Hail and Farewell! Vale — Chapter 13

London: William Heinemann, 4 March 1914, pages 291-332, 12,435 words

XIII

Ever since the day that I strayed into my garden and it had been revealed to me as I walked therein that Catholics had not written a book worth reading since the Reformation, my belief had never faltered that I was an instrument in the hands of the Gods, and that their mighty purpose was the liberation of my country from priestcraft. But seemingly they had forgotten to put a spear in my hand and a buckler on my arm, and for many months I had stood perplexed, but never doubting. I knew there was no preacher in me, and therefore had striven to fashion a story, and then a play, but the artist in me could not be suborned. Davitt came with a project for a newspaper, but he died; and I had begun to lose patience, to lose spirit, and to mutter, 'I am without hands to smite,' and suchlike, until one day on coming in from the garden, the form which the book should take was revealed to me. 'But an autobiography,' I said, 'is an unusual form for a sacred book.' My doubts quenched a moment after in a memory of Paul, and the next day the dictation of the rough outline from the Temple to Moore Hall was begun, and from that outline, decided upon in a week of inspiration, I have never strayed. Any straying would have been fatal, so intricate are the windings of the story I had been chosen to tell. As soon as the sketch of the whole was completed, the text of *Ave* kept steadily rising; and one murk December day the typewritten copy was tied up, sealed, registered, and directed to Heinemann in Bedford Street. But no pause occurred in the composition, for no sooner was *Ave* out of the house than I set myself to the dictation of *Salve*, following my memory of a long search for divinity through Meath and Louth, introducing the Colonel into the narrative, never stopping until Heinemann's letter came proposing the May of that year as the best time for the publication of *Ave*. And it was his letter that planted the conviction in my mind that *Hail and Farewell* had brought my sojourn in Ireland to a close.

He had written, 'Are you coming to live in England?' meaning nothing very probably thereby, but setting me thinking all the same that it would be in bad taste for me to remain in Dublin meeting my friends and acquaintances in the street, my models, and when the letter slipped from my hand to the floor I foresaw how exile would give the book a definite distinction. The scope of my design was to begin in the Temple and to end at Moore Hall; but I was loth to go to Moore Hall, and often answered Miss Gough, 'Of what use for me to go there? I can see the lake with my mind's eye better than I could see it with the physical. All the beautiful curves of the bay are before me, along Kiltoome and Connor Island.'

'But if the lake hasn't changed, the country has, and you'll bring back many new impressions and moods.'

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'You may be right. The gentry have gone and the big houses are in ruins, or empty or sold to nuns and monks, who are the only people who can afford to live in fine houses. Ballinafad is now a monastery.'

'You'll see Ballinafad.'

'I know it as well as Moore Hall.'

'But you haven't seen it as a monastery?'

'He hasn't had time yet to pull down the old house and build cells; and all I shall see is a peasant in a frock and sandalled shoon instead of a peasant in frieze and clouted shoon; merely a difference of garb.'

'One never can say what one is going to see.'

'You may be right. I'll go. Nature is full of surprises. Prolific mother of detail, I'll go to thee.'

And I wrote to the secretary of the Great Western Railway asking him if he would stop the morning mail for me at Balla.

'The road from Balla,' I said to Miss Gough, 'passes by Lakemount; I shall have only to turn about a mile aside to see the woods of Ballinafad. It may be I shall drive to the house on my way to Moore Hall.'

But the secretary wrote saying he could not stop the train for me at Balla, and his refusal to order the train to my convenience annoyed me very much, for some months before he had stopped the up-train at
Kilcock to suit the convenience of a priest.

'No one is cared for in this country but priests. I must write to the Colonel asking him to send a conveyance to meet me at Manulla.'

Ballinafad lies away to the left between Balla and Manulla, and on stepping out of the train I said: 'To take in Ballinafad would mean a round of four or five miles. I will instead drive over from Moore Hall with the Colonel. But where is the trap?' I asked myself in dread, for there was nothing to see but grey sky and bridge, or to hear but the plaint of telegraph wires. The porter himself at that moment seemed an hallucination, and overtaking him swiftly I laid hand on his shoulder, and he told me that if the Colonel's trap did not arrive soon, my best chance of getting a car would be in the village. After conference with the station-master, he promised as soon as his work was finished he would go down and inquire, but he was afraid Johnnie MacCormac had gone to Westport. The village was about a mile and a half away, and if Johnnie wasn't at home the only thing to do would be to wire for a car to Balla. Balla was seven miles away; an hour and a half wait at Manulla Junction would seem like a lifetime, and I had begun to wonder

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how the station master and the porters managed to get through the day, when the porter said he thought he heard a 'yoke' coming up the road. 'He'll cross the bridge over beyant;' and the bridge became at once the object of interest to me. 'It's his"yoke" right enough. You'll be off now in no time;' and these words were spoken in a tone that convinced me the man was conscious of his melancholy lot. But I couldn't stop at Manulla to keep him company; as soon as I left he would be as lonely as before; everyone for himself; especially at Manulla, and the devil gets the hindmost at Manulla; nor could I even wait to hear the end of his story, the Colonel's groom being so anxious to excuse himself for being late I had to listen to him telling me he had gone to Derrinanny to sleep with his family overnight; and the Colonel hadn't told him that he would be wanting him to go to the train in the morning.

'I wonder where the station-master and the porters live?'

'Are you after leaving anything behind you, sir?'

'No, I was merely wondering what they do when not at work at the station. There are only two trains in the day.' The boy thought there were three, but he would be able to find out at the grocer's. 'So there is a shop in Manulla?'

'We'll be passing it in a minute, sir; we're just going into the village now.'

It was perhaps because of the steep descent in the road and the trees on either side and between the houses that Manulla did not seem to me an ugly village. Nobody was about; we saw neither cat, nor dog, nor pig in the muddy street; the groom mentioned, however, that the Colonel knew the priest, and as soon as we passed his chapel the fields began again, uneventful little fields, for there was neither tree nor brook to be seen, nor anyone at work in them; only an occasional sheep, or goat, or mule, or ass, to tell us that the country was not yet a desert. Great stones had rolled down from the walls into the boreens leading from the main road up a landscape that would be flattering to call hilly; it was merely a little tumbled. Over the hillside a cabin showed sometimes, and at last a dog bounded out of one, and I said:

'Where there's a dog there's a man, and where there's a man a woman isn't far off — isn't that so?'

The boy did not answer, and, as seemingly he could not be persuaded into talk of any interest, I continued my survey of the country, noticing, for lack of something else to do, that it had flattened out without becoming a plain, and that the clouds were gathering on the horizon in a mass foretelling a downpour. But to mention that we were in for a wetting would only provoke a monosyllable from the boy. On the whole, the better chance of conversation seemed to be in a comparison between the Manulla and the Balla road.

'The Colonel thinks this is the easier road.'

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'It doesn't seem to be quite so hilly, but it is treeless, whereas on the Balla road there are trees nearly all the way to Moore Hall. Ballinafad — by the way, Mr. Llewellyn Blake has settled the monks at Ballinafad, hasn't he?'

'So I've heard tell, sir.'

'And how do the country-people like that, and they going to get the estate divided between them?'

The boy called to the pony, and I had to repeat the question.

'The monks is giving fine wages at Ballinafad.'

But how much they were paying he could not tell, and I tried to forget his presence, remembering that there never was any gentry between Balla and Castlebar, and that the only trees in the west are the woods that encircle the Big Houses. On leaving Balla one leaves Athy Valley on the right, and I took pleasure in recalling Sir Robert Blosse and Lady Harriet; their children I never knew. A little farther on was Browne Hall; Edith and Alice had been beautiful girls. The Browne Hall and the Ballinafad estates were contiguous, and Joe Blake going off to Castlebar races with his arm round his serving-maid's waist rose up in my mind as if it had been yesterday. Two miles farther up the road is Ballyglass, our post town; the mail coach used to change horses there, and I remembered my mother reining in her ponies so that we might have a good view of the coach as it came swinging round the bend. The men that clipped horses lived in Ballyglass, in a cottage with a pretty flower-garden in front — a rare thing in Mayo; and from the gate of Tower Hill to Carnacun the road is wooded, between Carnacun and Moore Hall the hills are naked, and the Annys River dribbles through the low-lying fields under Annys bridge to Lough Carra.

'We shall turn into the Castlebar road presently, shan't we?'

'Yes, sir, round by Clogher.'

How the name carried my thoughts over the years to the time when it was our delight to go to Clogher to gather cherries! We used to tear down the branches unreproved. There were four girls at Clogher — Helena, Lizzie, Livy, and May. Lizzie was the merriest, and her inventiveness was my father's admiration, for, needing a hearth-rug for her doll's house, she had divined one in a mouse. My father delighted in this association of images — a mouse-skin rug for a doll's house; and as we drove towards Moore Hall it seemed to me that I could see Clogher and its dead girls quite plainly — a little mist had come between us, that was all. 'In another instant I shall be pondering on life and its meaning,' I said, and looked round for something in the landscape to which I might direct the lad's attention. 'Don't you think we may hope for a fine day after all?' I asked, and the question seemed legitimate enough, for at that moment a ray lit the worn field in which a ewe bleated after her lamb to come at once to relieve her distended udder.

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'The lamb is the first sign of spring. The lamb comes before the daffodil. Do you know the flower?'

'Do you mean the daffydowndilly, sir?'

'That's what old Betty MacDonald used to call them.'

'We're just turning into the Clogher road, sir.'

'Yes, and yonder is the police-station, and beyond it the cross-road — to the right Castlebar, to the left Carnacun.'

'You've a fine memory, God bless it, yer honour.'

The same whitewash of the Clogher police barracks struck through the trees the same as forty years before, and I began to wonder what answer the boy would make if I were to tell him that the trees had not grown a foot within forty years. 'There's no use in wondering,' I said. 'He would make none;' but to my surprise he said:

'Them fellows do be too busy oiling their quiffs to put the comether on the girls.'

For a moment this remark was mistaken by me for Celtic wit, but the sullenness of my companion stirred me to guess that perhaps one of the policemen's quiffs had been the means of doing him out of his own girl and that it would be well to talk to him of something else.

'As soon as we pass the barracks we shall turn to the left and there will be hazel-bushes and rocks on both sides of the road, and about two hundred yards farther on we shall get a blink of Carnacun Lake where the hill drops.'

But the groom was not listening, and I fell to thinking of the pretty brooks one sees in England, purling and curling between low green banks, and shadowed by willow-trees. The willow follows the brook, and the Irish landscape lacks brooks and willows. 'Lakes are not in my temperament,' I said; and set myself to remembering the many different lakes that we catch sight of from our roads. 'Lake and Hazel' would have been a better title perhaps than 'The Untilled Field.' The country should be redeemed from that disagreeable and useless tree now that iron hoops have superseded wooden. We used to be able to sell hazel rods to the coopers, and I remembered their huts in Derrinrush all the summer, and Domnick Browne, who went away to New Zealand, taking with him a bundle of rods for walking-sticks. That was forty years ago, and he did not write till he discovered that he could trace me no farther back than Charles V., whereas himself went back to Charlemagne. 'A wonderful thing life is,' I said, and began to notice the endless stone walls between Moore Hall and Manulla, loose walls dividing little fields with a hawthorn growing in one corner and two magpies flying — whither? 'The people and the country are still savage,' I mused. 'Ireland is without pleasant objects to look upon, though why there have never been windmills in Ireland it would be difficult to say, for there is plenty of wind.' In my childhood

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there were a few water-mills, and it was pleasing to recall the day when the governess and the Colonel and myself had tripped over to Tower Hill to watch the mill wheel. But long ago that mill stopped working; flour is now imported. Yonder is Carnacun Lake, behind a scrubby hillside with the pines 'fornent it,' as the groom would say if he could be persuaded into speech. The lake seemed smaller than I remembered it, but he could not tell me if it were drying up. I looked forward to the cross-roads, and it was pleasant to see that the smith's forge was still there, and Grayon's house, one of my tenants, the tenant of Ballintubber, a wealthy man, even forty years ago, for he could afford to lend me two hundred pounds... money spent during my minority. The chapel stood up over the village on a knoll, and the fringe of trees about it was as ragged as when our carriage used to turn in the gateway. The smith's house and three or four cabins with sagging roofs were still the village of Carnacun; nothing had been added or taken away. I looked out for the house licensed to sell beer and tobacco, and found it, as dark and as dismal as of yore, a threshold that any moralist would approve. Above it was the great wall of the ball alley denounced by Father James Browne in his sermons: 'You think I don't be hearing your brogues about the doorways, and after I have gone up the steps of the altar,' he used to say. And now the rival of his Mass had fallen into ruins, some of the stones had tumbled out of the high wall, weeds had sprung up in the alley, and Father James's house, to which I used to ride my pony for a Latin lesson, was a ruin too. The present priest lives higher up the hill, in a two-storeyed house with plate glass windows; but does he read Virgil for his pleasure and drink as good port as Father James? Be this as it may, it will always seem to me that a great deal of the character of the village of Carnacun has gone with the old cottage under the ilex-trees, the ball alley, and Father James Browne. His image has nearly faded from my mind, but I can still recall a high-shouldered man with a large hooked nose and a complexion like a Crofton apple, and whose wont it was to walk about the parish in a tom cassock seeing that everybody was about his business. He would hop over the wall down into the road and out of the road again, on to the path across the triangular field to the school-house over yonder on the hillside. 'Why, Misther School-masther, do you mind being called the school-masther? You are the school-masther just as I am the parish priesht. I don't mind being called the parish priesht. I like being called the parish priesht, so why should you not like being called the school-masther?' 'So class distinctions were beginning to jar even then, and to this school we owe the disappearance of the Irish language from this part of the country,' I said, seeing in memory the children returning from this school along the road that winds through damp fields on one side, melting almost into bog about the Annys River; on the other side the land rises, and all the cabins appeared just as I had left them; a little improvement was noticeable in the last one; no better than a stye it was in old time, amid cesspools, unfit truly for an animal to live in. I used to hope that no human being would come out of its doorway until we had passed it by, and it was a satisfaction to learn one day that this cabin was not on our, but on the Tower Hill estate. The elder-bushes a few hundred yards farther on rose up in my mind, with my mother and my governess gathering the flowers, which were supposed to be good for sunburn, and myself cutting the stems for pop-guns. And by these bushes are two boreens, one leading over the hill to the right, the other slipping clandestinely away to the left along one of our woods to Runnineal, a Tower Hill village by the Annys River; and between them, over against the main road, is a woodranger's lodge, once upon a time the dwelling of a man called Murphy, whose welcome I used to dread. Like a great

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big dog he would run out of his house or saw-pit when he heard the wheels of the car, and his bark of welcome followed us until we reached the little bridge that spans the bog drain.

In those days a path was a wonderful thing, much more wonderful than a road, and there was a path by the bridge; and one day I succeeded in persuading my governess to wander down it, and we had followed it through some young fir-trees; and yet undaunted I had implored that we should follow the path through a wood, and it had led us at last to a field golden with buttercups and a drain in which wild irises grew. A little farther on we spied another path leading up the hillside, a dark and suspicious path, but a girl who dropped a curtsey told us that it would lead us right on to the stables of the Big House. We had dared to follow it too; and had come upon dells, open spaces, and copses, and trees of every kind; silver firs in whose vasty heights I was certain there were wood-pigeons' nests; and as we descended the hill on the other side a rowan delayed us; the berries were just beginning to redden, and immediately after we were in the bog road which was well known to us, and at the end of our adventure. Rowan berries and irises are not of the same month; two memories seem to have got mingled. I care not, enough it is to know that that wooded hillside was once full of adventure and mystery, and that there was a dark place under the turret at the end of the garden into which I did not dare to go, bramble-covered hollows into which I used to peep and then run away, afraid to look back. But the day came when I pushed my way through the dark coverts, and lo! there was nothing.

I was awakened out of my dreams of childhood by the new gateway that the Colonel had brought from Newbrook, and it looked handsomer even than I had expected, though the Colonel's praise had led me to expect a good deal. It had opened upon one of the Newbrook avenues a hundred years ago; cut-stone was not so costly then as it is to-day: even so, money must have been more plentiful in those days, for the gateway obviously represented a great deal of labour. In those times everything came off the land: mutton, beer, butter, bread, jam; the stewards, gardeners, butlers, and huntsmen came from the village, the housemaids too, for feudalism had lasted in Ireland down to 1870. But all that is changed now; the peasants have repossessed themselves of Newbrook and are offering its trees, two hundred years old, at eighteenpence apiece. 'And the trees that I am now looking at — the Moore Hall trees — will soon after my death be felled and the gateway will again be offered for sale, and there being no foolish buyer, the cut stone will be used to build cottages.'

A sudden stopping of the pony jerked me forward in my seat, and he began the ascent laboriously while I looked for the tall laburnum up whose slippery stem I had never succeeded in swarming. It was not there, yet it existed in my memory. I missed, too, some of the hawthorn-bushes, and very little was left of the great lilac-bush that used to stand by another path over the hill; it too led to the stables… one of our landmarks. We used to look forward to seeing it when we returned from our walks, and I remembered how one day in midsummer, after chasing through the woods, playing at Red Indians, yelling as we imagined Red Indians yell on the war-path, I had thrown myself into a haycock just by this lilac-bush, and, looking up into the blue sky, it had seemed to me that I had discovered how to be happy, and all night long I had lain awake, planning for the morrow: we would bring out whips with louder lashes and extend our adventure into mysterious places whither we had never dared to venture. We would

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penetrate the tangled coverts despite lurking ghouls and fairies. Children see many things that grown-ups have lost sight of. But the next day the woods had lost some of their mystery, and when summer returned the ghouls and fairies had died out of our imagination. Fairyland had vanished from our vision, and I went to old Joseph Applely to ask him how it was that I no longer experienced any desire to crack my whip, or to hide in the lilac-bush, or to roll in the hay.

The drive turned round a hawthorn, passed through a glade, and I looked out for the next lilac-bush, for it was within its perfume that I had had my first religious conversation with the Colonel. I could find no trace of it, but on the left, on the brow of the lawn, were two holly-trees into which I had shot many an arrow from the steps. But the laburnums that had once decorated the head of the drive, had they died too, died of old age or for lack of human companionship, the laburnum being a familiar tree? The last ascent is steep, and the pony walked every step of it, not consenting to trot till he reached the gravel sweep in front of the square Georgian house with the great flight of steps and big pillars supporting a balcony. On these steps a couple of red setters were always waiting — a special breed for which the house was famous. Nell rose up before me in her colour, in her shape, in all her winsome ways. A better dog never drew the scent of a covey of partridges or pack of grouse, and she would retrieve a duck far out in the reeds. My father often beat her for coursing hares, but despite these beatings she could not bear to be separated from him, and one evening he pulled her out of the lake into the boat saying that she had been swimming after us for more than an hour, and that if the large trout had not delayed us outside the reeds, she would have gone on swimming till she sank. Her son, Saddler, the biggest setter ever known — like a Newfoundland he was, and not a single white hair in his coat — used to lie in the hall on the mat. One day my father mentioned that the dog always snapped if he was stirred out of his sleep, and looked round with a bewildered air, and then suddenly seemed to recover himself. Saddler was suffering all this while from rabies, and as soon as the veterinary surgeon saw him he ordered him to be shot. Blush and Ruby were the last setters that adorned the steps, and the steps were the only part of the architecture that I ever liked, Moore Hall not being in my taste, which was for brick, and perhaps it is still, for houses that have been added to by different generations rather than for grey square blocks with pillared balconies. That is how I used to speak of Moore Hall. Moore Hall had always seemed a Mansion House to me, inferior to Clogher and Tower Hill, whereas it is superior to either, for it was built in 1780, and it was with a sense of relief that I had heard from the Colonel in Dublin that the roof had been raised by my father after winning some big races. The old roof was fifteen feet lower, and the slates that covered it were the small green Irish slates like tiles mortared together. It appears that it never was completely water-tight and that constant leakage had rotted the beams, so there was some excuse for the high roof and the ugly blue slates; and likewise for my antipathy to Moore Hall: the proportions of the house having been spoilt by the new roof and by the plate-glass that my father had put into the windows of the hall and dining-room and drawing-room, the feeling stole upon me, as the pony stumbled up the last ascent, that if I were ever to come to live in Moore Hall, the whole country-side would have to be searched for the old hand-made glass with rings in each pane like blobs of grease in soup.

But I had always liked the imposing flight of steps and the hall with its Adams ceiling, and should have liked the rooms on either side better if they had not been decorated in accordance with

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Victorian taste. It would seem that my father's journey to the East had to expend itself somehow, and being a clever man of many aptitudes he had designed a Greek room in an interval between racing and politics. It had filled my childhood with admiration, but the straw colour and the blue-grey chosen for the walls had faded in the course of forty years, and the decorators that had come from Dublin when the Colonel went into residence at Moore Hall had failed to divine the original tints in the faded. The Colonel had warned me that they had failed, but I was not prepared for so complete a failure, and the somewhat coarse, very nearly vulgar appearance that had been given to the room set me thinking that perhaps it would be well to replace all this plaster of Paris with a pretty French paper. 'But who could restore the Adams ceiling?' I asked myself, as I crossed a hall of fine proportions, 'and absolutely untouched,' I muttered, going into the dining-room, where my father's pilasters and variegated woods displeased me, and forced me to conclude that if Moore Hall were to be the end of my life the drawing-room and dining room would have to be brought into harmony with the hall. 'And the roof lowered some ten or fifteen feet,' I added. 'My father was too near the Georgian period to appreciate it.' On raising my eyes from the carved merman and mermaid on either side of the fireplace to my ancestor in the red coat, I began to wonder if the painting were Spanish…. 'Be that as it may, my grandfather is a Wilkie for sure;' and just as I had arrived at this final attribution the Colonel bounced in, fresh and rosy from the farmyard, all breeches and gaiters, and anxious to show me round the house.

The hall opened on to a wide passage with a staircase at either end, and off this passage there were four rooms — our old schoolroom, the watercloset, and two more rooms opening one into the other, and known as the doctor's and the priest's room. All these rooms the Colonel had thrown into one, and he had brought down grandfather's book cases and set them along the walls, achieving in this way a fine room, no doubt; but a long narrow room is un-Georgian, and character in a house is as important as in a man. No one sits in a long, narrow room. The fireplace is necessarily at one end, so while our left side is freezing our right is being roasted. Rooms should be square, there can be no doubt about it; and the present library is at another disadvantage — it overlooks a back-yard, a desert place surrounded by high walls, the top of the walls spiked like a gaol. This desert place was once set round with outhouses; a scullery opened on to this yard, and the hen-house was next to it. There was the wood-house, and on the other side of the gate was a turf-house, and in the right-hand corner I remembered the great chimney of the brew-house. William Mullowney's father used to brew beer there. But that was before my time. We used to get our beer from Ballinrobe in the sixties; our beer now comes to Mayo from Dublin.

The yard had always been considered to be a drawback, and with the disappearance of the outhouses it had become a very ugly feature. In old times it was the centre of activity. The water for the house was brought from the lake in a water-barrel, the cart stood in the yard with the mule-boy beside it, and when the maids had filled their cans he put the mule into the shafts and went away to the lake again, leaving them to exchange words with the garden-boy, their gossip interrupted by the voice of the cook or the arrival of the ass from the bog with creels of turf, which the turf-boy would carry up the back staircase, emptying his load into the great barrels that stood on the different landings, filling with special care the barrel in Joseph Applely's pantry,

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and I think it was Joseph who told me that these barrels had come from Spain filled with port and sherry. My thoughts passed into dialogue:

'Did Joseph Applely,' I asked, 'say that they came from Spain in the days of my grandfather, in the days of William Mullowney, the father of the valet I took to Paris with me? These importations of wine must have ceased in Ireland sometime about the beginning of the nineteenth century.'

The Colonel could not tell me if this were so, and he seemed much more interested to learn whether I thought it would be better to rebuild the outhouses or cover in the yard.

'Cover in the yard!' I said.

'Why not? A series of arches and a terrace on the top.'

'And a flight of steps would serve from the higher to the lower terrace.'

'And on either hand vases — '

'Or rare pieces of sculpture,' I said. The Colonel looked distressed. 'But how would the yard underneath be lighted?'

' By side windows.'

'And the drip? The rain would have to go somewhere.'

On our way to the bathroom he explained how it might be mitigated, if not altogether avoided.

'Here,' he said, 'is the bathroom.'

'The first,' I answered, 'that Moore Hall has ever known;' and we talked of the footpans and the bidets that once formed part of the furniture of every bedroom, and the disrepute into which bathing had fallen since Roman times, all through the Middle Ages, until Anglo-Indians reintroduced the habit of the thorough washing of the body into Europe.

From the bathroom window we caught sight of the ruined privy under the beech-trees to which our ancestors were wont to adjourn in the morning, their pipes in their mouths to talk the news, and the news was always of a racehorse, or a duel, or a hunt.

'We have improved upon those times, yet our neighbours still allow their dogs to deposit ordure upon our doorsteps. Humanity advances slowly,' I observed.

The Colonel had chosen my father's dressing-room for the bathroom, the room not being as intimately associated in his mind as it was in mine with our father. I should never have had the

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courage to make the change, so real is my memory of the room as it stood in my father's lifetime, himself seated at the great bureau full of countless drawers at which he wrote his letters, or standing before the toilet table between the windows covered with cut-glass phials of macassar oil, pots of bear's grease, many kinds of ivory brushes, tortoiseshell combs of all sorts and sizes, some destined for the hair of the head, some for the whiskers, relics of the days of his dandyhood, for he must have been a great dandy when Anonymous turned a shoe at Liverpool and Corunna won the Chester Cup.

He liked me to come into his dressing-room to talk to him while he lathered his face, and I remembered the lie I told him when he asked me if I had used the top of his silver shaving-pot to knock in a nail, and the day when he asked me to read him Burke's speeches aloud in an edition printed with long s's. I stumbled over these, as I should do now, and like one who had discovered his son to be blind or deaf or dumb, he threw open the baize door that communicated with my mother's room and appealed to her for confirmation of his fears. As she showed little or no alarm the governess was sent for and it was put to them: Had they ever known or heard of a child of seven who could not read Burke's speeches without faltering in an edition printed with the long s's? Before Miss Westby had time to answer my mother said that she didn't believe that any child of seven could read the long s's without faltering, and I can see him, his face covered with lather, telling that he used to read the *Times* aloud to his mother at breakfast when he was three. My mother's incredulity exasperated him, and he ordered my governess and me to the schoolroom, where for days we sat reading a very indifferent history of England by one Lingard. We dreaded his incursions into the schoolroom, and listened with apprehension while Joseph Applely brushed the master's silk hats and arranged his gloves for him in the hall, and we breathed more freely when we heard the hall-door clang, for we knew then he had gone to the stables to feel the horses' legs, and our hope was that the interest in the morning gallops would help him to forget my lessons.

The room in which I had seen him lying dead had not been in use since mother's death. My brother was with her; he had probably seen her die, and I supposed that that was why he had chosen for himself the two rooms at the end of the passage — rooms that I recollected as grandmother's rooms. After visiting them he threw open the door of the summer room, a pretty room opening on to the balcony that the four great pillars support, and in an instant the room returned to what it had been forty years before, and I remembered my father sitting at the rose-wood table in the evening, drinking a large cup of tea, telling me stories of Egypt and the Dead Sea, Baghdad, the Euphrates and the Ganges, stories of monkeys and alligators and hippopotami, stories that a boy loves. 'I am older now than my father was when he used to be telling me those stories,' I thought as we left the room and went to the two rooms at the head of the staircase, where my grandfather's library had once been. 'I've put you into these rooms,' the Colonel said.

'Grandfather's spirit seems still to animate these rooms,' I answered. The Colonel did not reply, and then I seemed to apprehend something that had hitherto escaped me: Moore Hall had always seemed alien and remote to me because it was pervaded by the minds of those that preceded me. My grandfathers and grandmothers were underground, but along the landings

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and in the large rooms opening on the passages one seemed to be aware of mentalities different from one's own, which is not strange, Moore Hall not having been subjected to any new influences since 1870; and going down to luncheon with my brother I felt I should never be able to live in this house; I should always feel my grandfather sitting by me wondering how it was that his grandson should practise so familiar a style, one so unlike Gibbon.

'I should be always engaged in imaginary dialogues,' I said, 'telling him that he did not always write like Gibbon but like me in his preface to the *French Revolution*; and the preface is the best part of it.

'If you were to say that he would answer, "But you haven't read my history of the French Revolution."'

And luncheon over, the Colonel said he would like to show me the garden, but I could barely see it, so present in my memory was the old eighteenth century garden, its rows of espalier apple-trees with four great walnut-trees, one in each plot. The two great ilex-trees whose branches leaned in front of the turret had died; the turret itself was in ruins, and the Colonel had felled a good many beeches along the twenty-foot wall to get light and air for his fruit trees. I was sorry for these, and said so.

'But nothing grows under them,' he explained, and led me round his peach and pear and apple and cherry trees, and while he explained the different varieties, I dreamed of the sweet-briar hedge that divided my mother's flower-garden from the plots in which we had once grown potatoes, cabbages, onions, spinach, chives, parsnips, cauliflowers, beans, asparagus. The asparagus-bed was never a great success, because of the walnut-trees which my father would not allow to be felled, his mother having planted them. A great apple-tree — a very venerable tree, moss-grown and carious — is still more distinct in my memory. It stood a little beyond the flower walk, and near it, tucked away in a corner, was a dense growth of raspberry bushes enclosed by a thick hedge, a dangerous place in my imagination, one in which witches and other evil spirits were to be met, but the fruit tempted me, and my governess once boxed my ears for having hidden myself and eaten too many raspberries.

We came upon the ruins of the greenhouse from which we used to steal the grapes, even when the door was kept locked, and my father once beat me with a horse-whip for breaking the panes, and now elderly men both of us, the Colonel and I stood looking at a large cut-stone chimney that the Colonel had saved in case I should care to rebuild the greenhouse again.

'Cut-stone is very expensive,' he added, 'but in our grandfather's days labour was cheaper;' and we passed into the stables, none of which had fallen. There was the box in which Croagh Patrick neighed when the boy brought his sieveful of corn. How he plunged his muzzle into it! for he was a greedy feeder and ready to kick anyone that came near him till the last grain was licked up. In the next box I had seen Master George, one of the best horses of his year, only a few pounds behind Croagh Patrick at a mile and a half, and his superior at two miles, a terrible buck-jumper that would have dislodged any cowboy. The little ponies that these horsemen ride

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have not sufficient strength to throw them out of the high Mexican saddles, but Master George was sixteen hands and a half, and when his head disappeared between his legs it was no easy thing to keep on a six-pound saddle, and the tightest might have been flung out of it, as I was three times one morning. It was once my luck to be thrown three times before breakfast, these falls irritating my father scarcely less than the long s's had done eight years before, compelling him to declare that no horse could unseat him. Joseph Applely smiled and went out of the room, and next morning my father was thrown in front of the house by the holly-trees, breaking his collar-bone, and the doctor had to be sent for.

'Wolf Dog, Anonymous, and Corunna have dragged hay out of those very racks,' I said; and the coach house recalled the coach hung on leather straps, and the great phaeton, likewise on leather straps, which hardly ever went out — a museum piece it was — and the tiny phaeton in which my mother used to drive Primrose and Ivory, a beautiful pair of ponies. The great fir at the back of the stable, in front of the hayrick, reminded me of the day that Joseph Applely took me out for a walk and taught me a little birdlore. The nest he showed me at the end of the bough was a goldfinch's, and we explored the woods together, and far clearer than to-day is that fragrant morning by the hawthorn-tree all in flower, Joseph lifting me up to see into the black bird's nest. And I remember his voice: 'You mustn't touch the eggs, Master George, or the bird will forsake her nest.' 'But how will the bird know? Let's try.' 'We must go back, Master George, and if we return at once we shall get back in time for dinner.' 'Oh no,Joseph, let's go a little farther and find some more nests,' I cried, for it did not seem to me that I should ever want dinner again.

But of what was the Colonel thinking? He is like his father, discreet; therefore not a man of letters, and we talked about the foreign firs which our father had planted in the sixties, and they seemed to me to be out of keeping with the landscape.

'Deodars may be suited to India,' I said, 'and the Wellingtonia may be well enough in California, but here they are detestable; and far worse than the deodar and the Wellingtonia is that cypress los - – something, a tree of vile habit, sending down branches to take root, creating a little jungle.'

The Colonel admitted the habit, which he could not well deny, but he could not be persuaded to send round for a couple of hatchets, urging that felling trees is not the light work that I imagined it to be, the real reason being that he is as averse as I am from felling a tree, an aversion inherent in every sensitive nature, one might almost say in every nature except the wood-cutter's; habit has dimmed his memory of his druid days; and he no longer perceives the mystery of the vasty height sprung out of a single seed.

It was while I was thinking these things that the great walls of the farmyard rose up through the beech trees, eighteen or twenty feet high, enclosing buildings of all kinds: stables for many cart-horses, granaries, barns, haggards, byres, smithies. A great deal of cut-stone had been used in these buildings, and the Colonel had saved many pieces from the ruins of the smithy, and these he said would come in useful when the time came to rebuild the farmyard. I liked to

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hear him dreaming his dreams while I meditated the question whether it were crueller to fell an ox or a tree. Behind that wall I had seen death for the first time, and with that kind of morbid pleasure which one feels in wounding oneself, I recalled how the shepherd had come one day into the yard driving half a dozen sheep before him, and how, stopping in my play, I asked him why he had brought them from the fields. He answered me that Friday was always 'killing day,' and putting out his crook he caught a sheep by the leg and felt for the fat; but not being satisfied with the animal, he allowed it to escape from him. Again he put out his crook and caught another, and again he was not satisfied; three or four sheep were tried; it may have been over the fourth that he muttered, 'This one will do,' and led it into a corner. He and his boy stretched it on a slightly raised platform, and I asked why a bucket was placed under its head. 'To catch the blood, Master George,' the shepherd answered as he sharpened his knife; and all this ritual was so enticing that I waited impatiently, perhaps even asked him to hurry, fearing that my governess might come and call me away before the sheep died. It accepted death without a bleat, looking at us all the time with round, peaceful eyes, in which one could read neither love of life, nor fear of death, nor reproach; and as I write this line I can see the blood pouring, pouring, pouring into the bucket. 'Why won't he die?' I asked myself. At last the eyes began to glaze, and I said to the shepherd,' He has begun to die,' and the shepherd pressed the sheep all over with his great strong fingers, urging the blood out of the wound in the neck. As he flayed the animal, in my imagination I remembered how a few days after the Colonel and I stopped amazed, so terrific were the shrieks we heard. But our governess would not, or could not, tell us whence they came or their cause. As if scenting death, we appealed to a peasant; and he told us the butcher was killing pigs. We ran from her to see the pigs killed; we hid from her in a stable, and did not venture out till she had given up the search. 'I'm afraid you're late; he's a goner by this time,' the peasant called after us, and when we arrived at the farmyard the carcase was being cut up and salted, and it would be some time before the butcher would be ready for another. The Colonel was a little diffident, uncertain whether he should stay to see a pig killed, but perhaps ashamed to go lest I might laugh at him. If I rightly remember, I took on authoritative airs, and bade the men hurry, returning now and again to the dung-heap to watch the pigs; there were eleven or twelve rooting and rolling, happy, for the warm May sunlight caressed their sides, and apparently the screams of their fellow, now passed away into salt pork, had not disturbed them. Standing by them I picked out the biggest to be taken next, a pigheaded animal that contested every yard of the way, two rustics dragging him, and myself applying an ashstick as a goad to his rump, and so cruelly that one of the rustics begged me to desist. He was bleeding under the tail when he was hoisted to the platform, and I felt ashamed of my cruelty; but he was a vicious brute that would have bitten the butcher had it not been for the rope about his snout. The butcher worked his knife slowly through the neck; and I plied him with questions: Why was it that pigs squealed when they were being killed and sheep died without uttering a bleat? Was it because it hurt pigs more to die than it did sheep? The butcher answered that pigs were noisy devils; somebody else added that they liked music, the bag pipes especially — answers that perplexed me; and I stood watching the blood, noting that with its flowing the squeals grew fainter and fainter. At last they ceased altogether. But dead he seemed such a stupid thing that I began to wish him alive again. My governess came into the cowyard saying she had been looking for us everywhere; our dinner was ready and we must come at once. 'But we haven't got the bladder yet.' The butcher put his hand into the pig, tore it out, and handed it to us all

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stinking; our governess begged us to relinquish it, but explaining to her that we were going to blow it out and tie it to the end of a stick, we followed her to the schoolroom. 'We shall want two more bladders to beat each other with,' I explained, and I hurried the Colonel through his dinner. Our governess thought that pig-killing was not likely to exercise any softening influence on our characters and resisted firmly our attempt to bring our sister with us. 'A young lady,' she said, 'would be disgraced for ever if it became known that she had seen pigs killed.' My sister cried. We were sorry for her, but clean forgot her in the spectacle of the pigs wallowing in the dung-heap outside Fright's stable, each waiting his tum for the great experience of his life — the butcher's knife.

Fright was a very handsome thoroughbred horse, He had won some big races — the Caesarewitch, I think — and had gone to the stud with a deformed foreleg. My father was sure Fright would get winners if he were given the right mares; he was a great authority on the breeding of thoroughbreds; Croagh Patrick had inspired him to write a work proving — I have forgotten what it was intended to prove — that certain strains died out, but into this intricate subject of heredity it will be perhaps well not to enter.

Whether he was right or wrong in his theory, it is certain that he brought Fright from England determined that he should have his chance, and the horse stood at Moore Hall for many years. Ten pounds for thoroughbred mares, five for half-breds; the groom's fee was, I think, the same in every case, five shillings, and it was a very well earned five shillings, for Fright gave Pat Kelly a great deal of trouble. So indifferent did he seem to his job that at one time my father was thinking seriously of getting rid of him, so Pat Kelly said, and he related to me with some pride how he had discovered the way to manage him. One day when he was bringing him home from walking exercise Fright had neighed at the sight of some cart mares: Pat had spoken in his ear and encouraged him, and then Pat had become suddenly reticent — not to the horse, but to me, and I was left pondering on the mystery of the continuous existence of life in this world. I had been told, as every child is told, that babies were found under gooseberry bushes, and had accepted the explanation for some years, but between the ages of ten and twelve this explanation seemed hardly worthy of a boy's serious credence, and I had accepted the only other possible solution — that the female produced children unaided, and had begun to regret my sex when Pat Kelly's words made life seem again worth living. And not to find myself lacking when my day came, I used to bide in the carpenter's shop (the carpenter's shop being next to Fright's stable) to listen to Pat encouraging the horse with all kinds of coaxings: 'That's the old boy, that's the old man,' and sometimes with so little effect that Pat's mouth would grow dry and he would curse the horse, and after cursing him he would start another set of coaxings, at the end of which, perhaps, the horse would be led out of the stable. It was then time for me to run out of the carpenter's shop and climb into one of the beech-trees overlooking the yard; and it so happened that the day the Colonel was let into the secret was the very day that Pat Kelly made a pointing-stock of us, and our father came round and called to us to come down and caned the Colonel severely.

With all these memories flocking through my mind, it was sad to see the carpenter's shop in ruins, for in it I had spent many days with Mickey Murphy trying to learn to use the chisel, the

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plane, and the saw; but to no purpose did I labour, for I was without handicraft, less gifted than the carpenter's son, and this deficiency found me out again in Julian's studio. The Colonel had never collected hatchets and hammers, saws and chisels, planes and gouges, files and augers and gimlets, and perhaps that is why he had bought an old saw-mill in Ballinrobe and established it in a corner of the haggard where, once upon a time, there used to be great sport ferreting rats in the wheat stacks built upon short stone pillars about three feet from the ground, with a slab on the top to keep out the rats. But a mischievous boy, preferring a rick full of rats to his father's grain, will leave a plank for them to climb; and when threshing-day comes, the rats will scurry before a ferret with the dogs in full tilt after them; and if perchance a curious dog should try to appreciate the smells of rat and ferret and get his nose bitten, he will cry, 'You'll know better next time, Towser.'

Outside the barn was a curious threshing machine; two horses yoked to a great beam were the motive-power; and these set going within a little stone circle all kinds of wheels and cog-wheels, and in response the jaws inside the barn clattered, and the women smiled upon me as they fed them with sheaves and asked me not to come too near, for I might have my fingers snapped off. When the threshing-machine went out of gear, the flail was flung, and dodging 'the thresher's weary flingin'-tree,' I would snatch a handful of grain and throw it to the finches that were waiting in the fir-trees on the hillside; not out of kindness of heart, but to entice them to their death; and when they had assembled in sufficient numbers on the ground and were pecking greedily, unmindful of any .danger, two barrels of a fowling-piece were loosed upon them, and the ground was covered with blood and feathers. It is thus that a boy learns to shoot, and for some time he fires at every living thing — birds that he would afterwards think it barbarous to harm: tomtits, bullfinches, goldfinches, thrushes; and blackbirds; the jackdaws as they hover about the chimneys, the magpies as they fly from hawthorn to hawthorn. And the gulls flapping about the lake's shore are shot at again and again, for gulls will dive after a wounded gull, and so the sportsman has a chance of shooting fifteen, or twenty, or twenty-five, or thirty birds, as long as he has cartridges in his belt and the massacre does not sicken his heart. A boy will shoot squirrels, he will shoot a badger, a raven, an eagle, and all the hawks, owls, and wood pigeons. As we grow older the right to kill seems more and more doubtful, but a boy will even set dogs after a cat, and one day a very beautiful white cat had been hunted out of the laundry into the lofts and then out of the lofts; it had been driven to escape by a broken window; the dogs were set after it, and when it crossed the road, the dogs in hot pursuit, it was forced to take to one of the trees growing out of the shelving hillside; the laundry-maids came running down the road pleading for their cat, but a barbarous boy forced it out of the branches, and it had met its death among the dogs underneath. It is shameful to relate that in imitation of the huntsman he pulled out a knife and cut off the cat's head and distributed the flesh, treating it as if it had been a wild animal — a hare or a rabbit — whose function it is to provide us with sport as well as food.

'You would like to see the Stone Park,' the Colonel said, and I prayed that he might not be tempted to ask me to take the path that led round by the bog; it once opened on to Fairyland, but it could not now be else than a wilderness, the cottage a ruin, and the bog derelict. 'The last creel of turf has been drawn out of it.' A vision of waste water rose up in my mind. 'As we come up the bog-road,' I said to myself, 'I shall look through the tall hedge for the orchard; fifty years

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ago Joseph Applely found a bullfinches' nest in one of the apple-trees. I wonder if all the trees have disappeared. The Colonel can tell me.' But loth to ask him, I began turning over my memories of the hut made of hay and wattles that an old man used to build there and live in with a savage dog till the crop was gathered. The smoke rising out of his thatch had stirred in me a greater wonder than the hut of a Terra del Fuegian could do to-day, or indeed a settlement of chimpanzees…. I did not wish to follow the old paths,and prayed that the Colonel might not ask me. By the Bull Park are the Turlough and the Stone Park; and to the Stone Park I had gone one summer's evening long ago with two laundry-maids and a stable-boy to gather nuts. Is there anything that takes as deep a hold on memory as the drawing down of boughs laden with flowers or fruit? We had gathered till it was dark night under the trees and strange shadows began to move about the fairy-ring. In those days everybody believed in fairies and leprecauns. My father, when he set to work to redeem the Stone Park from the hazel, spared the rath or fairy-ring out of respect for old superstition, or was it because he half believed that bad luck attended the dispersal of these ancient dwellings? Be this as it may, the rath was spared, but the sacred hazel was uprooted all around; and a fine sight were the villagers loosing the roots with crowbars, and two, three, and sometimes four horses yoked to the same tree, and they never jibbing, for they could feel the tree coming all the while.

A great clearing was sown with wheat, and in the virgin soil the wheat grew to be the tallest and thickest in the country; but when the day came for reaping there was only a fringe, a hundred or more pea-fowl having encamped in the middle of the field, and the villagers muttered that the master would have done well not to have meddled with the 'good people.'

‘“The good people" seem to have recovered their holding,' I said, and sought for the road that our father had built. But all trace of it had been swallowed up in a jungle of blackthorn, 'And by the deer park it must be impenetrable,' I said, and we talked of the great deer park that had once extended round Castle Carra. Its wall was our mearing, and while the Colonel narrated his plans for the second ridding of the Stone Park by means of dynamite, I heard him break off in the middle of a sentence. 'The goats again!' and away he went with thirty or forty goats trotting in front of him, to return a few minutes afterwards, and so much out of breath that he could barely tell me he had seen them jump the deer park wall. 'It is just as I suspected,' he added a little later. 'During the summer they are in Castle Carra, but just at this time of the year they descend into Moore Hall because they have nothing to eat.'

' Why don't you shoot them?'

He had thought of shooting them, but was afraid to raise up hatred against himself in the country, for the goats were not altogether wild; somebody had a claim upon them or their milk. The goats carried my thoughts back to the days when we used to climb the deer park wall and find our way to Castle Carra, a great stronghold in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, abandoned, so it was said, in the seventeenth, or later. The ascendents of the great chieftains had gone to live in the modern house, now a ruin like the castle. A herdsman once lived in a corner of it, who would milk his goats for us, bringing us the milk warm from the udders in noggins. The circumstances of the abandonment of the castle must have been wonderful. Or

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was it abandoned by degrees? All the headland was at one time fortified, but of this vast castle little remains except the central tower or fort, overgrown with thorn. As we passed under the gateway my mother used to repeat verses from *Marmion*. Our tablecloth was laid on the grassy space which we said was the ancient banqueting-hall. Above us in the broken wall were glimpses of staircases built between the walls, and despite the protestations of my mother and the governess, I climbed up the wall one day and reached the staircase. But the chieftains had left neither treasure nor pistols nor swords behind them, and I returned… disconsolate.

'We might do a little clearing every year,' the Colonel broke in, 'and all the trees that we get out of the Stone Park can be cut up by the saw-mill, creating a huge provision of fuel for the house, and in ten or twelve years we shall find that we have done a great deal. Aren't you listening?'

'Yes, I'm listening, and I think you're right; in about ten or twelve years Moore Hall would be nearly the same as it was in the time of our father. But about Castle Carra. Tell me, have you been there lately?'

He had visited Castle Carra some three or four months ago, and the castle was crumbling; last Christmas there had been a great downfall; the old gateway had wellnigh disappeared.

'But the castle itself?'

'It won't last more than fifty years, and nobody is living now in the ruins of the modern house; it is even in a worse state of repair than the castle. You remember the great stone fox that stood in the middle of the courtyard and the two hounds on either side? They have been broken; I found the pieces among the brushwood. Another thing. Castle Island needs repair. Michael Malia was out there some time ago and he tells me that the base of the old castle is insecure, but that a few pounds would make it safe.'

'My dear friend, it is sad to see all these things going, but one can't rebuild ancient Ireland.' And when we regained the lawn and stood viewing the house from the hill, I said: 'There isn't enough money left to carry on another generation in Moore Hall. As soon as I am gone the house will be pulled down; the cottages in Derrinanny and Ballyholly will be rebuilt out of the rubble, or the house will become a monkery or a nunnery. Which would you prefer?'

The Colonel sought refuge in silence, and the melancholy that overspread his face suggested to me that the idea of Moore Hall being turned into a monastery had put the thought of Ballinafad into his mind. I knew that the abandoning of family property to strangers was distasteful to him. 'Now that Llewellyn has given Ballinafad to the monks, he may,' I said to myself, 'be more willing than he was some years ago to allow me to bring up one of his children a Protestant, on condition, of course, that I leave him Moore Hall.' I had written to him once on this very subject, and his answer had reached me in Paris, where I was staying at the Hotel Continental — a very angry letter, in which he spoke of my proposal as infamous and outrageous. His letter was an amazing one from my point of view. Why should my proposal be looked upon as infamous and disgraceful? I had asked myself, and I began to ask myself again the same question as we

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walked up the lawn together. 'He may,' I said, 'think differently now; circumstances have changed. Moreover, the proposal might be put to him again in conversation; words pass rapidly; there is no time for anger if they be dealt out skilfully;' and I thought how after dinner, when his wife had gone to bed and we were sitting in two arm-chairs before the turf fire, I might begin by complaining that now that Stella and Walter Osborne and Hughes were gone, Dublin had become a little too small, and he would ask me whether I was going to London or to Paris. Paris would introduce Dujardin's name, and I would tell him that Dujardin's ambitions were to found a new religion in which there was no dogma, only rite. The Colonel would shrug his shoulders and ask how rite could exist independent of dogma, and I would answer that there was no dogma in ancient religions, telling him that it was to the Greek sophists, the hairsplitters of the third and fourth centuries, that we were indebted for dogma. The Colonel would answer 'Judaism,' and I would explain incidentally that the Jews had never indulged in heresy hunting. It was not permitted to insult Jehovah, and anybody who did so was condemned to death, as Socrates was condemned for insulting the Gods. Dogma and its concomitant, heresy hunting, arose when? What Pope founded the Holy Order? The Reformation would be mentioned, and it would be an easy transition from the Reformation to my proposal.

We make these plans, but very rarely do we adhere to them; and after dinner, when we two were sitting in the drawing-room, without prelude or introductory matter of any kind, I said:

'My dear Maurice, I have a proposal to make to you. I am quite willing to pay for the education of your eldest son, and to leave him any property and pictures that may remain after my death, but I should like to bring him up a Protestant. Our family is a Protestant family; there are one or two apostates, it is true, but it was originally a Protestant family.'

'I should never consent to what you are proposing. You needn't go on.'

'I'm sorry for that, for of course it is impossible for you to deny that Catholicism makes for illiteracy. As I have pointed out again and again, Catholicism has hardly produced a book worth reading since the Reformation.'

'But I deny that completely.'

'It doesn't suit you to admit it. But this you will admit, that if Catholicism degrades, corrodes, paralyzes, and stupefies the intelligence, its day is over.'

'I admit that, if your premises be correct; but I deny your premises.'

'To deny is easy; but if what I say be not true, if Catholics have written as well as Agnostics and Protestants, the books are known. Name them.'

At the end of a long waste of argument, I said:

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'Well, if you are so convinced that the Catholic is equal to the Protestant, why not bring the matter to the test? You bring up one of your sons a Catholic, I will bring up the other a Protestant, and I will back the Protestant boy to be the superior of the Catholic to the extent of five hundred pounds. You can't afford five hundred; well, I'll be generous. If I win, I will give the five hundred to the Catholic as a sort of consolation prize.'

'The proposal you are making to me is utterly inacceptable and horrible. I can't think of anything more detestable than that I should give you one of my children to be brought up in a religion of which I disapprove, and that I should be tempted to do this by a promise that you will leave him money! If, later on, my children were to tell me that they preferred Protestantism to Catholicism, I don't say that I shouldn't be sorry, but I should do nothing to prevent them following the religion which they wished to follow, but if they were to change their religion in order to inherit property, or to get money, I should hate the very sight of them.'

'But, my dear Mamice, nobody except Cardinal Newman ever changed his religion for theological reasons. All changes of religion are brought about by pecuniary or sexual reasons.'

The Colonel did not answer. He lay back in his arm-chair white with passion, the first time I had ever seen him lose his temper since he was a little boy. It would have been easier to let the matter drop, but I had determined to make a last attempt to save the boy, and could not stop half-way.

'You told me that I libelled my great-grandfather by suggesting he became a Catholic because it was impossible to carry on business in Spain as a Protestant.'

'And I say so still; but we're not talking now of our great-grandfather, but of my children. Your proposal is not an honourable one, and if possible it would be less honourable of me to accept it.'

'Everybody has his own ideas of honour; there is no fixed standard; but it is a very common thing, as you must know, that when parents are divided in religious beliefs some of the children are brought up in one religion and some in another, and it would be difficult to impugn the fairness of such an arrange ment. I am prejudiced in favour of Protestantism for intellectual reasons, and because my life is moulded on facts rather than upon sentimentalities.'

To which the Colonel answered that I looked at the world through a narrow tube and could only see one spot at a time, and that my opinions were always as narrow as the tube; and then, getting angrier and angrier, his face bleached with a passion which I could not help admiring, for at all events he was himself in this scene, he reminded me that I had said I would leave Moore Hall to his children, but no sooner had I said that than I began to impose conditions. In the beginning they were to learn Irish, that was the condition; now a new condition was to be imposed, they were to be brought up Protestants.

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'Not both, only one; and if I pay for his education you can't expect me to bring up a boy in a religion which I think paralyzes the intelligence, the one thing that I value. Your concern is with the possibility of a future life, the soul's arrival in Purgatory and its subsequent release by means of Masses paid for the Pope's indulgences, and — '

'There's no use discussing this matter any further,' the Colonel answered, 'and it doesn't seem to me that it would be advisable that we should see each other any more. As for Moore Hall, you have made it impossible for me to live here any longer, and as soon as I can I shall leave.'

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