rousing him to his old readiness to assert independence, but he was too much taken with the immediate chance offered to him not to give way. As for Mr. Fenny, entering all point-device, whether he had consented to exchange some words with John or Thomas or no, he did not permit himself to show the slightest surprise either at Dennis's presence or Dennis's appearance.

Dennis rose as Mr. Fenny entered and Grania formally presented the two men to each other as calmly as if they had encountered in some aristocratic assembly.

"Mr. Fenny," Grania said, "this is my oldest, nearest, and dearest friend, Mr. Dennis Tirowen."

Fenny bowed gracefully to Dennis and Dennis bowed awkwardly to Fenny.

"I am happy to make your acquaintance, sir,"

## A TALE OF A WAGER

Fenny said, blandly, "and I envy you the recommendation."

He smiled on Dennis as he spoke with an amiability which, it may be, he was far from feeling. Any amusement he may have felt at the whimsical situation he kept most religiously to himself. There was no hint of mirth or curiosity in his eyes or on his lips. As for Dennis, he glowered at Fenny and looked, as he felt, ill at ease. Grania was, outwardly at least, perfectly self-possessed.

"Mr. Fenny," Grania said, quietly, as one that makes a most ordinary suggestion, "I want you to take this gentleman to your lodgings, and to furnish him with all that he may require. He is doing me the honor of joining my company at dinner to-night."

Mr. Fenny made another excellent bow in the direction of Dennis. "With the greatest pleasure," he protested; and, indeed, he carried himself as if his chief desire in life was to be agreeable to the shabby stranger.

A sudden thought struck Grania, and she gave it tongue. "Mr. Tirowen," she said, with a quizzical smile, "is to be congratulated upon the conclusion of his wager."

Dennis turned his eyes from their half-scornful, half-envious appreciation of Mr. Fenny's finery to Grania's face. What on earth, he asked himself, was she talking about? What wager did she speak of? He soon learned.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Mr. Fenny, seeing that he was expected to show interest, showed it. "His wager?" he queried, with as much show of eagerness as polite usage permitted.

Grania was really pleased with her readiness of invention, and prompt to expound it. "My friend, like most men of genius, has his eccentricities. He made a wager a year ago that he would travel to London and wear the same suit of clothes there for a twelvemonth."

Dennis gaped with amazement; then he shut his mouth tight and did his best not to grin. Certainly Grania was saving the situation magnificently.

Mr. Fenny broke into a loud laugh, and clapped his hands approvingly. He did not in the least believe the statement, but it was a statement that in a wagering age was quite believable. "Egad! very original and neat," he protested, admiringly. "I do not think a merrier bet was ever recorded at White's."

Grania had more to say. "The time has expired," she continued, "and the first part of the wager is won. But there is a second clause to it, by which my friend undertakes not to wear any of his own clothes when he changes his attire for something more suitable to London society. By the terms of the wager he must be indebted for his shift to the good offices of a friend. Now, I am Mr. Tirowen's only friend in London at the moment,

## A TALE OF A WAGER

and in this particular I cannot assist him. Thereupon I thought of you.”

Mr. Fenny was vehement in his assurances of the delight it would afford him to be of service to Miss O'Hara's friend in this delightful dilemma, and he listened with an attentive ear to all Grania's instructions, while Dennis held his peace, feeling confusedly as if he had stepped somehow out of London into the pages of an Arabian tale, and feeling emphatically grateful to Grania for the readiness which had set the seal of an enviable originality upon his rags and tatters.

## XII

### A CHANGE OF CLOTHES

MR. FENNY never allowed himself to show surprise, nor even to feel surprise, at any wish or whim of Grania's. He had been sensible enough to recognize from the beginning of their acquaintance that when she said a thing she meant it, and when she wished for a thing to be done it was well for those who desired her friendship to obey her. It was accordingly without, even so much as a twitch of an eyelid or the least elevation of an eyebrow that Mr. Fenny accepted the charge of the dingy and ragged individual whom Grania committed to his care. He quitted the room, therefore, after smiling as amiably upon the ragamuffin by the fire as if he had been the favorite among his club companions, and set to work at once to carry out Grania's commands.

In the hall he found John and Thomas immobile and expressionless. He knew that they knew, and they knew that he knew, but the traditional distance was preserved. Mr. Fenny sent John—or Thomas—for a coach, for he decided that even if the climatic conditions had been more favorable



## A CHANGE OF CLOTHES

to walking exercise the contrast between the fine scrupulosity of his attire and the grotesque rags of his companion might succeed in attracting an unnecessary degree of notice in the neighborhood of St. James's, in spite of the darkness of that February evening.

While the coach was being sent for, Mr. Fenny, discreetly unwilling to intrude upon the strange pair in the great room, beguiled the time in a little lounge-room, where in a well-locked cabinet of gold and ivory the late Lord Ashford had sheltered a remarkable collection of books of a light-hearted nature. To this well-locked cabinet Mr. Fenny, by favor of my Lord Cloyne, had the key, and he now silenced unnecessary speculation in his mind by a few minutes' study of the skittish in literature. When the coach arrived Mr. Fenny put aside his book, relocked the cabinet, and returned to the drawing-room, where Grania and Dennis sat facing each other beside the hearth.

Mr. Fenny explained that a coach was in waiting, and straightway he conducted Dennis to it with as pleasant an air of good fellowship and as entire an absence of any appearance of patronage as if he had been accompanying one of his chosen comrades of the clubs. Mr. Fenny had had the forethought to banish John and Thomas from the hall before ascending to fetch Dennis, and the two men so oddly contrasted passed unobserved to the waiting coach, wherein Mr. Fenny conveyed Dennis

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

to his lodgings in Jermyn Street, talking pleasantly the while, and as if the little adventure were the most natural thing in the world. It was for the most part a monologue, for Dennis was embarrassed and taciturn, but Mr. Fenny showed no consciousness of his companion's awkwardness, but chatted away gaily and made shift to speak for two.

When the pair arrived at Mr. Fenny's elegant lodgings, which, of course, were in the fashionable end and on the fashionable side of Jermyn Street, Mr. Fenny conducted Dennis to his apartments, where they were received by Mr. Fenny's gentleman with a composure which rivaled in its calm and dignity that of Mr. Fenny himself. Master and man installed Dennis in Mr. Fenny's dainty dressing-room, there to make his necessary ablutions with aid of every exquisite essence, scent, soap and unguent that Bond Street could afford, while Mr. Fenny consulted with his man on the question of Dennis's attire, and studied the contents of his wardrobe.

Mr. Fenny was fortunate in his man-servant. There never was a better valet for a man of Peregrine Fenny's kidney than Sparrow since the word valet became a noun substantive with serious possibilities. He played the Leporello to Mr. Fenny's Don Giovanni with an air of discretion and restraint which suggested rather that he was sharing in the management of a Sunday-school than the amusements of a libertine. Had master been judged by man, had

## A CHANGE OF CLOTHES

the nature of the one been appraised by the standard of the demeanor of the other, Mr. Peregrine Fenny would have obtained, to his infinite amazement and amusement, a reputation very different from that which he actually enjoyed.

Sparrow had not only the urbanity, but also the dignity, characteristic of the sort of personage that comes into mental being when the words "rural dean" are uttered. He surveyed the panorama of fashionable life with calm, complacent eye; he aided and abetted debauch with an air of grave decorum; he took seduction and adultery for granted as part of a fine gentleman's appanage with an affability that never descended into any impertinent suggestion of complicity. When occasion called, as it often called, he was as ready to play pimp and pander as to tie a cravat or to froth a cup of chocolate. But he did the one duty of his office as he did the other, with the same show of suave correctness.

It was with the demure demeanor of some hierophant introducing a novice into the presence of the interpreter of divinity that Mr. Sparrow assisted Mr. Fenny to usher Dennis Tirowen into Mr. Fenny's dressing-room, made sure that all the elegant appliances for perfect cleanliness were in their place, and closed the door upon the dingy poet with a countenance of an imperturbable gravity. If Mr. Fenny chose to bring home beggars from the street that was the affair of Mr. Fenny, and not

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

to be questioned. Sparrow's countenance had worn the same air of immaculate calm on so many occasions when he had ushered unexpected visitors into those dainty rooms that he was by now well drilled in impassiveness. He had shown as gravely remote to each and all of the vagrant fair that flitted so frequently across the threshold of Mr. Fenny.

Never did Mr. Sparrow's austere aloofness of demeanor fail him, never, even in the company of his kind—if one so incomparable could be said to belong to a class, who really stood apart, an isolated specimen—did he condescend to any indiscretion concerning his master's affairs. He listened to the confidences of other valets in the little club-room of gentlemen's gentlemen at the Hand and Glove in Ryder Street with good-humored tolerance; but his own lips never made the minutest contribution to the feast of scandal. As far as Mr. Sparrow was concerned Mr. Peregrine Fenny might have been Galahad, or, for the matter of that, Abelard.

After Dennis, at the expense of no little labor and a vast consumption of soap, had washed himself white of his London grime, Mr. Fenny, punctilious in obedience to Grania's commands, saw that Sparrow made up a very good apology for a bed on the sofa in the dressing-room, and there he insisted that Dennis should rest for an hour. Once between the sheets sleep settled swiftly upon Dennis's tired, distraught senses, and it did not seem

## A CHANGE OF CLOTHES

to him that he had closed his eyes for an instant when he was roused from a dreamless sleep to find Mr. Fenny standing by his couch and assuring him that it was time for him to arise and dress.

For a moment Dennis could not realize where he was. He was as much puzzled as the awakened sleeper in the Oriental story who is persuaded by the merry-makers that he is the caliph. Swiftly, however, memory reasserted itself, and half eagerly, half reluctantly, wholly embarrassed, Dennis Tirowen quitted his sofa to surrender himself to the hands of Mr. Sparrow, who, under his master's directions, was to make a new man of him as far as clothes could do the trick. Many garments lay before him, wisely culled by the united judgments of master and man, and in a final selection from these Dennis was now persuaded to garb himself.

It was not to be denied that Dennis made really quite a pretty figure in his rig as a fine gentleman. Mr. Fenny eyed him approvingly; Mr. Sparrow eyed him approvingly; in so far as he might be said to be their handiwork they applauded him. Though he was a tall lad of his hands, he was no taller than Mr. Fenny, and as far as length went, Mr. Fenny's garments suited him well enough. Before he left Ireland he was of somewhat stouter build than the London fine gentleman, and then it would have taken some little humoring and adjusting to fit him satisfactorily from Mr. Fenny's wardrobe. But the evil days in London, the days of cold and

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

want, the evil nights of London, the night of sponging in taverns and sleeping behind bulkheads had done their work in thinning him and making him the likelier model for the pains of Mr. Fenny and Mr. Sparrow. Now their task was done, and well done, and the young Irishman looked mighty fine in raiment of a kind that he had never worn before. Even in his Dublin days his habiliments were of the sober, modest kind that the son of a well-to-do farmer would naturally affect, and had nothing in common with the fine array that was Mr. Fenny's daily wear. However, his natural adaptability and the native ease of his carriage enabled him to sport his fine feathers, unfamiliar as they were, with an air of familiarity.

Peregrine Fenny was justly renowned for his excellent taste in dress, and though he did not consider that it was, as it were, inherent in obedience to Grania's commands that he should endow his newly found friend with the best treasures of his wardrobe, the nobles and glories of his tallboy, he saw to it that the young Irishman's costume was of a kind that for happiness of cut and suavity of color should show him off to the best advantage. He had a double reason for this precision. In the first place, he knew that Grania would appreciate very keenly the way in which he had carried out her wishes, and he sought, therefore, to requite himself commendably. In the second place, the artist in Mr. Fenny was animated by his task. In dress-

## A CHANGE OF CLOTHES

ing Dennis Tirowen for his *début* in the world, Mr. Fenny was, as it were, dressing him for himself. The well-proportioned body, the well-proportioned limbs of the Irishman, felicitously molded by Mr. Fenny's clothes, revealed Mr. Fenny to himself as never yet a mirror could do. In the rehabilitated Dennis Mr. Fenny seemed to behold his living image, and beholding, very greatly to admire. His mind reverted with a tender melancholy to his earlier days, when the garden of pleasure first opened its rose-garlanded gates for him, and when he first realized the philosophy of a fine body in fine clothes. So he surveyed Tirowen in a rapture, seeing there himself as he had been, as he was, and as he long hoped to be, and he enjoyed the study amazingly, and made poor Dennis stand this way and that way, walk thus and sit so, that he might taste to the full this unexpected pleasure.

The young Irishman was a little shy at first during the process of transition, and his reluctance only surrendered to the eagerness of his rekindled desire to meet some of the members of that bright world whose distant light had lured him to disaster, that bright world which he seemed to have lost, but which he now again longed to conquer. Hopes that had long been buried, ambitions that had been drowned in taverns, began to revive, to reassert themselves, and to warm his heart. The dreams of victory which he had dreamed so often in his wanderings among the Kerry hills, the dreams which

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

had been so rudely dissipated in the slums and alleys of the great implacable city, began to paint themselves anew in lovelier colors upon his mind. His degradation was but skin-deep, and he was still shrewd enough to recognize the force of Grania's reasoning and the wisdom of her counsels. He would have enjoyed well enough to triumph over society clad in the simple garments of a rustic—so, perhaps, his simple vanity would have been most fully flattered—but he was ready to admit that London might be wooed and won more decorously in a gala suit.

Indeed, when the transformation was completed and he saw himself in Mr. Fenny's long mirror he was very well content with the change, and thanks to a certain mimetic quality in his composition, he carried himself as if he had been used to handsome garments all his days. The soothing influence of a clean skin, a short sleep, and a set of comely garments had restored to him much of the self-confidence that had been so sadly bruised and battered in London. He really felt as he surveyed his reflected person that he was justified in entertaining anew the highest hopes of triumph. When, therefore, Mr. Fenny told his guest that it was time for them to be returning to Ashford House, it was with no outward show of trepidation that Mr. Dennis accompanied his deputy Samaritan to the waiting coach.



## XIII

### THE DINNER PARTY

THE great dining-room of Ashford House was one of the proudest glories of that magnificent mansion. On its walls the portraits of the young spendthrift ancestors, happily rescued from exile by Grania's gold and Lord Cloyne's acumen, smiled or frowned according to their humor upon the strangers about the board. Holbein and Porbus had portrayed the servants of the polygamist and the Virgin. The Lord Ashford that had obeyed the Caledonian Solomon looked as wise as his master. There were those there that had fought for their kings at Edgehill and Chester, and Dunbar, and at Worcester, and at Boyne, and beneath these ever, by Grania's orders, big bowls of hot-house roses bloomed. Across the canvas of one portrait a grim bar of black paint had been smeared. This was the portrait of one of the house that had gone for Parliament and Oliver against throne and Charles, and had been thus defaced by command of the late Lord Ashford, that was as valiant a Jacobite as a man should be that was old enough to remember the tragedy of the forty-five, and would as soon

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

have gone to hell as to Carlton House. There was another portrait that was defaced in the same fashion, but even more emphatically, for this picture had two broad bars of condemnatory black drawn across it. This was the painting which it most amused My Lord Cloyne to regard, for it was the presentment of that ancestor of Lord Ashford's whose renegade defection from the cause of King James the Second to the cause of William of Orange had caused Lupus Loveless, of unpleasant memory, to play the rat in his turn.

For long enough these solemn images of stalwart men, and of their companions, the dear, adorable women, whom they had loved and hated and cheated, and that had loved and hated and cheated them, had gazed gravely and gloomily down upon an almost deserted room. The late Lord Ashford detesting his age and despising its politics, kingless since the death of Charles the Ninth, and well-nigh countryless save when the struggle with Napoleon had reminded him that if he was a Jacobite he was also an Englishman—the late Lord Ashford entertained no company in St. James's Square. He always dined alone in the great room, always drank in solitude his loyal toasts, "The King Over the Water" and "The Little Gentleman in Black Velvet," and was found one night by his frightened servants sitting very quiet at the head of his table with a broken wine-glass in his hand. He had drunk his last toast, he had entertained his last

## THE DINNER PARTY

guest. He left behind him his fame as a connoisseur, and his wonderful collections, and his great wealth. The great wealth soon vanished through the fingers of his heir, and the great collections would have followed suit if it had not been for the advent of My Lord Cloyne. Then the family portraits, that had come so near to seeing no more feasts, suddenly found themselves presiding again over joyous and crowded banquets, and their grave countenances seemed to soften and to smile under the influence of the long unfamiliar lights, the long unfamiliar laughter, the long unfamiliar flow of wine and wit. But Mr. Fenny always insisted that the portraits looked their pleasantest on such an evening as this, of one of Grania's little dinner parties, for then they were able with less distraction to please themselves with staring at Grania's beauty.

To-night the portraits looking down upon Grania in her beauty looked also amiably enough on My Lord Cloyne, as if they were aware that he had saved them in their stations, and were accordingly grateful. They looked down upon My Lady Cloyne, still amazingly handsome; upon Lady Double, very brisk and vivacious, as a woman may well be that sits at a small table with no less than three of her lovers.

At these small informal feasts of Grania's she was never at the pains to preserve an equality of proportion between her male guests and her female guests,

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

so the lords and ladies of the past, if the feast had been carried out as Grania had originally planned it, would have had no more women to stare at. But at the last moment, after the resurrection of Dennis, Grania had despatched messages here and there to certain of her fashionable friends who might be disengaged, inviting them to come to dinner and meet a countryman of hers who was going to astonish London. Invitations to Ashford House were regarded as almost as obeyable as a royal command, so most of Grania's missives hit the gold, and her table to-night was more crowded and her banquet a more elaborate business than she had intended. The names of these newcomers do not concern this chronicle, and even Mr. Redacre has only mentioned a few of them. The ancient portraits looked upon them as steadily as they looked upon the others. But this narrative is only concerned with those familiar personages whom the portraits regarded. Yet such interest as they showed did not seem to suffer. They looked down upon Captain the Honorable Curtius Loveless, very gallant and bland, very careful to adore his hostess without for a moment allowing adoration to overpass the limits of discretion and become impertinence. They looked down upon Mr. Rubie, earnest and sturdy, full of sympathy with the painted gentlemen with the black bars of disfigurement across their persons—Cromwell and William of Orange were Mr. Rubie's two great heroes of the past; as Mr. Burke and Mr.

## THE DINNER PARTY

Fox were his heroes of the present—and very alertly aware and resentful of Captain Loveless's adoration. They looked down upon Mr. Peregrine Fenny, very fine and bright, his eyes twinkling with suppressed merriment at a comedy to which he alone of the guests possessed a partial clue. They looked down also—and there ought to have been wonder in their look—upon a stranger to their fellowship, to their traditions, their prejudices, upon a young man that was handsome and handsomely clad, but that for all his fine clothes came to their aristocratic gaze plainly of a class that had never been privileged to sit at table with gentlefolk at Ashford House before. Fellows of yeoman stock had proved ere now that they had their place in English history, but that place was at the heels of their liege lords when they went a-fighting, at home or abroad, and never at the side of those liege lords when they met at board and passed the wine. In many a well-fought field abroad, in many a well-fought field at home, the son of the soil had done well for those he served at Crécy and at Poitiers, for the White Rose or the Red, at Agincourt and Orleans, for king or for Parliament, for the Son of the Man or for the brewer, for Monmouth, or for James. But the privilege to be killed for a cause did not carry with it the privilege to sit at meat with the captains of that cause, and to be smiled on by their womankind. This is why, to the whimsical mind, the family portraits on the walls of the dining-room at Ash-

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

ford House seemed to look askance at Mr. Dennis Tirowen, to discover his lack of gentility in spite of his fine clothes, and to sneer at him superciliously.

Whatever the ancient portraits seemed to think or whatever their originals very probably would have thought of the appearance in their society of such a one as Dennis Tirowen, it is certain that his presence caused very mixed emotions among the company who were seated at Grania's table that night. With the exception of Mr. Fenny, that was Grania's accomplice in her innocent little plot, only Lord Cloyne and Mr. Rubie had consciously seen Dennis before. My lord knew little more of Dennis than he had admitted to Mr. Rubie in the course of his conversation at the foot of the Round Tower, on the memorable day of the change in Grania's condition. Mr. Rubie knew what my lord had told him, with such additional knowledge as his very brief and scarcely agreeable interview with the man that carried a fiddle had afforded. Both were now very certainly surprised to find Dennis Tirowen in town, a welcome guest at Ashford House and dressed for all the world like a gentleman. Mr. Rubie scented a mystification, and resented it. Why should a Kerry farmer, he asked himself sourly, be suddenly transformed into a London dandy, unless at Miss O'Hara's pleasure and at Miss O'Hara's cost. Jealousy gnawed at his vitals; but though he was not aware of the fact, he did not suffer alone.

Lord Cloyne and his lady accepted Dennis on

## THE DINNER PARTY

Grania's presentation with imperturbable affability. They too felt sure that Grania was paying the way of the young Kerry farmer. They would have cared little if Grania had been a different kind of woman. Had she been as wanton as fashionable, her entertainment of a rustic lover would have been no more than a laughable natural serio-comic pastoral such as any fine lady had a right to indulge in if it pleased her whim. But my lord and lady knew Grania's impeccable virtue, and in consequence feared the worst.

Captain Curtius showed no signs of care at the presence of the stranger, but his temper raged behind the shelter of his smiling face. He was skilled to read the thoughts of women, and he guessed at once that Grania's thoughts of the newcomer were very kind if not the kindest. He had for so long believed himself to be steering a safe course to a likely haven that this sudden menace to his prospects—for he knew it to be a menace—startled and amazed him. He showed no signs, however, of either perturbation or annoyance, but greeted Mr. Tirowen with a charming show of amiability and caught an opportunity to whisper in Grania's ear some words in praise of Dennis's appearance. His words pleased Grania, and her pleasure enraged the speaker, but he kept his irritation to himself. He was a good player at all the games of life, and could encounter a run of ill-luck with tireless patience and a smiling face. Up to this moment he had feared

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

no ill-luck in the cunning course of his wooing of the Irish heiress. He had seen no rival who was for a moment to be feared; he knew that Grania was more than inclined to like him, even that she did positively like him. Captain Curtius was skilful in the wiles which win a man the liking of women, but he knew that the wiles are not the same for all birds, and he baited his snare for Grania with that air of comradeship, of brotherliness, which had thus far served him so well. But now, as it seemed, just when everything was going so well, his precious plan was menaced by the irruption of this wild fellow from Ireland, about whom Lord Cloyne was able to give him a little whispered information just before dinner. Captain Curtius, comparing himself with Dennis, was not alarmed by the comparison, but he was annoyed at having to make it, and he watched and waited for the chance to do the intruder an ill turn.

Mr. Pointdexter, beholding Dennis for the first time and well aware of Miss O'Hara's interest in him, studied the young man closely, without appearing to pay him more than the most casual attention. No hint of what Mr. Pointdexter may have thought of the poet showed itself on his impassive countenance, but he had been careful on being presented to Dennis in the drawing-room to greet him with a display of amiability which was unusual in the lawyer, and for which Grania rewarded him with a grateful glance.



## THE DINNER PARTY

As for Grania, she appeared to be quite contented with the appearance and demeanor of her lover. In her place as hostess she watched Dennis from afar with an expression in which approval of his bearing, under conditions so unfamiliar and unexpected, mingled with a humorous appreciation of the little comedy which her sudden impulse had improvised. It did not occur to her that her interest in Dennis would be no secret to any keen observer, and if it had it would not have altered her action in the least. She was too glad to have Dennis back again, restored to her from the unknown, to care if her gladness was evident to others. So she allowed her admiration to show itself unchecked, quite content to let others see it if they chose, so long as Dennis was aware of it and was encouraged by it to face his unusual ordeal.

There could be no doubt that the appearance of the young man, affecting those present in different degrees of attraction or the reverse, had made a profound impression upon the susceptible mind of Lady Double. As the antiquarian banker was not present, Lady Double had no need to exercise any restraint over her feelings, and she allowed her admiration for the stranger to manifest itself in many expressing and approving glances after the first moment when she caught sight of him. Lady Double had a wide range of taste and a receptive heart, and she was always ready at any moment

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

to find a place in it for any commendable gentleman, but not for a long time had she felt so much enthusiasm as she experienced in studying the handsome face and fine figure of Dennis as he showed himself in Grania's golden room decked out in his borrowed splendor. To do her justice, if Dennis had come into her presence clad in the shabby clothes he had so lately discarded she would have been scarcely, if at all, less willing to admire him and make her admiration patent. But Dennis fagged out in the brilliant plumage vouchsafed to him by Mr. Fenny was able to display himself to the best possible advantage, and Lady Double ogled him in a rapture. She had insisted in the drawing-room on his being presented to her at once, and immediately made a dead set at him.

Dennis, desperately struggling with the shyness inevitable to such a spirit in such a situation, found himself pretty soon at ease with the lady. She was still young, she was still good-looking, and she made him flagrantly aware that she appreciated his own good looks. There is always something complimentary in being made violent love to by a pretty woman, and, though Dennis had no experience of the type of wooer that Lady Double represented, he was not unwilling to take a hand in the game. An Irishman, and above all an Irishman that is by way of being a poet, can generally manage to say gracious words to a gracious woman, and when the

## THE DINNER PARTY

lava of Lady Double's admiration had thawed the last icicle of Dennis's reserve the two began to get on together very well indeed. Curtius Loveless looked on and smiled. He was too old a friend of Lady Double's not to understand all the manœuvres of her intrigues. Mr. Fenny, that had been, and, indeed, still was, one of Lady Double's favorites, also looked on and also smiled. Grania for her part was amused and not annoyed. It would never have occurred to her to object to her lover carrying himself gallantly toward an admiring woman. She was perfectly aware of Lady Double's wishes and hopes, but she had every confidence in Dennis and no fear for the results.

Lady Double's attentions during the progress of the meal had had a great effect in putting Dennis at his ease in this his first appearance in fine company and in spiring him with the self-confidence that was necessary to carry him to success. But its extravagancies had another effect that was not so fortunate. His quick and impressionable nature, responding loudly to any stimulus, began, as it were, to reciprocate the extravagance of his companion, and when his original diffidence had shifted into assurance the assurance increased to a somewhat aggressive self-assertion. At the beginning, while his shyness was still thick upon him, he had carried himself with reticence and discretion, and the modesty of his bearing commended itself to the most critical of his spectators. But under Lady

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Double's influence he began to change for the worse. Having learned to talk freely, he now began to talk noisily, to laugh more loudly than he should, to gesticulate with unnecessary vehemence.

## XIV

### THE UNBURIED CITY

GRANIA did not have cause to mark the declension of Dennis. In the first place because she was in no mood to mark anything to his or any man's disadvantage in that hour. Her heart was dancing mad with happiness, her mouth was singing mad with mirth. If Dennis were, indeed, drifting perilously toward the uncharted seas of ebriety, shall it be denied that Grania was a little intoxicated too, and with a headier influence than wine? The girl was, as it might be said, wonder-drunk; her spirits were wild and merry, and if she rejoiced in the return of the prodigal she rejoiced also in the comic effects of that return upon the company that were privileged to witness it and eat veal. She could guess well enough what every one at the table was thinking—every one, that is, with the exception of Mr. Pointdexter, whose thoughts were never lightly legible. It diverted her to dwell upon the irritation, the mystification, the consternation that were concealed by the smooth faces around her—the Cloynes, Captain Curtius, Mr. Rubie, Lady Double—she could interpret with ease the effect

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

that the appearance of Dennis had upon them, and the interpretation amused her. It amused her so much that it served to distract her attention from the waxing hilarity of Dennis. If she noticed at all that he grew in gaiety, she was no more than content, for she came of a breed of women that like their lovers to be jovial and show a bold front.

Yet she must perforce have discerned the overgrowth of Dennis's mirth but for an intervening circumstance. As the dinner drew to its close the butler came to Grania's chair and whispered to her that Mr. Heritage had arrived. Now, Grania did not wish to ask Mr. Heritage to join the party in the dining-room, as she desired to have some private talk with him before bringing him and Dennis together. Therefore she sent word that she would be obliged if Mr. Heritage would attend her in the Silver Saloon. A few minutes later she caught Lady Cloyne's eye, and Lady Cloyne, reading her purpose, rose, and the ladies left the gentlemen to their wine. Grania established Lady Cloyne and Lady Double with her other women guests in the Gold Room, explained her necessity of leaving them for a few minutes, and went to join Mr. Heritage.

Mr. Heritage rose as Grania entered and advanced to meet her. Grania saw that he carried a roll of paper in his hand.

"Madam," he cried, triumphantly, "I have found the play."

## THE UNBURIED CITY

“Sir,” Grania cried, more triumphantly still, “I have found the author.”

To ease the astonishment painted on the manager’s face, Grania told him what had happened, or, rather, told him a version of what had happened. She said nothing of her lover’s trials, of his poverty, of his rags. She merely said that he had been abroad and unable on account of his health to communicate with his friends, but that he was now in London, where he intended to remain for the present.

Mr. Heritage expressed his satisfaction at the news and congratulated Grania in this fortunate and timely solution of the problem that had distressed her. He on his side had been lucky enough to find the play after a very brief search among his papers at the theater. At that moment he held in his hand the manuscript of “The Buried City.”

Grania looked at him and at the manuscript he brandished eagerly. Had he examined it? she asked; had he formed an opinion as to its merits?

Mr. Heritage, it seemed, had done both. He had read the play very carefully, and as the result of his study he had formed a very decided opinion upon it. That opinion was apparently highly favorable to “The Buried City” as a poetical composition, and even as a piece intended for dramatic representation.

Grania’s cheeks glowed with pleasure as she heard him speak thus, but her elation was suddenly tem-

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

pered by a rapid change in Mr. Heritage's manner. The manager appeared constrained; it was evident that he had less pleasant words to say. Pressed by Grania to explain himself, he declared, after some little hesitation, that the difficulty that lay in the way of his producing the play at the Rotundo, much as he would like to do so, was that "The Buried City" would be a very expensive piece to put on the stage. If it were not done full justice to in the matter of costumes and scenery, its chances of success would be gravely imperiled. If it were done full justice to in the matter of costumes and scenery it would involve a risk too great for Mr. Heritage to permit himself to take.

Grania listened quietly while the manager told his tale, asked a few questions which proved she had a practical mind even in dealing with matters that were unfamiliar to her, and then made Mr. Heritage a straightforward proposal. She would find all the money for the most lavish production imaginable of "The Buried City" and for the payment of certain generous sums to the author, who was, of course, to know nothing of Grania's interest in the undertaking. She would further undertake to guarantee Mr. Heritage against any loss in connection with the production of the piece, which he was to keep on the boards for a certain time, whether the public came or stayed away.

Mr. Heritage, after a few seconds' consideration, indulged in for form's sake, accepted this amazing



## THE UNBURIED CITY

and advantageous proposal. To do him justice, he would not have entertained the proposition if he had thought "The Buried City" a bad piece. But he thought it quite a good piece. It was out of the common; but Mr. Heritage had intelligence enough, in the first place, to recognize that this was not necessarily in itself a defect, and in the second place, to rejoice at the opportunity thus unexpectedly afforded him of being able to produce an uncommon play on the boards of the Rotundo, and thus gain all the credit of an act of intellectual daring at no expense whatever to himself. So he assured Grania that he would carry out her wishes most carefully, that he would make Mr. Tirowen the most favorable offers for the right to produce his piece, and that he would keep the fact of his collusion with Grania the most profound secret. These preliminaries being agreed to between the two high contracting parties, Mr. Heritage accepted his hostess's invitation to accompany her to the Gold Room and drink there his promised cup of coffee.

## XV

### RECOGNITION OF GENIUS

MR. HERITAGE had scarcely settled himself comfortably to his coffee and the companionship of the ladies—a companionship in which he ever believed himself destined to excel—when the noise of ascending feet upon the stair and the buzz of mounting voices announced that the gentlemen had left the dining-room and their wine. In another minute they entered the room in very differing conditions of spirit. To consider only those essential to the narrative, Mr. Pointdexter and Mr. Rubie were, as was their wont, as cool and sober as when they had sat down to table. My lord and his brother, as was their wont, had drunk deeply, but carried their liquor gallantly and showed no marked signs of their potations. Indeed, there was only one of the company that seemed distinctly changed since the beginning of the banquet, and that one unfortunately was Dennis Tirowen. The poor devil was really more to be pitied than blamed for what had happened.

After the ladies had quitted the table, Dennis, deprived of the support of Lady Double, felt some-

## RECOGNITION OF GENIUS

thing of his early embarrassment returning to him when he found himself alone with the men. To repress this embarrassment he rapidly responded to the offers of wine with which he was plied by Captain Curtius, who meant to be mischievous. My Lord Cloyne looked on and smiled faintly, not disapproving. He resented the presence of this Kerry bumpkin—for so he styled him—and was willing enough to see him degraded in the eyes of his hostess. As for Mr. Fenny, he perceived a divided duty. He knew that Grania would wish him to act well toward her queer friend, but on the other hand he had his own interests to consider, and his own interests ran with those of Captain Curtius, and were intimately associated with a promised thousand pounds. Wherefore he made no serious effort to keep Dennis sober.

Mr. Rubie drank little; Mr. Pointdexter drank little; my lord drank much and carried it well. Dennis was in dangerous case. He had intended when he came to Ashford House to be very wary with respect to the wine-cup, but his intentions had steadily melted away under the influence of good cheer and a show of good-fellowship, and as his eyes brightened and his cheeks flushed he became momentarily more demonstrative and more assertive. If he had been gay enough when Grania and the ladies had quitted the room, he grew gayer thereafter, and was no less than rotten ripe when the time came to leave the dining-room.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

As soon as the gentlemen entered the room Grania rose, and, advancing toward Dennis, laid her hand gently upon his arm. She noticed that his cheeks were flushed and that his eyes sparkled, but such were too much the customary signs by which fine gentlemen were wont in those days to convey to a hostess their approval of their cheer to strike Grania as peculiar. It was the mode to drink much at meals; it did not occur to Grania to expect that Dennis would do other than his fellows did; if she had thought about the matter at all she would have expected him neither to abstain nor to exceed.

“Dennis,” she said, exultantly, “Mr. Heritage is here. Mr. Heritage is most anxious to speak with you.”

As a matter of fact, Dennis had more or less forgotten about Mr. Heritage. His wine-kindled spirits, flattered by the reception his sallies had been accorded in the dining-room, led him to accept himself already as an approved social success, and he saw himself mounting in the course of a single evening the throne of Mr. Moore without any troublesome need of presenting credentials. It had been his intention on returning to the drawing-room to regain the neighborhood of Lady Double and to renew the interrupted conversation that he had found so attractive below-stairs. It was not that Dennis faltered in the least in his allegiance to Grania. But, to be truthful, he was a little abashed

## RECOGNITION OF GENIUS

by the appearance of this unfamiliar Grania, this Grania of silks and ribbons, this Grania glittering with jewels, whom he had last seen as a barelegged girl on a Kerry hillside. He resented the fact that he should feel such abashment, and the resentment throve under the benignity of Bacchus. Grania habited like a great lady, carrying herself like a great lady, swaying easily the destinies of a great house, was a Grania that mystified him.

To him in this temper the genial familiarity of Lady Double was amazingly refreshing and inspiring. He had never met, rather should it be said that he had never guessed, at the existence of a woman like Lady Double before. In his Dublin days he had been too seriously inclined to seek the society of the venal fair, and though during the days of his degradation in London he had plied his fiddle in places where low women danced foul dances and sang foul songs, he thought of them as low women to whom vile thoughts and vile words came as part of their wretched inheritance, and whom, while he loathed, he pitied. But the blithe, undisguised salacity of the fine lady, the briskness with which she skipped from innuendo to a staggering frankness, the patent admiration with which she favored him and the nakedness of its nature, if it disturbed him at first, did not overawe him and ended by alluring. The wine and her smiles allying, Dennis fell readily under Lady Double's flagrant spell, and found himself facing

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

her boldness with boldness and bandying freedom with alacrity. It was not a pleasant game, but it had its fascination for a raw youth, to whom it was wholly unfamiliar, and he slipped swiftly deeper and deeper into its snare. He was yearning to play the game again as he reeled up the staircase, and he knew that the woman would be waiting for him and willing to renew, and it was with surprise and even disappointment that his intentions were stayed by Grania with her news of the presence of Mr. Heritage and of Mr. Heritage's desire to speak with him.

The surprise had the advantage of shocking him into a more sober mood. His muddled mind clarified a little; his titubating reason regained its equilibrium: mentally and physically he stiffened himself upon unsteady legs. Murmuring some words expressive of his gratification, Dennis suffered Grania to lead him to where Mr. Heritage was seated. Fortunately the distance was not far, and Dennis, desperately determined to recapture his self-control, accomplished the journey without disaster. Mr. Heritage rose as the pair approached, and after Grania had presented Dennis he extended a cordial hand to the poet.

"Sir," he said, expansively, "permit me to congratulate you upon a very admirable piece of work."

Dennis blushed boyishly. The sweetness of such praise from the great manager helped to strengthen him in his struggle to recover self-control. "You

## RECOGNITION OF GENIUS

have read my play?" he murmured, and halted, stammering, uncertain what to say next.

Mr. Heritage saw that he was under the influence of liquor—so he expressed Dennis's condition to himself—but he was not surprised. "I have read 'The Buried City,'" he said, "and I cordially applaud it and you. I can assure you that it is seldom indeed that we poor managers receive from outside a work of such sterling quality. It recalls the past, sir, believe me, it recalls our golden past."

Dennis, to use a familiar phrase, could scarcely believe his ears. It was to him, Dennis Tirowen, that Mr. Heritage was speaking. It was about him and about his cherished work, "The Buried City," that Mr. Heritage was uttering such honeyed words. He knew not what to say.

"I am indeed delighted," he faltered. "I do not know how to express myself—"

He paused, and Mr. Heritage took him up briskly.

"Your modesty," he protested, "is no less creditable than your ability. True genius, my dear sir, is ever so."

"True genius!" The words rung in Dennis's brain, kindling delicious madness. He was alone with Mr. Heritage now, for Grania had left the two men together after the introduction and was occupying herself with finding amusement for her other guests. Various friends were arriving to whom Grania had sent polite notes that evening after Mr. Fenny had taken his departure with Mr. Dennis

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Tirowen under his wing. Those polite notes had requested their recipients' call at Ashford House after dinner if their engagements permitted and drink a dish of tea or coffee with her and make the acquaintance of a young fellow-countryman of hers whose ability was likely to provide town with a new sensation. An invitation of any kind to Ashford House, as has been said, was scarcely less welcome to the elect than a royal command, and when coupled with the promise of a new sensation was indeed irresistible. So the select few whom Grania had chosen to summon as being most likely to serve her turn in serving the interests of Dennis Tirowen gladly came at her summons, and, as Mr. Redacre dryly comments in his memoirs, they certainly got their sensation. Mr. Redacre, it is to be gathered, was one of those guests. He was one of those individuals of relatively obscure origin who occasionally, for some mysterious reason, wield a great influence in society and have an almost pontifical power of awarding honors to newcomers.



## XVI

### MR. RUBIE SAYS HIS SAY

GRANIA, thus occupied in stemming the tide of her small stream of visitors and dispersing it in different directions over the stately reception-rooms of Ashford House, Dennis was left free to snuff voluptuously the incense that Mr. Heritage cunningly burned before him. The words "man of genius" were still dinning exquisitely in Dennis's captivated ears, and he shaped vainly inarticulate phrases of grateful appreciation. But Mr. Heritage, ever a business man, even with a poet in his cups, slid from the altitude of compliment to the level of affairs and talked practical and technical talk to a bewildered, enraptured listener.

True to his agreement with Grania, Mr. Heritage, while revealing no hint of the fact that he was a subsidized agent, made Mr. Tirowen offers for the privilege of producing "The Buried City" which would have seemed surprising to any one less vain and less inexperienced than Dennis. Mr. Heritage, in acting thus, was quite in his element and quite at his ease. It was always a joy to him whenever it was possible to play the part of the munificent art

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

patron, and to play it under conditions where money—another's money—was no object and where he could promise extravagantly with the certainty that another would fulfil his promises, sufficed to exalt Mr. Heritage to the apex of the pyramid of patronage.

Dennis listened with greedy ears while Mr. Heritage rolled out the rotund sentences which, as it were, placed the laurels on his head with one hand and filled his pockets with the other. Mr. Heritage's terms were as generous as his praises, and poor, perturbed, flustered, flattered, wine-bedraggled Dennis found it hard to decide which of the two favors he found the most to his liking. Avidly he swallowed the compliments, eagerly he agreed to the golden terms, cheerfully he consented to wait upon Mr. Heritage on the following day and receive the ample sum that was to secure the bargain. Mr. Tirowen, dizzy with joy, wrung Mr. Heritage by the hand and looked rather wildly about him, hot to let others know and applaud his good fortune.

While these eccentric negotiations were proceeding with so much satisfaction to both parties in the transaction—for Mr. Heritage did admire "The Buried City" very sincerely—Grania was devoting herself to the welfare of her guests. Some settled themselves to card-tables, others drifted to the music-room and listened to the string-band that existed to discourse sweet music in Ashford House.

## MR. RUBIE SAYS HIS SAY

Others of an austere humor sipped tea or coffee, and livelier spirits interested themselves in absorbing great goblets of an amazing punch of which Captain Curtius held the secret recipe.

In the course of her divagation she came across Captain Curtius, and he stayed her with a smile. He had been drinking far more than poor Dennis, but he carried his bottles well. His color was good, his insolent eyes were bright, his speech was sure and his gait steady. He made a pleasant picture to look at, a picture of handsome youthful manhood and soldierhood. He made Grania a courtly bow.

"Your young countryman is a merry fellow," he said. "I must congratulate myself upon making his acquaintance."

He spoke very easily, as if he meant what he said, and Grania believed him.

"I am glad you like him," she replied. "I should wish you to be friends."

Captain Curtius smiled sweetly. "Any friend of yours," he protested, "is a friend of mine." He made a little pause, and then continued in the same even voice. "He is a great friend of yours, is he not?"

There was nothing in the way the words were spoken for Grania to dislike, but they sounded like a challenge.

"Mr. Tirowen is a very great friend of mine," she answered, simply. Captain Curtius raised his eyebrows ever so little.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

“Upon my honor,” he said, “the young gentleman is much to be congratulated.” He suddenly modulated his voice to a softer note as he asked, “Is he as great a friend as I am?”

Grania smiled enigmatically. “I have known him longer,” she answered. Captain Curtius looked over his shoulder to where in the distance he could see Dennis engaged in conversation with Mr. Heritage. He would have said something, but at that moment Mr. Rubie came up and addressed himself to Grania. Good Mr. Rubie had been held in talk since the ascent from dinner by Lady Double, who had secured him to cover her vexation at the diversion of Dennis. He had been trying to talk to her, or, rather, she had been trying to talk to him, for while she was clever enough to conceal her desire for the society of Dennis, Mr. Rubie was not artful enough to control his emotions. He was longing to talk to Grania, and he was very grateful when the approach of Mr. Redacre enabled him to surrender Lady Double to his care and to start in pursuit of Grania.

Captain Curtius saw the eagerness on Mr. Rubie’s honest face, and he stepped aside with an amused smile. It was not the disciple of Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox of whom the gallant captain had any fear that evening. He saw without alarm that Mr. Rubie persuaded Grania to withdraw in his company to a little side room where they could speak alone. Captain Curtius turned to a servant and gave him certain instructions. Then he drifted

## MR. RUBIE SAYS HIS SAY

easily from one person to another, talking easy talk, but always keeping his watchful eyes upon that alcove where Mr. Rubie conversed with Grania. He did not in the least care what Mr. Rubie said, though he believed that he could guess its tenor well enough. But he was waiting for the time when Mr. Rubie should make an end of speaking and give him his chance.

He did not have long to wait. As soon as Mr. Rubie found himself alone with Grania he began to say what he had resolved to say with the directness of one that aspired one day to be a minister of the crown. With true parliamentary instinct, he began with a question, and so great is the force of habit that in spite of the purpose he had in view he came within an ace of addressing Grania as his right honorable friend. Luckily he checked this impulse in time.

“Miss O’Hara,” he began, “have I your permission to speak quite frankly?” Grania stared at him for a moment, taken by surprise.

When Mr. Rubie had drawn her apart she was too much occupied by her own happy thoughts to do other than accede indifferently to his wish. Now, listening to him, she suddenly guessed what was coming and struggled to look demure. Familiarity with such scenes had led her to regard them as matter for mirth, but she knew Mr. Rubie’s serious disposition, and she liked him, and wished him well.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

“Of course,” she said, “you can speak frankly—if you really feel a need to be frank to-night.”

“I do feel that need,” Mr. Rubie responded, “and I feel it to-night. You cannot be unaware, Miss O’Hara, that I entertain a very profound admiration for you—an admiration which I feel it is scarcely necessary to add is entirely unalloyed by any consideration of the fortune it has pleased Heaven to place in your hands. I am, as you may possibly know, myself a man of considerable wealth.”

Grania did know so much, and she inclined her head to signify her knowledge. She did not speak, for Mr. Rubie had not said yet what he must say. Now he said it. His manner was formal, his language precise, but Grania could detect a little tremor in the habitually steady voice, and felt both grieved and grateful.

“Miss O’Hara, I have the honor to ask you to be my wife.” Mr. Rubie was looking very steadfastly and strangely at her as he spoke, and for the first time since Grania had found wooers she felt inclined to cry. She shook her head; for a moment she could not speak; then with an effort she found words.

“I thank you, Mr. Rubie, but I cannot do what you wish. It is impossible, quite impossible.”

Mr. Rubie seemed to recognize and accept the finality in her voice. He was never the man to argue with fate or to take defeat bitterly. He was paler than his wont, but his manner was dignified

## MR. RUBIE SAYS HIS SAY

and composed as he bowed his acknowledgment of Grania's speech.

"May I ask you," he said, "if the presence in London of the young gentleman whom I met once before in your company in Ireland has any influence upon your decision?"

Grania colored a little at the question, but she answered it quite honestly. "Yes," she said and said no more. Mr. Rubie rose, made her a profound bow, and quitted the room in silence.

## XVII

### CAPTAIN CURTIUS PROPOSES

**M**R. RUBIE, outwardly calm, inwardly volcanic, had not quitted the little room above a minute, and Grania had not had nearly time to recover her breath after the only one of the many declarations that had caused her the least pleasure or the least pain, when Captain Curtius poked his handsome face through the open doorway. As Grania, conscious of his presence, looked up, the Captain's suave voice solicited a permission to enter, which the Captain's insouciance immediately took for granted. Crossing the floor, Curtius seated himself by Grania's side on the very seat which Mr. Rubie had just vacated, and smiled with an expression of intelligent good-fellowship at the girl. Once again that evening, on regarding him, she was compelled to recognize how well he looked, how gallantly he carried himself, how dexterously he mingled deference with impertinence in his manner of valiant homage. He certainly made an amazing contrast to Mr. Rubie. Mr. Rubie was a dozen times, a hundred times, the better man, but very certainly Captain Curtius was the better company. Which



## CAPTAIN CURTIUS PROPOSES

of the pair would make the better husband was a problem Grania did not feel herself called upon to consider.

Mr. Loveless was in the thick of his theme in an instant. "I will not," he said, "make a wager with you to the tune of a thousand pounds, for I could not afford to pay if I lost and it would be no more than a flea-bite to you if I won, but I will bet you a dozen of Hungary Water against the glove that you are now wearing on your heart-hand that I know the pith and marrow of what our excellent party-man has just been saying to you."

Grania could not choose but smile at the gaiety with which Mr. Captain Curtius aired his mind. "I protest I will not take you," she answered, looking as she spoke at her left hand, and thinking for a moment of its soft casing being worn next to Captain Curtius's heart and carried into action maybe if ever war should break out again, which seemed unlikely in that hour of universal peace. "I know well enough what Mr. Rubie and I were talking about, and I know that Mr. Rubie's views of the political situation are as sound as sound, but I have no desire to hear them over again from your lips—I do not care for politics."

Captain Curtius nodded sagaciously. "Politics be damned," he said, sententiously. "But you know, and I know, and you know that I know, that there was never a word of politics in old Rubie's talk to-night. The old Whig asked you to marry

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

him and you gave him his congee. Am I not right?"

"The matter," said Grania, gravely, "is not one that I propose to discuss with you or with any one." She did not speak angrily, for she really could not feel angry with Curtius Loveless as he sat there looking so debonair and amiable.

Captain Loveless only laughed. "Why should we discuss it," he asked, gaily, "when we have other things, and much more important things, to discuss? You will not marry Mr. Rubie, that goes without saying. The much more important question is, will you marry me?"

He neither raised nor lowered his voice as he spoke; he did not alter in the smallest particular his manner of gay and easy self-possession, yet he managed to convey through all his gaiety and all his ease a suggestion of quiet earnestness and of restrained passion which was calculated to disturb and which succeeded in disturbing his hearer. Grania made as if to speak, but Captain Curtius lifted a hand as if to entreat her patience, and Grania accepted the suggestion, and was silent. She had taken Captain Curtius so much for granted; she had so readily made him her friend; he had been so insidiously careful never to affect the lover, ever to affect the comrade, that he had gained a certain vantage ground in her mind, which made his present attack the more effective, and might have made it very effective indeed if there had never been a

## CAPTAIN CURTIUS PROPOSES

certain poet and fiddler in Kerry. As it was, Grania listened to what Captain Loveless had to say, and she found a kind of pleasure in listening, but she was so sure of her heart that she knew that he wasted pains.

“It is very likely,” Captain Loveless went on calmly, as dispassionately, to outward seeming, as if he were speaking of some one else, or for some one else, “that you have heard a great deal to my discredit.”

As a matter of fact, a good many people had spoken against Captain Curtius to Grania, chiefly young gentlemen who resembled him in his vices, or who desired to resemble him in his vices. But as all that they could think of alleging to the Captain's discredit was that he drank too much, played too much, and loved too much, and as none of these things were necessarily other than what were known in her surroundings as a good man's faults, they had not succeeded in prejudicing Grania very much against Mr. Curtius. In the society in which she now moved these were the common frailties. Mr. Rubie, indeed, was exempt from them; but then Mr. Rubie was not exactly amusing. Mr. Curtius might be guilty of many peccadilloes, but he was certainly a brave soldier, certainly a comely animal, certainly a diverting companion. Wherefore Grania had not been turned from her sentiments of friendship for Captain Loveless by any of his backbiters. But Captain Curtius as a declared suitor was un-

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

doubtedly a very different matter from Captain Loveless the familiar friend.

Captain Curtius, trying to read Grania's thoughts on her countenance, and quite unable to do so, continued his little personal discourse. "I am perfectly willing to admit," he said, cheerfully, "that I have my defects. I dare say that I drink more than is good for me, though I have never been able to find aught amiss with me after the wettest night that ever I spent. I dare say I play a bit deeper than I should, but I assure you that I generally balance up to the good at the end of the year." He stopped speaking for a second, and looked at Grania with a look half knowing and half appealing of a well-calculated frankness. "I have no doubt that you have heard that I am a bit of a lady's man. Well, it's perfectly true. I am. I've always liked women ever since I can remember anything worth remembering, and ever since I can remember women have liked me. Upon my honor, I believe that is all that can be said against me. As to what can be said for me, why, I think I must throw myself upon your mercy, for if I have any good qualities I should be the last man to brag about them. But there is one merit to which I must confess, one virtue of which I am amazingly proud, the redeeming merit, the exhonoring virtue of loving you."

Grania listening to him and feeling as if she were listening to a voice in a dream, was compelled to admit that Captain Curtius had a certain felicity

## CAPTAIN CURTIUS PROPOSES

in love-making. Almost she could have wished that another and dearer had something of this soldier's complaisant grace. Grania knew that she ought to listen no longer, that she should not have listened so long, but she was intoxicated by the events of that astonishing day, and she absolved herself from any folly with that plea. Captain Curtius continued his harangue.

“Of course there is this enormous fortune of yours. I should have spoken before, long ago, if only you had not been so damnably rich. Please do not think for a moment that I do not like money, for I do; I like it enormously. But I don't want to marry any woman for her money, and, most of all, I don't want to marry you for your money. I know that I must seem a pauper compared with you, but I've got enough for all my wants, thanks to a blessed old aunt of mine, and need only seek to marry according to the dictates of my heart. There, I have talked too much about myself, yet I had to say so much to set myself right in your eyes. I love you. I do not think that I am altogether unworthy to tell you so much. I am proud that I love you, that long usage of the world has not so dulled my mind or blunted my emotions as to make me insensible of your worth or of your beauty. I shall always be proud to have loved you. It is something for a poor sinful fellow to have been granted so much grace.”

Captain Curtius was certainly a cunning pleader,

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

for Grania found herself listening with pleasure to his appeal. Her senses seemed to be swayed by some subtle influences that lulled her as the handsome young soldier paid his addresses with such engaging frankness. She struggled against the strange sensations that invaded her; she compelled herself to speak.

“Captain Loveless,” she said, “I ought not to have listened to you for so long, and would not indeed if I could have interrupted you with any show of courtesy. I cannot but be grateful for the compliment you have paid me”—here Captain Curtius made her a grave little bow that was effective in its quiet dignity—“but I am not a free woman.”

If Captain Curtius was wounded or surprised by Grania’s words he showed neither hurt nor wonder. Only he asked a question, following unawares the example set him so short a time before by Mr. Rubie.

“Is it Mr. Tirowen?” he asked, and asked no more.

Grania nodded.

Mr. Loveless rose to his feet. “I am sorry,” he said, with a great air of frankness. “It would not become me to utter a word of disparagement of any one whom it had pleased you to favor, but upon my honor and without vainglory, as between Mr. Tirowen and myself, I believe myself to be the better man. That is all I have to say,” he went on,

## CAPTAIN CURTIUS PROPOSES

for he saw that Grania was about to speak. "Perhaps I ought not to have said as much. Very certainly I shall not say as much again. May I have the honor of escorting you to the drawing-room?"

He offered her his arm with excellent grace. There was nothing in his voice or bearing of the disappointed man, of the baffled suitor. He was quite at his ease, quite self-possessed, quite sufficiently blithe. He played his part very well. Grania, taking his arm in silence, reflected in a whirl of confused thoughts that she had received within the last few minutes the only offers of marriage that had moved her to any serious or tender emotion. Captain Curtius on his side did not believe that his game was by any means lost. He was still less ready to believe it when on re-entering the Gold Room he saw that the directions he had given to a servant a little while before had been faithfully carried out.

## XVIII

### WISDOM IN THE CAN

BY Captain Curtius's directions a servant conveyed a tray bearing a bowl of punch and some glasses toward Dennis and set it down on a table hard by the spot where Dennis and Mr. Heritage were standing. "With Captain Curtius's complements," the man said, to call Dennis's attention to the liquor, and stood waiting by the table.

Dennis's eyes sparkled at the sight of the punch. "We must wet our bargain," he said, thickly, and at once ladled out two glasses of the compound with a hand so unsteady that he slopped not a little of the liquid on to the tray. He took up one of the full glasses and motioned to Mr. Heritage to take the other.

Mr. Heritage did so, and, lifting the vessel to his lips, looked over its edge at Dennis. "Here's wishing you success," he said, and sipped a little of the drink.

Dennis laughed foolishly. "Success to the play," he said, and drained his glass. The subtle fluid set his jaded brain on fire. He hastily filled another glass. "This is glorious stuff," he protested.



## WISDOM IN THE CAN

“Here’s your good health, Mr. Heritage.” He tossed off the second glass and filled himself again a third, while Mr. Heritage sipped judiciously and eyed Dennis with a quizzical smile.

“If I were you,” he said, quietly, when Dennis had disposed of his third tumbler, “I should deal quietly with that beverage.”

“Deal quietly, is it?” Dennis protested. “Why, man, it’s as mild as milk; it’s the elixir of life.”

Mr. Heritage smiled and took another small sip. He was a temperate drinker, and if he sometimes exceeded discretion in other pleasures, he never exceeded in wine. But he was used to witnessing examples of excess in wine, and Dennis’s case afforded him a new illustration of its folly. His libations of punch on the top of his indulgence in unfamiliar wine had disordered his wit and destroyed his self-restraint. It was probable that somewhere in the back of his disordered brain he felt an unwarrantable conviction that he was behaving with great dignity and wisdom. He discoursed volubly, if incoherently, on art; he favored Mr. Heritage with an elaborate exposition of his views as to the proper conduct of a theater, the main thesis of which appeared to his diverted listener to be that the theater, any theater, existed chiefly for the purpose of producing the plays, already written or to be written, of Mr. Dennis Tirowen.

When he had expanded this theory for a con-

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

siderable time Dennis's unsteady hand groped over the little table hard by him till it touched the tumbler for which he sought. It was full again, as he had found it full every time when, after he had emptied it, he reached for it again. The servant that stood by, a sedulous minister steadfastly obeying the hospitable instructions of Captain Loveless, saw to that. Dennis had continued to drink unchecked by Mr. Heritage. It was none of his business to prevent his new author from becoming fuddled if such were his good pleasure. So Dennis drank and babbled and babbled and drank, talking ever thickly and more thickly of his genius and of his play and of Mr. Heritage's good fortune in finding him. And all the time the conflagratory punch burned up the residue of Dennis's wits, till he began to drivel. Now he lifted his glass to his lips and took a good swig of the liquor, and as he did so he saw over the tilted rim Grania moving down the long room toward him. To be faithfully precise, he seemed to see two Granias, but the whimsical circumstance did not disturb him. He lowered the vessel, splashing the lees of the contents over the floor, while Mr. Heritage skipped nimbly aside to escape contamination and shattering the glass into fragments by the force with which he struck it against the table.

Up to that moment nobody except Mr. Heritage had paid any heed to Dennis or noted his condition. The company had been too busy with their own

## WISDOM IN THE CAN

devices, some playing cards, some talking scandal, some bandying briskly the ball of elaborate flirtation. But with the crash and clatter of the ruined glass all attentions were diverted from other pursuits and all eyes were turned to the table where Dennis stood swaying and laughing, with Mr. Heritage near by surveying him with contemptuous amusement.

Grania's pace quickened in her course toward Dennis. Captain Curtius followed her, close at her heels. Dennis lurched away from the supporting table and staggered forward a few paces, bringing himself to a halt uneasily by clutching at the shoulder of an adjacent chair.

"Grania," he shouted, "Grania, my girl, all is well. Old Heritage takes my play. Splendid fellow, old Heritage, knows a man of genius when he sees one."

He looked weakly round in the endeavor to discover the manager of the Rotundo and address his encomium direct to him. Failing hopelessly in this attempt, he swung back again to face the multitude of staring faces. He felt vaguely that the occasion called for eloquence and should have it.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he stammered, "I have the honor to inform you that Mr. Heritage, of the Rotundo Theater—splendid man, splendid theater—has been lucky enough to secure my splendid play for his next production. I invite all of you to be present at the first performance—all of you, my guests—splendid event."

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

As he spoke he reeled against the chair, which, luckily, retained its equilibrium, and, seating himself somehow, kept still, huddled up and staring stupidly.

All this had happened very rapidly. The company preserved silence, highly diverted and wondering what would happen next. Grania had stood still at the first sound of Dennis's voice, had remained so standing while Dennis continued to speak. He seemed to her to be speaking for a very long time, during which she tried hard to think that nothing was happening amiss. Round about her she beheld mocking faces painted in smiles. Not all were smiling. She saw Lord Cloyne's face fiercely disdainful, she saw Lady Cloyne's face bitten with anger. Lord Cloyne, indeed, was much less indignant than his wife, and looked less indignant. He was, in reality, very well content with the way things were going. The objectionable fellow from Ireland, whose sudden appearance he had resented with a resentment which was all the fiercer because it had to be concealed, was playing Lord Cloyne's game excellently. No doubt Lady Cloyne realized this as well as her husband, but she was furious at such a scandalous scene taking place in a house where she had been at least a vice-queen, and she allowed a very open expression of disgust to disturb the habitual tranquillity of her countenance.

As Dennis finished his drunken speech and

## WISDOM IN THE CAN

stumbled into the chair Grania was suddenly aware that Captain Curtius was close by her side and was regarding her closely. She turned her head and looked into his face. Captain Curtius desired to show an impassive countenance, but for the life of him he could not restrain an expression of malicious victory. In a flash Grania seemed to understand, and Captain Curtius saw the sudden rage in her dark eyes. Yet in spite of this warning he was irresistibly tempted to improve the occasion.

“Indeed, indeed,” he said, softly, “I believe myself to be the better man.”

Certainly there could be no question for any sane observer as to which of the two looked the better man. The one stood so erect and soldierly, wearing his scarlet coat with so distinguished an air. His handsome face, unstained by his excesses, carried the fair color of health and strength; his smiling eyes were clear and bright; his body was nobly made and nobly poised; his movements were supple; he seemed, indeed, a heroic figure. The other squatted in his chair, hunched up helplessly, his borrowed finery bedraggled and awry, his arms listlessly pendent, his legs sprawling ungraciously. There was the foolish grin of intoxication upon his face where the triumphant wine had cruelly recalled the lines that want and degradation had traced. His cheeks were unwholesomely mottled, his eyes glittered disagreeably, his hair was ludicrously disheveled, for in the course of his conversation

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

with Mr. Heritage he had frequently, as meaninglessly, thrust his fingers through his locks in what he imagined to be a highly poetic action. Even as he sat he gesticulated foolishly, and it has to be admitted that every now and then he hiccupped. It would have been hard even for a caricaturist to imagine a more astonishing centerpiece for a fashionable gathering. Only the iron influence of an etiquette that kept them in mind of the presence of their hostess restrained the majority of the women from laughing audibly, restrained the majority of the men from jeering openly. Grania, seeming to observe everything about her with a singular lucidity, caught sight of Mr. Pointdexter, and found him quietly observant, surveying the intoxicated poet with the cold impartiality of a judge scrutinizing a prisoner; caught sight of Mr. Rubie, hot and embarrassed, obviously trying to devise some practical scheme for saving the situation, but unable to think of anything satisfactory.

Grania felt, with a sudden pang, that she stood on the edge of inevitable decision. Beside her the well-made, well-kept, alert aristocrat, with the fine face and the fine body, represented the world into which she had newly come, the world which she had learned if not to love, at least to appreciate, the world of suave customs and bland formalities, a world of pleasure palisaded, so far as was humanly possible, against pain. Facing her, the pathetic, collapsed creature whose nodding head

## WISDOM IN THE CAN

lolloped upon his breast with flushed face and falling lids and gaping lips, whose limbs, through his own ignoble folly, denied him service, the wretched adventurer who had set out to win a crown and had failed first and last, represented the world from which she had come, although for the instant he presented it very unworthily. As she looked at him with tender, compassionate eyes that knew neither scorn nor repulsion she saw him again as he had been in kindly Ireland, strong and clean and simple, ambitious, studious, a master of songs, a master of music. Dennis of the Sweet Mouth. This was Dennis of the Sweet Mouth, this bemused, bedraggled simpleton that was now the laughing-stock of a London drawing-room, the laughing-stock of her guests in her house.

Grania's heart was as a fountain of tears that flowed in sweet pity for her poor lover that had fallen upon evil days and that had shamed himself so gravely. But the shame, she felt sure, had not been all of his own making. The covert malice in Captain Curtius's smile assured her that he had played his skilful part in bringing about poor Dennis's degradation. Dennis had been wronged, and she must right him; Dennis had been betrayed, and she must aid him. She felt no resentment against him, no repugnance at his self-caused plight; any such feelings were swept away on the strong tide of her profound pity for his loneliness, his defenselessness, his defeat. The words of Captain

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Curtius hurt her like a wound. He might indeed be the better man, but Dennis was her man. She sorrowed for him as a mother would sorrow for a son that had come to like case; all her loyal soul was eager to defend the friend who needed defense. Come what might come, he was her beloved, and she would never deny him.

She looked steadily into Captain Curtius's smiling face. "Are you sure?" she asked, in answer to his speech. Then she walked quickly to where Dennis sat, unconsciously pilloried, and stood by him resting her hand upon his shoulder. At her touch Dennis looked up at her with watery eyes, and chuckled weakly. On all the staring faces amusement or annoyance had now shifted to intense surprise and expectation. Grania looked very brave and beautiful standing there with her hand on the sick man's shoulder. Captain Curtius was tempted to applaud, as at some fine scene in a play; Mr. Rubie felt his heart swell within him; Mr. Fenny, forgetting his apprehensions for his wardrobe, could have changed places with Dennis to be so championed; Mr. Pointdexter for an instant permitted a smile of wry approval to temper the wooden rigidity of his countenance; Mr. Heritage wished that he knew an actress who could carry herself so queenly.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Grania began, deliberately following the example that Dennis had set her, "you have heard one piece of news from Mr.



## WISDOM IN THE CAN

Tirowen to-night; you have heard that his play has been accepted by Mr. Heritage for production at the Rotundo Theater, and he has my heartfelt congratulations on the good tidings."

A burst of applause, led by Mr. Heritage, followed Grania's words, for those that made her audience liked her pluck in standing up for her guest and friend, and admired the way in which she did it. Dennis clawed vaguely at her hand and murmured some maudlin words of gratitude. But Grania had not yet said her say.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she began again, "that is not the only piece of news that Mr. Tirowen has to tell you to-night." Here a little murmur of curiosity ran round the room, for the manner of Grania, as well as her words, suggested something uncommon. Dennis himself, listening, lifted his head and seemed to be struggling to regain control of his disordered senses. Grania pressed her hand a little more lovingly upon his shoulder, and went on.

"Mr. Tirowen will tell you, or I will tell you for him, that he and I are engaged to be married."

The words fell with staggering effect upon Grania's hearers. Not a sound greeted them; they were received with a well-nigh religious hush so greatly did they astonish the company. Captain Curtius swore beneath his breath; Mr. Rubie felt as if he were trying to swallow a cannon-ball; Mr. Heritage shaped his mouth for an inaudible whistle;

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Mr. Fenny restrained an unexpected desire to laugh hysterically; Mr. Pointdexter looked inscrutable; Mr. Redacre hurriedly called his system of mnemonics into play in order to record upon the tablets of his memory the exact effect of the greatest surprise it had ever been his privilege to witness in a London drawing-room. But events moved too fast for Mr. Redacre. Great as was the surprise which Grania's announcement had made, it was destined to be eclipsed, and that instantly, by a surprise that was still greater.

The hush of surprise was still heavy on the company when they suddenly realized with a new amazement that Dennis had risen to his feet and was endeavoring to address them. At first, of course, they took it for granted that the man was simply going to indorse and emphasize what Grania had said, but his earliest words taught them that they were mistaken. Dennis seemed to be inflamed with indignation, and his unexpected anger appeared to have had an unexpected power of sobering him, for, though his speech was somewhat thick, his words came separate and distinct.

"Nothing of the kind," he protested, vehemently; "nothing of the kind. Ladies and gentlemen, I assure you that Miss O'Hara is entirely mistaken. We are not engaged to be married." "He turned to Grania, who had grown frightfully pale, and addressed her. "You know very well, Grania, that

## WISDOM IN THE CAN

there can be no talk of marriage between us for the present. I have told you so plainly enough.”

By this time all the company had risen to their feet and were moving with common consent toward where Grania and Dennis stood. It seemed evident to all present that Dennis's drunkenness had taken a new turn, as drunkenness sometimes will, but it also seemed necessary to all that its display should be reduced to silence instantly.

Many who did not know Grania well thought that she might faint, and Mr. Rubie and Captain Curtius were rivals in their efforts to approach her, only to find that Mr. Pointdexter had forestalled them both and was already standing by Grania's side, ready to afford her any assistance she might need. As a matter of fact, she did not seem to need any. She stood very white and quiet, resting one hand lightly on Mr. Pointdexter's arm, and composedly assuring Lady Cloyne that of course Mr. Tirowen knew his own mind and that she was sorry she had caused him any annoyance. She did not let any one see how profoundly she was disappointed at the failure of her sweet plot to snare Dennis into acceptance of an openly proclaimed engagement, and though she was horribly hurt by the way Dennis had treated her, she now blamed herself for her gracious effort to coerce him.

Captain Curtius made his way to where Dennis stood, all red with the rage of his intoxication's new mood.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

“Sir,” said Captain Curtius, softly, “permit me to express the opinion that you are a peculiarly unattractive blackguard.”

Those that heard seemed to agree and approve. Dennis, whose changed drunkenness had restored to him a certain control over his body and limbs, made answer by attempting to strike Captain Curtius on the face. The aim was wide, and Dennis’s clenched fist did no more than brush Captain Curtius’s cheek. The soldier put up his arm to parry the stroke, and the force of his defense upset Dennis’s balance. He staggered and sat heavily in the chair and glared at those about him.

“Two of my friends,” said Captain Loveless, still in a low voice, and still with a quiet politeness, “will call upon you in the morning.”

Dennis did not seem to realize the meaning of the Captain’s words. The stupor of his first stage seemed to be descending upon him again. He murmured something sulkily, which those nearest to him understood to mean “Damn your friends.”

Captain Curtius turned to Mr. Fenny. “Will you find out where the fellow lives,” he said, still speaking pleasantly, “and look him up in the morning?”

Mr. Fenny nodded. He was thinking, in a phrase habitual to him, that it was rather a blue outlook for Mr. Tirowen. The little episode had happened very rapidly. Now those that had been near to Dennis began to edge away from him and leave him to himself. He looked about him stupidly

## WISDOM IN THE CAN

and rose with difficulty to his feet. He was trying to say something, but the words did not seem to come very readily to his stammering lips. He made a piteous, ridiculous figure.

Now was the moment chosen by Lady Double to assert herself. She had been chafing for long enough at being delayed in her conquest of the handsome young Irishman; she had watched him with devouring eyes during the long course of his conversation with Mr. Heritage, though all the while she contrived to keep up a creditable show of conversation, first with Mr. Rubie and afterward with Mr. Redacre. When Dennis made his ridiculous speech of invitation she was less impressed by his drunkenness than by the fact that he remained desirable. An animal rage possessed her when Grania announced her engagement to Dennis, a rage that was succeeded by a no less animal joy when Dennis made his amazing repudiation of the girl. Now she saw the chance to secure his friendship. She rose from the sofa where she sat and glided across the room with a motion which she confidently believed to be swan-like till she came to a halt beside the unhappy youth, who sat isolated and shunned. Dennis was still gibbering absurdities, but he became silent when Lady Double laid a gently restraining hand upon his arm.

“Dear Mr. Tirowen,” she said, affectionately, “the room is very warm and I am feeling the effect of it. Will you be so gracious as to escort me to my

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

carriage. If you will allow me to have the pleasure of dropping you anywhere I shall be more than delighted."

Some remnant of lucidity allowed Dennis to understand dimly that he was being offered a way of escape from a bewildering situation which it was beyond his powers to understand clearly. With an effort he rose to his feet, stiffened himself against the chair, and endeavored to regain control of a distracted brain, to compel the whirling room and blurred figures to stability and distinctness. He was muzzily convinced that he had been carrying himself with great dignity, also that he was shamefully misunderstood; he was distinctly inclined to weep. Abandoning the chair, he clutched at Lady Double's plump arm to save him from falling and sprawling on the floor. Very fortunately the good lady was strong enough to support him. Piloted by his companion, Dennis made his uncertain way across the room, mumbling what he believed to be appropriate expressions of farewell as he went, while the silent company stared at this new episode in an eventful evening as they had never stared before. As the pair reached the door Grania, who had been standing very still, made a slight movement as if to advance and stay their departure, but she immediately repressed the inclination, and in another moment Lady Double had disappeared from the room with her drunken poet, as it were, in her pocket.

BOOK III

THE PLAY'S THE THING





# I

## IN THE ROTUNDO

THE *Annual Recorder* for the year 1815, occupied as it was with chronicling certain of the greatest events of modern history, nevertheless found place—those in its pages devoted to social events—for a slight account of one of the curious convulsions that occasionally disturb the equanimity of theatrical history. The writer expresses his sympathy for Mr. Heritage, manager of the Rotundo Theater, who found himself the victim of a series of demonstrations which turned for a time his theater into a bear-garden. But the writer does little beyond mentioning the fact that a cabal existed which had all the appearance of being called into being for the purpose of preventing the production of a certain play, and that this cabal was opposed by a counter-party in favor of the play, and that the proceedings of the two forces attracted great numbers to the theater, not indeed so much to see the piece as the battle that raged about it. From other sources, however, and chiefly from the memoirs of Mr. Redacre, it is possible to elicit a fuller account of the extraordinary occurrence and of its secret causes.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Mr. Heritage was very proud of the Rotundo Theater, and he had plenty of justification for his pride. The theater was popular with all classes; it earned such special favor from authority, thanks to the patronage of His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, that Mr. Heritage had a free hand in its management. The Rotundo Theater made money for Mr. Heritage, and Mr. Heritage liked money, but he liked fame as well and wished to be regarded as supreme in his sphere. He was pleased to believe that his theater was the handsomest in London; he decked it; he adorned it; nothing was too good for it that could increase its attractiveness. It was dearer to him than a child, and Mr. Heritage had no children. It was dearer to him than a mistress, and report accorded him many mistresses.

The room which was reserved for the manager of the Rotundo Theater, the room in which he transacted his private business, interviewed favored authors or pretty actresses, and occasionally entertained his friends, was such a one as Mr. Heritage believed to be worthy of his position and of himself. As Mr. Heritage had an exceedingly high opinion of both, it follows that the room was as gorgeous as Mr. Heritage could make it. It was spacious and pierced with a pair of windows that overlooked a quiet back street where the stage-door of the theater was. No sound reached that room of the roar and clatter of the great main street on which the pillared portico of the Rotundo stood.

## IN THE ROTUNDO

It was richly furnished after a fashion that however much it might suggest the opulence of its owner and his desire to make that opulence evident to the meanest observer could not possibly be said to err on the side of lightness. The floor was covered with the thickest of thick carpets, a rich velvet pile of a vivid ruby color which would make an imaginative person fancy that he was walking on a crimson moss. This carpet deadened all foot-falls and insured to Mr. Heritage that soothing sense of quiet so agreeable to the nerves of a man who feels that he has little less than imperial cares upon his shoulders. When he paced, as he often did pace in moments of grave reflection, up and down the extent of his room he found that the rich resilience of that texture had a soothing effect both mental and physical which served to transport him, like the flying carpet in the fairy tale, into undreamed-of realms of thought.

Above, a flamboyant painted ceiling represented the muses and the graces, all amiably disarrayed, doing homage to a stout, bald gentleman, awkwardly foreshortened, whose air of preoccupation and whose attitude—one hand pressing a reflective finger to a spacious brow and one hand poising a quill over the pages of an open book—left no doubt on the mind of any intelligent spectator that he was intended for a representation of Mr. William Shakespeare, of Stratford-on-Avon. Paintings of famous players of the day stared from the splendor

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

of heavy gold frames with expressions of unbridled ferocity or unquenchable scorn upon the man who had helped to make them famous. Marble busts on marble pedestals were ranged about the room, being stony witness to Mr. Heritage's familiarity with the masters of the past. The great Grecians were there and the great Romans and the great Frenchmen. Mr. Heritage could fix his gaze as he pleased upon the countenance of Sophocles or the countenance of Seneca or the countenance of Racine. The stranger in those classic shades on finding himself confronted with the portentous portraits might have feared for a moment that he had made his way by mistake into the Royal Academy, and on discovering the busts to have imagined himself dreaming a bad dream amid the Townley marbles. But the pictures and busts pleased Mr. Heritage, and so long as a thing pleased him he cared precious little for other people's opinion of it.

A curious characteristic of the room was that it was furnished with what seemed to be a disproportionate number of doors. There were, in the first place, the two double doors facing the windows. The huge, heavy mahogany portals, with their heavily gilded ornamentation, communicated with a small private foyer in connection with the royal box. A door in the wall to the right of this opened on to a small staircase which led to the front of the house. A similar door in the opposite wall served as

## IN THE ROTUNDO

a means of communication with the stage-door. But there was yet another door in the room, though this was one that seemed to exist in order to supply an answer to the time-honored question, when is a door not a door. It did not look like a door, because it looked like a massively framed, life-sized portrait in oils of Monsieur Talma, the eminent French actor, in one of his favorite classical rôles. But it was a door, nevertheless, and it would be opened by the pressing of a spring in quite the approved melodramatic fashion. When it was thus opened it revealed a small passage with a door at the end, and this door also opened by the pressing of a spring. If you pressed this spring the door opened and you found yourself—to your surprise if you had never been that way before—in a room in a house directly adjoining the theater in the street where the stage-door was. The secret door of this room seemed, like the one in Mr. Heritage's room, to be no more than a massive picture, though this time its subject was a portrait of Mademoiselle Mars. The house that could be thus mysteriously entered was occupied by an old housekeeper of Mr. Heritage's. The device of the picture and the secret passage was his, and he had found it very useful many times and in many ways. Mr. Heritage was so histrionic in his spirit that he never employed this means of disappearing from or entering into his private room at the theater without experiencing such a thrill as an emotional audience may be ex-

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

pected to feel when the employment of a secret panel allows the heroine to escape or delivers the villain to unexpected judgment. Very few people knew of that secret door, only people who were privileged to be very deep indeed in Mr. Heritage's confidence.

## II

### PAR NOBILE FRATRUM

I N a corner of Mr. Heritage's room there stood a great mahogany table, so placed as to gain the greatest advantage of light from the windows when it was daytime. This was the table at which Mr. Heritage was wont to sit when he was engaged about his correspondence or the study of some newly submitted play. It was a spacious table, and Mr. Heritage liked spacious things and to be at his ease in his furniture. At the particular moment of a particular evening some certain number of days after the events which have just been narrated Mr. Heritage was not in his room. The room was brightly illuminated by many candelabra; the curtains of crimson velvet were snugly drawn; a sea-coal fire glowed comfortably upon the hearth; there was a generous display of decanters and glasses upon a sideboard; everything about the disposition of the room suggested that it was swept and garnished for its master's delectation. But Mr. Heritage was not there. The magnificent frame lacked its essential canvas.

Nevertheless the room was not unoccupied. At

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Mr. Heritage's table, though not indeed in Mr. Heritage's own august chair, there sat a middle-aged man, whose commonplace clothes seemed to be most aptly devised to match his commonplace body and his commonplace face. Yet for all his apparent insignificance the individual was by no means either an insignificant or an unimportant factor in the social economy of his hour. For the mean-looking little man, whose countenance rivaled in intelligence the expression of the average rabbit, was none other than the notorious Mr. Bowley, of *The Scourge*, the ferocious censor of contemporary manners and morals, who could always be relied upon to bludgeon unmercifully wherever he had failed to blackmail. His business was, metaphorically, the letting of blood, and whether he accomplished his purpose by the slash of the assassin or the suction of the leech, at least he was determined to accomplish it.

It was not, indeed, quite all one to him how he accomplished it. He dearly loved to slander in print, to trip the heels of flighty women, to pillory dubious reputations, and to hint filthy innuendoes about reputations yet unshamed. He loved to malign, to slander, to menace, to snarl, to snap; there was no currish trick, no mongrel indecency, which it did not delight him to practise. But if he loved to void his spleen in the vomitorium of his ruffian journal, he also dearly loved to be persuaded, by the copious eloquence of gold, from publishing some richly garnished libel that had been carefully



## PAR NOBILE FRATRUM

prepared to tickle the appetites of the ghouls for whom he cooked his mess of garbage. Of course what he liked best of all was to concoct some obscene lampoon, bring it judiciously under the notice of his victim or his victim's kin, receive for the price of his silence the utmost blood money that he could screw from their fears, and then insidiously spread the poison of his invective through the channel of some other journal as foul-smelling as his own, and so sting the fools he had already swindled.

This double delight had its risks and had to be enjoyed infrequently and with a judicious care; but the single delight of being a cruel bully, a cunning liar, a listener at keyholes, a suborner of servants, this could be tasted and was tasted by Mr. Bowley on every day of the year. It kept him alive, it served him with that reason for existing which other minds find in ambition, in duty, in the honorable desire to see the day's good work well done and the way paved for the good work of to-morrow. Mr. Bowley thoroughly liked his work.

Unlike the pig who roots for tubers that he may not taste, Mr. Bowley's nasal excavations in the rank earth of scandal afforded him a physical gratification and a pecuniary advantage, for Providence, that in its wisdom permitted Mr. Bowley to publish and print *The Scourge*, also permitted a considerable number of the public that were sealed of the tribe of Mr. Bowley to eat the dirt he offered them and to take pleasure in its taste.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Mr. Bowley at the moment when we make his acquaintance was seated at one end of Mr. Heritage's table, and very busy writing hard in a very fat note-book with a very short pencil. What he wrote appeared to afford him entertainment, for his normally unattractive features were quickened into a quite remarkable repulsiveness by the contortion of a malignant grin. He was so taken up with writing and with grinning at what he had written that it is probable that he would not have heard the opening of the great double doors behind him which prefaced the entry of another man into the room were it not for an attendant circumstance. The man who had entered the room had entered very quietly, making as little noise as possible in his gingerly sundering of the great doors. It was his way always thus to open doors gingerly, thus to creep into rooms quietly. That was the plan to take people unawares, to surprise them, perhaps, at an awkward moment, to overhear priceless fragments of conversation, to glean golden secrets. On this occasion he had divided the mahogany panels with his familiar, silent dexterity and had glided through the aperture with his wonted quiet. But in the moments, and they were very few moments, in which he had to keep the doors apart in order to permit of his entrance he let in with himself a body of sound that had the instant effect of attracting the attention of Mr. Bowley. It was a very peculiar volume of sound. It would have

## PAR NOBILE FRATRUM

suggested to those ignorant of its true nature that Mr. Heritage amused himself by keeping a private menagerie, and that the moment had just arrived when the wild beasts were to be fed. The desert bellowings of lions, the jungle-shaking growls of tigers, the whining of wolves, the grumbling of bears, the grunting of camels, and the trumpeting of elephants seemed to unite in a common clamor commixed with which could seemingly be discerned at intervals the croakings of carrion-birds and the screechings of an uncountable multitude of parrots and macaws.

Mr. Bowley, diverted from his note-book by the amazing clamor looked up with no surprise on his face, but with a distorted and hideously displeasing grimace, which he intended to be a welcoming smile, for he expected that the new-comer must be Mr. Heritage. The smile faded for a moment as he saw that the new-comer was not Mr. Heritage and recognized who the new-comer actually was. It then reappeared as a somewhat perfunctory grin. The new-comer did not appear to be any more delighted to receive this sign of recognition than Mr. Bowley did to accord it, but he returned it by a curt nod as he crossed the room, and, taking a seat at the opposite end of the table to Mr. Bowley, produced his note-book and his pencil and prepared to write.

So, shall we say, might two gladiators approach each other in the anteroom of arenas, warily saluting each other, who would soon be seeking as warily to

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

destroy each other. So might two augurs of some brand-new creed favor each other with that realizing scowl which admitted that they had at least this much of sympathy between them, that they belonged to the fellowship of the gullers and not to the company of the gullible and the gulled.

The new-comer was a taller, leaner man than Mr. Bowley, with a face more markedly sinister, and, in so far as it was markedly anything, by so much less repulsive than Mr. Bowley's. He wore a rusty black suit that afforded glimpses of rusty linen, and his angular jaws and lank cheeks were rusty from at least two days' lack of shaving. He looked like many things. He might have been a very low-class attorney long since stricken off the rolls but earning a subterranean livelihood by vending contraband advice. He might have been an undertaker in a small way of business, condemned to reside in an especially salubrious suburb. He might have been one of the queer hangers-on of Bow Street, a very subordinate thief taker. Also he might have been a very subordinate thief. As a matter of fact, he was a colleague, a very distinguished colleague, and a rival, a very formidable rival, of Mr. Bowley.

For the new-comer was none other than Mr. Shadd, Mr. Abner Shadd, the eminent editor of that eminent and creditable journal *The Whistle*. Public opinion differed very markedly in its estimate of the merits of Mr. Bowley and Mr. Shadd.

## PAR NOBILE FRATRUM

There were those who maintained that Mr. Bowley was the greater blackguard and baser knave of the pair, but those that held this view were the unfortunate individuals who happened, by the visitation of God, to have some personal knowledge of the editor of *The Scourge*. Others who championed Mr. Shadd's claims to recognized pre-eminence in blackguardism and knavery were those that were privileged to boast some degree of intimacy with the character of Mr. Shadd. Mr. Shadd did in *The Whistle* what Mr. Bowley did in *The Scourge*. He blew on his instrument for the same reason that Mr. Bowley wielded his. His ostensible purpose, like Mr. Bowley's, was to reform society; his real purpose, running level with Mr. Bowley's real purpose, was to fill his own pockets by pandering to the meanest and filthiest instincts of the Yahoos that exist like ticks in all civilization. Mr. Shadd was, perhaps, a finer spirit than Mr. Bowley. At least he thought that he was and said that he was; he claimed to be more of the true satirist. Bowley, he insisted, was no better than a cudgel-player, while he, Shadd, pinked his men and his women, especially his women, with a small sword. Such were the pair, *par nobile fratrum*, that faced each other across the length of Mr. Heritage's mahogany.

### III

#### TOWN TALK

THEY are still going it, Mr. Shadd?" Bowley inquired with a jerk of his stumpy pencil in the direction of the door through which the editor of *The Whistle* had just entered. He was alluding to those mysterious noises which had, as it were, gushed into the apartment with the opening of the portals, but which with their closing had been lulled into almost complete inaudibility. It is true that any fine ear already aware of those distant and occult thunderings might when the doors were closed still detect a faint, a twittering susurrations. But Mr. Heritage's doors were so nicely calculated to shut out all disturbance from his sacred chamber that only a fine ear primed, if it may so be said, with previous experience would be pricked.

Mr. Shadd smiled a malignant smile which might in so far be said to light up his countenance as it availed to accentuate the rusty, dusty shadows about his chin and cheeks. "They are still going it, Mr. Bowley," he answered, with an unlovely chuckle. Any stranger, hearing that chuckle must have surmised that whatever caused it was some-

## TOWN TALK

thing of a very unlovely nature indeed. Mr. Bowley leaned back and rubbed his clumsy, vulgar hands in malevolent satisfaction.

"It is amazing," he ejaculated, "simply amazing. This is the fifth night of it, and it is as lively as ever."

Mr. Shadd leaned his meager body across the table and prodded the air in the direction of Mr. Bowley with a dirty finger barbed with a still dirtier talon.

"It is livelier than ever, Mr. Bowley," he asserted in emphatic correction. Mr. Bowley scratched his head persistently with his stump of pencil.

"I had not the time to look in," he confessed. "I was delayed in the city looking after that business of Alderman Mulkin, and when I got here I came straight to this room that Heritage has given us the run of to get my notes in order."

Mr. Shadd made a contemptuous gesture, made a contemptuous grimace. "The Mulkin business," he said, disdainfully; "there is nothing in the Mulkin business. This is the only thing worth troubling about in London just now, this, of course, with its attendant trimmings. You make a mistake, if I may venture to say so, my dear Bowley, in pursuing too many interests. If you have got a good thing stick to it, say I, and this is the best thing we have had for many a long day. Really, we gentlemen of the press have much to be thankful for. Just think that in a year like this, a devil

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

of a year, when everything seems settled for good and all, Bonaparte snuffed out, America friendly, everything as dull as ditch water, we have got the Rotundo Theater to keep us going."

He rose after this somewhat lengthy address to his colleague, and going to the sideboard, filled himself out a glass of sherry. "May I?" he questioned, politely, with a glance at Mr. Bowley. Mr. Bowley nodded, and rising in his turn, accepted a glass of sherry from Mr. Shadd's extended fingers. It was fortunate for Mr. Bowley that he was not a man of a queasy stomach, or the sight of those fingers around the stem of that wine-glass would have instantly killed his appetite for liquor. Mr. Shadd held up his glass and eyed its golden contents affectionately. "Here's to 'The Buried City,'" he said, with a wicked grin, and tossed off his drink with astonishing briskness. Mr. Bowley repeated the toast and the action, and suggested another glass. Mr. Shadd complying, the two men faced each other with full glasses. This time, according to all the rules of decorous drinking, it was Mr. Bowley's turn to propose a sentiment. Mr. Bowley rose to the occasion. "Mr. Shadd, sir," he said, with a villainous twist of the features, "I give you 'The Fair Irish Maid.'"

Both men, shrieking in eldritch laughter before they emptied their glasses, continued to shriek after they had done so and set them down, continued to shriek even after they had returned to the table and



## TOWN TALK

their note-books, as if that toast of "The Fair Irish Maid" were the most mirth-provocative subject in the world. And indeed it was to Mr. Bowley and to Mr. Shadd. What they didn't know of the scandal, or, at least, such was their published opinion, was not worth knowing. They could tell and they did tell every reader of *The Whistle* and *The Scourge* the ignominious chapter in the hitherto triumphant history of "The Fair Irish Maid," with all the essential preliminaries and all the more or less speculative sequels. They knew all about Grania's entertainment of a ragged fiddler from the snowy streets. Here Mr. Bowley had reason to be grateful to John, and Mr. Shadd had reason to be grateful to Thomas, or *vice versa*. They knew all about the legend that this same beggarly fiddler was an old flame of Miss O'Hara's far away in savage Kerry in the days when she hadn't a penny and lived on potatoes and went about almost naked. They knew all about the bedizenment of the fiddler in the fine clothes of Mr. Fenny. There were too many in that secret to keep the matter long from the claws of the Bowleys and the Shadds even if Grania had not told the faithful Peregrine that there was no mystery about the matter and no need for concealment.

They knew all about the banquet at Ashford House, where the family portraits stared and sneered at the jackdaw in its borrowed plumes. They knew the names of all the guests. They knew of Lady Double's desperate dead set at the sham gentleman

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

from Kerry. They knew of that same sham gentleman's foolish and facile descent down the hill of intoxication. They knew all about Dennis Tirowen's drunken announcement to the assembled company of Mr. Heritage's acceptance of his play. They knew all about Grania's declaration of her engagement to Dennis Tirowen, and Dennis Tirowen's brutal and stupid repudiation of her graciousness.

There was nothing which happened at Ashford House on that eventful evening which was hidden from the malice of Mr. Bowley and Mr. Shadd. Indeed, it would be difficult to hide anything that happened in Ashford House or any other great house at any time from the malice of Mr. Bowley and Mr. Shadd so long as the house supported a staff of servants. The methods of Messrs. Bowley and Shadd were subterranean, but they were elaborate and satisfactory to Messrs. Bowley and Shadd. *The Whistle* blew with such a Jericho-devastating shriek, *The Scourge* fell with such ferocity and inflicted such lancinating weals, because the lips of Mr. Shadd and the fingers of Mr. Bowley were inspired by the magnetic current of the servants' hall.

Also the scavenger birds knew of the sequel, the series of sequels, to the strange scene at Ashford House which broke up the party, as Mr. Bowley had happily quoted, in such "admired disorder." They knew all about Lady Double's well-nigh

## TOWN TALK

forcible abduction of the intoxicated poet, and they knew all about the disastrous failure of that amazing rape, with its staggering slap—metaphorically—in Lady Double's amorous face. Messrs. Shadd and Bowley were both on intimate terms with Lady Double's coachman, so, though what they knew was surprising enough, it was not at all surprising that they should know it.

They could picture easily enough Lady Double's coach with its double load of passionate femininity and inebriated masculinity staggering through the darkness of the February night. They could imagine, with much gloating, the blandishments of the lady and the initial passiveness of the man. It was fairly certain that there came a moment when the advances of the dame had a wrong effect upon their object, for it seemed that before the carriage had nearly arrived at Lady Double's residence, to which her ladyship had directed her coachman to drive, a window was pulled down and a man's head popping through the aperture bawled at the coachman to stop. The coachman incontinently stopping, the carriage-door was opened, and Mr. Dennis Tirowen, very flustered and angry and quarrelsome, tumbled out into the slushy rawness of the night. According to the information received, Mr. Tirowen was still drunk, but not so drunk as he had been when he was bundled into the carriage at Ashford House. From the darkness of the carriage came the voice of Lady Double pleading with her protégé

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

to return to the fold—the metaphor was Mr. Bowley's—but all her pleadings were in vain, for the gentleman only grunted out some words of surly refusal and went shambling and staggering off into the darkness, a resolute devotee of continence and solitude. He made his way, it seems, lighted by the kindly star that sometimes illumines the footsteps of the drunk, to Mr. Fenny's lodgings in Jermyn Street. There he spent his uneasy night, while Lady Double went her lonely way abandoned and infuriated. Of course *spretæ injuria formæ* appeared in Mr. Shadd's malevolent comments.

The information of Mr. Bowley, the information of Mr. Shadd, did not end here. If they had nothing more of moment to record for that particular evening, the succeeding days were fruitful of incidents. There was, to begin with, the duel between Captain Curtius Loveless and Mr. Tirowen, which was risible enough to divert the most cynical of Londoners. Undoubtedly after the blow aimed at Captain Curtius by Mr. Tirowen nothing but the arbitrament of arms could be expected. At the same time that blow was the consequence, the direct consequence, of certain words addressed by Captain Loveless to Mr. Tirowen which no gentleman of spirit could be expected to hear without felling—or attempting to fell—the speaker to the earth. It might be a question for a court of honor to decide which was the actual aggressor,

## TOWN TALK

which the direct provoker, to the field. But there could be no question as to the necessity for a meeting unless the parties concerned were willing to wipe the slate of contention clean by withdrawing and apologizing, the one for his well-aimed words and the other for his ill-aimed blow.

It was no secret—every one knew it, including Mr. Bowley and Mr. Shadd—that the gentlemen acting for the principals in the dispute, Mr. Fenny and My Lord Cloyne for Captain Loveless and Mr. Pointdexter and Mr. John Rubie, M. P., for Mr. Tirowen, were anxious to come to some amicable arrangement. To this it was generally believed, and the belief was duly strengthened by Mr. Bowley and Mr. Shadd, that the pair of seconds were led by the direct pressure of the wishes of Miss O'Hara herself. Undoubtedly the duel promised to be a serious business for the adventurer from Kerry. Captain Curtius was probably the finest pistol-shot in all England—he could hit an ace of spades at thirty paces as long as there was anything of it left to hit—and Mr. Tirowen, in the popular phrase, did not know one end of a pistol from the other.

This in itself was not enough to prevent the duel from taking place. If a choleric gentleman, in his cups, goes so far as to strike or seek to strike another gentleman, he cannot hope to escape the consequences of his act because he does not happen to know how to shoot straight. But the whole affair

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

was an awkward one. Miss O'Hara was desirous that the thing (the disturbance at Ashford House), should win as little publicity as possible—Mr. Bowley chuckled and Mr. Shadd chuckled to think that the gratification of this desire was denied to the hitherto overfortunate young lady—and it was pretty generally believed that she had made an appeal to Captain Loveless, to which Captain Loveless had generously responded. He, confident in his matchless reputation as a pistol-shot, was affable enough to express his willingness to let the matter drop. That was what he would do. He would neither apologize nor ask for an apology; he would just agree to consider that the incident had not occurred. This was so far satisfactory, but, to the surprise of all concerned, or at least of most of those concerned, it was the Irishman who proved intractable. Mr. Tirowen positively insisted on the duel being carried out. If Captain Loveless refused, then Mr. Tirowen announced his intention of way-laying the gallant officer in some public place and repeating his original offense and so forcing the gallant Captain to face his uncertain weapon.

Mr. Bowley chuckled and Mr. Shadd chuckled as they recalled how the obstinate Irishman was afforded satisfaction. Captain Loveless could not do less, for his reputation's sake and his cloth's, than consent to meet this incorrigible fire-eater. He was most loath either to kill or maim his persistent enemy on account of the pain it must cause Miss

## TOWN TALK

O'Hara, for whom he professed a chivalrous regard. (The idea of any man entertaining a chivalrous regard for any woman caused Messrs. Shadd and Bowley to indulge in paroxysms of obscene mirth.) Captain Loveless declared to his adversary's seconds that he was perfectly willing to fire in the air on the occasion of the encounter, but that he was, naturally, unwilling to be made the helpless target for his opponent's fire. However ignorant a civilian might be of the proper employment of firearms, there was always the whimsical chance that he might by misadventure hit his mark. Then it was that Mr. Pointdexter came to the rescue. He undertook to see that his principal's weapon should be a guileless instrument loaded only with a little harmless powder and guiltless of ball. Under these mirific conditions the duel took place and all went as arranged. The antagonists duly faced each other. When the signal was given Captain Curtius fired at the sky, and Mr. Tirowen, making the best aim he could at his enemy with deadly intent, blazed away, and did no manner of mischief.

## IV

### THE INSULT TO POET CRINCH

THE fashionable world, thanks to the whispers, asides, innuendoes, and suggestions of Mr. Bowley and Mr. Shadd and their kind, had been highly diverted by the Loveless-Tirowen duel. Mr. Tirowen, as a professed poet and a native of Ireland, was congratulated on having at least one resemblance to his illustrious countryman and contemporary Mr. Thomas Moore in that he had played a part in a Hudibrastic duello. The pungent paragraphs that made society smile made Mr. Tirowen writhe. Mr. Tirowen, now very plentifully in funds, thanks to a meeting with Mr. Heritage at the Rotundo on the morning after his calamitous escapade at Ashford House, had retired from Mr. Fenny's lodgings, and on Mr. Fenny's recommendation had ensconced himself in the comfortable, if costly, seclusion of Thomas's Hotel. There he sulked—the simile came from the classical Mr. Shadd—like Achilles in his tent. He sallied thence to fight his famous duel. There he had the displeasure of reading the badinage of the journalists; there he fumed to find himself a laughing-stock.



## THE INSULT TO POET CRINCH

Very soon, however, society had other food for mirth and our Dennis other things to think of than the famous duel.

By this time "The Buried City," Mr. Tirowen's play, was in rehearsal at the Rotundo, and very soon the evening of its first performance duly arrived. Never was such a first performance remembered in London since the production of "Vortigern and Rowena." Mr. Bowley dug Mr. Shadd in the ribs, and Mr. Shadd prodded Mr. Bowley in the stomach, as they recapitulated, with inextinguishable laughter, the events of that astonishing evening. The overture, "The Soul of Erin," was received in silence, and the curtain rose for an audience seemingly assembled, and for the most part actually assembled, for the workaday purpose of seeing a new play by an unknown author. But the first line had not been spoken before the hubbub began. Some one in a corner of the pit shouted out an indignant demand that the play should be immediately taken off. While the interruption was being resented by the immediate and unsophisticated neighbors of the interrupter another disturbance began in another portion of the parterre, which was speedily followed up by a series of like outbreaks in different parts of the house.

As far as the interrupters seemed to have any purpose in their interruptions, it appeared that they resented the production of "The Buried City" because it had caused the postponement of a play

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

previously announced for production by Mr. Heritage, a play by an author in whom up to that time playgoing London had taken no manner of interest. Now, however, it suddenly was made to appear that to a section, and a mighty quarrelsome and belligerent section, of Londoners the postponement of this play was no less than a national calamity of the gravest character. The play in question was a tragedy entitled "Titus, or the Fall of Jerusalem," by a Mr. Philip Crinch, who with infinite pains had gained a recognized place among those authors whose work can be put on at any time without risk, if without renown. By anticipating a little the knowledge of Mr. Bowley and Mr. Shadd, and making use of the later record of Mr. Redacre, it is feasible to state that "Titus, or the Fall of Jerusalem," was afterward produced at another theater, attracted some curiosity on account of the Rotundo riots, which had forced it into notoriety, and failed to make any impression.

But on that first evening of "The Buried City," and for many evenings afterward, it seemed certain that a large number of enthusiastic playgoers were convinced that a grave injustice had been done to Mr. Crinch in the first place and to all true lovers of the drama in the second place by the retardation of "Titus" and the presentation in its place of a work by an unknown author who was openly reported to be an Irishman and a rebel. Mr. Crinch's friends—hitherto wholly unknown to that most

## THE INSULT TO POET CRINCH

worthy mediocrity—made flagrant proof of their affection for him and their prophetic admiration for “Titus, or the Fall of Jerusalem,” on that first night. As fast as a clamorous voice was silenced in one part of the house protest broke out in another, to be succeeded in unbroken succession by similar interruptions.

The Crinchites, as they came to be called, had laid their plans and aimed their strategy well. They leavened the lump of that first night audience to a surprising extent, and their tactics were so successful that not a syllable of the first act was permitted to float across the footlights. A few ejections were made in the interval, but the storm broke out again on the rising of the curtain on the second act, and silenced that act as effectively as the first had been silenced. In vain did Mr. Heritage, at once frightened and furious, make personal appeal to the audience, standing, an incongruous figure of modernity, in the midst of his bewildered players huddled together in the garments of a romantic age. He that had been the Jupiter of his theatrical temple was treated as unceremoniously as the play had been treated. Unless he would consent to withdraw “The Buried City” and set up “Titus” in its stead he should not be accorded a hearing on the boards of his own stage.

Mr. Heritage, not unnaturally losing his temper, endeavored to continue a policy of ejectionment of the offenders against the decorum of his theater, but it

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

soon became evident that there were far too many Crinchites in the Rotundo to be dealt with satisfactorily in that manner. The uproar waxed momentarily; the fiery cross of insurrection seemed to fly from point to point, kindling enthusiasm in its course. "The Buried City" was buried anew under waves of sound.

The story of that astonishing first night flew over London, and made the Rotundo the Temple of Curiosity and "The Buried City" the one subject of discourse. The desire to witness the performance that had been provocative of so much protest was enormous. Had the Rotundo been like that tent in the Eastern story which could be carried on the palm of the hand and that yet would on the wish expand to shelter an army, its powers of extension would have been sorely tried. As it was, it could only entertain a small number of those that were anxious to be present, but those that were fortunate enough to obtain admittance were certainly not disappointed. They saw "The Buried City," but they did not hear a single word of it. The proceedings of the previous evening were repeated with an increased ferocity which, as Mr. Shadd happily remarked, reduced the business of the stage to "inexplicable dumb-shows."

Once again the fierce clamor for the slighted masterpiece of the illustrious Crinch made the lusters of the chandelier shiver. This time, however, the Crinchites found themselves faced by a more

## THE INSULT TO POET CRINCH

formidable opposition than they had encountered on the previous evening. Mr. Heritage, determined not to be taken unawares, had made a levy of sturdy swashbucklers to preserve the peace, had enlisted a brotherhood of noted bruisers, that was dispersed about the auditorium fired with liquor and enthusiasm for "The Buried City." The Crinchites got the worst of it on that evening as far as physical contest was concerned. Man after man of the disturbers was haled from the theater howling undaunted his demand for "Titus." But there were enough of them present to wreck the performance. A policy of ejection, even if carefully organized, takes time, and the result of the battle was that once again the poor players were unable to send a single syllable of "The Buried City" to any expectant ear.

On the following night the real fun might be said to have begun, the fun that had endured without cessation to this very evening on which Mr. Bowley and Mr. Shadd sat facing each other at Mr. Heritage's table. For if one side to a controversy can engage the services of professional pugilists to support its views by force of arms, so can, and in this case so did, the other. Whoever was inspiring the ardor of the Crinchites was evidently prepared to back that ardor with stout strokes. Bulky members of the Fancy asserted a thunderous admiration for the genius of Crinch, and emphasized their admiration by planting smashing blows on the countenances of those that failed to share it. Greek met Greek, as

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Mr. Bowley aptly remarked, and the agitated pit was promptly converted into an exaggerated prize-ring, where splendid mercenaries slogged hard on either side.

Thenceforward the Rotundo was the one place in which anybody who was anybody wished to be. Nightly the din of battle reigned in the unfortunate playhouse, nightly the subaltern giants of the noble art contended unfamiliarly in a literary quarrel. News of the Homeric struggle spread into the country and brought exiled Londoners hurrying to town, spurning the muddy roads in their eagerness to witness what were now known as the Rotundo riots. Among these zealots was no less a person than my Lord Byron, who actually was willing to spare a few hours from newly married rusticity in order to have at least a spectator's share in the sport that was toward. His lordship, as Mr. Shadd informed Mr. Bowley, was present in the house that very evening, and professed, it seemed, much interest in the feud and much curiosity as to the cause of it.

Mr. Bowley and Mr. Shadd believed that they knew well enough who was at the bottom of the Rotundo riots. "Hell has no fury like a woman scorned" was the felicitous quotation of one of the pair in one of their papers, and the woman scorned whom Mr. Bowley had in his mind was Lady Double. Who but she had the instigation to revenge herself upon a fellow presumptuous enough

## THE INSULT TO POET CRINCH

to reject her proffered friendship and to slight her charms. Mr. Bowley believed that Lady Double would have been willing enough to see Mr. Dennis fall before the pistol of Captain Loveless, and that if she had had her way the duel would have taken place according to the established code. Failing in this, for the influence of Miss O'Hara proved more potent than hers with the gallant captain, Lady Double, baffled in one direction, sought, and indeed found, satisfaction in another. She had serviceable friends, she had abundance of money, she suddenly discovered the merits and the wrongs of Mr. Crinch, and she found means to inspire a goodly number of persons with sympathy with those merits and those wrongs. Here, according to Mr. Bowley—and who shall say that he was wrong?—was to be found the secret cause of astonishing manifestations that abide in history as the Rotundo riots.

Mr. Shadd, however, supported another theory. He agreed, of course, with the "woman scorned" doctrine, but his woman scorned was not Mr. Bowley's woman scorned. Mr. Shadd's candidate for that post of distinction was no other than "The Fair Irish Maid"—Miss O'Hara herself. Who, he asked, had more occasion to feel hostile toward the Irish dramatist than the young lady who had been publicly flouted in her own house and in the presence of her friends by that same dramatist? What better revenge could she find for her affronted feelings than a public damnation of her uncivil lover's play? Miss

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

O'Hara, according to Mr. Shadd, was the Goddess of Reason of the Rotundo Revolution. She it was who hired the bravoës, she it was who patronized Mr. Crinch, she it was who prevented a not very curious public from hearing a single word of "The Buried City" by providing that public with an entertainment much more kindling to its curiosity.

Mr. Bowley so far temporized with Mr. Shadd as to admit that Miss O'Hara and Lady Double might be partners in the conspiracy against "The Buried City." But Mr. Shadd was for no such compromise. He could not see that Lady Double had any place in an enterprise which for him was entirely engineered by the magnificent malice of Grania O'Hara.



## V

### A ROMAN HOLIDAY

ON this particular evening when Mr. Bowley and Mr. Shadd discoursed in Mr. Heritage's room and discussed the one subject of the town's talk, the eruption of insurrection and counter-insurrection within the walls of the Rotundo was at its worst so far. It was therefore a consolation to such loyal citizens as the editor of *The Whistle* and the editor of *The Scourge* that this was the evening which had been chosen by His Royal Highness the Prince Regent to pay a visit to the theater and to see for himself the sport of which all the world was talking. The news of His Royal Highness's intention to be present spread as such news will spread, and attracted to the tempest-tossed theater a more than usually brilliant company of spectators. That all the members of the new Princes' set should attend was a matter of course, but a goodly number of the old guard rallied round their semi-sovereign for the occasion, Captain Morris and My Lord Coleraine conspicuous among them. Mr. Brummell, fiddling, as it were, while Rome was burning—Mr. Shadd again—wore his most wonderful composition to

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

grace the battle. Mr. Redacre flitted from box to box, the busy, curious, thirsty fly of all and any gossip. My Lord Byron assured his friends that the married state was ideal, and Henry Averill regarded everybody and everything with his habitual suave disdain.

The scene which His Royal Highness had the pleasure of surveying was certainly sufficiently astonishing. It was indeed a repetition of a scene that had been enacted now for many successive evenings, but with each performance it became more charged with dramatic intensity. The whole of the theater was filled to overflowing. The world of fashion, the world of literature, the world of art, nightly sent its representatives to throng the more expensive parts of the house. But while the occupants of the boxes and balcony came in their hundreds, and often came more than once and more than twice, they came for the most part solely to act as spectators. The real theater for them was not the boarded stage, but the spacious area of the pit, which ever since the disturbance of the first night was packed with those that lusted for battle.

The ceremonial on this occasion, as on all occasions since the beginning of these whimsical riots, was the same. It was followed with as much formality as if it had been an ordered portion of the programme. Silence reigned in the densely thronged house while the overture, which was founded upon "The Soul of Erin," had concluded and the curtain

## A ROMAN HOLIDAY

had risen on the beautifully painted first scene of "The Buried City."

But with the first words spoken on the stage, with the utterance of the first syllables of Dennis Tirowen's nobly molded blank verse, the signal for insurrection was given in the house, the standard of rebellion raised. A chorus of voices instantly rose demanding the immediate cessation of the play, a chorus that swelled in volume with every second and made it impossible for the players to make themselves heard. This rude and noisy challenge was instantly answered by the counter-chorus of those, and they were many and leathern-lunged, that for one reason or another befriended the piece and that insisted upon the performance being allowed to proceed. For a while these clamors would continue, sometimes waning a little, sometimes waxing as wild winds wane and wax in a storm, but always drowning absolutely all sound of speech upon the stage. There the players, no longer frightened as they had been the first night by the unexpected attack, moved through their parts and muttered their words with as much indifference as they could assume for the conflict that raged beyond the footlights, a conflict that iteration seemed to assure them must needs endure as long as Mr. Heritage persisted in putting "The Buried City" upon his stage.

It did not take long, however, for the quarrel in the pit that converted its habitual decorum into a parliament of shrieks to become something more

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

than a war of words. For a while nothing more violent would happen than the rival shouts of the hostile factions, and the amused and delighted spectators up-stairs had their ears chiefly appealed to by the brawl, and had nothing more on which to feast their eyes than an ocean of crimson faces with gaping mouths that shouted war-cries or swollen cheeks that sucked in the breath of new efforts. Certain collocations of words had already become the battle-calls of the two factions. Those that were opposed to the production of "The Buried City" had got into the habit of intoning like a chant the words "Crinch, Crinch, give us Crinch," which when repeated monotonously by a hundred voices had a very stupefying effect upon its hearers. The partisans of "The Buried City," however inspired, had taken a Celtic hint for their slogan, and thundered "Tirowen aboo!" with all the breath and energy that was in them. So long as the strife was one of words so long did these two sentences challenge each other, bellowed with a faithful fury by either side.

Then some fierce demonstrator for or against the play, growing more excitable with the rising tide of the din, would suddenly feel that it was high time for him to push or jostle or menace with brutal extremities of physical violence some other vociferous demonstrator whose opinion for or against the performance did not agree with his own. The ritual of action thus once set in motion followed on its ordered course. The person pushed or menaced

## A ROMAN HOLIDAY

invariably retaliated with a vigor and ferocity at least equal to that of his aggressor. Then the spectators above, the fine ladies of fashion, and the dandies, and the bloods, the men of letters, the men of art, the men of law, all who belonged to society or could seem to belong to it by paying for expensive seats, were afforded an example of two hot-headed Londoners bustling in front of each other, squaring awkwardly at first and punching like clumsy school-boys afterward, amid shrieks, jeers, and encouragements of those immediately above the combatants. For the most part encouragements prevailed, each faction being anxious to back its own champion who had proceeded from words to deeds in attack upon or defense of the unfortunate play.

Generally this first brawl was thrashed out rapidly and ended in the opponents being separated by the partizans of whichever warrior was getting the worse of it. But very soon the example of this earliest duel would be followed by another pair in some other part of the house whose hot blood could no longer be contented by mere bellowings, and the example thus reset would be imitated again by others that sat or stood in the vicinity of these batlers or a little farther off. These sporadic combats would multiply at first slowly and then swiftly, until the contagion of strife spread the game of fisticuffs all over the arena of the pit, and the excited beholders tarred on the combatants as the nobility of old Rome tarred on its gladiators.

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

The game of fisticuffs, and not fisticuffs alone. Battle breeds battle. Hot-tempered humanity, seeing its fellows contending and finding the raw knuckles of clenched fingers insufficiently potent for the settlement of the dispute, took with enthusiasm to more truculent instruments of strife. Men brandished bludgeons, men twirled canes provocatively, and were responded to by other men that twirled canes and brandished bludgeons, and presently bludgeons and canes alike descended on convenient heads and shoulders and were struggled for and snatched away and used in retaliation and sometimes broken and their fragments flung abroad over the contending sea of furious warriors. The pit became the scene of an Iliad that only needed its rhapsodist to rise to epic dignity, and as the conflict grew so grew the attendant din.

Those that were not actually in the thick of the fight, recognizing the fallibility of any attempt of the human voice, however it might rival the bull of Bashan to dominate such a hubbub with any hope of effective dominion or even assertion, resorted to artificial modes of interpreting their emotions. They produced from recesses of their garments all manner of contrivances, imported for the purpose in hope of opportunity. They displayed tin trumpets, whistles, cat-calls, and kindred noise-compelling instruments, and played upon them with all the strength of their lungs, till the air reeled and sickened with the hideous cacophony. Maddened by this

## A ROMAN HOLIDAY

infernal music, the heady battle would continue, violence intensifying violence, brutality accumulating, savagery increasing, in the fever of the fight. Coats were torn off, shirts rent to ribbons, wigs tossed high in air. On all sides noses were bleeding, eyes were blackened, lips were split, and knuckles barked, and the bedlam of battle persisted so long as the act endured.

But the moment that the last word of the act was spoken, the moment, rather, that the unfortunate actor or actress had made what appeared to be his or her last pantomimic gesture, and that the green curtain rumbled down dividing the mimic sorrows of the stage from the real passion of the pit, at that moment, as if by magic, all signs of hostility ceased. Tin whistles were silenced, brandished bludgeons and lifted canes were lowered, antagonists paused in the very instant of putting in an ugly left, damaged garments were recaptured and were hurriedly resumed, missing wigs hastily sought for, places re-occupied, and something of the ordinary demeanor of a well-bred pit restored. At the same time the sated spectators in boxes and balcony resumed their sanity and their seats and their customary decorous manner. An ordinary observer who might happen to enter the theater at that moment, unless he were keen to notice the heated countenances of the pitites and here and there a man holding a blood-stained handkerchief to his countenance, might not be aware that anything out of the common was toward.

## VI

### MR. HERITAGE'S VISITOR

“SO the high jinks go on,” Mr. Bowley observed. “Why, even the presence of the Prince Regent to-night has done nothing to allay the feud.”

Mr. Shadd tickled his chin thoughtfully with the top of his pencil. “What amazes me,” he said, “is why old Heritage goes on with it.”

Bowley nodded agreement with Mr. Shadd's amazement. “He swears he will never give way,” he said, “and that he doesn't care how much it costs.”

Mr. Shadd's look of thoughtfulness deepened. “It certainly is odd,” he said, “for on the first night old Heritage seemed in a mortal funk, and I thought he would undoubtedly throw up the sponge the next day.”

Mr. Bowley laughed and was about to complete a sentence to the effect that Mr. Heritage was a rum customer, when a warning glance from Mr. Shadd stayed him. Mr. Shadd was seated so that he could see the door, and he saw the handle turn. Now the door opened and Mr. Heritage appeared in the opening. Behind him, faint and far off, like ances-



## MR. HERITAGE'S VISITOR

tral voices prophesying war, came a fresh breath of the distant fury. Mr. Heritage himself did not appear to be at all distressed. He greeted his visitors with a certain amount of cordiality, for Shadd, of *The Whistle*, and Bowley, of *The Scourge*, were men to be reckoned with, and, under the troubled conditions, he had given them the run of the theater. In reply to their queries he replied that he was no whit distressed by the persistence of the riots. He damned the rogues freely and fully enough, but he insisted that nothing would induce him to give way an inch before the clamors of the hydra.

"In the cause of justice," he protested, "in the higher interests of the drama, I am prepared to suffer."

As he spoke he aired the nobility of Laocoon grappling with the serpent. "A masterpiece shall not be cried down by ignorance and insensibility so long as I can afford to defend it."

"Come, come, Mr. Heritage," Shadd commented with a sneer. "On your honor, sir, as between man and man, is 'The Buried City' a masterpiece?"

"You have seen it, sir," Mr. Heritage answered stiffly; "you can judge for yourself."

"That is all I have done," Shadd answered with unwonted and reluctant truthfulness. "Your damned pit has never allowed me to hear a word of it. But regarding it purely as a pantomime, hang me if I can make head or tail of it."

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

"It's a rigmarole," Bowley shouted, quite unconscious that he was making an ass of himself. "That's what I call it, a rigmarole."

Mr. Heritage drew himself up and regarded the two journalists with the look which he felt would be appropriate to Cæsar at the moment when he decided to cross the Rubicon or Hannibal when he decided to cross the Alps.

"Opinions differ, gentlemen," he said, coldly. "I have my opinion, and I stand by it, and no noisy mob shall bluster me out of it."

Bowley dimpled his pasty face with a hideous grin, and made a gesture as of applauding the heroic manager with his fat, damp, dirty hands.

"I never thought you were that kind of man, Mr. Heritage," he said. "I always took you to be the ideal man of business."

Mr. Bowley hoped that Mr. Heritage would wince at his words, but to his disappointment Mr. Heritage merely smiled smugly.

"So I am, sir, so I am," he insisted. "But in this instance business and pleasure are twins."

"I don't quite see that, Mr. Heritage," Shadd said with a sneer.

Mr. Heritage caught him up briskly. "Don't you?" he cried proudly. "Every night we play to capacity."

Mr. Bowley looked reprovingly at the great man. "But the scandal," he suggested.

Mr. Heritage answered him, briskly and briefly. "Oh, damn the scandal!" he said.

## MR. HERITAGE'S VISITOR

Mr. Bowley and Mr. Shadd eyed the manager with a curious interest. Here was a Heritage that was new to them, a Heritage that to all appearance was perfectly sane, and yet that really seemed to be indifferent to riot so long as he championed a deserving work of art. What could be the meaning of it? The problem perplexed them.

"What news from the seat of war?" Mr. Shadd asked carelessly, to cover his surprise.

"The curtain will be down in a few minutes," Mr. Heritage answered. "Of course not a word of the act has been heard, as usual. Half the Fancy are fighting it out in the pit under the very eyes of the Prince Regent."

"I didn't see much of it to-night," Shadd admitted. "The moment that I saw that the presence of His Royal Highness made no difference to the rioters I came in here to write my account quietly and get to bed early. How does His Royal Highness seem to take it?"

Mr. Heritage smiled a broad smile. "Why," he said, "he laughs and claps as if he were at a cock-fight." But he stopped laughing for a minute when he saw Mr. Brummell in the Dandies' Omnibus. Lord Byron is here, too, and Hook—all the tribe, begad."

While this edifying conversation was being carried on there came to Mr. Heritage's ears a sound which he had expected to hear. It came from behind the picture of Talma and seemed to be a faint scratching

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

noise. It was plain to Mr. Heritage's accustomed sense, though it did not attract the attention of either Mr. Bowley or Mr. Shadd. It acted upon Mr. Heritage as an imperative signal that summoned him to be alone. Mr. Heritage lost no time in making it plain to the pair of journalists that he was more in need of their room than their company. But he contrived to gild the pill, to temper the grief of parting. He went to a desk that stood on a small side table, unlocked it, and drew forth two small paper packages, which he placed in his waistcoat pockets. Then he locked the desk, and, turning, addressed his unsavory guests again.

"My friends," he said, "His Royal Highness has intimated to me that on the conclusion of the next act he will probably do me the honor of visiting my room and partaking of a little refreshment in the company of the ladies and gentlemen who usually frequent it. Under the circumstances, therefore, I think it must be evident that I am compelled to wish you good evening."

"I met His Royal Highness," Bowley observed, "once at a turn-up at Sam Dango's. His Royal Highness, who had been drinking, was good enough to ask me to stand out of the way and be damned to me."

"I met His Royal Highness," said Shadd, "one night at Luker's oyster-shop in the Haymarket. I was there on business working up a case against young Lord Lustleigh. His Royal Highness noticed

## MR. HERITAGE'S VISITOR

me, I know, for he whispered something to Hellgate Barrymore, who was with him, and the pair laughed heartily."

The two journalists seemed to be much pleased by their recollections, which, however, failed to impress Mr. Heritage.

"Wherever you may have met His Royal Highness," he said, dryly, "you are not going to meet him here. Good-night, Shadd; good-night, Bowley."

As he spoke these words of farewell his fingers traveled to his waistcoat pockets, and as he clasped the two journalists successively by the hands he dexterously transferred into the palm of each one of the small packets that he had taken from his desk. Mr. Bowley felt the pleasant pressure of coins, Mr. Shadd felt the pleasant pressure of coins. The pair murmured their farewells and rapidly departed by the passage that conducted to the stage-door.

When they had gone Mr. Heritage crossed the room toward the picture of Talma, and touched the spring. The picture moved slowly back, and Grania O'Hara entered the room.

## VII

### NEWS INDEED

GRANIA was looking pale, and even a little care-worn, which seemed strange in one on whose cheeks the blush of Irish roses had bloomed so bravely. But her manner was gay as she smiled on Mr. Heritage, who salaamed to her.

“Well,” she said, “how is it going?”

Mr. Heritage shrugged his shoulders. “Worse than ever,” he said with a cheerfulness that he would certainly not have worn if the rioting had cost him as much as one red penny. He was silent for a moment while he aided Grania to disembarrass herself of her cloak, and handed her to a chair. Then he asked her the question which he had asked her every night since the second night of the performance of “The Buried City.”

“You still mean to go on?”

Grania was looking very dainty and fair in an evening gown of a chastened gorgeousness that had just been the most admired garment at the dinner at the great house which she had quitted to come to the Rotundo. She laughed at the manager’s unnecessary formality.

## NEWS INDEED

“My dear Mr. Heritage,” she said, “we will go on until we win and secure a hearing for ‘The Buried City.’”

“It will take some time, I’m thinking,” Mr. Heritage said, gloomily. “The other side doesn’t seem to get a bit tired of the game, and they spend money like water.”

“They haven’t got as much money as we have,” Grania said, belligerently. Mr. Heritage liked to hear her use the first person plural in this way. It gave him for the time a personal interest in Grania’s millions, and so long as the partnership with the pretty heiress existed he was running his theater for nothing.

“How is he taking it?” Grania asked. ‘He’ meant Dennis Tirowen, whom Grania had not seen since the wild night at Ashford House.

Mr. Heritage smiled. “He is as warlike as ever, our dear author,” Mr. Heritage answered. “Every night he wants, when the noise begins, to take off his coat and bear a hand in the battle. But I have persuaded him that the nobler part is to stand aloof in Olympian disdain.”

Grania could not help smiling. Her mind’s eye pictured Dennis being greatly taken by Mr. Heritage’s high-sounding phrases, and molding himself Olympianly in obedience to the hint.

“He has no suspicion,” she questioned, “that I have anything to do with the business?”

“Not the slightest,” Mr. Heritage replied, and

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

would have said more; but at that moment the great doors opened to admit the Prince Regent and the mob of fashionable folk that were privileged to follow on his heels to the sacred seclusion of Mr. Heritage's private room. Another act had just come to an end, and no noise was audible except the noise of the eagerly speaking voices of the Prince's set.

His Royal Highness, the moment he caught sight of Grania, advanced toward her with his most impressive manner. Her presence there was in no wise a surprise to him, for he had heard and been diverted by the story of the scene at Ashford House, and he assumed, not without amusement, that the young lady still cherished a regard for her ill-mannered lover. Grania dipped the due curtsey, but the Prince stopped her, taking her hand and lifting it to his lips as he bowed over it. Around the room the fashionable folk ranged themselves and watched the scene with admiration. At least the most of them admired, or seemed to admire, but My Lord Byron smiled sourly, having, as was generally known, no great regard for the Prince Regent.

"My dear Miss O'Hara," the Prince said, "I should, no doubt, have occasion to congratulate you on the merits of your compatriot's production, but the rascals in the house won't let me hear a single word of it."

Grania dipped another curtsey, disappearing this time beneath the waters of formality. She rose to the surface again, and smiled.



## NEWS INDEED

"I am sure," she said, "that Your Royal Highness's known taste and discrimination would lead you to applaud the piece if you made its acquaintance under happier conditions."

The Prince Regent looked ineffably gracious. Always an eager feeder upon praise from every offered platter, he liked best to be fed by the pretty hand of a pretty woman.

"The town," he said, solemnly, "expresses much surprise at the courage and pertinacity of our friend Heritage in facing this continued demonstration." He paused and looked knowing; then he continued. "A little bird whispers to me that a certain charming young Irish lady, who shall be absolutely nameless and guessless, supplies him with the sinews of war."

Grania pierced the proposed veil of anonymity frankly.

"I come of a fighting line, Your Royal Highness," she said, simply.

His Royal Highness smiled. "To be sure," he said. "We must not forget that you are the most dangerous rebel in our dominions."

Suddenly a frown dissipated the smile on the august countenance as His Highness caught sight of a comely gentleman, exquisitely dressed, who, with an air of admirable nonchalance, was at that moment entering Mr. Heritage's apartment. "Ah," he said in a vexed voice, "here comes that impertinent fellow Brummell."

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

Mr. Redacre asserts in his privately printed "Memoirs" that it was on this occasion that Mr. Brummell made use of the historical expression with which his name is always associated. He asserts that when His Royal Highness saw the Beau entering Mr. Heritage's apartment and advancing toward Grania, the Prince uttered some impatient expression of disapproval and turned away from the young lady with a frowning face. The Beau in all the majesty of his most elaborate attire and all the calm unconsciousness of the existence of those whom he desired to ignore moved serenely up to Grania, and, after paying her the most elaborate bow, stood looking directly after the retreating figure of the Prince, and in a tone of voice loud enough to be heard by all that were near, including the Regent himself, asked, "Who is your fat friend?"

Mr. Redacre further asserts that the young lady's native Irish sense of humor was so strong that, as she afterward admitted, she could not for the life of her prevent her face from smiling, and she was not, therefore, able to address to Mr. Brummell with the sufficient gravity the reproof that he needed. In any case, Miss O'Hara had a liking for Mr. Brummell, and she had reason to believe that in the feud between him and the Regent he was not the original offender. She always found him amusing, consciously or unconsciously, and the serious devotion which he offered to the religion of Dandyism did not seem to her to be more unreasonable than any of

## NEWS INDEED

the other follies of the hour. To do this one thing well was apparently all that lay in Mr. Brummell's power, and to the girl's energetic spirit it seemed better to do something than nothing.

Therefore, as His Royal Highness had left her, she saw no reason why she should not continue to converse with Mr. Brummell. If it were true as people whispered that his glorious reign was drifting to a close, that the clutching fingers of care were gripping his throat through all the folds of that nobly tied cravat, all the more reason for her to be gracious. If her affability cost her the Prince's favor she did not care a rap. She would always be loyal to those she liked, and she liked Mr. Brummell a thousand times better than she liked the vice-king of Carlton House. So she listened and laughed while Mr. Brummell talked, and talked well, for he was on his mettle and flushed with his successful impertinence, when suddenly her attention and his attention were distracted by an unexpected incident.

The Prince had turned to re-enter the theater, and was actually about to pass through the door, when his progress was arrested. A man hurriedly entered the room by the entrance that led from the front of the house, and, looking eagerly around him, asked in a loud and anxious voice if His Royal Highness was present. Many of those in the room recognized the new-comer as a high official from the Foreign Office, and in another moment the Prince Regent, informed by half a dozen obliging gentlemen of what was

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

happening, turned back and was immediately joined by the new arrival. The rest of the company stood discreetly apart out of earshot while the new-comer spoke rapidly and excitedly to the Prince, whose sudden change of color and unwonted seriousness of expression showed that something momentous was being communicated to him.

That the communication was momentous the company were to learn in a few seconds. When the man had done speaking the Prince stood for a moment in silence, and then turning to the others, said: "Ladies and gentlemen, news of the utmost gravity has just reached me. Napoleon has escaped from Elba!"

The news came with staggering force on all present. His Royal Highness instantly took his departure, followed by most of the company, Lord Byron murmuring sardonically as he took his leave of Grania that this new display of activity on Napoleon's part had entirely spoiled the effect of his poem on the fall of the Corsican.

In a few moments Grania was left alone, for while the smart company was scattering Mr. Heritage made his way to the stage, where the curtain had not long been raised upon the last act. The storm in the pit was raging with all its familiar violence when Mr. Heritage, very flustered and excited, made his appearance among the players and advanced to the footlights. Though he appealed for silence, his voice could not dominate the din, and for a while he

## NEWS INDEED

stood gesticulating wildly, an inaudible and slightly ridiculous figure. He succeeded, however, after a while in making it clear to those in the front row of the pit that he had important news from abroad to communicate, and these passing the word to others behind them, gradually a silence was obtained.

In that silence Mr. Heritage told his news. Napoleon had escaped from Elba! The astonishing tidings entirely killed the spirit of riot as if with the single stroke of an ax. The play, and its friends and its enemies, were swamped and swallowed up and forgotten in the thought of the terrible event that had taken place and the terrible events that must follow it. With one accord, and as if at a given, long-expected signal, the whole of the audience rose and left the theater, without wasting a thought on the last act, which was acted for a while under unusual conditions of audibility to an empty house, and presently cut short peremptorily by Mr. Heritage. Anticipation and the pages of the *Annual Recorder* teach that with the escape from Elba the Rotundo riots came to an end. There was no time for small controversies in the face of the great catastrophe that threatened the safety of Europe for a hundred days, and that was only diverted on the field of Waterloo.

## VIII

### MR. POINTDEXTER'S "HEY, PRESTO!"

GRANIA was not long left alone. In a little while the great doors opened, and Mr. Pointdexter entered, bringing with him Dennis Tirowen, firmly held by the arm. Dennis looked rather like a captive under the wardership of the iron-faced lawyer. He seemed at once angry and ill at ease, and he looked sheepishly at Grania, who smiled very amiably at him, though she was not a little taken by surprise at his sudden appearance.

"I have brought here," said Mr. Pointdexter, solemnly, "a young gentleman, who in my opinion and, as I believe, also in his own, feels that he has something very special to say to you in the way of an apology."

He released Dennis's arm as he spoke and left Dennis standing in a corner of the room, seemingly rueful and ill-tempered, while he advanced toward Grania.

"My dear young lady," he said, and his voice was most unfamiliarly gentle as he spoke, "it is high time that you and this young gentleman came to some definite understanding. There is no time like

## MR. POINTDEXTER'S "HEY, PRESTO!"

the present. I shall wait in the corridor if you should chance to want me."

He made her a formal bow and withdrew, leaving Grania and Dennis face to face.

Grania looked steadily at Dennis, and the faintest dimple of a smile lurked at the corners of her mouth. But her eyes were grave and curious, and they examined Dennis carefully. He certainly showed to better advantage than the last time she saw him, swaying and lurching out of the Gold Room at Ashford House on the triumphant arm of Lady Double. His face was anxious, even care-worn, but it was clean from the stain of drink. Just at the moment it wore a decidedly sulky expression as he stood there uncertain what to say. Grania spoke as if nothing had happened amiss between them.

"You have been having a stormy time, my poor Dennis," she said; "but I think this news will bring calm with it."

"The calm is worse than the storm," the young man cried, angrily. "Just think of it. Because a political adventurer escapes from prison those idiots go away and abandon my play. Friends or foes, they are all the same; it has no longer any interest for them. They are only thinking of that damned Corsican."

"I am afraid, dear Dennis," Grania said, suavely, "that even I must admit that the escape of the Emperor is a matter of more immediate moment to the world than your beautiful play."

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

“It shouldn’t be,” the young man protested, vehemently. “It shouldn’t be. Is there no such thing as art? May not a great poem be of more value to the world than the crimes of a soldier of fortune?”

“Of course art is a real thing,” Grania answered, quietly. “And of course, a great poem may be of more value to the world than a great conqueror. It is possible indeed that hereafter this year may be remembered in history chiefly as the year which saw the birth of ‘The Buried City.’ But to those that are living in it the fact that Bonaparte has escaped from Elba and that he may again conquer Europe seems to them in their short-sightedness a more vital event.”

Grania was not speaking satirically; there was no sting in her tongue; she was feeling very kindly to Dennis, and very sorry for Dennis, but she had learned much since the day of her parting from him over in Kerry, so many thousand years ago! The only thing she had not learned in that great gap of time was to cease to be in love with him.

But Dennis did not understand Grania. He shot a lowering glance at her. “You are making fun of me,” he grumbled.

Grania shook her head. “I am doing nothing of the kind,” she vowed. “I want to talk to you very seriously, and I mean to talk to you very seriously. This is the second time we have met since the day when you set out to seek your fortune, and



## MR. POINTDEXTER'S "HEY, PRESTO!"

I stayed at home, and my fortune came to seek me. Tell me, Dennis, honestly, as between maid and man, don't you think that you made a bit of a fool of yourself the last time we met?"

Dennis squared his shoulders and faced her. "No," he said, doggedly, "no, and again no. Of course I was a blockhead to get drunk and to spin speeches and pick quarrels, and to go off with that woman—but you know I didn't go far."

Grania knew it very well. She had had the story from Mr. Fenny and from Captain Loveless; she had never been jealous of Lady Double. She nodded, and Dennis went on.

"But I was in the right of it when I said what I said about"—he hesitated for a moment, and then continued, clumsily—"about what you said. You knew what I told you, and you knew that I told you my true thoughts, and you had no right to try and trap me like that."

Grania laughed a little good-humored laugh, the laugh of a girl that, being wiser than he was, could also afford to be kinder.

"You are indeed the noble Roman," she said, "and it served me right for being so unmaidenly, for I thought you would never have the face to deny me once I spoke like that before all the people. But I had miscalculated the greatness of your heart, my Dennis."

Still she was laughing, but she was not laughing at him, nor laughing at herself, at least not in any

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

unkindly fashion. She was amused, and she showed that she was amused, nothing more.

“It was my pride,” Dennis answered, “my pride, that still forbids me to do what I am longing to do.”

“And what may that be?” Grania asked, seeing that Dennis kept his peace.

“To clasp you in my arms,” Dennis answered, fiercely, “and call you to be my wife. But I can’t do it, Grania, I can’t do it. I can’t marry you while you have got all that mountain of money behind you. I’ll marry no woman that I can’t keep in comfort with the work of my two hands and the help of my wits.”

“And do you think you could do that same,” Grania asked, “if I was as poor as I was on the day when we parted at Cloyne?”

“Devil doubt it,” Dennis answered, confidently. “Why, I have a tidy bit of money put away at this present, out of what Mr. Heritage has paid me, and he has promised me a round sum down for another play that I am to write him. Grania, my girl, if you were only what you were on the day when we parted at Cloyne it is the proud man I’d be to lay my little all at your feet, and it is the happy pair we would make when you had given me ‘yes’ for an answer.”

Grania looked at him with a puckered forehead and tightly compressed lips. It would be foolish of her to deny to herself that she liked her fine fortune; but it would be more foolish still to deny that she liked Dennis better than all the fine fortunes in

## MR. POINTDEXTER'S "HEY, PRESTO!"

the world. She did not waste time in asking herself why she liked him so well. There was the unchanging fact which nothing could alter. It seemed to her that there was only one thing to be done, and she tightened her mind to do it.

"Dennis," she said, and her voice was soft as she spoke, as the soft west wind of Ireland, and sweet as the breath of Irish meadows, "are you sure you love me?"

Dennis looked back at her, and there was a light on his face that glorified it, smoothing out the sullenness and the obstinacy and the insane pride.

"Sure," he said, and he said nothing more; and there was no need to say anything more, for him or for her. Grania smiled a happy smile. Then she crossed the room and opened the door and called to Mr. Pointdexter, who was waiting in the distance with the tranquil air of a man who was prepared to wait for a century.

"Dear Mr. Pointdexter," she called, "will you please come in?"

Mr. Pointdexter came in and closed the door behind him and stood in front of it, looking at the pair with a gaze that meant anything or nothing, as you chose to interpret it. "Well?" he said.

"Mr. Pointdexter," said Grania, "Dennis and I understand each other."

"At last?" Mr. Pointdexter questioned, dryly. Grania shook her head.

"Dennis and I have always understood each

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

other," she answered, "but we have both of us learned something since we left the kingdom of Kerry. I am going to marry Dennis and Dennis is going to marry me."

"The one proposition," said Mr. Pointdexter, calmly, "would seem to suggest the other. I am glad to hear it. But I understood that there was a little difficulty."

"There was a little difficulty," Grania admitted. "But we have got over it. I am not going to be rich any more. I am going to give all my money away, every penny of it. You must arrange that for me."

"I must arrange that for you!" Mr. Pointdexter echoed, with the necessary grammatical alteration. He seemed amused, as far as it was ever possible to make a sure guess at Mr. Pointdexter's feelings.

"Yes," said Grania, firmly, while Dennis gazed at her in rapt admiration. "It cannot be difficult to do, even with as much money as mine. Then I will marry Dennis, and Dennis will make money for us both."

"That is very pretty," Mr. Pointdexter said, quietly. Then he turned to Dennis. "You are quite willing," he asked, "that this girl should make this sacrifice for your sake?"

"It isn't a sacrifice," Grania interpolated. Mr. Pointdexter took no heed of her, but waited for Dennis's answer.

"I am willing," Dennis answered, slowly, "if

## MR. POINTDEXTER'S "HEY, PRESTO!"

Grania cares enough for me to make it. I will make a home for my wife, if it be no better than a cottage. I will not live in a corner of my wife's castle."

"Now you see, Mr. Pointdexter," said Grania, "that it is all settled, and there is no need to discuss the matter any more." She stretched out her arms with a smile. "I feel freer already," she declared.

"I am afraid there is still need for discussion," Mr. Pointdexter said, calmly. "The plan you propose is delightfully poetic, but I am afraid that it can't be done."

"May I ask why not?" Grania said; and it must be admitted that there was an unfamiliar note of irritation in her questioning voice. Let it be remembered to her credit that she had been so used since she came into her queendom to unquestioning obedience to her triviallest whim, so confident always to find grave Mr. Pointdexter blandly ready to approve her every impulse, that the unexpected change nettled her.

"Certainly, my dear child," Mr. Pointdexter answered, and Grania was not too surprised by his first refusal of her wishes not to note the unusual endearment of address. "I brought our young friend here to make his apology. Now I find that it is time to make mine. I am afraid that I have been deceiving you, my dear."

Grania stared at him with wide eyes of wonder. Mr. Pointdexter had always been enigmatical, but now he was the very Sphinx. Dennis stared, too,

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

puzzled and worried. "The Buried City" seemed to be very much buried now.

"I hope and think that you will forgive me," Mr. Pointdexter continued, "for, indeed, I believe that you have enjoyed yourself. But I must tell you that you have no fortune to deal with in the manner that you propose."

Grania listened dully, as one listens on a drowsy day to unexpected thunder. "I have no fortune?" she gasped.

"No, and yes," Mr. Pointdexter answered. "I told you the truth when I told you that your uncle made a large fortune, and that he had bequeathed it to you. But I did not tell you the truth when I told you that your uncle was dead."

Grania felt for a moment as if the room were reeling about her. Then with a strenuous effort she recovered her senses.

"My uncle is alive?" she said. Mr. Pointdexter nodded his head very solemnly.

"Your uncle is alive," he repeated. "And I confess that I am glad to be able to say as much. I am Phelim O'Hara."

This time there was no hesitation in Grania's action. She seemed to read on the strong, stern face what the strong, stern man would like her to do, and she did it. In a moment she was in his arms and clasped in his firm embrace.

"Oh, Uncle Phelim!" she cried; and then looking up into that stern, strong face, now suddenly softened

## MR. POINTDEXTER'S "HEY, PRESTO!"

to quite another kind of countenance, tender and gentle, and filled with a fierce and melancholy affection, she cried, "Why, why, why?"

With Grania in his arms and Dennis a gaping auditor, Mr. Pointdexter, or, rather, Phelim O'Hara, told his story. He told it very simply and straightly, making no defense of his conduct, either in the past or in the present, but just setting forth a plain tale in plain words. He told how after the red ruin of Ninety-eight he had made his way to America, and how in the young Republic fortune that had frowned upon him before, in love and in war, now smiled on him in peace. Sixteen years after his flight across the Atlantic he found himself the sole master of enormous wealth. The story of how he amassed it he promised to tell his hearers at another time. It was a history by itself, that called for leisure to narrate its wonders. Through all those sixteen years of strange adventures and increasing store of gold he had cherished in his heart nothing but bitter memories of the woman he had once longed to wed, of the brother he had once sought to slay. Then on a sudden came sickness, great and grievous sickness, and the strong man struggling for his life received as he believed a summons to make amends for his sins. He caused inquiries to be made in Ireland, from which he learned that his brother's widow and his own old love was dead and that her child lived in poverty upon the Cloyne estate. Then the wild idea came into his head of giving out that

## THE FAIR IRISH MAID

he was dead, of visiting this unknown niece in the seeming of a lawyer, and seeing how the girl would carry herself when she found herself entrusted with the command of countless money. At the time the war with England was drawing to its close. He had influence enough to be able to obtain permission, as Mr. Pointdexter—which was his own lawyer's name—to accompany to Europe the commissioners appointed for the settlement of terms of peace.

“The rest, my dear Grania,” he said, “you already know. I have played the part of fairy godfather to a very lovely Cinderella, and my child has not been spoiled by opulence.”

He turned to Dennis. “Frankly, my young friend,” he said, “you are much to be congratulated upon having won the love of a girl who is willing to fling aside a fabulous fortune for your sake. No less frankly I must say that I do not think you are worthy of such a sacrifice or of her. But there must be the possibility of better things in you or she would never have chosen you for her mate. Henceforth she will be to me as a daughter, and you shall be to me as a son, and we will all live together in the New World. You shall learn to make your way, since that is your wish. Phelim O'Hara has made a new will, and this time he bequeathes his fortune to Dennis Tirowen and Grania, his wife, and the children of their union. I will leave you for a while, for I have matters to settle with Mr. Heritage, and I make no doubt that you will have much to say to



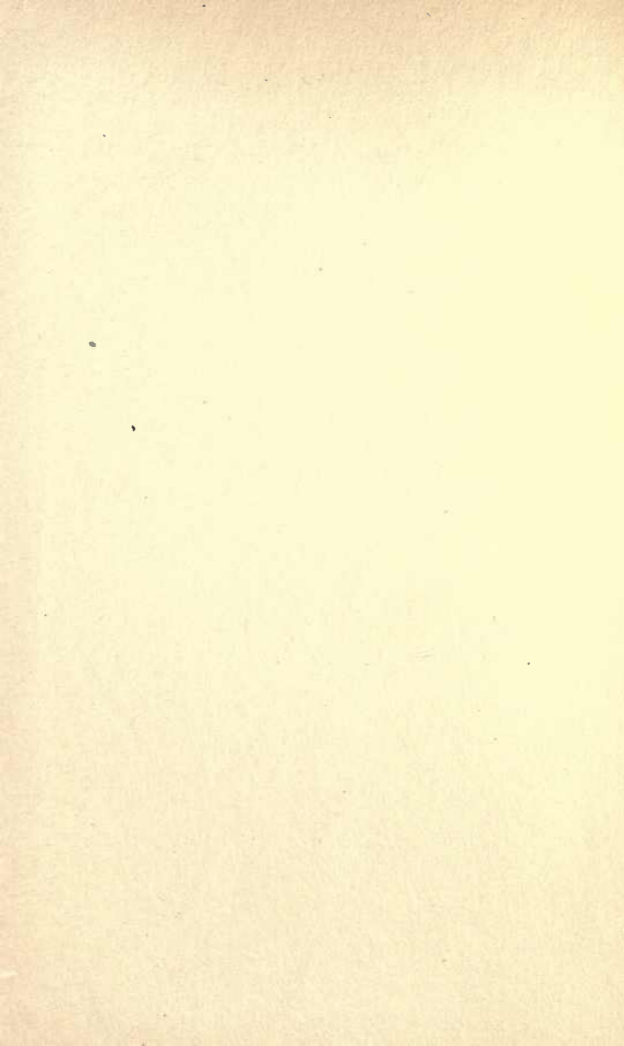
## MR. POINTDEXTER'S "HEY, PRESTO!"

each other. I hope that Grania will be sensible enough to tell you how heavily you are indebted to her love and to her loyalty. If she fails to do so I will take that charge upon myself hereafter."

Dennis and Grania had much to say to each other, so much that it seemed that only a few moments had passed by when Mr. Phelim O'Hara returned to the room to say that it was very late and that the carriage was waiting at the stage-door.

THE END





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