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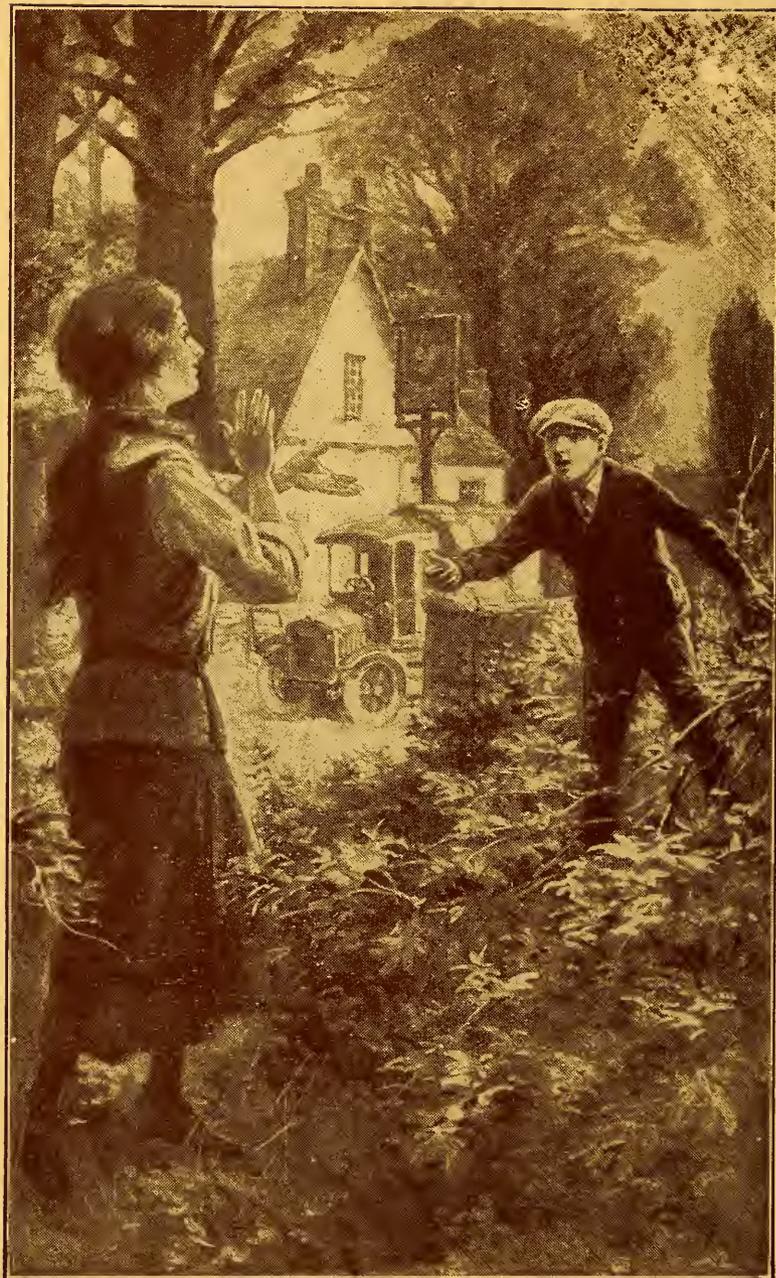
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*"Great Scott!" cried Joe, "Eileen Desmond!"*  
(Page 189)

# ON THE RUN

BY

FRANCIS J. FINN, S.J.

Author of "Percy Wynn," "Tom Playfair,"  
"Harry Dee," etc.



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# ON THE RUN

## CHAPTER I.

JOE RANLY, AMERICAN, ARRIVES IN DUBLIN AND BEGINS TO REVISE THE OPINIONS OF A LIFE-TIME.

“I WANT to go to the Jesuit residence on Upper Gardiner Street,” said Father Dalton to the driver of a jaunting car.

“Step right up, your Reverence,” returned the jarvey, raising his hat, and relieving the priest of his valise and suitcase.

“Oh, say! I beg your pardon,” broke in a boy apparently little more than fifteen years of age, “but would you mind my going along with you? I’ve got a letter of introduction to Father McSorley of that house.”

The clergyman turned and fixed his eyes upon the lad, who with no appearance of effort was holding in one hand a bit of luggage of such a size that it would be difficult to say whether it was a small trunk or a gigantic suitcase, and in the other a traveling bag of enormous proportions. In fact, not content with

holding these articles of luggage, the youth was lifting them up and down as though they were dumb-bells.

He was good to look upon. He was short, stocky, and as with no apparent effort he raised and lowered the luggage, the priest could clearly see the play of rippling muscle. Although short and stocky, he was in no wise stout. He was of bone and muscle all compact. His face, unusually fair, was drawn, which in addition to a slight tinge of pink in his cheeks might have led a superficial observer to suspect that he was a consumptive. Father Dalton was not a superficial observer; he had long since learned the difference between a young man in the pink of training and a young man in the first stages of tuberculosis.

“What team do you play on, Young America?” asked the priest, smiling and holding out the hand of welcome.

“Quarterback, St. Xavier College, Cincinnati, Ohio, U. S. A.,” answered the youth, dropping his luggage and shaking the priest’s extended hand with a grip that was viselike.

“You don’t mean to tell me that you are Joe Ranly?” cried Father Dalton, cleverly masking his wincing features under a cover of genuine astonishment.

“Why, how did you come to know my name?” exclaimed the still more astonished youth.

"It's quite simple," returned Father Dalton. "Everybody in Cincinnati knows the name of St. Xavier's great quarterback. My name is Father Dalton."

"Of St. Xavier's Church, Cincinnati? Why, I've heard of you. Lots of the boys knew you. Shake again."

This time Father Dalton gave the enthusiastic lad one finger.

"Come on," he said; "suppose we get aboard."

The jarvey meantime had stowed away the luggage of the two Americans.

Young Ranly in response to this suggestion leaped up into his seat with the gracefulness of a bird; but Father Dalton, a sexagenarian, did not follow his example. He looked puzzled. How was he to get up? The jarvey came to his rescue at once, pointing out a step and giving his Reverence an arm. Also, he was encumbered by the help of young Joe, who caught him by the other arm and gave him such a generous pull that the priest was within a little of vaulting over the luggage piled on top.

"You're too healthy!" observed Father Dalton, as the jarvey touched his whip to the meditative horse. "And to think that in Dublin, of all places in the world, I should meet the captain of the St. Xavier College football squad!"

“Did you know I was captain, Father?” asked the delighted youth.

“I did. We all know it at St. Xavier’s Church. But none of us knew you were going over to train in Ireland.”

As the jaunting car emerged from the station, a group of ten or twelve men lifted their hats as one.

“Say! Did you get that?” exclaimed Joe. “Did you see that bunch uncover? What’s the matter with them?”

“You’re in a Catholic country, my boy.”

“Oh!” said Joe. “I never thought of that. In fact I didn’t take off my hat to you, did I?”

“You did not,” returned Father Dalton. “We priests do not expect that religious courtesy of most true-born Americans, even though they happen to be Americans who are Catholics and German.”

“German!” echoed Ranly. “Where did you get that stuff? My father was half-German, and my mother was half-Irish. I’m an American and proud of it. Say, look! Do you know all these children?”

The jarvey had turned into what was clearly a residential street. The sidewalk on either side was crowded with children, barelegged all of them, barefooted many of them; and every child whose eyes happened to fall on Father Dalton brightened and smiled a “Cead mille failthe.” The boys with hats or caps lifted

them, the bareheaded ones "raised their hair," little girls curtsied gracefully, a few of them genuflecting. One little boy of a venturesome disposition was sprawled on the sidewalk. On perceiving the priest he scrambled hastily to his feet. But the sidecar had passed, and it was too late for him to catch the eye of the reverend Father. Into the streets and after the car, bareheaded, barelegged, barefooted, he dashed. Presently he caught up, and looked straight into Father Dalton's smiling eyes.

"God bless you, Father!" he said, pulling his hair. And then the freckle-faced, tousled-haired vision was gone.

"Upon my word!" gasped the priest, still busy bowing and smiling and raising his hat to the lovely little tatterdemalions of Dublin.

"What sights we do see when we haven't got our gun," apostrophized young America. As though the word gun were the signal, there suddenly swept around from a by-street a lorry—a lorry in which were crowded together a number of Black-and-Tans screened in with a wire cage and armed with guns. As the lorry swept along, the owners of these guns were thoughtfully pointing them at the innocent, lovely little children on either side of the street. The gunmen were a rough, dissipated-looking body of men. Some of them were scarred; but it is very doubtful if a single scar had been won in honorable battle. These scars, the Irish

people believed, were not the red badges of courage. In no conceivable beauty show could any of these wretched men have obtained even so much as honorable mention. They were the flotsam and jetsam of the English army, men of wasted and inglorious lives. They were sophisticated barbarians—barbarians without the refinement of their forbears who had burnt libraries and torn down cathedrals. They were the accredited representatives of a country whose inhabitants passed them by with blushing and averted faces.

One of them, a heavy-set fellow with a livid gash stretching from his left eyebrow across his forehead—a gash inflicted, by the way, by a pothouse mug in the hands of his irate wife—leveled his gun at Joe Ranly. It was his idea of humor. The indignant young American countered by raising his thumb to his nose and wriggling energetically the fingers of that particular hand.

There was a loud oath from the lorry, and an ominous click.

“You fool!” cried Father Dalton, catching the wriggling fingers in a strong grasp and wresting them away from the somewhat tip-tilted nose. “Don’t you want to see a little more of Ireland than this? That fellow might have shot you.”

“I wish I had a brick,” stuttered Joe. “The

gall of that fellow! I didn't know the Irish were like that."

"Irish!" cried the jarvey. "Oh, holy Mother of God!"—here he crossed himself—"Did you ever hear the likes of that?"

"Irish!" repeated the indignant priest. "You may know football, but you don't know anything else. These fellows are the offscouring of England. They are picked for their vile-ness. They are sent here because the rank and file of the English soldiers would disdain to do such dirty work. Those fellows are Black-and-Tans."

"Are those the fellows that the Irish treat so roughly and cruelly?" continued Joe.

"If it weren't for his Reverence," said the jarvey, bringing his horse to a halt, "I'd be asking you to get off."

"Beg your pardon," said the bewildered youth. "I see I'm barking up the wrong tree; but in Cincinnati most of the fellows I've been running with are strong for England; and there's an evening paper there which comes to our house. It gave me the idea that the Irish Sinn Feiners are the bloodthirstiest, riproaring-est lot of cutthroats in the world. I thought those fellows in that lorry were Sinn Feiners"

"Sure, it's a furriner ye are entirely," said the jarvey, with compassion in his voice.

"You infernal greenhorn!" ejaculated the priest. "You must have been born yesterday!"

“Well, all I’ve got to say,” proceeded the discomfited Joe, “is that if those birds are Black-and-Tans I’m against them from this day forever and ever, amen.”

“May the Lord be with you,” said the jarvey, once more setting his horse in motion.

“That’s all very well,” added the priest. “I’m very much against them myself. All the same, whenever you happen to travel with me, you’ll be good enough to conceal your noble rage. If it had not been for the Black-and-Tan next the fellow you were wiggling your fingers at, you might have been shot dead. Those fellows have little or no regard for human life.”

“Do you mean to tell me,” stuttered Joe, with protruding eyes, “that that bird would have fired at me?”

“I’ve heard tell,” put in the jarvey, “of a mere boy who was shot dead because he went up to a Black-and-Tan and said ‘God save Ireland.’ ”

“Holy smoke!” ejaculated the crestfallen young American.

“You did be saying that there was Irish blood in you,” said the jarvey suspiciously.

“I did; and I didn’t mean anything when I said it. But now, by George, I feel it stirring all through me! I wish every drop of blood in my body was Irish. I feel as if it was.”

“You’ll be a Sinn Feiner in a week’s time,”

observed Father Dalton. "They are good and noble men, not cutthroats and murderers."

"This is Dublin's greatest street," said the jarvey, as they turned from the residential street into a wide thoroughfare. "It does me good to look on the face of these young fellows you see that do be walking along."

Although it was after six o'clock in the afternoon, the sidewalks were thronged. There was a certain air upon the faces of the men which at once caught Father Dalton's attention and which in a vague way impressed Joe Ranly. The faces were the faces of idealists, the faces of men who dreamed beautiful dreams. There was also the expression of determination, the determination of men who believed in their dreams and were willing to shed their blood to the last drop for the realization of their ideals. In a word, their faces were the faces of men who were at once poets and soldiers.

"Upon my word," ejaculated Father Dalton, "this is a new, a renascent Ireland!"

"You never said a truer word in your life," said the jarvey. "The old days and the old times are gone. These young fellows have more sense than we ever had. I'm old, too old to learn; but these boys know that talking is not going to win. They don't drink and they don't talk. But they do be doing things. The only thing we old fellows have given them is

the old faith; and, begorry! they've got it better and stronger than we had it."

"I notice that many of these men wear medals of the Sacred Heart."

"Sure they do, and proudly. And most of them that do be wearing them are men of the I. R. A."

"The what?" asked Joe.

"The Irish Republic Army, God bless it!" explained the driver.

"What's that?" continued the youth, pointing to a vast ruin in a northerly direction.

"That is the Custom House," answered the driver. "Whenever we would hurt the feelings of the Black-and-Tans, they would burn down a building or two. We burned that building beyond, being that they hurt our feelings. That one building was worth more than all the buildings they burnt and pillaged put together."

"What is your name, if you please," asked Joe, looking with favor on the old Irishman.

"Patrick McGreeve."

"You were the oldest boy," put in the priest.

"I was, sir. How did you know?"

"Let me answer your question by putting another. Do you know why it is that every boy born in Ireland is not christened Patrick?"

"I do not, your Reverence."

"The reason," answered the priest solemnly, "is that many boys have brothers, and it would

be confusing if all the boys in the family had the same name. The second boy is always Michael. When there are more, the parents are free to follow their own inventions."

The jarvey, who had reined up on O'Connell Bridge to give his passengers an opportunity to gaze upon the river Liffey, broke into a roar.

"Faith!" he chuckled, "there's more of truth than jest in your Reverence's words. Me own brother next to me is Michael."

"O'Connell Bridge," observed Father Dalton, throwing out his hand in a wide gesture, "is in the heart of Dublin. Behind us is the University of Dublin and the Bank. The beautiful river stretches on either side of us, and we have a fine view of O'Connell Street itself, with the Pillar and the Nelson Monument. Besides, everybody seems to pass over the bridge."

Joe Ranly gazed about him bright-eyed, alert, puzzled.

"Say," he commented presently, "this doesn't strike me as being Ireland at all. Look at all the soldiers. I've seen more soldiers since I got here than I saw in America all during the war."

"They do be sending them over here by the boatful," explained Patrick, "for the last few weeks; and they tell me they are getting ready to wipe us out entirely. The people don't mind the regular soldiers so much. It's the Black-

and-Tans and the Auxiliaries that they hate.”

“And what makes you think that this is not Ireland?” asked Father Dalton.

“Why, I thought all the men would be in corduroy knee-breeches and carrying shillalahs.”

“Indeed!” commented the priest. “And no doubt you expected the young women to be dressed elaborately, like Irish collens on the stage.”

“And everybody seems to be so sober,” continued Joe.

“And nobody is dancing an Irish reel,” added Father Dalton sarcastically. “Also the young men are not enjoying themselves by smashing each other’s heads. Your ideas of Ireland are gleaned from Lever and Lover and a few musical comedies.”

“I guess a lot of us Americans have a wrong idea of this country. In some ways they have more sense than we. Look at their buildings—all solid; no frame houses, no skyscrapers. I’ll bet they never have fires here.”

“Beggin’ your pardon, sir,” said Patrick, “but they do. It takes a lot of trouble to get a house to burn. But if we use a little oil and kindling we can do it.”

“There now!” cried Joe impetuously; “there’s the sort of thing I’d expect to see in Ireland. See that tiny girl with the basket of flowers.”

Directly in front of them, leaning against the bridge rail was a little girl of about seven whose face was noticeably dirty. Her feet were grimy, and her little dress, old and tattered, had one rent in it which gave any one who wished to investigate an opportunity of counting her ribs on the left side. She was everything that could be expressed by the word "tatterdemalion."

"Poor little child!" exclaimed the priest. "Who knows but her father is on the run? Here, little girl," he cried, raising his voice, "let me have a flower."

The child raised her eyes—beautiful blue eyes, limpid pools of loveliness, and smiled upon the priest. She bowed, she ducked, she curtsied.

"This is the nicest bit I have, your Reverence," she said, handing him a bunch of heather.

The priest gave her a shilling; young Ranly added another.

"God bless you, Father! And God bless you too, sir! It's a fine supper I'll be having to-night."

"That child is half starved," observed the Father as the little one bowed herself away. "There is the pallor of ill nourishment on her face, though it's hard to discover it by reason of the dirt; and her features are pinched. Poor little girl! Look at her now."

The child, her back turned to the surging tide

of humanity, was looking at the two coins, brushing them with her sleeve; and, no doubt, conjuring up visions of a hearty supper. She was for the moment supremely happy. And as the three occupants of the side-car still gazed she suddenly opened her mouth and broke into song.

The priest and Joe looked at each other in amazement. It was the voice of an angel.

“Think of it!” whispered Joe; “she’s singing ‘Bubbles in the Air.’”

Utterly absorbed, oblivious of her surroundings, the tiny flower girl, as her sweet voice rang out, traced with her right hand a succession of bubbles in the air with gestures corresponding in grace to the poignant loveliness of her voice. She sang the chorus to the end and then stopped.

“Well,” ejaculated Joe, “she may look like the devil, but she sings like an angel.”

“Suppose we get on,” suggested Father Dalton.

They drove up O’Connell Street. As they passed the Gresham Hotel, a flower woman, catching the eye of the priest, smiled, bobbed, and running into the street, came up beside the car.

“God bless you, Father,” she said. “Here’s a bunch of roses. If you’re going to Gardiner Street——”

“I am.”

“Sure, I knew you were a Jesuit. Would

you be kind enough to put these flowers before the statue of the Sacred Heart? Oh, Father," she continued, "I don't want your money. Tomorrow is the First Friday, and it's the month of May too. Here are some flowers, too, for Our Lady's altar."

"Sure, it's a quare flower girl ye are," observed Patrick. "Man and boy I druv the streets of Dublin for forty odd years, and you're the first flower woman I ever saw who didn't want all the money she could coax. Sure, ye don't look to me to be genuine."

The flower woman meantime was pacing easily alongside the side-car, a matter of no great difficulty, as the horse was of a contemplative disposition and going just then at a pace between running and fast walking. The woman wore a shawl over her head, a thin and tawdry affair. She was somewhat over medium size and moved with an ease which indicated at once strength and grace. She had piercing black eyes, eyes that in repose grew dreamy. Although she was strongly built, her features were clear-cut and regular. But there was something strange about her complexion. It was dark, quite in keeping with her raven-black hair, a wisp of which remained unconcealed by her shawl; so dark that she looked rather like a gypsy than an Irishwoman. As she trotted along beside the car, there came sweeping by another lorry filled with just such another crowd of Black-and-Tans as had already

aroused Joe's ire. This lorry turned at the nearest crossing beyond.

"Bad cess to them!" grumbled Patrick. "What are they after? I believe I'll follow them."

"No," cried the woman, her contralto voice suddenly becoming deeper. "I know better. Go up to the next crossing. Don't bring the Father that way."

Patrick, bringing his horse to a stop, looked keenly at the woman. She returned his gaze no less steadily.

"Holy Mother!" gasped Patrick. "I'll do as you say." And Patrick did not follow the lorry.

"God bless you, Father; pray for me. Good-by, my boy. You'll be a Sinn Feiner yet," said the flower woman, and ran up the side street with accelerated speed.

"I say," cried Joe, "what is the meaning of all this?"

"Oh, just nothing at all, at all."

"What's the matter with that street?"

"Sure, there's nothing the matter with it just now."

"Was that woman a flower woman?" Father Dalton inquired.

"She was not, your Reverence."

"For goodness' sake, who was she then?"

"There do be lots of things we don't talk about, your Reverence. Sure it's a quare way we're in."

Just then a shot was heard. Joe jumped;

Father Dalton turned uneasily; the jarvey seemed to be deaf. Prompt upon that shot there rang out a fusilade; and as Father Dalton, looking backward, perceived, there came running from the side street which the lorry had taken a multitude of children and women, many of them carrying babies in their arms. Meantime the roaring of guns continued.

“Did that woman know what was to happen?” asked Joe.

“She did, sor. It’s an ambushade.”

“A what?”

“And,” continued Patrick, “if we had gone that way it’s likely that instead of going to Gardiner Street we’d all have landed in a hospital.”

## CHAPTER II

JOE RANLY GETS AN IDEA OF WHAT IT IS TO BE ON THE RUN AND EXPLAINS UNDER CROSS-EXAMINATION WHY HE HAS LEFT AMERICA.

“THIS place,” soliloquized Joe Ranly, after a meditative pause, “is no place for a minister’s son.”

“Were ye thinking of going back?” asked the jarvey, gazing with some disfavor on the captain of the St. Xavier College football team.

“Going back! What’s the matter with you? If for nothing else, I’d stay here just to get a chance to meet that squint-eyed Black-and-Tan who pointed his gun at me. What would suit me would be to meet him alone in a dark alley some night when nobody was looking.”

“Sure, it’s a bantam fighting cock you are entirely,” commented the driver, with a smile genial enough but hinting disparagement.

“See here, Pat. I’m not as young as I look by a long shot. People think I’m fifteen, but I’m seventeen years old with six months and two days to the good. Until I left America, I put on the boxing gloves every day with the best boxing instructors in Cincinnati. Don’t you get to thinking I’m an infant.”

Father Dalton ran his hand down the arm of young America from shoulder to elbow.

“You’re as hard as nails,” he remarked. “No wonder that they say of you that you’re worth your weight in wildcats.”

“Say, where did you get all that dope about me, Father? You must be a sport.”

“Nevertheless,” pursued Father Dalton, “if you were worth a ton of wildcats, one bullet from a Black-and-Tan gun would end your career on this earth as completely as though you were a baby in arms. Suppose you were to be shot dead.”

“Oh, lots of people have been shot.”

“Yes; but don’t bother about lots of people. What about yourself? I mean your soul, my boy.”

“Oh, if I were to worry about that, I might lose my nerve. ‘Conscience doth make cowards of us all.’”

“Wirra, wirra!” exclaimed Pat. “Sure, and the like of that I never heard in all me life. In dear ould Ireland it’s the man who prays best fights best.”

“I have been told,” added Father Dalton, “that there are in this land thousands and thousands of young Irishmen who fear only one thing in the world.”

“Machine guns?” queried Joe.

“Mortal sin,” the priest made answer.

“I never thought of it that way,” said Joe.

Then the driver made a speech. They were now in Gardiner Street, and to say all that he desired he reined up his horse. He informed Joe that he knew of Sinn Feiners who, when

sent upon some mission that meant almost certain death, went to confession and communion, after which they looked forward with cheerfulness, even in some cases with joy, to giving up their lives for faith and country.

“Look!” continued the jarvey, dramatically, pointing with his whip to the broad entrance to St. Francis Xavier’s Church.

It was an astonishing sight to the boy. People were entering and leaving in throngs—men and women, boys and girls. Guarding the outer gates was a flower woman; beside her a frowsy old lady with a basket, and a frowsier old man. These three worthless noted with quick and discerning eye every one that passed in or out. They were professional beggars. As the trio in the side-car stood gazing, they noticed not a few men and women dropping coins into the extended hands of these guardians of the gate.

“Looks like a tollgate,” observed Joe. “Do you notice that most of the people who give are coming out of church, not going in?”

“You’re right, Joe,” said Father Dalton. “These people entering are going to confession; those coming out have been to confession. No wonder they give, even if it is to the professional beggar. They are happy; they are in the state of grace.”

“You mean to tell me all these people are going to confession? What’s the matter with them? Do they hear confessions only after six o’clock?”

“They’ve been coming here all mornin’ and all afternoon,” said Pat. “And they’ll keep on coming till half after nine this night.”

“In Cincinnati,” said Joe with spirit, “I know of a church where they hear confessions till after ten and eleven.”

“Oh, sure! But they haven’t got the curfew in Cincinnati.”

“The curfew?”

“Yes, sor. At ten o’clock we must all be off the streets and in our homes.”

“I’d like to see them keep *me* off the street at ten o’clock,” vaunted Joe.

“Me boy,” said the jarvey, urging his horse forward, “I’d advise you to go to confession before you try anything like that. Here we are, your Reverence. Step down. This is the house of the holy Jesuits.”

“Well, Pat, how much is it?”

“Sure, whatever your Reverence pleases.”

“Oh, come on; tell me your price.”

“Five or six shillings, your Reverence.”

Father Dalton, with a grin, paid the double price, although Joe resented very much the father’s paying the bill. In fact, before they entered the Gardiner Street residence, Joe almost forced Father Dalton to receive what he had paid out.

“Good-by, Patrick. May we meet again.”

“God bless ye, your Reverence! Whisper,” he added drawing Father Dalton aside. “Sure you’re as Irish as if you had spent your life with us here. Ye were born here?”

“No, Patrick. I was born in the States, of Irish parents.”

“Father, nobody would know it. You are Irish from the top of your head to the sole of your foot.”

“You couldn’t make me a finer compliment.”

“And do you find the country changed, I dunno, since ye were here before?”

“But I was never here before.”

“Sure, then, America must be a wonderful country. You seem to know all about us. Look ye, Father—if ever ye want a ride around Dublin or anywhere else in the neighborhood, ye’re a thousand times welcome, and no charge at all, at all. Just tell the porter here that ye want me. He knows me and can get me. May God bless you, Father. You’re as good as the best of our own.”

In response to their ringing a young man opened the door and ushered them into the parlor. Presently Father McSorley entered.

“Father McSorley,” said the American priest, “let me introduce myself first. I’m Father Dalton, a brother Jesuit from the Missouri Province and ——”

“You are more welcome than the flowers that bloom in the spring,” broke in the Irish Jesuit, with that full-hearted greeting which is characteristically Irish. “We get our spring flowers yearly but you only once in a lifetime. And this boy?”

“Is Joe Ranly, the great quarterback of St.

Xavier College, Cincinnati, probably the greatest quarterback in the Middle West."

Father McSorley beamed upon the youth.

"Welcome, Joe. You're small, but I fancy that every ounce of you counts. Have you had anything to eat?" continued this practical Jesuit.

"Thank you, Father McSorley," the American priest made answer; "but business first."

"How truly American!"

"This boy has a letter of introduction to you. He's an interesting lad. We met casually at the depot——"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Father McSorley, with interrogation in his face.

"Oh, yes. I mean we met casually at the *station* here in Dublin."

"Oh, I see."

"Now, I judge he needs some help and advice. I will leave him with you and get the porter to show me up to Father Cuneen, with whom I have often corresponded."

"Very good, Father Dalton." As he spoke, Father McSorley walked to the door and hailed a passing small boy, a chubby little fellow with a pair of beautiful and mismated eyes, one blue and the other brown.

"Tommy, call the clerk to bring Father Dalton to Father Cuneen's room."

"I will, sir," answered Tommy.

"Father, I have this letter for you," said Joe as the visiting priest departed.

“Sit down, my boy. But before we go further wouldn't you like a cup of tea?”

“No, thank you, Father,” said Joe, suppressing a giggle. An Irish friend of his in Cincinnati had wagered that Joe would not be one hour in Dublin without being invited to “take a cup of tea.”

“Well, sit down, and make yourself at home.”

Adjusting his glasses, Father McSorley read the following letter:

“To the Reverend Father McSorley,  
“St. Francis Xavier Church,  
“Upper Gardiner Street, Dublin.

“REVEREND AND DEAR FATHER—The bearer of this note is Joe Ranly, a typical American boy, of Cincinnati, Ohio. He is past seventeen years of age, a sprinter of no mean ability, a wonderful football player, and supposed to be able to lick his weight in wildcats. When I have said this, I, who am his uncle on his mother's side have said pretty much all that can be said in his favor. He is smart enough, it is true; but studies take up the few hours of his waking life which he cannot give to amusements, eating, sleeping, nonsense, and athletics. In fact I doubt whether he would be attending college at all were it not for the opportunity it gives him to shine in football and kindred sports.

“I said he was typically American. He comes out of our Melting Pot. He is of German and Irish blood, modified by the fact that his an-

cestors on both sides have been in the United States for three generations. As to the German side, he speaks with supreme contempt of Kaiser Bill; and as to the Irish, he takes as much interest in that dear land as he does in the manufacture of soap. The boy companions who are his neighbors are mostly the sons of capitalists—New England Stock—and are strongly pro-English. Again, possibly by reason of these companions, he is anything but religious. What he gets in this way from the Jesuits of St. Xavier College, Cincinnati, he sloughs off very quickly in the vacation time.

“For several years I have ardently desired to let him go to Ireland and visit his uncle, Bernard Daly.”

As Father McSorley read this sentence, he started visibly, and gazed with increased interest at Master Joe, who, unconscious of the priest’s scrutiny, was just then endeavoring with some measure of success to balance his fedora hat on the tip of his nose. The priest gave himself once more to the letter:

“Unfortunately, the young gentleman at no time has shown the least interest in the projected trip. Last summer, for instance, his only desire was to travel to Cleveland and see Babe Ruth—our great ballplayer—make a home run. Mr. Ruth’s team does not belong to the association which plays in Cincinnati. Joe went—he saw Babe Ruth clout the ball for four bases, and was glad.

“However, just two weeks ago he did some-

thing which made it advisable for him to get out of the United States. He had to go. I leave you to get the story out of him.

“Now, to get down to brass tacks. I have lost the address of his uncle, Bernard Daly; but I know he is somewhere in or about Dublin. Will you see to it that Joe meets his uncle? I am sure that a month or two in a Catholic country and in an Irish Catholic home will do him a world of good.

“I am writing this letter at the instance of his father, who is so extremely angry at his hopeful son that he cannot trust himself to put pen to paper. As my father once lived within the shadow of St. George’s and attended your church all his lifetime, I feel as though I were addressing an old friend.

“Joe brings from his father a check for two hundred dollars, good American dollars, which he begs you to use, as you judge fit, for the poor and distressed, especially the children.

“Thanking you in advance for what you can do, I am

“Yours sincerely,

“MICHAEL DALY.”

The priest folded the letter and lifted amiable eyes upon the youth.

“Here’s that check, sir,” said Joe.

“You seem to be a mind reader, my boy.”

“Not at all, Father. I know that letter by heart. That’s an affectionate uncle I’ve got, isn’t it?”

Father McSorley laughed.

“That’s the way all my relations talk about me,” growled Joe, with an aggrieved look. “Anyhow they keep my head from swelling.”

“Your good uncle, the name of whose father is still in benediction in this house, tells me you were obliged to leave.”

“I can’t see it that way, Father. I was willing to stay and face the music; but my sisters and my cousins and my aunts got panicky. They cleared me out of Cincinnati before I knew what was happening.”

“But what did you do, my boy?”

“Oh, I only just played a joke.”

“A joke! Do you mean to tell me that you had to leave home and country just because you played a joke?”

“You see, Father, I played it on a policeman.”

“Oh, that’s it. In your country, then to play a joke on a policeman is a sort of penal offence.”

“You’re getting it wrong, Father.”

“Pray tell me, then, what sort of joke you played.”

“Well, Father, it’s this way. This bird——”

“I beg your pardon.”

“This policeman and I were never good friends. I used to play ball in our street out in Walnut Hills, and this particular cop——”

“What’s that, Joe?”

“This cop—this policeman, you know—was always on my trail. One time he wanted to

arrest me, and I was only a kid of twelve. Another time he swiped my ball."

"He swiped it? How did he do that?"

"Took it away, you know. Say, you talk beautifully, and I like the way you use your voice; but—excuse me for asking it—were you brought up in an English-speaking country?"

Father McSorley was seized with a violent fit of coughing and pulling out his handkerchief, effectually concealed his face.

"Is there anything wrong with my accent, Joe?"

"Oh, you pronounce very nicely; but there's a lot of English words you don't seem to know the meaning of. I guess you got your English out of highbrow books. What are you laughing at?"

"Excuse me, Joe. If I remember right, that cop swiped your ball."

"That's the talk. He was always doing something to take the joy out of life. Just two weeks ago today it occurred to me to put one over on him."

"To put what over, Joe?"

"To play a trick on him, you know. It was twilight. I saw him about a square from our house walking in my direction. I had a good strong string in my pocket, and I tied it across our pavement about one foot above the ground, stretching it from our fence to a hitching post."

"And then?" queried Father McSorley.

"While I was waiting for him to come along,

out comes a friend of mine, Jack Leonard, with a cigarette in his face."

"A cigarette where?" gasped the priest.

"In his mouth, you know. Jack is twenty, and nobody minds his smoking. I'm seventeen myself, but look more like fourteen. That cigarette gave me an idea. 'Here, Jack,' I said; 'let me have that coffin nail of yours for a minute.' You know I don't smoke, Father."

"So I would suppose. I'm sure your mother would not approve of it."

"That isn't the reason."

"No?"

"You see it's bad for the wind; and I want to keep fit. Well, I took that cigarette and put it in my f— between my lips, and puffed away. The cop saw me and started after me. It was all going my way. I started to run backwards puffing. It's a fine exercise, running backwards, Father."

"No doubt," assented the other. "But the policeman did not run backwards."

"No; but he might as well have done it. He kept his eyes on me, and of course he didn't see that string. He was running fast when he struck it, and down he went quite as though I had tackled him in my best style. The fact is he fell too hard. I didn't want him to fall hard; but he did. In thirty or forty minutes it was all settled, and I was whirling down in uncle's automobile to the depot. You see, I was in a hurry to get the train; a trolley would be too slow."

"A trolley?"

“Don’t you know what a trolley is? A street car.”

“Oh, I see. A tram.”

“No. I don’t know what a tram is. It was a car.”

“And what did you go to a depot for?”

“To catch the train for Canada. They all said I’d have to get out of the country at once.”

“But, good heavens, boy! Why leave the country? Is it such a crime to trip up a—a—cop?”

“There was no crime about it, Father. It was just a miscalculation.”

“But how hard does a policeman have to fall to force you to leave your native land?”

“I don’t think I should have left. He was carried off in an ambulance to the hospital while I was beating it to the depot.”

“Beating what?”

“Going in the machine, you know.”

“But what was he going to the hospital for?”

“Why, didn’t I tell you? He broke his leg. It was just like my rotten luck. I was to have played second base just the next day for our baseball team in the biggest game of the season.”

“I am sure,” commented Father McSorley, “that it was very thoughtless of that cop to go and break his leg. He should have been more considerate.”

“Go on and josh me, Father.”

“But what about that policeman? Perhaps he had a wife and family.”

“Father,” said Joe, with an engaging smile, “I don’t mind telling you that I’ve worried about it a good deal. I’m very sorry. I know I was a fool.”

“As soon as a person begins to know that he is a fool, at that very moment he begins to grow wise.”

“Father you’ve said a mouthful.”

The priest started as though he had been struck, paused, then broke into a ringing laugh.

“What’s the joke, Father?”

“The joke, my boy, is that we have been talking in two different languages—you American and I English.”

“American language? I never heard of it.”

“You may not have heard of it, Joe; but you’ve been talking it all your life.”

Just at this moment there came a violent rapping at the door.

“Something’s happened,” muttered Father McSorley, rising to his feet. “Come in.”

### CHAPTER III

#### JOE LEARNS SOMETHING OF INTEREST CONCERNING HIS UNCLE.

FORTHWITH there burst into the room a Jesuit priest, Father Feeley, tall and striking in appearance.

“Father McSorley,” he cried out, in his excitement paying no attention to the presence of Joe Ranly, “I’m just back from the ambushade.”

“I hope none of our people were hurt.”

“There were three badly wounded, eight slightly injured, one man was killed, and, father, one little girl—Patricia Bland.”

“Patricia Bland!” exclaimed Father McSorley. “Why, that’s one of my little penitents and a daily communicant!”

“Yes, Father; she had just gone to you to confession and was on her way home. I saw her after you heard her confession. Before leaving the church she paid a short visit to the ‘Agonizing Christ.’ I was just leaving my confessional and passed by her. There was an expression on her face—love, compassion, entreaty—which arrested me. I paused to look at her. If ever a child was closely united to Christ, she was. Innocence and love seemed to shine from her face. Presently she rose from her knees and, not being tall enough to kiss the

projecting foot of the Christ, she stood on tip-toe, touched it reverently with her hand, then kissed that part of her hand which had touched the sacred figure. Then she arose and set out for home. She never reached home. She left the church in the supreme innocence of un sullied childhood and sealed her virginity with her blood."

"But how did it happen?"

"She walked into the ambushade. A stray bullet brought her down. Several of the fathers were called at once. I was one of the first to arrive. She was lying on the ground in the arms of a good woman, and was fully conscious. She had no confession to make, and it was the work of a few moments to anoint her and give her Holy Communion. Her face had gone deadly pale, but there was upon it a supreme happiness. 'Sure, Father,' she said, 'I've made the nine first Fridays, and tomorrow I was going to start them again. But it's better as it is. I'm going home.' Then she sent loving messages to her father and mother and brothers and sisters, and to you, Father. Finally she said, 'And may the Sacred Heart have pity on dear old Ireland. Jesus, Mary, Joseph.' With these words she died, without the semblance of an agony."

"Surely," said Father McSorley, mastering his emotions, "there's another strong friend of Ireland in heaven—a Holy Innocent, a virgin, a martyr of Christ. God help us! But what brought on this thing?"

“It’s quite simple. About four o’clock to-day the Black-and-Tans got word that Michael Collins was visiting a certain house on that street, and steps were taken to capture him. There’s a big reward out, you know, for his capture. Half an hour later the Irish patriots got word—just a few minutes before the lorries started out, seven in all, to close off all chance of escape. The Sinn Feiners got together in a hurry; and while some made an attack on the two lorries coming from O’Connell street, a strong body of the soldiers brought Michael Collins right past the point of attack. It was all over in less than five minutes.”

“I came near getting mixed in that myself,” put in Joe, who forthwith told the two Jesuits of the strange flower woman.

“It’s lucky you were traveling with a priest, Joe,” said Father McSorley. “The Irish are ever on the watch for the safety of their clergy; and that flower woman—”

“She was no flower woman at all,” said the other priest.

“In saving Father Dalton she saved you too.”

“I wish,” said Joe devoutly, “that I had some of my American friends over here. Wouldn’t they learn a lot?”

“Shake hands, my boy,” said Father Feeley. “Tomorrow there will be an item of news in all the English and American papers which will read like this: ‘On Thursday, May 5, an attack was made just off O’Connell Street in Dublin upon the English soldiers. Although

outnumbered, the soldiers repelled the attack in a few minutes, wounding over twenty of the attackers and killing two. No losses are reported by the English soldiers. A little girl was shot by a stray bullet, probably from the attacking party.'

"That's the sort of articles they always send out," said Father Feeley, his eyes flashing. "They give the world the impression that we Irish are killing and fighting for no reason. They never state that we are defending our own from imprisonment and death. Now I happen to know that eight Black-and-Tans were killed. They never let out their own losses. Well, I'm growing angry. I'd better go and pray." And Father Feeley left the room.

"You begin to see, Joe," said Father McSorley, "how things are in this most distressful country?"

"It is a sort of reign of terror, Father."

"Precisely. Do you know that there are thousands and thousands of men in Ireland, our best men at that, who are at home everywhere except in their own homes?"

"I don't quite get you, Father?"

"You've just now heard how the Black-and-Tans were looking for Michael Collins. They heard that he was staying in a house in one of our by-streets. Of course that house was not his home. For months and months that man has slept here and there and everywhere save only in his own home. He dare not go there; for if he did, the English would capture him.

All over Ireland there are men in his condition. The English are looking for them; and so they disappear from home—they are homeless, and we say of them that they are ‘on the run.’”

“Oh!” cried Joe, “I begin to understand what ‘on the run’ means. So Ireland is a country just now without homes.”

“In a certain sense, yes. The men, the fighting men, the patriots, the lovers of right and justice and liberty, are everywhere—in town and hamlet and city and countryside and in the mountains and fields—everywhere but in their own homes.”

Joe reflected for a moment.

“Oh, say!” he suddenly burst out, “I’m on the run myself!”

Father McSorley smiled.

“Yes,” he admitted; “in a sense that is true. The police in the United States are possibly looking for you, and you are forced to leave home. But there’s a difference. You are on the run because in trying to play a trick on a policeman you broke his leg. Our men are on the run because they have proclaimed that Ireland has a right to freedom. If you were captured, it would mean a few days in court and a payment of damages; if our men were caught, it would mean for some captivity, for others death.”

“Keep on rubbing it in, Father,” said Joe humbly.

“And now, Joe, you won’t be very shocked to hear that your uncle Bernard is on the run too.”

“He is! Well, I’m proud of him. What did he do?”

“His story is a strange one, Joe. To begin with, no finer man attends our church. He was a daily communicant, he had some income and gave his time to study, writing and athletics. Although about thirty-two years of age, he has the strength and agility of a young man of twenty-four. After the famous Easter uprising here endeavors were made to enlist his interests in the Sinn Fein movement. There was no question as to which way his sympathies lay. His love for Ireland was unquestioned. But Bernard was scrupulous to a fault. He could not make up his mind to commit himself definitely to the movement. About six months ago he was walking along a lone road just on the outskirts of Dublin when, making a sharp turn in the wayside, he came upon a Black-and-Tan who was offering his evidently unwelcome attentions to a country girl. The Black-and-Tan, to do him justice, was under the influence of liquor. So absorbed was this apology for a soldier that he was not aware of Bernard’s approach; and Bernard, for his part, made no attempt to apprise him. The soldier, as Bernard started on a tiptoe run for him, seized the girl’s arm. ‘Help!’ she cried. The words were not well out of her mouth when Bernard, coming full tilt, landed the best blow of his life on the jaw of the fellow, who went down unconscious.”

“Oh, I want to meet Uncle Bernard!” ex-

claimed Joe. "I wish I had uncles like that in America. My uncles over there play billiards and golf. But what happened then?"

"Your uncle told the girl to run, instead of which she fainted. Of course he had to revive her. That meant running for water. Also, he threw the Black-and-Tan's gun into some bushes near by. He brought her to at last, and by that time the Black-and-Tan was sitting up, looking dazed and wondering where he was. 'Run home, girl!' said your uncle. The girl glanced at the Black-and-Tan, and that seemed to put new life into her. She disappeared in a jiffy.

"'Where's my gun?' said the soldier, picking himself up.

"'Did you have one?' asks your uncle.

"'What's happened to me,' continued the fellow.

"'I think somebody must have thoughtfully knocked you down,' says your uncle.

"'You come along with me,' commanded the soldier.

"'I will not.'

"The fellow fished into his pockets, but there was no weapon of any sort about his person, thanks to the forethought of Bernard.

"'If you don't come along peacefully, I'll make you,' said the soldier.

"'Fine! Just come and take me,' answered your uncle, squaring off.

"Within five seconds the Black-and-Tan went down; but he rose promptly, and spurring himself on with a mighty flow of profanity, re-

sumed his attack. In a few moments he was down again. He made no show this time of attempting to rise. Your uncle had scored a second knock-out. While assuring himself of this, Bernard heard footsteps nearing the sharp turn. Bernard Daly, my boy, is the quickest man I ever met. He leaped to the hedge nearest the turn and crouched low. In the very moment there appeared a burly Black-and-Tan swinging his gun loosely. Bernard, in a spring and with one jerk, had the gun out of his hands; in the fraction of a second he had it cocked, and turned to find two more Black-and-Tans blissfully unconscious of what had just happened.

“‘Drop your guns and up with your hands or I fire,’ he bellowed out, with the roar of a raging bull. Two guns were dropped and three pair of hands went up.

“‘Say, young man; it’s no use,’ said the coolest of Bernard’s prisoners. ‘There’s a lot of our men coming along after us. They’ll be here in a minute or two.’

“‘Thank you for the information. Now just step forward around this turn and line up with your bloody-nosed companion. That’s it. Now stand at attention. Very good. When your friends—if Black-and-Tans have any friends—come along, and you hear their steps, you are not to make a sound. If you do, you’ll get a bullet.’

“‘There was that about your uncle’s voice which carried conviction to the three prisoners. Lined up against the hedgerow they not only

stood at, but showed, perfect attention. The gun in your uncle's hands fascinated them. The moments passed into minutes. After a while, the upraised hands of the Black-and-Tans began to tremble; but the gun your uncle held stood out as steady as though it were laid across a table. That man has the most extraordinary nerves.

"'If any man asks you,' said Bernard, who for all his coolness was burning inwardly with fury, 'what I am, you may tell him that I'm a Sinn Feiner, and that I became one at the moment when I saw that bloody-nosed, black-eyed brute insulting an Irish girl.'

"Then your uncle became silent and strained his hearing. What should he do if more Black-and-Tans arrived? Your uncle, as he has often told me, has one prayer when he finds himself in difficulties. He said it then, slowly, fervently, under his breath: 'We fly to thy protection, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our afflictions, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin Mary.'"

"That's a great prayer," cried Joseph, so excited that he stuttered. "Just the thing for a fellow when he's up a tree. It's going to be mine from now on. But go on, Father. If you don't think I shall bust."

"When Bernard had said this prayer six or seven times, he discerned in the distance a slight movement. Without a change in his expression he fixed his gaze intently. There was

no doubt of it there was a crowd approaching. Could they be Black-and-Tans? Probably not, as they were expected from the other direction. No, there were no guns in their hands, no uniforms on their persons; there was a woman with them and they were all running. And the woman was the girl whom he had saved."

"Glory halleluia!" cried Joe.

"And the crowd was made up of men and boys. As your uncle, fixed and unchanging, still gazed, the rescuers took in the situation. They were not yet within earshot. They paused; there was a momentary whispered conference; then from the halting group six stalwart young men, quickly removing their shoes, ran forwardly noiselessly.

"'Before your Black-and-Tan friends come along,' bawled your uncle, in a voice that would drown out the marching of a troop, 'I want you to understand that this fellow I punched is to tell why I attacked him and knocked him down three times. Do you understand, sir? Will you promise me to tell—'

"That was as far as your uncle, who was sparring for time, could get; for synchronously the three barefooted young men threw themselves on the totally unprepared Black-and-Tans and brought them to the ground. A few seconds later these so-called soldiers of the king were neatly trussed. The guns were at once picked up by the invading party.

"'Here,' said your uncle to the third one of the young men, 'take this thing. It's cocked

and I don't know what to do with it.' Then your uncle broke into a laugh. 'The fact is,' he explained, 'I never fired a gun in my life. Glory be to God! I can't even imagine how I cocked it. But before night I'm going to take lessons.'

"A few words passed between him and the invaders, whereupon all hurried off, leaving the trussed Black-and-Tans to their own somewhat limited devices."

"And he didn't even know how to use a gun! My! Talk about nerve! We Americans have nothing on the Irish. And what happened to the Black-and-Tans?"

"Naturally, your uncle did not wait to see. And he did not go home that night. But he was near enough to see nine lorries drive up to his home. Since that time he has never slept in his own house."

"Where is he, Father?"

"He is here and there and everywhere. Today there is not a better shot in the I. R. A."

"The what?"

"The I. R. A.—the Irish Republic Army. They say that he carries his life in his hands as jauntily as most men sport a cane. He's anywhere and everywhere in Ireland; but it's very difficult to trace him. He goes about disguised."

Joe rose to his feet.

"Father," he said. "I didn't want to come over here. I wasn't interested in the Irish. I didn't care one way or the other. But now—Oh gosh! ain't I glad I came. That uncle of mine

is a wonder. I'm dead stuck on him; and I want everybody to know that I'll not leave this country till I've found him and thrown my arms about the most wonderful uncle that a fellow ever had."

The priest shook Joe's hand warmly.

"If you knew," he said, "what I know about Bernard Daly, you'd look upon him not only as the bravest of men but as a saint. Tonight I'll send out inquiries and try to find out where your uncle is. But before we go further, won't you take a cup of tea?"

"Thank you, Father. Crossing the Channel I spent a good part of my time eating. Fact is, I took too much for a fellow who wants to keep fit. You must pardon me, father, for taking up so much of your time, but you had me excited. I didn't know how the time was passing. I—I feel all lit up."

"Could I help you, Joe, in getting a lodging or a hotel?"

"No hotel for me," said Joe. "I want to see some more Irish. If I could get a room with an Irish family—"

"Why, certainly. There's the widow O'Rourke. She has five daughters—all grown up."

"I pass," said Joe simply. "Widows and grown-up daughters do not appeal to me."

"Then there's Mr. and Mrs. John Malone. They live all alone and they are both old."

"Give me another choice," said Joe.

"Oh, yes. There's John McGroarty, the heavy-weight lifter."

“Now, you’re shouting!” cried Joe.

“He lives just a few doors above, himself and his wife and little daughter of eight. She’s a fine Irish dancer. They have a spare room and will be glad to take you in for two or three shillings a day.”

“Can that man box?”

“He’s a professional, though he retired from the ring about one year ago. He’s very well up in all matters of athletics.”

“That’s the place for me,” said Joe. “Why, I’ll be in training here just the same as at home; and who knows but everything will be arranged over there before the opening of the football season? How can I find Mr. McGroarty’s house?”

“I’d gladly show you the way myself,” said the priest, taking Joe’s hands in his, “but as you may know, the First Friday confessions are going on, and there must be a mob waiting at my confessional by this time. One of the wonders of Ireland is the devotion of our people to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Tomorrow there will be about five thousand communions distributed in our church.”

“That’s going some!” observed Joe.

“So I’m going to put you in the hands of Tommy Leeson. Tommy!”

The little boy with the eyes that were different came hurrying in.

“Tommy, this is my American friend, Joe Ranly, just arrived on our shores.”

“A thousand welcomes to you, sir.”

"Glad to meet you," answered Joe, shaking the little extended hand vigorously.

"Good-by, Joe. Call on me tomorrow about ten o'clock. And, Tommy, you take care of my friend."

"I will, your Reverence."

"Come on, Tommy. Do you know where Mr. John McGroarty lives?"

"I do, sir."

"And will you take me there?"

"I will, sir," answered Tommy as the two walked out of the Jesuit residence into Gardiner Street.

Joe paused beside the threshold and gazed about him. It was now eight o'clock and broad daylight. The street was anything but empty. Children were playing hop-scotch and other games, donkeys hitched to all manner of odd vehicles were passing up and down; but the main centre of activity was St. Francis Xavier Church. Crowds were standing without, crowds were entering, crowds were leaving, while the three beggars were, apparently, enjoying a red-letter day.

"Tommy, I'm thinking of going in that church."

" 'Tis a good thought, sir."

"There's a picture in there of 'The Agonizing Christ.' "

"It's a statue, sir."

"Do you know where it is?"

"I do, sir."

"I want you to bring me to it."

“I will, sir.”

They entered, and with some difficulty made their way beyond the extra communion railing which divides the church almost equally. Turning to the left, they entered one of the many niches of this home of devotion. One of the three chief altars was facing them. On the remote left side, mounted on a pedestal, stood a touching figure of Christ, seated weary and worn. More eloquently than the pose, the sweet lines of the sad face recalled the memorable verse of the *Dies Irae*:

*Quaerens me sedisti lassus.*

Grouped about it were many trouble-burdened souls. One would surmise, gazing in the tear-stained faces of an old woman and of a weeping girl, that all the sorrows of sorrowful Ireland were brought to Him who bore the sorrows of all. To that shrine came the colleen whose loved one was on a hunger strike; the betrothed whose chosen one was wandering shelterless, with a price upon his head, among the bleak hills of Connemara; the parents whose boy had died that Ireland might live. Joe, as he took one brief look, sensed something of all this. He kneeled, thinking as he fell upon his knees, that he, at any rate, had no sorrow to expose to the All-Compassionate. He lifted his eyes. They fell upon the sacred foot, which the old lady, the tears still coursing down her cheeks, had risen to kiss. Then his thoughts flew to a desolate home where a little girl, a virgin, a saint, a martyr, just now lay sealed

forever in her sanctity by death. Around her were grouped a heart-broken mother and father and weeping brothers and sisters. Their agony became Joe's. Suddenly his thoughts struck a different channel. Over in America there lay in some hospital a policeman, helpless, unable to move. Surely the man had a wife and children. What about them? For the moment their agony became Joe's and for the first time he prayed for the man he had wronged. Once more he raised his eyes. His imagination grew active. He could see that sweet little bare-footed girl arising from her knees, standing on tiptoe and reaching forward in a last beautiful gesture, touching the foot of Christ, and kissing the hand where it had touched the foot. For the first time in his life Joe was filled with a sense of the supernatural. He felt that "ministers of grace" unseen were all about him. He arose, kissed the foot, and turning to Tommy, whispered, "If you don't mind waiting a few minutes, I believe I'll go to confession."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CURFEW, AND HOW IT AFFECTED JOE.

“Do you know, Tommy,” said Joe, as he handed each of the three beggars a sixpence, “that I feel like a morning star?”

“I do not, sir.”

“Well, I do. I feel very Irish and very Catholic.”

“Sure, they’re both the one, sir.”

“Now conduct me to Mr. McGroarty’s.”

“I will, sir.”

To Joe’s manifest disappointment, neither John McGroarty nor his little Irish daughter, Eileen, was at home. Mr. McGroarty was at that moment giving an exhibition of weight lifting at a charity bazaar, and Eileen was with him, prepared, should there arise the occasion, to favor the attending people with a program of Irish dances. Mrs. McGroarty, however, was at home. She would be delighted to have Joe as a lodger. She had a brother in America who had prospered, and she loved America next to dear old Ireland.

“And won’t you take a cup of tay?” she asked.

Joe grinned and shook his head.

“And when do you expect your husband and little Eileen back?”

“Sure, they’ll be here in an hour’s time. They must be in by ten o’clock.”

“Well, I’ll go out and explore a little; and—I say, Tom, what about my baggage—er—luggage?”

“The clark will bring it here, sir.”

“The what?”

“He means,” explained Mrs. McGroarty, “the young man who attends to the door.”

“Oh, I see. Clark? How do you spell that word?”

“C-l-e-r-k, sir.”

“You mean clerk?”

“I do not, sir; I mean clark.”

“Well, have you time for a walk?”

“I have, sir.”

“All right. Good-bye, Mrs. McGroarty, I’ll be in to see your people in an hour or two.”

“Remember, Joe,” said the lady of the house, “you must be in before ten.”

“I should worry!” answered Joe lightly. “So this is Gardiner Street?” he continued as they left the house.

“It is, sir.”

“And what is that park down there?”

“It is Mountjoy Square, sir.”

“I am glad to see you have a fine place like that,” said Joe, making conversation. “There are so many children around here! Why, this is a land of children. They are everywhere.”

Why aren't these children in that park instead of being on the streets?"

"It's a private green, sir."

"Private! What the— Who owns it?"

"I do not know, sir. But only them is admitted as have a key to the gates."

"And who have keys to the gates?"

"It is for them as lives around in the houses facing the square, sir. But they do be telling me that if you pay a few shillings a year you may have a key."

"Well, I'll be—" Here Joe paused, meditated, and said—"switched. I want to go in."

When Joe wanted a thing he generally got it. He waited patiently at one of the gates till someone came out. Joe, followed by his astonished young guide, took advantage of the opening. He had a baseball in his pocket; and when, a few minutes later, he gave Tommy a few lessons in that part of the American national game known as catching or ball-tossing, the tennis players laid aside their rackets and became spectators. Presently Joe began to put a curve on the ball, whereupon idle curiosity changed to admiration.

There was one young man—a ladies' man—among the spectators who did not share the admiration of the others. If there was any lime-light to be thrown, he wanted it exclusively for himself.

"He's one of those rotten Americans," he remarked to the young lady who had been his partner on the tennis court, "who knows base-

ball and nothing else. Watch me show him up. Beg your pardon, sir," he said, bestowing a stealthy wink, as he spoke, upon the fair one, "but would you care to try a game of tennis with me? I'll be glad to furnish you with a racket."

"Delighted," answered Joe. "Here, Tommy, get one of your friends to catch with you."

"He really seems to know something else besides baseball," remarked the young lady a little later. "It was a 'love' affair for you from start to finish."

"He's a professional," growled the discomfited ladies' man. "Wait till Pat Crellin gets through with him!"

Joe had met a foeman worthy of his steel. Pat Crellin was the bright particular tennis star of Mountjoy Square. It was difficult to say which of the two was the better player. Two games were hotly contested, each player winning a set. Then a halt was called.

"Young man," said Pat, shaking Joe's hand warmly, "being what you are, how I wish you were an Irishman!"

"I feel that way myself," returned Joe, the hero of the moment. "But what's your hurry? You don't mean to say you want to stop now?"

"But it's a quarter to ten," urged Pat, a young man who was Joe's senior by five years, "and I give myself ten minutes to get home."

"Oh, the curfew!" cried Joe. "But what's the difference? Who's going to bother about a few more minutes at a game of lawn tennis?"

Pat laughed.

“The English have different opinions. Before ten o'clock strikes every mother's son of us has to hurry in.”

“Just like a lot of naughty children being put to bed,” said Joe bitterly.

“Come on, sir,” said Tommy, flushed and rosy, returning the ball to its owner. “I must be getting home. I have a walk better than five minutes.”

As the two left the Square they came upon two small mobs of boys, evidently just finished with some game.

“What were you fellows playing?” asked Young America.

“Cowboys and Indians, sir,” answered a chorus. “And we were the cowboys, and we're after beating the Indians,” continued their leader, “with only two of us scalped.”

If Joe had told these boys that he had seen cowboys only once in his life, and that in a Wild West show, not one of them would have believed that he came from the United States. But they did not wait to hear further remarks from him. All were bent on making their homes. It was ten minutes to ten, and the light was so good that any one with ordinary eyes could read fine print. Nevertheless it was bedtime.

Joe paused to observe. Children were scurrying hither and thither like frightened prairie dogs. Mothers, anxious mothers, were running into the street after their little ones or leaning

out of windows and calling with raised voices for Patrick or Mary or Eileen or Michael. The streets were emptying fast.

"Excuse me, sir," said Tommy, "but I do be thinking that I'll have to run for it. Me mother will be getting uneasy. That's your way." Here Tommy pointed up the street. "You pass our church and go on to Sherrard Street. It's on the farther side."

"I know," said Joe. "Here, Tommy, buy your sisters some hair ribbons or candy or something—and run."

And Tommy, richer by two shillings, dashed away with a light heart and lighter legs.

Joe, hands in pockets, strolled along. The street was buried in gloomy silence. He reached Great Denmark Street, and it occurred to him then to walk over and view St. George's Church, the spire of which had excited his admiration. It was five minutes to ten by its clock when he came in front of its portals. Children were running past it in a dead silence which seemed to have gripped the entire city. Joe stood before St. George's buried in thought. The silence, the awful silence, was bearing down upon him like a nightmare. Never in all his life in America had he felt as he did now. What could it be? He meditated long—meditated earnestly.

"Oh, I have it!" he cried, slapping his thigh. "It's the talking machines and pianos. That's the difference. You can go anywhere at night in America, and you hear phonographs, and

horns, and pianos, and what not. The poorest people in our country have some sort of musical instrument in their homes. Perhaps they have them here too; but just as like as not the Black-and-Tans won't let them use them."

Just then chimes here and there began sounding the hour of ten.

"Gee!" said Joe. "I guess I'll have to run for it."

It was a most unhappy decision. Joe turned and ran as though pursued by an army of fiends. It was a pity that so admirable a demonstration of speed had no witnesses. In less time than it takes to tell he reached Dorset Street, and turned towards Gardiner. Once he won that street it would be but a few seconds before he was in safety.

"Halt," cried a rough voice directly behind him.

The challenger might as well have advised Joe to run faster, which is precisely what the young gentleman did.

A shot rang out. Joe could hear the bullet, he fancied, whizzing over his head. Somewhat frightened but mightily enraged, Joe turned to face his pursuer. Towards him, running awkwardly, came a man in the uniform of one of his majesty's soldiers. He was within twenty yards of Joe. Running forward a few paces, the representative of what by a bitter irony might be called law raised his gun and pointed it straight at the very attentive boy.

In justice to the Black-and-Tan it should be

stated that the fellow had no intention whatever at that time of shooting the boy. He was merely indulging in a Black-and-Tan pleasantry. No Black-and-Tan can possibly have a highly developed, even a fairly developed, sense of humor. If he had he would cease in the developing to be a Black-and-Tan. But these gentry have that sense of humor which we find in cannibals and Georgian clay eaters. To scare a child into fits is with them high humor. This man with the pointed gun was amusing himself.

Joe did not share in the mirth. The baseball was in his hand. He had whipped it from his pocket in the act of halting. With the quickness that had done so much to make him the famous quarterback of St. Xavier's Cincinnati football team, Joe sent that ball with all his force at the enemy's trigger hand, and as he did so threw himself flat on the ground. The precaution was unnecessary. The gun, it is true, did go off, but the bullet sped towards the sky. Joe's aim was not perfect. The ball had struck the guardian of the law on the crazy-bone, to such effect that the man, having pulled the trigger involuntarily, danced with pain and swore with fury, while Joe, picking himself up, dashed away to shelter.

Still swearing and roaring lustily, the soldier of his sovereign majesty, the king, recovered the gun which had fallen from his hands and resumed the hot pursuit. But the loss of time entailed by the recovery of the weapon was more

than enough for Joe, who, watched by a thousand shining eyes from the windows on either side of the street, dashed forward with a speed which evoked the highest admiration and good wishes of the sympathetic spectators. A number of little boys in various houses were unable to control their joyous feelings. They broke into rapturous applause, for which many of them were promptly spanked by their mothers and put to bed.

Everybody thought that Joe was safe—everybody, including Joe himself. He had rounded the corner at Gardiner Street and was within a few paces of McGroarty's house. His pursuer was not even in sight.

"I hope their door isn't locked," prayed Joe. And even as the hope passed through his mind two Black-and-Tans emerging from Sherrard Street threw themselves upon him and brought him violently to the ground.

"Hold him! Hold him!" gasped the pursuer as he appeared, turning the corner. "He tried to kill me."

"Here, you people, get off me; I'm not a sofa," exclaimed Joe indignantly. His captors rose at his words, holding him tightly.

"What's your little game, young feller?" said one of them.

"Since you fellows are holding my arms so I can't use 'em, suppose you brush me off. I just love the dust and dirt of Irish streets, but I don't love it in the wrong place."

While the two, to the exuberant delight of the

window occupants, dusted off the indignant young gentleman, the cause of Joe's plight came within speaking distance.

"That bloke tried to kill me. Hold him fast. He threw a bomb at me."

"A bomb!" echoed Joe. "You're a bum yourself. I threw a baseball at you; and it served you right. You were just going to shoot me."

"I was not. It was a joke."

"Where's my ball?" asked Joe. "What did you do with it?"

Before the furious soldier could think up suitable expletives for reply, the window of Mr. John McGroarty's residence was raised, and there appeared the full head and gigantic bust of a man who, Joe at once concluded, was McGroarty himself. Behind him, pale and trembling stood his wife.

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen," he said. "But I'm sure there's some mistake. That young gentleman is a guest of ours. He's a stranger in Dublin——"

"Silence!" broke in one of the soldiers. "He can explain all that to our sergeant. Come on, boy!"

They turned into Sherrard Street, and Joe's original aggressor strode in front.

"Well, I'll be switched!" gasped Joe.

"What's the matter, boy?" queried one of his captors.

"I've met that humorist before," and he nodded towards the fellow in front. "I'll never

forget that jagged scar across his forehead, nor that toothbrush moustache, nor that pair of buck teeth. And," continued the frank youth, "I believe he's got the same big quid of tobacco bulging out his left jaw as he had when he pointed his gun at me in my jaunting car, and himself in his lorry."

"I wish I had you by myself," growled the Apollo referred to, with a string of oaths to emphasize the strength of his feelings.

"You don't wish it near as much as I do," retorted Joe. "I'd just hate to leave Ireland before we had that little meeting."

There was a lorry, a caged lorry, halfway down the street at the curb.

"Jump in," said the leader.

"But I don't want to go in," protested the boy.

The two captors bore him forward, and the humorist playfully struck him a blow on the back of the neck from behind. Joe's playfulness asserted itself—the playfulness of a trick mule. He kicked backwards and by a lucky fluke caught the practical joker on the left knee. It took the strength of the three other Black-and-Tans to keep the howling victim from indulging in further pleasantries.

The barracks which they shortly reached were full of captives—guilty villains, most of them, who had been found on the street in defiance of England's curfew law. Joe was placed on a bench to await his turn.

The officer in charge was typically English,

and correspondingly slow. The quarters passed, an hour elapsed, and Joe was still waiting.

At twenty minutes past eleven there entered an inspector, a decent man in the opinion of all Dublin, accompanied by Mr. John McGroarty. That personage was everything Joe expected of a wrestler; so stocky that he seemed to be undersized, with a round massive head, and jaws that indicated viselike strength.

Mr. McGroarty's eyes swept the room till they paused and brightened when they were regaled by the vision of Joe Ranly.

"There he is," he whispered to the inspector, as he nodded and grinned at Joe. "He's a mere boy."

The inspector walked over and shook Joe's hand.

"What did you do?" he asked kindly.

"Do? I got into trouble for trying to obey your measly old law. It struck ten, and I shot out for home, and one of your cops fired a bullet over my head; and when I took the hint and halted, he pointed his gun at me. I thought he was going to fire and I threw my baseball at his hand on the trigger. I must have been nervous; I missed his hand and caught him on the crazy-bone, I reckon. Anyhow, I've lost my ball."

"I'm sure he didn't intend to shoot."

"I'm beginning to think so myself, sir, now. It's his way of being funny."

"I'll arrange everything," said the inspector.

After a whispered conference with the officer in charge, the inspector returned.

"It is all arranged," he said. "There's a lorry waiting without to take you both home. I'm really very sorry. As to the fellow who aimed at you with his gun—George Hill is his name—he's one of the biggest idiots imported into this city. We're going to send him out of Dublin within a few days."

As the lorry conveyed the two newly made friends homeward, Joe and McGroarty entered into a most exciting though whispered conversation. It was on the comparative merits of Dempsey and Carpentier. Suddenly McGroarty paused.

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen," he said, raising his voice. "But I've a little daughter who is frightened to death on account of the arrest of this boy. If we drove up to our house in this lorry, it might throw her into a fit. Suppose you stop a hundred yards or so this side of the house."

Mr. McGroarty's wishes were acceded to, and the two newly made friends started walking quietly up the street. They had not made fifty yards when there pounced upon them from the shadows of St. Francis Xavier Church fully a dozen men.

Before Mr. McGroarty discovered who they were, he had knocked three of them down, one of them unconscious; and while he paused on recognizing that they were Black-and-Tans, Joe deftly administered a black eye to a fourth.

“Sorry,” said McGroarty blandly, as he threw up his hands. “Stop your scrapping, Joe. And now let me explain.”

“Come on, both of ye,” said their leader. “Ye can spend the night explaining at the barracks.”

“Say, is this a joke?” roared Joe.

The unresisting pair were bundled around the corner once more and into lorry number three.

“But look you,” protested McGroarty—“this is hideous. We’ve just come back from the barracks under safe conduct. Instead of going all the way—”

“Oh, stow it!” grumbled the officer. “That’s a fine story, and you can tell it later on.”

McGroarty looked at Joe.

“God save Ireland!” said the youth, with a fervor which he had never manifested in prayer at college or high school.

“You keep a civil tongue in your head!”

“Oh, I beg your pardon,” returned Joe, developing under the stress of the last two hours’ happenings a vein of sarcasm. “But is it uncivil to mention the name of God in reverence, and is it uncivil to pray out loud? When I get back to the United States—”

“Stop!” roared the officer to the chauffeur. “I beg your pardon, sir,” he continued, turning to Joe. “But are you a stranger in Dublin?”

“In a way, I am,” answered the youth,

“though you’ve all been training me to feel very much at home.”

“And are you an American?”

“Proud of it.”

“Perhaps,” said the officer, “there’s a misunderstanding. Suppose you explain,” he continued, addressing McGroarty.

And McGroarty did explain, with such happy effect that the lorry turned backward in its course. The officer apologized volubly. An escort of four men conducted the two to McGroarty’s home and bade them a polite good night.

“I like Ireland,” said Joe, as the athlete opened his door. “It’s—it’s different.”

The difference continued; for as Joe entered, a tear-stained mite of a girl sprang forward, leaped into his arms, and planted a resounding kiss upon his blushing cheek. As Joe, utterly disconcerted, let her down, she suddenly blushed herself, and ran out of the room in the extreme of confusion.

“And now, Joe,” cried Mrs. McGroarty with radiant welcome, “won’t you take a cup of tay?”

“I will,” said Joe heartily.

## CHAPTER V.

### AN IRISH EVENING IN AN IRISH HOME.

**I**N Ireland the simple expression "a cup of tea" covers much more than the words convey. On the present occasion it stood out for bread, butter, marmalade, and a dish of the finest strawberries that Joe had ever tasted or seen.

"You poor boy!" said the sympathetic Mrs. McGroarty. "Sure it's starving you must be. Perhaps you'd like some eggs and a rasher of bacon. I'll be glad to get them for you."

"No, thank you, ma'am."

"But it would be no trouble at all. It would be a pleasure."

"I shouldn't eat at all," answered Joe, biting into his fourth piece of bread. Mr. McGroarty, a part of whose simple life consisted in refraining from all talk while eating, was now well on with his seventh slice.

"Great Scott!" said Joe presently as he helped himself to the strawberries. "These things must have won a prize at a fair."

"They're our own, sir," returned Mrs. McGroarty. "They're the kind we always have. Sure, I'll pick you another dish."

“No,” objected Joe. “Enough is as good as a feast.”

From a door leading into an adjoining room the fair head of Maureen peered forth, her face aglow, and her shining eyes fixed in undisguised admiration upon the young American. When Joe happened to catch the child’s gaze and grinned graciously, she disappeared, after the manner of Jack-in-the-box.

“Won’t you have some more tay?” asked the hospitable woman.

This question brought the smiling Maureen into the picture again.

“Thank you, ma’am; but I’m in training—” Here Joe, catching sight of Maureen, waved his hand at her. This brought gravity to her face and her finger to her mouth. Joe grinned amiably and the girl effaced herself once more. “And,” continued the boy after this bit of pantomime, “I don’t think much tea is good. Say, Mrs. McGroarty, when I was in fourth year high, I came upon a sentence written by an English bird—I think his name was Doctor Arbuthnot. He said something like this about the strawberry. ‘Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did.’ Well, now I know that he had good reason for getting off that stuff.”

Once more Maureen appeared, standing squarely in the doorway. Her face was set, there was determination on her brow. Anyone could see that she was going through an awful ordeal. With firm step she advanced towards

Joe, but when Joe raised eyes of smiling welcome she turned tail and bolted incontinently back to her coign of vantage.

“What in the world is the matter with her?” queried the mystified boy.

For the first time since addressing himself to “the cup of tay” Mr. McGroarty broke into speech.

“Sure, ’tis the bashfulness that’s come over her,” he explained, fortified by ten pieces of bread and a heaping dish of strawberries. “Our little Maureen wants to welcome you, but she’s that timid with strangers!”

“You’d never dream from the way she’s carrying on,” put in the wife, “that she’s dead in love with you. She thinks that you are everything that America stands for.”

At this point of the conversation Maureen once more came into view with a do-or-die expression upon her lovely features. In her right hand, extended towards Joe, she held a baseball.

“Gee-rusalem!” bawled Joe, jumping to his feet. “If that isn’t my ball! Where did you get it?”

Maureen, as she handed the ball to its owner, moved her lips.

“What’s that?”

Again Maureen gave a pretty exhibition of mouth movement.

“Here,” said Joe, putting his ear within an inch of the girl’s mouth, “say that again.”

“A woman brought it to us just after you

were taken away," whispered Maureen, as though she were in confession and telling some hideous crime.

"A woman!" cried Joe. "And out after curfew?"

"Yes, sir," whispered the child. "She said to let you know that she was the flower woman you met."

"Holy smoke!" ejaculated the boy.

Just then Mr. McGroarty, who had gone to one of the windows fronting on Gardiner Street, suddenly returned to the table and lowered the wick of the lamp till the room was almost shrouded in darkness.

"Here, Joe," he said, catching the boy's hand, "come over here and look out. See that wall over there between the two houses? Do you notice anything?"

Joe peered out into the night that still carried with it a remnant of the evening twilight. Nestling against the wall was a figure—a woman's figure. As he continued to gaze, the form moved, the face turned towards him, and Joe gasped. It was the flower woman!

"Isn't that the woman?" asked McGroarty.

"It certainly is," answered the boy.

A little hand caught Joe's right at this juncture.

"That you, Maureen?" asked the boy kindly.

"Joe!" whispered Maureen.

"Yes, dear," answered Joe, bending down and putting his ear at the proper distance—one inch.

“Look at her hands, Joe.”

He looked. About the right hand was a bandage, and in the left a pair of beads. Even in the dim light Joe could perceive the woman's lips moving in prayer.

“What sights we do see!” said Joe.

“Joe!” came the whisper.

Joe adjusted himself to hear.

“Joe, I was bold. I am so ashamed!”

“Bold! What are you talking about? You're the most timid child I ever met.”

“She does be referring,” explained Mrs. McGroarty, “to her jumping into your arms and kissing you when she met you first. You see, sir, I had told her all about you and what a fine boy you were. And when she saw you in the hands of the Black-and-Tans and carried away, she got it into her head that they would put you to death. Nothing that I could say could console her. Then when you came in alive and radiant, she simply forgot herself.”

“She did not forget herself,” contradicted the boy. “It was just her big Irish heart. Why, it was worth my while to travel from Cincinnati to Dublin to get such a little friend as that,” and as Mr. McGroarty raised the wick Joe caught Maureen in his arms, swung her into the air, and returned the salute; whereupon Maureen, rosy, happy, but overcome once more by excessive timidity, slipped from his arms and would have once more dashed into the other room had not her father caught her fast.

“Now, Maureen,” he said, “it’s far beyond your bedtime; but before you go suppose you give Joe an idea of an Irish dance.”

“Great stuff!” bawled the boy.

At once every trace of timidity departed from the child. Flushing with pleasure, she stepped to the largest open space in the room and put herself in position.

There was a piano in the room, but it was not put into use. Mrs. McGroarty hummed, sweetly hummed “Miss McCleod’s Reel,” and after two bars the child, all her bashfulness gone, broke into a step, gay, alert, easy and instinct with the joyousness of the Irish dance. The father began beaming with pride at his graceful daughter, but gradually getting into the spirit of the movement, fell to clapping his huge hands rhythmically and thunderously. This was a cue to Joe, who forthwith set to beating time with hands and feet, interjecting, occasionally, a wild western whoop of joy. Maureen, inspired by these noisy and hearty demonstrations, put added vivacity into her work. There came, presently, a loud rap at the window; but dancer and accompanists were too absorbed to give it heed.

The tapping grew louder, more insistent, but, with “joy unconfined,” on went the dance. At length there came a mighty tap that almost broke the window pane. The mother ceased singing, the father rushed to throw back the shutters, Maureen stood at attention, while Joe, gazing curiously at McGroarty’s movements,

continued to stamp and clap his hands with the interjection of an occasional ecstatic howl.

The grim face against the pane, as they all discovered when McGroarty moved aside the curtains, was the face of a Black-and-Tan.

"Good evening, sir," said McGroarty pleasantly as he raised the window.

"What are you people doing?" came the question of suspicion.

"Sure, we're enjoying a little diversion, sir."

"The noise that you're making is a breach of the peace. Get to bed!"

"Much obliged," said Joe, in tones excessively sweet. "Say, who's going to wake me up? I'm going to communion tomorrow?"

"I'll see to it," said Maureen.

"What's that?"

This time Joe found that he was able to understand her at a range of two inches. Maureen was losing her timidity.

"Sure, we'll all see to it," added the mother; "and we'll all go to the seven-o'clock Mass and receive communion together."

Joe had a tiny room all to himself. Over his white-counterpaned bed was a picture of the Adorable Heart, and on the opposite wall one of Our Immaculate Lady. There was a lovely bunch of roses on the dresser. The room was exquisitely clean. On a table beside his bed lay, beside a student's lamp, a small volume. Joe took it up and glanced at the title. It was "The Hounds of Banba."

"Banba! Banba! Who was he?" mused Joe.

His meditations were broken by a light tap at the door.

“Come in.”

Maureen, bare of foot, and bearing in her hand a small bottle, presented herself. She smiled nervously.

“Hello, old lady!” said Joe. “What is it?”

For answer Maureen opened the bottle and generously sprinkled the bed.

“What’s the idea?” asked Joe.

Maureen’s lips moved.

“Eh?” cried the boy. And at a range of three inches he could hear without difficulty Maureen pronounce the words “Holy water.”

“And what are you sprinkling my bed with it for?”

“To keep,” whispered Maureen in a voice that carried almost two feet, “the Black-and-Tans and all other evils of soul and body from this room.” And with the words Maureen was gone.

“There’s nothing like living in Ireland,” thought the youth as he went over to the window, having first lowered the light and looked across at the dividing wall. The woman was gone.

Then Joe knelt down and prayed—prayed as he had never prayed before. The soul of Ireland was fighting to get into his blood.

Too excited to sleep, he gave himself, after finishing his prayers, to the pages of “The Hounds of Banba.”

“By George!” he exclaimed three times

while reading the first story, *The Ember*. It was a new discovery—to Joe at least. These Irishmen could write. They lived lives of trial, and with the pen reduced them to terms of poetry.

Joe got ready for bed. Then, blowing out the light, he made for the window. The woman was there, still telling her beads.

“Holy smoke!” murmured Joe.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A WALK IN DUBLIN THAT CHANGES INTO A RUN.

ON Friday morning, June third, Joe determined to take a walk.

“But you’ll be getting lost,” objected Maureen, whose voice, still soft and low, could now be heard if one paid due attention.

“What’s the diff?” Joe returned. “You can never really get lost anywhere if you know the name of the street you live on.” Joe paused to consider. Of a sudden his eyes lit up. “By Jove!” he exclaimed. “You haven’t anything to do, Maureen, have you?”

“I have not, sir.” This was not strictly true. School was keeping that day. But what was school with so royal a guest in the house?

“Suppose you come along, Maureen. I am naturally timid, you know, and I might get frightened to death if I were alone.”

The idea of Joe’s getting frightened to death struck Maureen as being the funniest thing she had ever heard. She broke into violent laughter, and suddenly realizing her boldness, checked herself, the effort bringing on an attack of coughing which was within a little, as it seemed to Joe, of choking her to death. Her father came to her rescue and gave her a pat

upon the back, intended, no doubt, to be gentle. Maureen ceased choking and proceeded to scream.

“You overgrown elephant!” said the wife. “Did you think you were in the prize ring?” Saying which, she caught Maureen in her arms, and kissing each tear-stained cheek, added: “You may go, Maureen, with Joe, and have a picnic all day. I know Sister Gabriel will be glad to excuse you this once; you haven’t missed a class day this year.”

The eyes of Maureen, still moist with tears, threw out lights of joy, like the sun’s rays breaking through rain clouds, and she pirouetted and dashed away to make herself ready for what she looked forward to as the red-letter occasion of the year.

“Now which way shall we go?” asked the boy, as they walked out into Gardiner Street.

“Sure, any way at all,” returned the radiant child, holding in a tight clasp her young hero’s hand.

“What’s that street up there?”

“Denmark Street, sir?”

“I’d like to see it in broad daylight,” said Joe. “That’s the street, I believe, where I got the cop on the crazy bone.”

“The what, sir?”

“The policeman.”

Maureen’s eyes flashed; she tossed her head. “Indeed and he was no policeman; he was a Black-and-Tan.”

“Well, I suppose, it’s all the same.”

“Indeed it is not. The police are nice, good men; and we children all love them.”

“How about the Black-and-Tans, Maureen?”

“Oh, we do be trying all the time not to hate them.”

Joe broke into loud laughter; but Maureen’s face remained grave and somewhat troubled.

“I was almost afraid to go to communion this morning,” continued the child.

“What were you afraid of?”

“I was trying to forgive the Black-and-Tan who chased you last night. I said me beads three times and I wasn’t sure that me anger was all gone. Don’t you find it hard to love your enemies, Joe?”

“Wh—What’s that? stammered Joe, aroused into a new field of thought and ethics.

“To love people like the Black-and-Tans?”

“I’ll tell you what,” answered Joe, after a thoughtful pause. “I’d dearly love to meet that Black-and-Tan, George Hill, who got me into all my trouble last night, in a quiet place with nobody around and no guns in sight, and to knock the tar out of him with bare fists. Then, oh, then I’d forgive him with all my heart!”

“Sure, it’s joking you are,” said the scandalized girl.

“Well, we’ll let it go at that,” answered Joe, who himself was unable to say in how much of truth and how much of exaggeration he had indulged.

It was not a typical Irish day. It was bright

and sunny. There were few clouds in a generally clouded sky. The clock of St. George's indicated fifteen minutes past nine, and the people of Dublin were about ready to take up the business of the day. As they walked up David Street, Joe gazed with much interest at the signs.

"For the love o' Mike," he suddenly exclaimed, "how do you pronounce the name on that sign?" and he pointed to the unaccustomed word "Victualler."

"Vittler, sir," answered Maureen, wondering whether he were still joking.

"And what does it mean?"

"Sure, it means a butcher, sir."

"Well, that's one on me. Say, Maureen, how would you like an ice cream soda?"

"I beg your pardon, sir."

"An ice cream soda, you know."

"I never heard of such a thing in all me life."

"You didn't! Well, you're going to make a great discovery before you are ten minutes older. Show me the way to a drug store."

"A what, sir?"

"A drug store."

"What's that, sir?"

"Oh, I say, Maureen. Where have you been all your life? A place where the women go for lip sticks and rouge."

Maureen's brows wrinkled.

"Lip stick, lip stick," she repeated. "Oh, I know. Once me father brought me to see Charlie Chaplin in a lip-stick comedy."

"I think you mean slapstick, Maureen. Say," he said, addressing a jarvey, just then standing at rest beside his jaunting car, "could you tell me whereabouts there's a drug store?"

"I beg your pardon, sir."

The jarvey listened attentively. He had never heard of a drug store in all his life; but, like many an Irishman of his class, he never, until driven to it, admitted his ignorance on any topic.

"We haven't got them here since the troubles, sir; but I think you'll find one in Cork. Maybe two of them."

Joe, unconvinced, moved on.

"Doesn't anybody ever get sick in this place?" he growled.

"They do, sir," answered the girl.

"And have you physicians here?"

"We have, sir."

"And when they prescribe medicine, where the dickens do you go to get it?"

"To a medical hall, sir."

"So that's what you call a drug store, is it? Come on, let's go to a medical hall, then."

There was one a few doors up the street. On entering, Joe looked about him with interest.

"Good morning, sir," said a fresh-cheeked young woman behind the counter. "It's very warm this morning."

"Not so that I can notice it," answered the frank lad. "Why, your thermometer here says seventy-one degrees. You don't call that warm, do you?"

"It is pleasant weather and the sun is shining bright," evaded the surprised young lady.

"Where's your soda fountain?" pursued Joe.

"I beg your pardon, sir."

"Don't you serve ice cream soda?"

"There's a place on O'Connell Street, I think, sir, where they serve ice cream."

"I didn't say ice cream; I said ice cream soda."

"I beg your pardon, sir," quavered the young woman, blushing furiously with embarrassment.

Maureen climbed on the counter, reached over to the fully exposed ear of the young woman, and whispered, "Joe is an American boy just over."

In her excitement the woman forgot her embarrassment. She raised large blue eyes of admiration, and wonder.

"Are you the lad that came running past here just after curfew last night?"

"I was in a sort of a hurry," answered Joe pleasantly.

"My brother said you must be a great runner. And we all do be loving you for hitting that Black-and-Tan on the arm. It serves him right. You saw the news about him in the morning's paper, sir?"

"No; what?"

"Look at this," said the young woman, laying her finger on a short article on the last page of a local daily.

Joe read this:

A BLACK-AND-TAN MYSTERIOUSLY  
ATTACKED

Early this morning George Hill, a Black-and-Tan who had just distinguished himself by bringing in a young American who failed to realize the enormity of violating the curfew law, was brutally assaulted by some person or persons unknown. It happened just a few moments after his leaving the barracks at one o'clock A. M. So serious was the punishment inflicted on him that he was reduced to unconsciousness. At the hour of going to press he is still unable to talk. The attack is involved in mystery.

"Well!" said Joe, laying down the paper. "I thought I had pretty rough sledding last night, but he got a lot more than I did. Thank you, ma'am. Good-by. I say, Maureen, I don't believe they have ice cream soda in Ireland."

"If it's snakes ye mean——" began Maureen.

"Snakes! Not at all. Are there any fruit stores about?"

"There's one on O'Connell Street."

"Good! We'll go there and try a slice of watermelon. Do you like watermelon?"

"It's teasing me ye are," protested Maureen.

"Indeed I'm not. Is it so very expensive? Is it a luxury?"

"I never heard of a watermelon."

Joe whistled. "Maureen, half of your life has been lost. Why, it's the finest sort of a

dish on a summer's day. Just wait, and you'll see!"

They had now passed Temple Street, famous for the Church of St. George, and in a short time reached the next crossing.

"Ah, here we are—O'Connell Street," said Joe.

"But we haven't come to O'Connell Street, yet," said Maureen. "Up that way it is Blessington Street; when we come to the next turn, it is Frederick Street, and when we come to the next street, we call it Cavendish Place."

"But it's all one and the same street, isn't it?"

"But we don't call it O'Connell Street till we pass Cavendish Place."

"All right, Maureen. I guess I'll have to get used to it. Come on; let's go to that fruit store of yours."

They were soon in the heart of the ancient city of Dublin, a city that can show records as far back as twelve hundred years. O'Connell Street is a very wide thoroughfare. The houses on each side are strong and substantial, none of them in any wise reminding one of the American skyscraper.

The sidewalks were scenes of busy life. There were many young men walking about— young men with keen, eager faces. Energy, earnestness, idealism, could be read in them. They represented the new, the renascent Ireland. The street was alive with side-cars and every conceivable variety of vehicle that could

be drawn by horse, or pony, or donkey. There were a few Fords and a rare automobile.

“What I like about this town,” soliloquized Joe, “is that an old man or an old woman can cross the streets without incurring the danger of sudden death or heart failure. I like those busses, too—especially the top part, where you can sit in the open air and enjoy the scenery. And nobody seems to be in a hurry.”

“Why should they be?” asked Maureen, genuinely seeking information.

“Why should they be?” echoed Joe. “By Jove, you’ve got me! I don’t know the answer myself. All I do know is that in the United States we are always in a rush. You see that conductor over there seeing those people get aboard? There are ten people, and they’re taking their time, and he is smiling. In the U. S. A. the conductor would be shouting out ‘All aboard’ every time he got his breath. I wonder whether you’re not a heap more sensible than we are.”

“My father does be saying, ‘The more haste, the less speed,’” said Maureen. “Here’s the place, Joe.”

The fruiterer’s had a familiar look. There were oranges, and apples, and bananas looking as though they were wasting away in a slow fever, and anemic tomatoes, and debilitated cantaloupes, with luscious strawberries and rich dark cherries. There were pears and plums too. In fact it looked like an American fruit store with a washed-out appearance. But there

was a striking difference. Joe felt it, but could not localize it.

“What would you be pleased to wish today, sir?” said a black-eyed Irish colleen, with a smile of welcome.

“Got a slice of watermelon?” asked Joe. He knew the difference now. There was not an Italian in any way connected with the business.

“I beg your pardon, sir.”

“A watermelon,” repeated Joe.

“Excuse me,” said the colleen, retreating into the store, where she consulted a young man. He looked troubled, shook his head, and directed her to the bookkeeper, an old gentleman, the pen in whose hand seemed a part of himself. On hearing her question, he dismounted from his high stool and, putting his pen behind his ear, came forth.

“Good morning, sir,” he began, addressing Joe genially, “’tis very close this morning.”

“Not that I know of,” returned Joe, with a smile.

“You are from America, sir.”

“How did you know that?”

“Weren’t you asking for watermelon? No man in the three kingdoms would be asking for that. The fact is, sir, we have no watermelons in these parts; and many of our people haven’t the least idea of what a watermelon is.”

“Oh, now I know what Maureen meant. Watermelons over here are about as plentiful as snakes.”

“Precisely, sir.”

“All right. Maureen, do you like cherries?”

Maureen blushed and smiled. They went forth presently biting away at their cherries without the least self-consciousness.

“Halloa!” exclaimed Joe, as they neared O’Connell Bridge. “What’s broke loose now?”

“It’s an infantry patrol, sir,” said a young Irishman as he was passing, catching Joe’s question and pausing to give the information. “It’s one of the ways the British Government employs to teach us to love them. You might be taking this street here, sir,” and the young man, as he spoke, motioned towards Henry Street.

“Thank you, sir; but I don’t see why?” Joe, as he spoke, gazed at the approaching soldiers. They were marching at a measured pace, twenty strong, separated from each other by several yards, and in three columns. Their officer, a dapper young man, was playfully twisting a revolver in his hand, and gazing from left to right with a mocking smile, as who should say, “Well, you dirty Irish, what are you going to do about it?” Each soldier carried his gun, not, as one would expect on his shoulders, but with finger on the trigger guard, and prepared to fire at the drop of a hat.

“The big stiffs!” growled Joe vehemently.

As he spoke, some one touched his elbow. He turned to find himself facing the flower woman. She raised her finger in a warning gesture.

“Whisper,” she said with a serious face. Just then an undersized man with shifting eyes

sidled towards Joe. The woman at once changed her attitude and tone.

“Sir,” she said with raised voice, “a fine young man like you ought to wear a flower on a beautiful day like this. Just a penny sir, for the love of God and the Blessed Virgin, to get me a cup of tay.”

Joe readily produced sixpence and was about to give it to her. Ignoring the money the woman undertook to pin a bit of heather on the lapel of his coat. As she proceeded to do this, Joe’s attention was excited by the swollen condition of her right hand and by the fact that, as with extreme awkwardness she endeavored to pin the heather securely, she was pushing, pushing until he found himself turning the corner on Henry Street. The shifty-eyed man was out of reach.

“Boy,” whispered the woman, cleverly contriving to make a long business of fastening the heather, get up this street as fast as you can! There’s danger.”

“What? A row?” whispered Joe. “I want to see it.”

“Think of the little girl,” pleaded the woman.

“What a selfish beast I am,” returned Joe.

“Thank you, ma’am, for the warning.”

As Joe was speaking, there rang out a command from the dapper officer, following which the patrol turned from O’Connell Street and debouched into the street on which the boy was standing, but in the opposite direction.

“Hurry!” urged the woman.

Catching the wondering-eyed Maureen in a firmer clasp, Joe turned his face westwards. Coming towards him at a speed so rapid that it would take an expert to decide whether it were slow running or fast walking were three young men with faces unusually set and determined. The man in the center had his hands folded. The two on each side were pressing close to him. To Joe's quick eye the three suggested a football formation—the center man carrying the ball and the other two acting as guards. Joe glanced sharply at the folded arms. He could almost swear that the man was carrying a ball. A baseball? No, it was a bomb. Through the crowd behind the three there burst, as Joe continued to gaze, a Black-and-Tan, his eyes fastened on the trio. He was apparently unarmed.

“Hurry! You're followed,” came a whisper, intended for the three young men. Joe had sharp ears.

The trio passed quickening their pace. A few yards behind followed the soldier of the king.

“Come on, Maureen, we must run.” Joe, as he spoke, swung her vigorously into the air and started at a quick run, darting straight into the Black-and-Tan, who went to the ground as though he had been struck by an automobile.

“Sorry,” yelled Joe, darting forward as though nothing had happened. By the time the Black-and-Tan had religiously cursed Joe, his past ancestors, and his prospective descendants,

and risen to his feet, the young men had lost themselves in a crowd—a crowd, by the way, in which there were no old men, no women, no children. As the discomfited fellow, chagrined and furious, rubbed the grime from his face, there came the report of a bursting shell, followed at once by the cracking of many rifles. It was, thanks in a great measure to Joe, a bad morning for the Black-and-Tans; and for the next three months the officer of that particular platoon did his smiling, when he smiled at all, for the benefit of five doctors and several hospital nurses.

Maureen meanwhile was a feather in the hands of the young American. Joe ran for some distance without further blockade of any sort. In fact, all were running in the same direction. He paused at last at the corner of Dominick Street, and set Maureen upon her feet.

“Say, Maureen, you weren’t scared, were you?”

“But,” objected the calm and shining-eyed child, “didn’t I have you with me?”

“Holy smoke!” interpolated the boy.

“And didn’t I make me first Friday this morning?”

“Oh!” said Joe humbly.

“And aren’t we both in the state of grace?”

“And what were you thinking of when you heard all those rifle shots?”

“I did be thinking of the way you bumped

into that Black-and-Tan. Why did you do it, Joe?"

"I thought, Maureen, that he was going to get an Irish soldier, which would have spoiled the whole program. But look who comes," he added dramatically. "Our flower woman once more."

As the woman, walking quite rapidly, passed, she said in a voice clear enough to reach Joe's ears:

"That fellow you bumped is looking for you." Not so much as turning head or eyes toward the youthful adventurers, the woman went up Dominick Street.

"Isn't she the little stormy petrel, though!" remarked Joe. "Say, Maureen, which is the shortest way home?"

"We might go back to O'Connell Street."

"But that's the way he'll be coming. And sure enough, here he comes now! You're not afraid, Maureen?"

"I am not," said the calm young miss, whose voice was now normal, natural and fearless.

"Very good, you blessed cherub; I'm going to face it out. Now, child, smile."

Looking at him fiercely, the Black-and-Tan came straight towards him.

"Good morning," cried Joe genially. "I want to apologize for bumping into you. You see, I didn't have time. I wanted to get this little girl out of danger, and I couldn't stop."

"You were blank, blank awkward," said the soldier.

“Yes. My friends have often told me the same thing.”

“What relation is that girl of yours?”

“She’s my great-aunt.”

The soldier stared at the boy, who returned the stare with large, unblinking eyes.

“And what were the two of you doing at that corner before you started to run?”

“Oh, we were just out to pick a few strawberries.” The soldier broke into profanity.

“Stop!” said Joe grimly. “Are you such a beast as to use language like that in the presence of a little girl?”

“But you are lying to me!”

“Not at all. When I told you the child was my great-aunt and that we were out on the street of downtown Dublin to pick strawberries, it was only a nice way of telling you to mind your own business.”

“You come with me,” said the soldier, laying a hand on the boy’s shoulder.

“Come where? What for?”

“You are under arrest.”

Joe became anxious. He threw his eyes up Dominick Street. Some hundred yards off he noticed a crowd of women towards which girls and more women with flying hair were rushing from all sides. Yes, and there in the heart of the crowd stood, the foremost figure, Joe’s “Stormy Petrel.”

“One moment, sir,” he said gravely. “Maureen, you go up to where that crowd is; you’ll

find the Stormy Petrel there. She'll take you home."

"I will not leave you, sir," answered Maureen, with a gaze of sweetness upon Joe, which as she turned her face towards the Black-and-Tan changed into lively contempt.

"Come on!" said the man, giving the boy a rude jerk.

"What's your hurry?" asked Joe, his face crimsoning with anger.

"Come on," repeated the fellow, emphasizing his remark with a violent shove.

Joe went flat to the sidewalk, where he remained.

"Come on and take me," he said.

"Are you hurt, Joe?" cried Maureen, the tears gathering in her eyes.

"Not so as you can notice it. I'm an American, sir," he went on.

The soldier released his hold on the boy's collar, and rubbed his nose.

"And," continued Joe brightly, "when a cop in our country arrests us, he always takes us off in a conveyance. I'll ride with you, but I'll not walk with you. If you won't give me a ride, you'll have to carry me."

His majesty's soldier scratched his head. It was one thing to manhandle a "dirty Irishman," another to arrest a citizen of the United States.

"You're lying again."

"Lying here on the sidewalk?" asked Joe.

The pun was lost on the perplexed English-

man. As he paused to fathom the meaning of Joe's remark, there suddenly came from up the street a shrill scream followed by a Babel of women's voices; and as the three turned to look, there came dashing towards them a young woman with distended eyes, disheveled hair, followed in full chase by a mob of her own sex. She was running swiftly, but there were fleeter pursuers, two of whom, with flashing scissors, were upon her within a few seconds.

"Help! Murder!" she screamed.

The soldier uttered an ejaculation.

"Susie!" he exclaimed.

There was a click of scissors, and a tress of the woman's hair fell to the ground.

"Stop!" bawled the Black-and-Tan, hurrying up the street.

Without saying a word, Joe jumped to his feet, caught Maureen in his arms, and put off at full speed back to O'Connell Street.

Maureen, glad-eyed and perched on high, surveyed the scene with radiant eyes.

"Look, Joe!" she said, before they had gone twenty yards. "There's a priest in a Ford waving to you."

Joe looked, and saw seated in a Ford at the curb Father Dalton.

"Jump in! Quick!" said the priest. The next moment the party was flying homewards.

"Joe," said Father Dalton, "you gave me the impression last night that you were not particularly Irish."

"I'm Irish through and through."

“That’s what a lot of Sinn Feiners think, too. Only they say you’re too reckless.”

“Oh, it makes a fellow mad to see the way those Black-and-Tans carry on.”

“But you make them mad the way you carry on. Why did you hit that fellow last night on the crazy bone?”

“It was a fluke,” explained Joe.

“The whole town is talking of it. And why did you bump that fellow who came near arresting you?”

“I thought he was trying to get a friend of mine.”

“A friend of yours? What do you mean?”

“Well, a Sinn Feiner. That fellow he was after was a Sinn Feiner all right; and every Sinn Feiner is a friend of mine.”

“If it hadn’t been for that flower woman——”

“The Stormy Petrel?”

Father Dalton broke into a laugh. “A fine name for her. If it had not been for her, it would have gone hard with you.”

“She’s always around to help me,” admitted Joe.

“It was she that staged that little scene a moment ago that called your captor away.”

“You don’t say!”

“Yes. You see, this young woman whose locks were bobbed—Susie McDougal is her name—was seen out walking yesterday with the soldier you so thoughtfully bumped. Irish women cannot tolerate that sort of thing. In-

dignation was smoldering. Your Stormy Petrel, when she saw your plight, got the women to organize a scissors party. It was a quick affair. The woman was to be allowed to run, was to afford her English lover a chance to recognize her and come to her rescue. He did, and you escaped."

"And what do you think has happened to him?" asked Joe.

"I fancy that by this time he's on his way back to the barracks to get a new uniform, and his lady love is going about with her hair worn in the extreme of American fashion."

"It's a great town!" cried Joe ecstatically.

"Yes. And you'll have to get out of it."

"What's that?"

"Joe, you are too swift for the quiet population of Dublin. From now on you will be under constant watch."

"Who's going to watch me?"

"The Black-and-Tans. They suspect you to be a spy or a messenger from the Irish in America."

"Well!"

"And you'll be watched by the Sinn Feiners too."

"What have I done to them?"

"They love you, and they'll be with you, so far as may be, to keep you from harm."

"God save you, Joe!" said Maureen.

"Tomorrow," continued the priest, "if you'll be guided by me, you'll go to Galway."

"I will," said Joe.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE STORMY PETREL IS A BUSY WOMAN. JOE FINDS THAT DUBLIN STREETS IN THE EVENING ARE NOT AS PEACEFUL AS THEY LOOK.

“I do be thinking,” observed Mr. McGroarty after the six-o’clock tea, “that it isn’t safe for you, Joe, to be going out on the streets of Dublin alone.”

“Well, haven’t I been out several times? And haven’t I come back this side up with care?”

“Yes, so far you have come back. But yesterday morning it was your Stormy Petrel and Father Dalton and a number of Sinn Feiners who managed it for you. I suppose you do be thinking of walking out tonight!”

“Of course I do. And Maureen wants to come along too.”

“You’re not afraid to go out alone?”

“Why should I be?”

“And,” put in Maureen, “isn’t he in the state of grace?”

The American reader may smile at Maureen’s ingenuous remark. But in Catholic Ireland it would be received with perfect gravity. At the very time that Maureen spoke there were any number of Irish soldiers of the Republic whose main preparation for all manner of dangers, that carried with them almost a certainty of

death, consisted in going to confession and receiving Holy Communion. Thus prepared, they feared not all the might nor all the measures of all England.

"I've been after thinking it over," continued the head of the house. "You're the broth of a boy, Joe, and you're very clever; but you are reckless. Sure, if you don't object, I'll go with you myself."

"The very thing!" cried Joe with enthusiasm.

The three that were presently seen passing along Great Denmark Street could not but excite observation—Joe, young, fresh-colored, brimming over with life; John McGroarty, heavy, powerful, looking as though he sprang from a race of giants; and between them and holding a hand of each, little Maureen, the more fairylike for the contrast.

"Sure, John McGroarty," observed a member of the Dublin police force, "it's a fine evening, thanks be to God."

"It is," rumbled McGroarty, his cap well over his eyes.

"But whisper," continued the official, leading the athlete aside. "They do be saying the air just now is bad for that young American, God bless him!"

"What do you mean?" asked McGroarty, pulling his cap down further, and projecting a massive chin.

"Oh, nothing at all, at all. There do be some people who think that that boy will talk too

much when he goes back to America. That is——”

Here the policeman, eyeing Joe with approving and sympathetic eyes, paused.

“What’s that?”

“That is—if—if he ever gets back.”

“Stuff!” said McGroarty. “He’s an American. He has powerful friends. Why, do you know that he’s the greatest quarterback in his part of the United States—the Middle West, they do be calling it?”

“You don’t say!” ejaculated the officer, gazing in vast admiration at Joe, just now engaged in showing Maureen how he held a baseball to effect the incurve. “Sure, McGroarty, you’re right—in a way. The crown forces won’t dare to lay a hand on him. But there will be an unfortunate accident. And that accident may happen tonight!”

Looking as though he had said too much, the friendly policeman, paying no attention to McGroarty’s adjurations, hurried away, leaving the athlete troubled in mind, yet undaunted.

“Suppose,” he said presently, “that we walk up a little distance and take a tram as far as Grafton Street. They do be saying that there’s plenty to see there before curfew.”

“Good!” said Joe. “And we will get on top and survey the town.”

“It would be more comfortable inside,” said McGroarty.

“Pshaw! You don’t call this cold, Mr. McGroarty.”

“It is lovely on top,” added Maureen. “And besides, daddy, you can smoke.”

There was a struggle in McGroarty’s thoughts between his caution and his bravery.

“Right-O!” he said after a pause.

But Mr. McGroarty did not smoke. He saw Joe and Maureen up the flight of steps, and then, before following them, he made, somewhat to the astonishment and admiration of the conductor, a majestic sign of the cross.

“Now God be between us and all harm,” whispered the conductor, reading in McGroarty’s troubled face the presentiment of impending calamity.

Maureen and Joe were seated together well up in front. The arrangement did not please the man. He frowned, pulled his cap down, and scanned both sides of the street. As he looked, he gave a half-suppressed gasp. The Stormy Petrel was on the pavement to his right, whispering earnestly in the ear of a young Irishman—one of the young Irishmen, so common on the streets of Dublin, with a face the note of which was consecration.

“Here, Maureen,” ordered the father, “you sit in that front seat. I want to talk with Joe.”

Maureen obeyed wondering. It was a sacrifice on her part; but she did not pout nor give the faintest sign of protest. Her father’s word was law.

The young man to whom the Stormy Petrel had spoken, after nodding his head as though he fully comprehended the import of her words,

dashed into the street and unceremoniously leaped into a passing jaunting car. The jarvey turned, his mouth opened in indignation, to remain, on seeing his unceremonious fare, open in surprise. McGroarty saw the young Irishman make a sign, whereupon the inhabitants of Dublin were treated to a rare exhibition in their many-centuried city—the sight of a jaunting car tearing down their main thoroughfare at the rate of something over twelve miles an hour.

“Joe,” said McGroarty, “suppose I take the outside seat?”

Joe glanced sharply at the man. Such a request, on the face of it, was inhospitable. Now McGroarty was the soul of hospitality. The reason for the request, then, was to be sought elsewhere. Despite the man’s smile there was anxiety on his face.

“Ah, I see through you, Mr. McGroarty. You think that someone’s out to get me, don’t you? And you want to take the post of danger. No, you don’t!”

McGroarty heaved a sigh which would have blown out a candle at a distance of three feet, and resignedly sat down beside the recalcitrant youth.

“Keep your eyes open, Joe; and leave me to meself while I think.”

Joe wondered, but he kept his eyes open. There were three people on the ’bus behind them—two little boys and a man, apparently their father. So far all was safe. Joe glanced at the fairly thronged sidewalk nearest him. He

started when he perceived his Stormy Petrel hurrying along, managing in some way or another to keep pace with the 'bus and, as she made her way, whispering now to one, now to another man of the "consecrated face."

"By George!" he exclaimed, turning to McGroarty, "I believe there is something brewing. Did you——"

He paused reverently. McGroarty's beads were in his hand.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!"

"'Tis all right," said McGroarty, slipping his beads into his pocket. "I just wanted to say a decade, and I did. 'Tis a timid man I am, Joe."

Joe laughed as he looked on the "timid man," whose cap, perched at a most belligerent angle, shadowed a pair of bushy eyebrows over bold eyes, leaving exposed as belligerent a jaw and chin as any artist could depict. The 'bus stopped at Abbey Street.

"Look!" said Joe in a low voice. "If it isn't our Stormy Petrel coming aboard! Say, I believe there is something brewing!"

The Stormy Petrel came up briskly and seated herself behind Joe.

"Good evening, sir," she said, leaning over towards Joe. "Sure, you want a bit of heather."

It was hardly necessary for Joe to turn, as the woman had so adjusted herself as to have her face on the outer side of the 'bus flush with his. Joe did turn, however, and to his surprise saw that immediately behind her was seated a

new fare, no other than the shifty-eyed fellow he had met on the eventful morning two days ago.

“Let me pin a bit of heather on ye, my boy,” continued the Stormy Petrel, leaning over so far that Joe was almost completely hidden from view to those on that particular side of the street.

“Say, what’s up your sleeve?” remonstrated the boy.

“Sure, me poor old arm,” said the Petrel. “Sit still, me boy,” she whispered. “Keep quiet for a few minutes.

Joe was of two minds. Indignation surged within him that he should be treated as a mere child. Clearly, the woman was trying to shield him. But against this feeling there was gratitude. The Stormy Petrel had saved him before. Were he her own child, she could hardly be more devoted. Still, if there was any danger, he wanted to face it himself. Above all things he would not shield himself behind a woman. Yes, he would nerve himself to put a stop to the Petrel’s present kindly offices. But how go about it without hurting the Petrel’s feelings? He turned his face to McGroarty. That gentleman was peering out from under his cap with the unblinking gaze of an eagle. Evidently he was alert; his very nostrils, widely dilated, seemed to be scenting danger.

Before taking action, Joe under his breath uttered the words he had but lately learned to love: “We fly to thy protection, O holy mother

of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities; but deliver us from all dangers, O ever glorious and blessed Virgin."

Then Joe pulled down his cap and was ready to act. But he did not. They were just come to O'Connell Bridge, when the Petrel was roughly pulled back, leaving Joe fully exposed. In the same moment John McGroarty seized Joe and bore him to the floor. In the same moment a rifle shot rang out; in the same moment the gun from which the shot issued flew into the air and dropped from the nerveless hand of the man who had fired it. The aggressor, a man in plain clothes, was standing near the middle of the bridge. Six men had darted upon him as he raised his gun. One of them, the foremost, had struck him a paralyzing blow on the arm just as he released the trigger. There was a mob about him in a moment; and, as they dispersed quietly a few seconds later, there was no sign of the would-be assassin; and, also, there was a dazed and astonished swimmer in the river Liffey.

The shifty-eyed man, meanwhile, thought it time to leave the 'bus. He was half-way down the steps when McGroarty noticed his absence. With flashing eyes, the athlete, in two strides and one jump, was upon him.

"You big brute!" he hissed. "To lay your hands on a woman!" The rest of the speech was completed in two swift gestures, each of which ended upon the "big brute's" face.

"Sure, we'll take care of him," said several

men, picking up the unconscious victim of McGroarty's wrath.

No doubt they did. Since then no one in Dublin has encountered the man of the shifty eyes—once a Sinn Feiner, discharged from the Irish army for intemperance, and, finally, a traitor to the sacred cause of his country.

Mr. McGroarty remounted. All the fares on the upper section had disappeared, with the exception of Joe, who had arisen, of Maureen, who was brushing him off, and of the Petrel, who was apparently about to depart too.

"As you pass a little beyond Trinity College," whispered the Petrel, "the 'bus will stop; be down at the foot of the steps. There'll be a closed car waiting. They're off the scent now. Get in and go home."

McGroarty marshaled his two companions down to the platform. "Don't say a word," he whispered.

The 'bus presently stopped midway between the crossings on Finster Street. It was beyond Grafton Street, and possibly at that moment the most deserted part of the Dublin downtown district. Beside the 'bus a taxi was driven up. The door was open, and the chauffeur stood at attention.

"Skip in, Joe," ordered McGroarty, taking Maureen in his arms and following the quick-limbed boy. It was all the work of two seconds. The taxi, as McGroarty closed the door, was already making its way straight ahead.

“Joe,” said McGroarty presently, “you’re a mark.”

“I see,” said the boy, “that these fellows have my number.”

“I do be thinking,” continued McGroarty, “that it was a mistake that you didn’t start for Galway yesterday, the way Father Dalton said.”

“Maybe it was,” said the boy, “but didn’t you get word yourself that they were watching for me at every railroad station in the city?”

“True for ye, me boy; and I myself did be thinking that it would be better to stay. But I’ve changed me mind. You’ll go tomorrow.”

“But they’ll be looking for me tomorrow as like as not—more likely, in fact.”

“No matter. We’ll think up some way of fooling them divils. There’s one thing sure, though,” added McGroarty, his eyes lighting up, “the omadhaun who pulled the Stormy Petrel back so that that sniper could get a shot at ye won’t be on hand. It was two wicked blows I gev him, and I left him in the tender hands of boys whom he was trying to betray.”

“Were you frightened, Maureen?” asked Joe.

“Sure, I was saying me prayers,” returned the serene child.

“I did some praying myself,” admitted Joe.

It was a little before nine when the taxi halted on Sherrard Street some twenty yards distant from McGroarty’s home.

“Slip in, the two of ye, at the back,” said

McGroarty. "I'll be with you in a few minutes. And, Joe, behave yourself. Don't do anything to attract notice. I do be fearing that we'll have trouble the night."

When Mr. McGroarty returned an hour and a half later to his home, the wife, the girl, and the boy were engaged in a game of casino, behind drawn blinds.

"Well, Joe, you are on the run."

"I knew that long ago," returned Joe, throwing his cards on the table. "I wonder how that American policeman's leg is getting on. Here's a letter I've just written him, and I forgot to post it."

"Sure, I'll take care of that," said McGroarty, slipping the envelope into his coat pocket. "But when I said you were on the run, I did not mane that. There's a lot of them divils looking for you, and it won't be safe for you to sleep in this house tonight."

"The deuce!" cried Joe, raising his voice. "Do you mean to say——"

"Sh! Not so loud, me boy."

"Do you mean to say," repeated Joe in a stage whisper, "that the Black-and-Tan machine is out after me, an American?"

"Yes and no, Joe. It's this way. They dare not go after you officially; but they'll be looking for you as individuals."

"Oh, I see. They're going after me in such a way that whatever happens won't seem to be the action of the Black-and-Tans."

"That's it. And if they can arrange it, what-

ever happened would appear to be an accident."

"It's what we call a frame-up in the States."

"Well, I've been making arrangements. You'll be in safe hands tonight; and tomorrow you'll be on your way to some quieter part of Ireland, and no one the wiser. Come up to your room now, Joe, and we'll go over our plans together. Bid them good-by, me boy, for God knows when you'll see them again."

Maureen, who had undauntedly faced danger with Joe, now blanched with fear. The thought came to her that she might never see her hero again. Throwing her arms about the boy's neck, she wept bitterly.

"Sure, Maureen," said the mother, "crying will do him no good. But you can pray for him."

"And I will," cried Maureen, her courage beginning to return.

"Now," said McGroarty, locking himself and Joe within the bedroom, "we want everybody to know you're in your room." Saying which, he lighted the lamp and threw back the curtains of the window looking out on Gardiner Street.

"Nothing like publicity sometimes," chuckled the boy. "But what's the big idea just now?"

"The big idea," McGroarty made answer, "is just this. We want them as is curious to know to feel sure that ye've gone to bed in this room. But in this room ye will not sleep till there be better times."

"Oh, I see."

"In ten minutes we're going out. There's an

opening behind your bed in the wall. Ye'll follow me, and I'll lave ye with a good, honest man; and all ye need do is to follow his directions. Me boy, you have made a few enemies, but for every one of them divils there's a thousand brave Irishmen, hardly one of them who has seen ye, who would die to save you from the least harm."

"You bet I'm Irish!" said Joe.

"And you've made more friends in less time—sure it beats all creation!"

"You're a wonderful people," said Joe earnestly. "Why, I came here a reckless fool, and if it hadn't been for the watch you've put over me, I suppose I'd be a candidate for a wooden box and flowers and a dead march by this time."

"Sure, they love ye for your recklessness."

"And I'll never, never forget you, John McGroarty. "Didn't you try just a while ago to stop with your own body the bullet intended for mine?"

Mr. McGroarty blushed.

"Of course, I've been reckless," continued Joe; "but you are the last person to blame me for it. You are reckless yourself. In fact, if thinking nothing of risking life is recklessness, the Sinn Feiners are the most reckless body of men that ever shouldered musket."

"Thru for ye, Joe. Now, do as I say. Close the one window there nearest the church tight. That's it." Here Mr. McGroarty concealed himself behind the dresser. "In the next place, stand over by the other window and take off

your coat, your vest and your tie. That's it. Now them that are looking for the information believe that you are going to bed. Close that window tight. Good. Now put out the light.

McGroarty then arose from his place of concealment.

"Put on your things again. I'll see that your other clothes reach you. Give me your hand."

McGroarty, guiding the youth, pushed back the bed, raised a panel, and after bringing Joe into the secret passage, closed it again.

"It's very dark," he whispered, "but I know every inch of the way."

At precisely ten minutes to ten John McGroarty posted the letter. Had he read it, that letter would have edified him. It was addressed to Officer Michael Moloney, Police Station, Cincinnati, Ohio.

"DEAR MR. MALONEY—I suppose you think I ought to be in jail, and I'm inclined to think you are right. Since getting to Ireland I have learned a lot—the chief thing being that I'm an awful fool sometimes. The day I played that idiotic trick on you I was all kinds of a fool—and then some. The last few nights I've got to thinking how maybe you have a wife and children, and how they must be suffering. I'm sorry from my heart for what I did, and I feel like going right back to tell you, to take my medicine and to do all in my power to make up for my cussedness. But I'm not ready to go back. Say, oh boy! but I do love the Sinn

Feiners! Judging by your name, you must have Irish blood in you, too; and if you were here in my place, you wouldn't go back either. Football isn't in it with the excitement we have over here. Why, a Black-and-Tan tried to shoot me for being out after curfew and got a lick on the crazy bone that he won't forget in a hurry; and a sniper took a shot at me which might have got me, only a thoughtful Sinn Feiner spoiled his aim with a rude jolt; and there was a spy trailing me just a while ago, and my friend John McGroarty, who is the strongest man I ever saw, spoiled his mug, after which a bunch of Sinn Feiners carried him away. And there's a queer old woman—mighty light on her feet—who always bobs up when I'm in trouble, and I call her the Stormy Petrel. Nobody knows anything about her, but she seems to know a good deal about everybody else. Talk about our American detectives! Oh, boy! These Sinn Feiners have an organization that would put our best organizations to the blush. And they are watching me—the Sinn Feiners to protect, and the other bunch to get me. I have felt a little nervous once or twice; but would you come back if you were in my place? Not on your life! I love Ireland; and if I can help her, I'm willing to lose a leg or two. I am staying with McGroarty, who taught me several wrestling tricks yesterday; and he has a sweet little daughter named Maureen. Yesterday she put me through the Irish reel. There are no dances like the Irish dances. But honest, officer,

almost every time I look at her it occurs to me that you may have a sweet little girl like her, and I feel like going out and kicking myself all around the block.

“I suppose you are a Catholic. Well, if you were over here, you’d be proud of your religion. You ought to see St. Francis Xavier Church, on Gardiner Street, just a few yards from where I’m staying. Yesterday—Monday morning a week day—I went to their eleven o’clock Mass, and you ought to see that church! It was filled; there were over a thousand people there. And you ought to see them pray! I could hear some of them praying, too, though I can’t say I enjoyed that.

“I hope and I pray that your leg is coming along nicely; and I hope you’ll forgive me; and if I get back, I think you’ll find that I’m not near so rotten as I used to be.

“Sincerely,

“JOE RANLY.”

Mr. McGroarty was a man of iron nerves. Now that Joe was safe he walked home briskly, humming, as he went, “The Wearing of the Green.” As he drew near, he observed that every room was lighted.

“Ah! so they’re at it. What’s happening over there?” he inquired of a small crowd of urchins.

There came an eager babble of replies. Out of the hubbub McGroarty gleaned the information that four men in citizen’s clothes had made

their way into the house, and that Maureen and her mother had fled to a neighbor's.

"Here, Tommy," said McGroarty, picking out an intelligent boy of twelve; "run for your life up Dorset Street and tell Officer Flynn that McGroarty says his house is being robbed by four Sinn Feiners, and to bring on a force to arrest them."

Tommy flew, and McGroarty sauntered across to his home. He entered. The front room was vacant. He made for Joe's room, and with a quick jerk threw open the door, in the same instant bellowing out, "Hands up!" That magnificent bellow was enough to unnerve the bravest. The four men, two of them kneeling, the other two standing about Joe Ranly's suitcase, absorbed, all of them, in trying to make out what an American football nose-guard was, jumped in terror, threw up their hands wildly, and turned around to find themselves facing a mass of a man with the most formidable pair of blackthorn sticks in his hands that they had ever seen.

"If you make a move," rumbled McGroarty, "it will be your last. The first one of you that gets out of line will be put to sleep."

Every man of them knew John McGroarty by reputation. Every man of them was armed. Not one dared reach for his hip pocket.

"Who are ye?" asked McGroarty.

"We were told to look for a boy here," said one.

“The more fool to look for a boy who is gone. Who sent you?”

“We don’t know,” answered the same person. A light step was heard outside.

“That you, Maureen?” asked the father, his eyes covering the captives.

“Yes, papa.”

“Come in.”

Maureen entered.

“Don’t be afraid, Maureen. Just step up to the fellow nearest you, and see what you can get out of his hip pocket. That’s it, Maureen. A pistol? Hand it to me.” As John took the pistol, the blackthorns dropped from his hands, and in almost the same motion the weapon was cocked.

“Now, Maureen, step outside, and when the police come bring them in.”

When presently seven policemen entered, McGroarty asked them to disarm his captives. Then he said:

“Are ye soldiers of the Irish Republic?”

“We are not,” they cried.

“Then it’s soldiers of England ye are?”

“We are not,” they answered sullenly.

“Are ye spies?”

“No,” they shouted.

“Then, officers,” said McGroarty, turning smilingly to the Irish constabulary, “these fellows are housebreakers and are carrying concealed weapons. I charge ye to arrest them.”

Almost unable to conceal their delight, the Dublin police took in charge and conducted

away four men who dared not confess that they were Black-and-Tans. There was no love lost between the Dublin force and the emissaries of the crown.

All Dublin rejoiced. It was "one on the hated foe." But none enjoyed the situation more than the Irish police themselves. The next day there was a ballad circulating on the streets, singing the cunning and bravery of John McGroarty.

## CHAPTER VIII.

INTRODUCING AN AWKWARD GIRL AND ALSO THE  
HEROINE OF THIS NARRATIVE.

SOME twenty miles out from Dublin the train bound for Galway stopped at a small junction. Father Dalton, seated in a smoking compartment, gazed with interest on the scene without. So far, on this trip, Father Dalton had been particularly lucky. Although the other compartments were filled, he himself had but one companion. The girl facing him was a decided blonde, with blue eyes that reminded one of the skies of the Mediterranean, flaxen hair falling below her shoulders and confined by a single blue ribbon, a singularly clear complexion, and regular features. This girl, who could not have been more than seventeen or eighteen, took no interest apparently in what was going on about her. In her hand was a book, Mr. Frank Spearman's "Whispering Smith." It seemed to absorb her completely.

Father Dalton observed that the guard and the porters were having some difficulty in finding room for the new passengers, several of whom made an attempt to get into the priest's compartment; but a man standing at the door managed in some way or another to get them

to go elsewhere. Presently all the passengers had been accommodated save one—a girl in her early teens.

The guard, reflecting for a moment, conducted her to the one compartment that was not filled.

“Step in this way, Eileen,” he said aloud. “She’s all right, yer Reverence. She’s of good stock,” he whispered to the priest.

Father Dalton smilingly relieved Eileen of her wraps and valise, and stowed them away, while the reader of “Whispering Smith,” closing her book with an inserted finger to keep the place where she had left off reading, gazed with no little interest on the new arrival. Possibly there was good reason for her interest.

Eileen was a typical Irish colleen. Her hair, unconfined and falling straight down over her shoulders, was raven black; her eyes dark, lustrous, limpid pools, framed by beautifully penciled eyelashes and delicately arched eyebrows. Her dark complexion was singularly clear, while her features were small, delicately chiseled, and lighted, when she smiled, by a roguish dimple and by a pair of teeth white as the new-fallen snow.

“Thank you, Father,” said the girl, revealing in her smile dimple and dazzle of teeth.

“You’re welcome, Eileen. I’m Father Dalton of America. What’s your last name?”

“Desmond, Father; and I’m very lucky, I think, to be traveling with an American priest. Sure, we all love the Irish-Americans; they’ve been so good to Ireland.”

As Eileen finished her remarks, she suddenly threw her large eyes in inquiry upon the girl sitting at her side. The girl, thus gazed upon, at once became sensibly confused. She blushed, dropped her book, picked it up, threw it beside her, and looked desperately at Father Dalton.

"Pardon me," said the priest affably. "I should have introduced you before. This young lady, Eileen, is Miss Roberta McHugh."

"How do you do, Miss McHugh?" said Eileen cordially, extending, as she spoke, the hand of welcome.

Roberta looked suspiciously for a moment at the proffered hand, then took it gingerly in her own as though she were touching a stick of dynamite, and, conscious of her awkwardness, blushed fiercely once more. Then, leaning over, she whispered into Eileen's ear, "I'm glad to meet you."

"Miss Roberta," explained the priest, "has never traveled in these parts before; and although I have no reason to suspect her of being extraordinarily bashful in general, she's timid at conversation."

The object of these remarks fidgeted, opened her hand satchel, took out her vanity bag, and gazing into its tiny mirror, became completely absorbed in the contemplation of her own beauty.

"It's quite warm, isn't it?" said Eileen, rather puzzled by the strange manners of Roberta.

"Not that I know of," returned the priest.

“You Irish don’t know what a wonderful climate you’ve got. People in Ohio travel north in the summer hundreds of miles to get a cooler climate. Few of them find anything like this. In Cincinnati it is not uncommon for the thermometer to be between eighty and ninety degrees nine or ten days in succession.”

“How do you stand it?”

“Oh, we’re used to it. We go to zero in the winter and to a hundred degrees in the summer; and yet we manage to worry along somehow. And look at your land,” continued Father Dalton, waving his hand towards the scenery. “They say there’s been a drought here; but your turf is as green as the heart of an emerald; and all the land seems under splendid care. Looking out these last three-quarters of an hour, and seeing how orderly your farms are kept, how carefully your farmers watch their lands, how so many of your hedges are rich with the red of the fuchsia, I begin to realize how much truth there is in the line of the song writer to the effect that ‘Ireland is a little bit of heaven.’ ”

“Sure, it’s all so different, Father, since the people got their own properties and the landlords were thinned out. My mother says that in the last ten years Ireland is a nation born again—a new and glorious Ireland.”

As Eileen spoke, Roberta, letting her vanity case fall upon her lap, gazed at her with open mouth, but catching Eileen’s glance as she finished the sentence, Roberta closed the case,

almost with a snap, and resumed her studies in the hand mirror.

“I take it for granted,” said Father Dalton, resisting an inclination to laugh, “that you are a convent-school girl. Your speech betrays you.”

Eileen, it may be stated for the reader’s benefit, had a rich alto voice, beautifully modulated, and a pronunciation beyond cavil.

“For the last two years, Father, I have been attending boarding school.” Here Eileen mentioned the name of the academy and the order of nuns in charge. “They have been happy years. School was to close two weeks from now; but we were all sent home for our vacation yesterday.”

“Indeed! What happened?”

“The Black-and-Tans—”

Eileen paused, and turned, with some surprise, her gaze upon Roberta. That charming but awkward creature had suddenly broken in with a sound compounded of a hiss, a grunt, and an exclamation, suppressed in its very utterance.

Roberta leaned over and whispered in Eileen’s ear, “I beg your pardon.”

“Roberta is quite nervous,” explained Father Dalton, preserving a straight face. “You were saying something about the Black-and-Tans.”

Eileen was still gazing at Roberta, who more and more embarrassed, took out her powder puff and set vigorously to apply it to her face.

“Oh, yes, Father. The Black-and-Tans are

beginning to swarm in the little town, and our superioress was informed that there might be an outbreak at any moment. When those men—those Black-and-Tans—are attacked, say by John Smith, they go to work and burn down Tom White's house; sometimes the houses of ten or twelve different men who had nothing to do with the affair."

"So I've noticed," assented Father Dalton. "Of course in doing such things the English Government shows a sense of justice."

"I beg your pardon, Father," broke in Eileen, opening scandalized eyes.

"Oh, yes, Eileen—a sense of justice of a kind. The sense of justice that we find in an Arabian Nights' sultan. Don't you remember the story of the porter who kissed a lady?"

"Yes, Father."

"And as the caliph or sultan could not find that particular porter, he executed sentence on every porter in the city. The sense of justice thus shown may be primitive, but a sense of justice it is. By the way, have the Black-and-Tans ever disturbed you girls at the convent?"

"Only once, Father. About four weeks ago we were celebrating Mother's Day—the feast day of the superioress, you know. We had a great time. All of us girls were divided into two sides, and we played hide-and-go-seek. Our side won. The game was over by four in the afternoon. We felt very proud of our victory, and, the rules being relaxed for the time, we began to cheer and shout. You know how girls

go on when they begin to cheer, Father?"

"Some of them squeal like stuck pigs," said Father Dalton.

"That's precisely what some of them did, the little ones especially. We carried it on for three or four minutes, I should think, perhaps longer, when there came a loud knocking at the convent gate. It sounded as though the person outside were trying to break through. We all became quiet. 'It's the Black-and-Tans,' said one nervous girl. At that all the little ones huddled together. One of the graduates, a brave girl in every way, took upon herself to open the gate, while another graduate ran off to inform the sisters. On opening the gate, we saw two Black-and-Tans, one of them perceptibly under the influence of liquor. The other, as the two entered, said, 'What's the meaning of all this noise?' He looked very angry, and he bellowed out his words. The effect upon the smaller children was to send them running off shrieking. We explained that we had just finished a game, and that we were cheering in honor of the victory. By the time we had finished our explanation the mother superior was on the scene. 'Put these girls to bed at once,' roared the leader. 'I'll be back in fifteen minutes, and if there's any one stirring in this place, I'll burn the house down.' So we all went to bed. But the two did not come back, and that was the last of our experiences with the Black-and-Tans."

"I sometimes wonder," mused Father Dalton, "why the English Government sent those men

over to Ireland. If their idea was to stir up war and hatred, they acted wisely. But the English themselves state that they desire to get on friendly terms with the Irish. So, if we believe their own words, they have shown in sending these offscourings of the soldiers an idiocy which is simply monumental."

"My father tells me," said Eileen, "that he knows many Englishmen and likes them. They are slow but sure, and just. But when they touch upon the Irish question, all their sense of fair play and justice leaves them."

"I've been reading a series of articles in Blackwood's Magazine," said the priest, "and they bear out what you say. Their idea of the Sinn Feiners is absolutely false. One would think from these articles that our Sinn Feiners were a set of dissolute makers and drinkers of poteen, whereas I am convinced that never in the history of Europe, not even in the time of the Crusades, was there any army as decent, as brave and as temperate. Most of them are idealists."

"Father," said Eileen, as the train began to slow up, "we are coming into Ballinasloe. The train stops for ten minutes at least. Two of my girl friends get off here; and I know they'd be delighted to meet an American priest. Would you mind stepping off for a minute? We might see them as far as the Fair Green."

"I'm sure Roberta would be glad to see them, too. By the way, Roberta, suppose you take out your mirror and look at yourself."

If Roberta blushed, it was impossible to ascertain. During the conversation on the Black-and-Tans that young lady had grown so excited that she had powdered her face vigorously. She now looked like a typical clown, or as if some one had thrust her face into a barrel of flour.

Roberta surveyed herself in the mirror and gasped. Leaning over, she whispered in Eileen's ear:

"It makes me so nervous when I hear people talk about the Black-and-Tans." Saying which, she proceeded to scour her face with a dainty lace handkerchief.

"Poor thing!" whispered the compassionate Eileen to the priest. "Isn't it terrible to be so easily frightened? Roberta ought to see a nerve specialist."

"Oh, I don't think it's so bad as all that," said the priest. "If you knew her better, you would discover that she's not such a coward as she seems. Here, Roberta," continued the Father in a raised voice, "let me arrange your hat for you."

Roberta's hat, rimless and somewhat military in design, was cocked at a rakish angle. A bit of chewing gum in her mouth would have completed the vamp-like effect. Father Dalton endeavored with doubtful success to restore Roberta's former appearance of respectability, while Eileen wide-eyed looked on at the awkward performance.

"Excuse me, Father," said Eileen, coming to the rescue. And as the priest cheerfully

stood aside the convent-school girl gave the obstinate hat a deft tap, restoring Roberta, now hotly blushing, to a presentable appearance.

By this time the train had drawn up at the station; and headed by Eileen, the three stepped out upon the platform. Hard upon Eileen's appearance there broke upon the quiet air three several screams of joy unconfined. Eileen's girl friends had perceived her from afar, and rushing upon her, fell upon her neck and babbled with the exultation of a glorious reunion. Eileen had been separated from them for over one hour. It is the property of innocent adolescence to be in love with love—the property and the danger. Then Father Dalton was introduced, while Roberta stood apart, desirous apparently of remaining unknown.

“Here, Roberta,” called Father Dalton, the imp of mischief in his eyes, “come and meet these girls.”

The two convent-school friends of Eileen made joyously for Roberta, who started back as though she were about to take refuge in flight. This brought the two girls to a pause of indecision. Roberta, recovering herself, raised her hand to her unhappy hat, as though she were going to remove it; but, thinking better of it at the last moment, contented herself with giving a severe military salute.

“Is she Irish?” asked one of the discomfited girls.

“She was not educated in this country,” replied the priest in an aside, “and besides she's

abnormally nervous just at present."

As if to verify his remarks, Roberta, as the priest spoke, with her feet wide apart, put her arms akimbo and glared morosely at the gentle and unoffending landscape.

After some discussion it was settled that the whole party should go as far as the Ballinasloe Fair Green, in a conveyance small in appearance but capable of carrying an incredible number. A "governess" cart they called it. But when they reached that curious vehicle, Roberta protested.

"I'll walk," she whispered to Father Dalton. "I'm afraid to ride in that."

"What's the matter, Roberta?"

Then Roberta took Father Dalton apart and spoke with great determination. The priest listened and approved.

"Girls," he said, "Roberta is rather timid about getting into this conveyance; so she will follow us and rejoin me and Eileen when we get off at the Fair Green."

"Poor thing!" exclaimed Eileen to her two friends, "I'm so sorry for her! She's a nervous wreck. The least thing frightens her."

Under these arrangements the expedition started off favorably. The mettlesome horse, controlled by the steady hands of the driver, trotted at a fair rate of speed. To the surprise of the three girls in the conveyance Roberta trotted too. It cost her no apparent effort to keep within easy hailing distance.

"She may be a nervous wreck," observed one

of them, "but I rather think she is quite strong."

"It is not uncommon," observed Father Dalton, "for nervous people to be very fit from a muscular point of view."

The conversation changed; and when one of the girls, particularly gifted in the way of narrative power, got to telling some extraordinary convent experiences, Roberta was completely forgotten. They arrived in a few minutes at the Fair Green.

"Halloa!" cried the priest, for the first time showing anxiety, "where is Roberta?"

The girl was nowhere to be seen.

"Surely, nothing evil could have happened to her!" said Eileen.

"In Ireland today," returned Father Dalton bitterly, "anything evil could happen to anyone, anywhere. It's all my fault. I should have kept my eyes on her. Come, Eileen, we must hurry back. Good-by, girls. And say a prayer that I may find that poor child." And visibly disturbed, Father Dalton set out at such a pace for the station, glancing eagerly from left to right, that Eileen to keep up with him was compelled to trot.

The station was closely examined, discreet questions were asked; the time flew by until there were three minutes left before the train's departure.

"Eileen, say a prayer," entreated the priest. They were both silent for a time.

There were two minutes left.

"I'm afraid, Eileen," said the Father, "that I cannot go further with you."

"Is she in your charge, Father?"

"In a way she is. I undertook to see her safely to the end of her trip, and I feel that through my own negligence I have failed."

There was but one minute left.

"Well, Eileen," said the priest as he helped the girl into the compartment, "I hope that we shall meet again. Good-by, my girl."

"Good-by, Father," said Eileen, full of sympathy for the distressed priest.

Father Dalton picked up his suitcase, and with an air of dejection proceeded to leave the coach. At the very door he paused and dropped his luggage.

"Ha!" he shouted exultantly.

"Oh!" cried Eileen, "is Roberta coming back?"

"No," he answered. "She will not come back. But I'll not leave you yet, Eileen."

"But what about Roberta?"

"I never expect to see her again," said Father Dalton cheerfully.

"Is—is she dead?" asked the shocked girl.

"Not exactly; but it will be all right," answered the priest.

## CHAPTER IX.

JOE RANLY MEETS EILEEN DESMOND AND IS PLEASED TO RECORD HIS IMPRESSIONS.

**T**o return to the nerve-wrecked Roberta. She really seemed to enjoy the trot along the road. Her face lost its air of dejection. A healthy flush returned; she breathed easily. But just as the group in the car turned their attention from her she uttered a grunt and came to a full stop. Her speed had started a nail in the shoe of her right foot. Roberta looked about her. A few yards back she had passed a narrow byway flanked on both sides by tall hedges. Roberta limped back and, taking an inconspicuous position beside the hedge, proceeded to remove both her shoes. They were dainty high-heeled affairs, new and very tight.

Roberta, the process completed, heaved a sigh of relief. Looking about, she discovered a small stone, and using it as a hammer, pounded at the offending nail until she had restored it to its proper place and function. Nothing was now left but to put on the shoes and set out after the conveyance. But when it came to doing this, a new difficulty suddenly presented itself—the shoes would not go on. They were very tight, and the tender feet of the young

lady had swollen, slightly it is true, but enough to make the task extremely difficult if not impossible. After attempting now to put on the right shoe, now the left, Roberta petulantly threw both into the middle of the road. Relieved of their immediate presence, she was about to give herself to serious meditation on her predicament, when a slight noise fell upon her startled ears and brought her suddenly to her feet. She stood like a statue for several seconds, when, turning the corner and walking with a suspicion of a stagger towards her came a Black-and-Tan, a young fellow with thick lips, a nose cocked skyward at a noticeable angle, and a face slightly flushed with drink.

Roberta shrank back, forming in the act a sort of recess in the hedge. Holding her breath, she waited for the man to pass by. But he did not pass by. The pair of shoes attracted his attention. Like all his kind, he was suspicious. Could this be a mysterious signal? Perhaps it meant danger. He glanced about sharply from side to side till his eyes rested on the crouching girl.

“Halloa!” he called out.

Roberta made an awkward curtsy.

“Are those your shoes?”

Roberta nodded her head.

“What’s your name?”

Roberta put her finger in her mouth.

“Can’t you talk?”

She shook her head.

“Suppose you come along with me.”

Of course the Black-and-Tan was not at all surprised when the very timid-looking girl, removing her finger, shook her head resolutely. No self-respecting girl of Irish birth would under any circumstances walk with "the likes of him."

"What are you doing here?"

Roberta spread her hands, the palms facing her interrogator.

"If you don't answer, I'll arrest you."

The girl began to make signals with her fingers.

"Come here, young woman."

By way of answer, Roberta drew back.

"Oh, you won't! Very well; we'll see." And as he spoke he advanced towards Roberta, who pointed towards her shoes.

"Oh, you want to put on your shoes. I'll bring them to you. There! Now put them on."

For five minutes Roberta struggled vainly with the dainty footgear.

"Here, let me try," volunteered the man. Stooping down, he took one shoe and was about to try it on the girl's foot, when she suddenly plucked his pistol from his holster, threw it over the hedge, and giving him a sharp push, was up and away with the fleetness of a deer.

The astounded Black-and-Tan said a number of unseemly things as he picked himself up and took after the flying girl. He had been a crack runner in his day, and he felt certain that, swift-footed though the young woman appeared to be, he would catch her easily within a hun-

dred yards. But when he had pursued her for fully this distance, he began to wonder. She was still thirty or forty feet in advance.

“Stop!” he puffed. “Stop or I’ll fire!”

As Roberta had deprived him of his pistol, she may have discounted his threat. At any rate she continued to fly. The pursuer was chagrined. To be outstripped by a slip of a girl was unthinkable. Also, the zest of the chase was upon him. He began to gain. The girl was losing speed. In a short time he was within a few yards of Roberta. The light of the conqueror flashed in his eyes. Another moment and he would be upon her. Another moment—and as this other moment was passing, the girl sudden wheeled round and, as the Black-and-Tan came at full speed upon her, threw herself straight at his knees. It was as fine a tackle as Joe Ranly had ever made, and brought the astounded man to so sudden a halt that, coupled with the fact that his head struck against a stone, he lay unconscious.

Joe did not trouble to investigate his adversary’s condition. Throwing off hat and skirt and wig, he stood revealed a spry boy, neatly clad in blouse and knickerbockers, and relieved of the feminine garments, himself again.

Hastily folding the garments, Joe tucked them under one arm and, retracing his steps, dashed for the station. He paused for a moment to conceal his feminine attire under a fallen log, and once more resumed his race for the train.

Luckily for Joe the station was comparatively deserted, and just as the guard gave the signal he bounced into his compartment, where, throwing himself on the seat, he panted for several seconds. Father Dalton, his face glowing with delight, caught the boy's hand and wrung it warmly, while Eileen Desmond arose in some alarm and stared at this unexpected apparition.

"Eileen, meet Joe Ranly, an American friend of mine."

Joe grinned and, although still breathing heavily, managed to say, "Delighted to meet you again, Miss Desmond."

"Again?" quavered Eileen.

"Yes. I'm Roberta, you know."

It was Eileen who now blushed, while Joe, in answer to Father Dalton's questions, unfolded to the eager audience of two his adventures and misadventures of the last fifteen minutes.

"But why in the world didn't you get into the cart with us?" queried Eileen.

"Well, you see, Miss Desmond, to get in I had to climb, and there were a lot of people looking on, and—and—oh, hang it!—these knickerbockers might have shown and given me clean away. Oh, boy! but you should have seen the look of that Black-and-Tan when I turned and tackled him. He didn't have much time to figure out what I was, for his head ran against that stone and put him to sleep. I suppose by now he's looking for his pistol."

“Joe, my boy,” said Father Dalton, endeavoring with faint success to be severe, “you have a knack of getting into trouble. It would seem that you are actually looking for it.”

“It was those shoes, Father. I said they were too tight all along.”

“And Eileen here thought you were a nervous wreck. She wanted me to bring you to a neurologist.”

“I was never so fooled in all my life,” protested the dark Eileen, dimpling and flushing. “But you were nervous—you know you were.”

“Nervous! I should say I was. I was afraid of my life that you would find me out. That’s why I wouldn’t talk. Didn’t you suspect my whisper?”

“I merely thought you were the most bashful girl for your years that I had ever met.”

“Look here, Eileen. I want to tell you something. I’ve had a good many adventures in the last five or six days, been having them ever since I struck Ireland; and I’ve been having trouble all along with these abominable Black-and-Tans. Once I was a little frightened—the time I saw a fellow aiming his gun at me as I sat on top of a bus; but the time I was most frightened was when I was introduced to you, and my fright lasted till you drove away with your friends.”

“But you’re not afraid of me now?”

“Oh, I’m myself now, even if I’m barefooted; and as Joe Ranly I’m delighted to meet you.”

“But tell me all about yourself,” implored the delighted girl.

Joe told his adventures in a few words. It was a most inadequate narration. Then Father Dalton developed the theme in such wise that Eileen’s views of Joe went from curiosity to wonder, to admiration, to hero worship.

“It will please you to know,” continued the priest, “that Joe’s disguise as Roberta ceased to be necessary once we left Ballinasloe. And a mighty lucky thing it is that he had no further need of his skirt and wig and high-heeled shoes.”

“When I tackled that fellow,” put in Joe, “I didn’t do a thing to that skirt. It looked like a banner of a hundred battles. It was no use wearing it any more. A blind man could see that I was a boy.”

“And, Eileen,” pursued the priest, “try to forget us both—at least try to forget where we leave this train, which will slow up in a few minutes as a sign for both of us to get off. Everything has been arranged. Joe, as you know, is on the run, and it will take, I’ll wager anything, a better police service than England ever had to track him up for several weeks to come.”

“Anyhow,” said Joe earnestly, “I do hope, Eileen, I’ll meet you again.”

“Indeed, and my hopes are the same,” said Eileen whole-heartedly, “and as long as you are on the run I’ll pray for you every day, morning, noon and night.”

“No fear of your not meeting,” commented the priest. “Joe is like a cat; he’s bound to come back. Halloa! We’re beginning to slow up!”

The guard passing along the foot rail without glanced significantly at Father Dalton, and disappeared.

“Good-by, Eileen. God keep you as you are,” said the priest.

“Good-by, Eileen. Here’s to our meeting again.”

Before Eileen could formulate some fitting response to these farewell addresses, Father Dalton threw open the door and, followed by Joe, leaped from the car, now going at a speed of not more than four or five miles an hour.

As the two adventurers had been in the last passenger compartment, their hasty departure was not perceived by any who might be minded to sound an alarm.

There was a machine awaiting them—a machine manned by three fully armed Sinn Feiners. In the tonneau was a new outfit of clothes for Joe—a pair of corduroy trousers, a sweater, a pair of heavy brogans, and a peaked cap. As they drove along a fine roadway, Joe dressed himself anew. The party halted beside a deep pool some six Irish miles from the railroad track, and one of the men, tying the knickerbockers to a stone, threw them into the dark waters.

Three hours later the boy, having taken an affectionate leave of Father Dalton, was seated

in a little room of a Claddagh hut in Galway. The day had been a trying one, but Joe was not yet ready to turn into his narrow cot. Seated on a primitive chair, Joe, using his crossed knee for a desk, wrote his recollections of the day.

“Today,” he wrote, “I met a wonderful girl. She was very beautiful. But that wasn’t it. And she was very clever. But that wasn’t it, either. She looked the picture of health. But I’ve seen good-lookers and highbrows and athletic girls over and over. This Eileen Desmond was different. She gave me a feeling of reverence. That’s it. She was jolly too; but I felt she was the sort of girl I could look up to, which is not the way I feel when I meet the flapper sort. It made me want to be more decent. Anyhow—oh, hang it!—I met Eileen Desmond; and if Ireland is a little bit of heaven, then she’s Ireland and then some. She goes to communion every day. Religion seems to mean a lot over here. If I were to tell some of my American pals that I met a girl whose presence made me feel as though I were surrounded by angels and saints, they’d say I had bats in my belfry. All the same, till I got back to my boy’s clothes, she frightened me more than all the Black-and-Tans I’ve met to date. I wish I knew a little more about writing poetry. If I did, I’d write something that would make Rudyard Kipling go and buy a rope and hang himself.”

Here Joe ceased writing. Looking wildly

into the air, he tried to excogitate a rhyme for Eileen. Failing in this, he took up the word Desmond. There were no rhymes for either word. So Joe, sighing deeply, then and there desisted from the composition of a poem which would have driven Mr. Kipling to self-destruction, and said his prayers devoutly for nearly three minutes.

When he awoke at seven the next morning, he was still on his knees.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE KING OF THE CLADDAGH.

ONE day late in June, Master Joe Ranly, clad like a Claddagh boy, with several patches and more than one hole in his garments, issued forth from the hut where for several weeks he had been the beloved guest of a lone widow whose husband had been lost at sea and whose two sons had died in the great war. It was, for Ireland, a bright morning. The Claddagh houses, rude stone thatch-covered structures, massed together in crazy-quilt fashion, showed no signs of life. But on Joe's appearance there suddenly came a change. Boys and girls, tatterdemalions every one of them, came trooping out, shouting welcome to the sturdy young American.

In his few weeks' stay with them Joe had completely won the hearts of lads and lasses. He was generous and he had plenty of money, which he spent freely. He was an athlete, skilled in all manner of games. Almost at once he became athletic promoter and leader. Joe was just; to him the children came with all their troubles. Best of all, since his meeting with Eileen Desmond, Joe's spiritual thermometer had taken another jump. Every morning he

went to Mass and Holy Communion in the Dominican Church situated in the heart of the Claddagh district.

Now the Claddagh children were innocent and good. Foul talk and foul language were unknown. They were faithful at their prayers and, with few exceptions, went to communion weekly. But when Joe gave each of them a medallion of the Sacred Heart to keep away all evils of soul and body and presented each of the women folk with a pair of beads, their admiration arose to that fine point which expresses itself in imitation.

So when Joe on this particular morning sallied forth on his way to the church of the good Dominicans, from every hut issued boys and girls galore to accompany him—their king.

As is well known, the Claddagh, a race of fishermen, dwelling in their own little district in Galway, had for centuries lived their own lives, made and kept their own laws under their own king. They were a strange, simple folk, so dark of complexion that there is an impression that they originally came from Spain. They had their own language too, the Gaelic; and they kept that tongue a living tongue up to a recent date. But Time, the destroyer, in these later days took away king and language. Nevertheless many of the old manners and customs remained. Their women folk—to be seen about the streets of Galway balancing on their heads a basket of fish—still dressed

plainly. Their attire was simple to the extreme—with one exception. The one thing on which the Claddagh women stood up for the rights of feminine adornment was their shawl. No matter how plain, how poor her attire was, the woman of the Claddagh wore a shawl which was a delight to the eye. The hat was unknown.

Although the kings of Claddagh were a thing of the past, the boys and girls were all conversant with the history of the more notable of these leaders. Tradition was strong amongst these simple fisher folk. It is not surprising, then, that one of the more imaginative boys, impressed with Joe's liberality, skill and justice, one day proposed that they, the boys and girls, should revive in a way the old tradition and make Joe their king. The suggestion was received with acclaim, and Joe was then and there made king over a body of subjects to whom his slightest wish was law.

Joe had now been king for two weeks. His reign had been marked by nothing revolutionary. The spirit of opposition to the Black-and-Tan, a spirit fanned into flame by the horrible death of Father Griffin, the most beloved man in Galway, he had guided into a useful channel by forming the boys into companies and training them in drill, in boxing and in wrestling. They would have made Joe commander in chief; but dreading too much authority, he had passed this honor to Michael, a young sailor boy who had spent a season in the United States.

On the way to church, Joe, the king, and Michael, commander in chief of the Claddagh Boys' Brigade, walked together. They were fast friends. Before they entered the church Joe recited the Our Father and the Hail Mary, while Michael listened attentively.

"Sure, I couldn't do better meself," said Michael, speaking with the authority of a master. Joe had said these prayers in the Gaelic tongue.

After Mass the king created a glorious sensation by reciting aloud these prayers five times, being answered in the same lovely and spiritual tongue by all the boys and girls in attendance.

That day, in celebration of this event, was made a gala day. The morning went swiftly. Foot races, hurdling, jumping, football, filled up the golden moments; and Joe was the guide and inspirer of each undertaking. Joe, living simply and leading a life in the open, had reached a condition of health and strength far beyond anything he had ever achieved in his American periods of training. He was absolutely "fit." He had learned to sail a boat in the beautiful Bay of Galway, he had become an expert fisherman, and no day passed without his giving at least half an hour to bathing in the salt water which was the only thing between him and his native land.

That afternoon he went fishing with Michael. It was a glorious afternoon, and the fish were hungry. The two came home with fish enough

to supply all the widows and destitute in the district.

There were several letters awaiting the king on his return. He glanced eagerly at the superscriptions. There were two from his father and one from Gardiner Street. He opened this latter. It was from Father Dalton.

“MY DEAR JOE: You will be glad to know that I have no heart disease. My little trip with you from Dublin to Galway was not without its points of humor. I certainly did enjoy your exhibition of how a young lady should carry herself; but when you disappeared, my heart should have stopped. I had a very bad five minutes.

“And when I left you in Galway, it was not without considerable misgivings. What I had seen of you up to that point had given me the idea that if there were any trouble pies within your reach you would be certain to put your finger in each and every one of them. Well, I’ve been getting reports of you almost every day, and I can assure you they fill my heart with joy. Not only have you avoided trouble, but you have saved others from trouble. You have been prudent. You have brought joy and happiness to all those Claddagh boys and girls. Strangest of all, your religion, which, if you will excuse me for saying it, you had hitherto worn as a loosely fitting garment, has become a part of yourself.

“Indeed Ireland must be ‘Holy Ireland’ to have brought about such an unbelievable change.

They talk of romance nowadays only to pooh-pooh it. Yet, as it seems to me, there is high romance in what you have achieved. You, an American boy, have come to Ireland; you have taken up your dwelling with the simple and devout Claddagh folk, and you have been amongst them all, especially among the boys and girls, a missionary of the Sacred Heart and a promoter of a higher Catholic life! I really can't realize it.

“Since your departure we have been continuing our inquiries as to the whereabouts of your uncle, Bernard Daly. No one knows what has become of him. Just one week before your arrival he had a brush on a lone country hillside with three Black-and-Tans. These misguided men did not know that the inoffensive man they came upon was the redoubtable Bernard Daly. When within speaking distance of him they called upon him to halt and throw up his hands. Bernard at the moment had both hands thrust deep in his coat pockets. At the word he threw up both hands, one of them holding a pistol, which, as he raised it, went off and brought down the foremost soldier walking in advance of the others. Bernard, as the other two answered his fire, dropped behind a turf embankment and picked out a second soldier. By a scream of pain this man gave notice that he was hit. That he was not badly hurt was made evident by the celerity with which he turned tail and dashed off for a safer part of the Green Isle. The third aggressor, being no doubt a

man of prudence imitated his example, leaving the field to your uncle Bernard.

“Arising quickly, giving no thought to the two who had fought and run away, Bernard hastened to the side of the prostrate Black-and-Tan. He was, Bernard saw, hopelessly wounded.

“‘I’m afraid,’ said your uncle kindly, ‘that I have done for you. I’m sorry. I had to shoot. There’s a price on my life.’

“‘Do you think I am going?’ gasped the man.

“‘I do. Have you any religion?’

“‘I was a Catholic—once.’

“‘Well, it’s time for you to be thinking of the other world. Sure, God is good. He forgives for the asking.’

“‘I’m thirsty,’ said the dying soldier.

“‘Wait,’ said your uncle, and off he sped across the mountain side. He was gone fully ten minutes, returning with a canteen of water. Then your uncle ministered to the soldier, received his dying messages for his old mother in England and did everything in his power to make the man’s last moments comfortable.

“‘You had better leave me, sir; those two men will be back at any moment.’

“‘I’ll leave you if you’ll say an act of contrition.’

“‘I—I—forget.’

“‘Then repeat after me.’

“Together the two recited the prayer which, if the heart accord with the words, will open heaven’s gates to the vilest sinner.

“ ‘God help you,’ said Bernard at the end, ‘and Mary be with you. Perhaps you would like to see a priest?’

“ ‘I would, sir.’

“ ‘Then, if there’s one to be got, you’ll have one. Now good-by. And you will forgive me?’

“With an effort, purely physical, the man offered the hand of friendship.

“Then your uncle sped away. He was gone fully an hour. They say that he ran without resting for six miles. Whether that be true or not, he returned finally in a captured lorry, bringing with him a priest and six armed Sinn Feiners. As they came near they perceived eight or ten Black-and-Tans grouped about the prostrate soldier. The sight was a transient one, for these soldiers of the king scattered in as many directions as there were soldiers and were seen no more.

“Standing at a respectful distance, your uncle and the Irish soldiers remained at attention, while the priest, a young man, who was wanted by the crown because he had made such a speech as Patrick Henry had made for liberty, heard his confession, anointed him, and gave him the Viaticum.

“Repeating after the young clergyman the words of thanksgiving, words of peace and comfort, the dying man manifested a fervor which brought wonder to the onlookers and edification. Two or three of them learned a lesson that it is well for all of us to learn who love Ireland and hate tyranny—namely, that even

the worst Black-and-Tan is a man for whom Christ died, and that even a Black-and-Tan, under God's powerful grace, may yet show in his own person that man was created a little less than the angels.

"When the priest ceased praying, the man beckoned him to stoop down, and whispered in his ear.

" 'Brothers,' said the priest, 'he wants you to come near.'

"When all had gathered about him the man held out his hand to Bernard Daly, who grasped it warmly and reverently.

" 'I bear you no grudge,' he said, in words that were barely distinguishable, 'and I thank you from my heart for bringing me the priest.'

"Releasing his hold on Bernard's hand, he attempted to sit up. But he was too weak. Bernard, sinking on his knees, supported the soldier, who, turning his eyes on the men of the Republic, with a supreme effort said clear and loud:

" 'God save Ireland!'

" 'Amen,' came the fervent answer.

" 'And,' added Bernard, a break in his voice, 'may his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.' For the man was dead in his arms.

"They gave that soldier whose dying prayer was 'God save Ireland' a military burial, as though he were one of their own.

"No doubt, my dear Joe, you are surprised at the minuteness in relating this incident. I

have set it down pretty much as it was written by one of the men present, a Sinn Feiner, who got the story from Bernard and transcribed it at once.

“Within twenty-four hours after the soldier’s burial your uncle went off alone, refusing to state his destination, and has not been seen or heard of since. The weeks have passed by, and in their passing they have given rise to all sorts of rumors. Some claim that your uncle was trapped by the Black-and-Tans and put to death. Others that he is somewhere in the wilds of Connemara. Others that he has left Ireland. For myself, I can’t bring myself to think that his life has been taken.

“And now, my dear Joe, I must bring this lengthy letter to a close. Maureen calls every day at our house, asking each time for a different priest, to get news of you. She prays for your safety daily, and so, for that matter, do nearly all those who have heard with delight of your adventures with the Black-and-Tans while in Dublin. They know as yet nothing of your brilliant career as Roberta. That’s a secret between you, McGroarty, his friend, Eileen and myself.

“God bless and keep you.

“Your friend,

“DALTON, S.J.”

Joe laid down the letter and reflected.

“I’d go to the ends of the earth,” he said internally, “to meet my uncle. I’m sure he’s not dead.”

The next two letters were directed by the same hand—his father's. Having a sense of method and order, Joe opened the one dated earlier by one day than the other.

“MY DEAR JOE: I regret very much to say that there is no prospect of your being able to return safely to Cincinnati. This morning I visited Officer Moloney at the General Hospital. He is in a very resentful mood. He says that he thinks you are possessed by the devil, and that the best way to exorcise you is to clap you in jail. He's had his lawyers on the case. They have a warrant issued for you, and they are getting ready to sue me for fifteen thousand dollars' damages. I talked with Moloney for over an hour. But my words were wasted. He dwelt on his home, mentioned his little daughter and his baby boy.”

“Oh!” cried Joe, wincing.

“Well, I showed him your first letter, telling of your arrival in Ireland. But he wouldn't look at it; said the paper you had written it on might poison him. He was in the worst of humor. So I left him.

“I am very much alarmed about you, my dear boy. Father Dalton has written me a letter concerning your early escapades, after the reading of which I began to think you would be better off and safer in the Cincinnati jail. While I fear to bring you back to the States, it strikes me that there are other places in Europe where you would be safer. You are entirely too reckless.

“Anyhow, I am thinking the matter over, and I expect in a few days to write to Father Dalton and ask him to take steps to get you out of Ireland with a whole skin—the more so as your uncle is on the run and you have no one to take care of you; and God knows that if there’s any boy in the three kingdoms who needs a guard it is yourself.

“Somehow I infer from your letter that you are catching something of the religious spirit of Holy Ireland. I hope it’s not a passing phase. Our young American men lack religion badly, and you yourself in the past year have been a shining example of that lack. Come back a good Catholic, a devout Catholic, and I’ll pay the policeman that fifteen thousand with a smile. It will pinch, but it will be worth while.

“God bless you. Everybody in the family is writing to you. You’ll hear from all of us soon.

“Affectionately,

“WALTER RANLY.”

Joe was visibly disturbed by this letter. It was bad enough that the policeman had become his foe. But the prospect of leaving Ireland suddenly, without seeing his uncle, the man of his dreams, and Eileen, the girl of his dreams, was appalling. As to his not being allowed to return to Cincinnati, that prohibition bothered him not at all. The football season was far off; there was plenty of time to arrange for his return. Joe’s blood ran rich with the red splendor of romance. He loved adventure even though it were spiced with danger.

Joe hesitated before opening his next letter. Perhaps it was an order to leave Ireland—leave the land that he loved, the hero and the girl he adored. Bracing himself as though he were waiting for the signal to carry the pig-skin, Joe opened the dreaded missive.

“MY DEAR JOE: Hurrah! It’s all right. Everything is settled. You may return to Cincinnati at once. The most extraordinary thing has come to pass. Even yet I pinch myself to see whether I am awake or only dreaming. It all happened a few minutes ago. But let me get down to the plain facts.

“At ten o’clock this morning—hardly two hours ago—I received a telephone call from the General Hospital asking me to call at my earliest convenience on Officer Moloney. Of course I went at once. When I entered his room his leg was still cocked in the air, and he and the room looked just the same as they did yesterday, save for his face. The frown and the air of gloom were gone. He was all smiles. I will try to quote as well as my memory lets me the amazing conversation that took place between us.

“‘Good morning, Mr. Ranly. You are welcome. I am glad to see you. I want to apologize,’ he went on as he shook my hand, ‘for my rudeness yesterday. I think it was the cabbage.’

“‘The cabbage!’ I gasped.

“‘Yes, I took too much of it. Been eating hearty for all these weeks without exercise, and cabbage every day.’

“‘But surely,’ I said, ‘the authorities here should give you a lighter diet. I’ll see to——’

“‘Don’t blame them as is in power here. They have been very good to me. It was because I asked for it that they gave me cabbage and pork so often. Anyhow, the doctor has ordered me to change my diet. My stomach was very bad yesterday; and it was the bad temper of it that made me so rude.’

“‘I’m very glad,’ I said, ‘to make friends with you, officer, for I realize how badly my boy acted——’

“‘Sure,’ broke in Officer Maloney, with a large gesture, ‘it was only a boy’s prank.’

“‘Joe, my boy, upon my word, when he said that I gasped and became speechless.

“‘Your boy,’ went on that astounding policeman, ‘is the most wonderful quarterback in the Middle West.’

“‘They say so,’ I managed to say.

“‘And it’s my opinion,’ he went on, ‘that there’s no better, east or west, or north or south. I’ve known Joe since he was a little fellow, and I’ve always liked him.’

“‘Gosh!’ exploded Joe, laying down the letter and jumping into the air, with heels clicking thrice before they rested again on the floor.

“‘Did you be wanting anything, Joe, me boy?’” said the widow, opening the door and gazing on the madcap with fond inquiry.

“‘Nothing special just now, ma’am. In fact the only thing I want is the earth.’”

The old woman retired chuckling, and Joe resumed the letter.

“When I got my breath after absorbing this statement, I said: ‘Why, officer, I hadn’t the least idea that you liked my boy. He himself thinks you don’t care particularly for him.’

“‘Let me explain,’ said the policeman earnestly. ‘We always did have our little tiffs, and perhaps I was a little hard on the boy. Sure, nearly all of us by the time we’re married forget that we were boys once. And do you know, Mr. Ranly, I did use to think that I did not like your boy. But now I know that deep down in my heart I actually loved him.’

“‘I asked him how he found it out, and he told me. Then he said that his lawyers had been to see him at nine o’clock to arrange some date for entering a suit for damages.

“‘And,’ said the officer piously, ‘I told them to go to hell.’

“‘Joe, when he said that I nearly exploded. He said it with such unction. The words, as they stand, may sound profane, but there was no intent of profanity—far from it—as he uttered them.

“‘Well, everything is settled. Officer Maloney says that he’ll be grateful if I pay him a few hundred dollars, just the actual expenses incidental to his broken leg, and not a cent more. And, oh Joe! Joe! He told me to send you his love!’”

Joe sat down and whistled the “Irish Washerwoman.” Rising, he whistled it a sec-

ond time, jiggling as he whistled. The boy was now a skilled Gaelic dancer.

“Talk of miracles!” he mused, picking up the amazing letter once more. “What in the world happened to Officer Maloney over night? And why doesn’t dad tell me what the officer told him in explanation of the sudden change?”

Perhaps the best thing would be to read on. So Joe read on.

“And now, my boy, you can come home at once.”

“Oh, can I?” mused Joe. “They are still laying for me.”

“Be sure, my boy, to take the first boat. You have no idea how I have worried about you. You’re such a harum-scarum that you are bound to get into trouble. Cable me as to the time of your sailing. The family ask me to send you bushels of love. Good-by. Don’t fail to turn this page over and read the postscript. Men may sometimes do what women always do.

“Affectionately,

“WALTER RANLY.”

“P. S.—Officer Maloney got your wonderful letter last night. If he were able he’d go over to join you. He tells me that he’s sent for the priest and is coming back to the practice of the religion he has neglected for seven years. After reading your letter he came to the conclusion that every Irish Catholic who loves Ireland ought to be as good as the men in the Irish army. Joe, I could hug you. Hurry on; we’re all awaiting you.—W. R.”

Joe chuckled and grinned and whooped over this postscript. He was filled with joy and thankful to God. But to go home by the first boat! Was it practicable? Only the week before he had received information that the enemy was still watching for him. Before venturing to Dublin he would write. To tell the truth, Master Joe cherished the secret hope that he would be advised to remain where he was. He wanted, before leaving Ireland, to see his uncle, to speak with Eileen Desmond. It was, then, purely through a sense of duty that he sat down and, putting one knee over the other by way of a desk, wrote a letter to Father Dalton, stating the substance of his father's missive and asking what he should do.

He had hardly closed and stamped the envelope when he heard a voice without—strange yet familiar.

Cautiously Joe peeped out of the window. He gasped. Standing at the door of the cabin, conversing with the good widow, was his old friend, the flower woman.

"One hundred to one," he muttered, "that I don't go back by the next boat."

Joe left his room and was at once greeted by the Stormy Petrel.

"Sure, there's the sort of boy who'll be a soldier of the Irish Republic some day. Let me pin a bunch of heather on you, king of the Claddagh boys and girls. Sure, the children have been telling me all about you."

Joe, adopting her cue, made no sign of having

met her before. Going to the door, he allowed her to fumble at the lapel of his coat.

"God save ye, your Highness," she said. "But would ye mind stepping out into the light? Me eyes are bad."

When they had gone a few yards from the cottage, the woman whispered:

"Go at once into the hills of Connemara. Don't return to that cottage. Walk out briskly past the Jesuit College on the way to Salthills. When you hear three owl-hoots this side the bathing place for women, stop and wait till a man comes up and says, 'God save and bless Ireland.' Do as he tells you. Don't go back."

The flower woman then hurried away. Joe mused for a moment.

"Oh, Mrs. Callahan!" he called out.

The widow showed herself at the door.

"I'm going to post this letter," said Joe. "Good-by!"

"Good-by, and God bless you."

They saw each other no more. An hour or so later, when Joe, having met the man with the countersign and mounted a horse and driven away, a platoon of auxiliaries surrounded a score of houses in the Claddagh district, among which was the widow's. The Claddagh was explored from one end to the other. But Joe was not found. He had gone off to post a letter.

## CHAPTER XI.

### JOE RANLY MEETS AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE IN THE HILLS OF CONNEMARA.

**T**HE hills of Connemara have a sort of Gothic beauty. Rock-ribbed, treeless, severe, they rise typifying the spirit of unconquerable Ireland. Between these hills lie lovely pools and lakes, with here and there interlacing them narrow roads, hard as granite.

Crouched beside one of these roads, in a clump of bushes, one evening late in June, Joe Ranly scanned the road narrowly with a field glass. It was deserted. Bare hills on all sides framed lakes and valleys which, so far as the eye could see, were without sign of human habitation or occupant. Neither boat on the many waters nor vehicle of any sort was there to vary the wild beauty of the scene. Nevertheless Joe scanned the approaches on every side. It was evident, could anyone have seen him just then, that he was not studying the beauties of nature. The minutes passed into the quarters, but Joe never relaxed for one moment. At last his attention became fixed. Far off, coming from the direction of the town of Galway, he saw a speck, a blur, and after two minutes a vehicle. It was

coming towards him. Joe studied the approaching object with intensity.

"A Ford," he said to himself. "Well, it's not a lorry, anyhow. And there are three men, a woman and a child in it."

When the Ford, going at a speed which would have filled the inventor with pride, was within a hundred yards of him, Joe stepped into the roadway and held up his hands after the manner of a traffic policeman.

"Good evening," cried the chauffeur, succeeding in bringing his machine to a stand within a few feet of the boy. "Is there anything wrong?"

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen," returned Joe. "No, there's nothing exactly wrong. But traveling on this road is not healthy this evening."

"What's the matter?" asked the chauffeur.

"The matter is that you had better turn back and get off this road at the first turn."

"My son," said one of the passengers, "we appreciate your advice, and I think we understand. The way I figure it out is this: You expect a visit hereabouts from the soldiers of the crown, and you don't want us to get mixed up in the business."

"You may have it so if you like," said Joe, smiling.

"Very well," continued the man. "Now in warning us you take it for granted that we are friends of the Irish cause. As a matter of fact we are. But how could you know that?"

"I don't know it, sir."

"But don't you see that we might go back and warn the soldiers?"

"Sure," said Joe, who was falling gradually into the Irish forms of conversation, "and if you did warn them, we should all be pleased, provided it kept them away."

"What's that?" asked the amazed man.

"We're not looking for bloodshed," said Joe.

The party, one and all, thanked the boy and turned back, leaving Joe to the majestic twilight silences of the Connemara hills.

More than an hour passed before Joe's watchings were rewarded. Then he saw, afar off, three specks, three black dots, three vehicles, three lorries.

"So there're coming, sure enough!"

Joe whipped off his coat and vest, swiftly wrapped them about his field glasses, and placing them in a hiding place which he had previously arranged, darted off at breakneck speed, getting away at once from the road, and pursuing a path, a short cut, that led to a small rustic bridge something over one Irish mile beyond.

Many and many a dash had Joe made, every step accentuated by the cheers of enthusiastic football lovers. But none of his American admirers had ever seen anything like his present burst of speed—a speed that he maintained for over five minutes. It was evident that Joe had studied this route, for he picked his way without pausing, among bowlders, briers, jagged

rocks, and dangerous gullies. Once that he felt sure he was beyond observation of anyone coming along the road from Galway he relaxed his speed. Even so he was making time which under different circumstances would have established, for one of his years, a new record for long-distance running.

Very few minutes had passed before he was in sight of the road once more and the bridge that spanned it. There was not much left of that bridge. No vehicle could cross it. Joe paused and gave a very fair imitation of a crow attempting to sing. At the sound there arose from behind rock and bush and ditch a score or more of men, each one carrying a gun.

Joe raised his hand three times, and presto there was nothing on rock or hill or wayside to indicate the presence of a human being.

These men were all stationed on the further side of the ruined bridge. Making his way down a deep ravine, taking a flying jump over the tiny creek below, Joe climbed the other side and sped over to a clump of bushes. Screened there he found three Sinn Feiners—one of them, Lieutenant Michael O'Callaghan, the acting leader.

“So there are three lorries, Joe,” said the lieutenant.

“Yes, lieutenant; and I sighted them long enough to see that they were all well filled. I fancy that there are from twelve to fifteen in each.”

“How long ago since you sighted them?”

“Oh, about six or seven minutes ago. Do they think they’ll get you, lieutenant?”

The lieutenant smiled—a mirthless smile.

“I’m not worrying about that, my boy. What does worry me, though, is that we may have to kill three or four of them. And tomorrow or the next day word will get into all the newspapers of the world that three lorries of Black-and-Tans were ambushed by Irish rebels and four of his majesty’s soldiers were ruthlessly shot down. But not one paper will state that these three lorries carried armed soldiers who had deliberately come out to capture Lieutenant O’Callaghan, a man who never used a gun or harmed a human being till he was forced to go on the run because he stated in a public speech that Ireland asked only justice and that justice in her case meant self-government.”

“If things go on this way,” said Joe, “it will soon be a crime to say that two and two make four.”

“If the outside world only knew the facts!” sighed the lieutenant. “One of these facts is this, that ever since the Black-and-Tans were sent over here to cement the ties of love between England and Ireland these soldiers of the crown have by preference picked out, not the armed Irish soldier, but the Irish patriot who went unarmed.”

“You don’t say,” said Joe.

“Yes. And there’s a reason. When the Black-and-Tans go after, say, an Irish professor—a man who thinks and voices his thought

—they can get him safely with three men. But when they want to capture a soldier of the Republic, an armed man, nothing less will do than three lorries.”

“Lieutenant,” said Joe, “I thought you had been a soldier all along.”

“Far from it. Up to a few months ago I was a professor of the Gaelic tongue in Dublin. One night, at a public meeting, I made a speech. I pleaded for liberty. Next day I was advised to leave Dublin. I went to my home, and two nights later three Black-and-Tans called for me. As they came in the front door I went out the back. I was a marked man. For months past the wild hillside has been my home. On the same night that these men called for me they called for a neighbor and friend. He had no time to escape. They asked him, guns in their hands, to come along with them. Next day his body, riddled with bullets, was found half a mile up the road. And now I sleep armed and go about armed. I stand for thousands of peace-loving Irishmen. Today they carry the pistols and guns forced upon them by the English Government.”

“Listen!” said the sharp-eared Joe.

All became silent. Through the quiet air came a subdued humming.

“Look!” said the sharp-eyed boy.

The lorries in the distance were barely distinguishable.

“Here, Joe,” said Lieutenant O’Callaghan, “we’ve fixed a place for you behind this rock.

Be careful, now, not to expose your person. I don't think there will be any danger, but I have strict orders to keep you out of the fight—should there be a fight."

"But what am I to do?"

"Say your beads. Every one of us here has done that already. Remember, men," he continued, "don't fire unless it be necessary, and if you must shoot, try to avoid killing."

The lorries by this time were drawing near the bridge, some distance from which, as the Irish watchers expected, the armed machines came to a stop.

Three Black-and-Tans, one of them a deputy inspector, got out, and made an examination. A glance of the eye was enough to convince them that no lorry could possibly cross. The three, crouching low, with guns held ready to fire, went out upon the bridge. The district inspector looked about intently.

Joe could hear his heart beating, not with fear, but excitement and apprehension. Would these three men venture to cross the bridge? If they did, there would be an encounter.

The district inspector, satisfied that no one of the enemy was to be seen, turned and made a signal to his men. Seven additional Black-and-Tans descended from the foremost lorry, and with guns ready aligned themselves behind the bridge. There was still left on that ruined structure a passageway on each side large enough for human beings to cross single file.

Followed by his two companions the district

inspector crossed. As his foot touched ground on the other side a shot rang out. The inspector's rifle fell from his limp and powerless hand to the ground. Even as it fell the soldier behind him took the same step. A second shot rang out, and the man dropped with a bullet in the calf of his leg. In falling he managed to get back on the bridge, whither he had been preceded by the leader.

After a moment's thought the inspector signalled for the seven men to take their places on the bridge. As these men set about obeying, O'Callaghan put a whistle to his mouth and blew. The shrill sound was still echoing between the hills when there rang out almost simultaneously a volley of shots, evidently fired into the air to warn the soldiers of the crown that any advance would be perilous. The seven Black-and-Tans were wise enough to accept the warning at once and without waiting for advice. They scuttled from that bridge with a celerity wonderful under the circumstances, and once on firm ground threw themselves flat on their faces.

The district inspector, his right arm still hanging limp, gave the order for all to retire. The one virtue which the Black-and-Tans maintained during their inglorious occupation of Ireland was prudence. Nearly all of them who survived were men of the caliber who lived to fight another day. Within five minutes the lorries were three specks in the golden afterglow of the west.

“Well, thank God,” said O’Callaghan, shaking Joe’s hand warmly, “we sent them all home alive. Tomorrow or the next day here’s what you’ll find in the papers. ‘A lorry’—not three, mind you—‘containing twelve soldiers of the crown were set upon by a battalion of Irish soldiers in the mountains of Connemara. After a brave resistance in which the deputy inspector was shot in the arm and another soldier was wounded in the calf of the leg, the Irish soldiers disappeared. How many of their men were killed or wounded is unknown.’ That’s the sort of information the world gets of our doings.”

Here the lieutenant blew his whistle three times and stepped into the open. Forth from bush and rocks and gully came some twenty armed men and gathered around him. These men were with but two exceptions young men, men with unflinching and idealistic faces, men whose very appearance proclaimed that they represented the new patriotism—a patriotism engendered by the Gaelic revival and the old faith.

“Boys,” said O’Callaghan, “I want to thank you and to congratulate you. Without loss of life—almost, I might say, without loss of blood—we have won a victory. We have sent back three lorries of English soldiers to Galway balked and defeated. As you know, they came to capture me. Had they succeeded, they were to go further into the hills and capture several other men. In some way or other they found

out a number of our best hiding places in the hills.”

“Were we betrayed?” asked one of the men.

“I think not. But one man, a disgrace to the Sinn Feiners—I’ll not name him—was in Galway last week and was seen drinking. That man is no longer of our army. It is suspected that while in his cups he talked too loud. Well, be that as it may, all danger is over and I have reason to hope will not arise again.”

A murmur of astonishment was heard.

“Boys, you know that I gave you strict injunctions to avoid if possible the taking of human life. You wondered. Well, there’s peace in the air, and the hope of peace for Ireland.”

A great cheer arose.

“I can’t speak out plainly yet, but pray, pray, and who knows but the day may soon come when each and every one of us may sleep in the only place an Irish patriot dare not sleep—in his own home.”

There came a lustier cheer. The men shook one another’s hands. Into the eyes of many came the pure love light enkindled by the thought of waiting wife and smiling babe and glowing home fire. Several of the men had been on the run—away from hearth and home—for fifteen or sixteen months.

Then Lieutenant O’Callaghan called for special messengers. There were five particular places on the mountain side to be reached that night. Joe wanted to undertake every one of

them. But the lieutenant demurred to his acting at all. Joe was insistent; he knew the mountain sides, he had studied them, he needed exercise, running was his long suit, and above all he wanted to do something for dear Old Ireland. There was no denying the boy.

"Well, Joe," said O'Callaghan when he had despatched four men with their cheering messages, "I doubt whether I ought to do it, but I'll let you go on condition that you have a companion."

"Oh, that's all right," said Joe. "I like company."

"I'm sending with you Terence Mulry, as good a man as ever shouldered a gun for Ireland. He's prudent and brave, and I'm sure you will be safe in his company."

"Hurrah!" said Joe. "Terence, you can sing Homer to me on the way."

Terence Mulry was a professor of Greek in one of the great Irish universities. Three months before he was to have been married to the girl of his heart. Returning, as he fondly supposed, from his last visit to her previous to their marriage, he had met a group of auxiliaries who were torturing a boy of fifteen because he would not tell the whereabouts of his brother who was wanted.

Terence, who had thus far during these troublous days kept a civil tongue in his head, could contain himself no longer.

"You dirty cowards!" he roared out.

The astonished soldiers of his majesty left

off beating the boy, who promptly slipped away.

“You call yourselves soldiers. You are the scum of the earth. When you people get to your proper home, which is hell, the other people there will object to staying with you. Are you so mad as to think that any Irish boy would tell you where to go and shoot his own brother?”

A crowd, attracted by Terence's voice had gathered—a dangerous crowd. The auxiliaries, taught by bitter experience, knew an Irish Republican soldier when they saw one. The spirit of the crowd was ominous. Had the auxiliaries followed their natural inclinations, they would have taken a walk with Terence out of town and left him on some lonely roadside riddled with bullets. But their one virtue asserted itself—prudence. They slunk away. The next night, however, as Terence had expected, there was a patrol stationed about his house. All his belongings were ransacked, all his papers carefully scrutinized, and he himself was sought for during the long hours of the night—he who, anticipating all this, was safe and homeless and taking his first lessons in the art of loading and shooting a gun in the hills of Connemara. From that day to the present moment he saw his fiancée no more—his fiancée who morning, noon and night was to be seen before the figure of the Agonizing Christ at St. Xavier Church, praying in her own agony that God might spare her betrothed, and bring him back safe once more.

Lieutenant O'Callaghan gave the two messen-

gers minute instructions. They were to repair to a certain dugout on a hillside six miles away where twenty men on the run sought shelter each night, and informed them to avoid all brushes with the Black-and-Tans, and if such encounters should be forced upon them, to be careful, were it possible, not to take life. The messengers were to add that there was a prospect of peace with liberty, and they were to exhort all to pray for such a happy outcome.

Joe and Terence were off at once at a smart jog-trot. It required little to put Joe in the best of spirits. The news was glorious. He could and did jump for joy. As for his companion, Terence Mulry, he was in a state that bordered on ecstasy. During his three months of exile he had made little of sleeping chilled and unprotected on the bleak hillside; little of coarse food, when he could get it; little of going without food occasionally for as much as twenty-four hours. Terence had faced danger intrepidly. But the one thing that bit into his soul had been homesickness. There were nights when for thinking of home and of the girl of his choice he could not sleep. Communication was almost completely cut off, and when he did now and then get some news—a scribbled note or an oral message brought by some new exiled offender against the king's majesty—his homesickness grew the stronger.

There was one other hardship that he could not take lightly. As the two jogged along, leap-

ing at times from rock to rock, he gave expression to it.

“Joe,” he said, “I was never away in all my life from home before, and, from the time I was introduced to Agnes and fell in love with her on sight there never passed three days that I did not see her. Sometimes I think I must be a baby. Oh, how lonely I have been! Now and then it was almost maddening. It took away my sleep and my appetite. Yet I think I could have borne the separation easily if it had not been for one thing.”

“What was that, Terence?”

The scholar soldier hesitated before replying.

“I don’t know whether it’s right to talk about it, Joe. It never occurred to me to mention it to any one before. But now that there’s hope of peace, hope of returning home, I can’t tell you how anxious I am to get back to old St. Francis Xavier’s—the Gardiner Street chapel—and receive Our Lord once more. Joe, I’ve been to communion only once since I left Dublin.”

Joe was startled. He had many Catholic friends in the States who thought they were doing remarkably well if they approached the Holy Table every three months.

“Since the beginning of the great war,” continued Terence, “I have been communicating daily.”

“You have!” said Joe.

“Yes. And it made a change in my life. Oh, what a difference! Joe, don’t mention this to

any one—but since I've been on the run I have been hungry for the Body of Our Lord."

Once more the boy was brought to see what an intimate thing religion was in the life of a Catholic Irishman. Had he heard such a declaration a few months before—say, at the time he landed in Ireland—he would, I fear, have received it with cynical disbelief. But a great change had come upon him in the eventful weeks that had followed.

"I can't say I feel that way myself," he said humbly. "I'm not much of a Catholic, Terence. But I really have myself felt lately the loss of communion. It didn't amount to a hunger for it, but I felt it all the same. But why is it that there are no priests with us?"

"There was a priest who took care of all the soldiers in Connemara; but he was killed the very day I encountered the displeasure of the soldiers of the crown. No one has taken his place; and although a priest has come to administer to our needs three or four times since I've been here, it always happened when I was on duty elsewhere. Joe, I'm not only hungry for the Bread of Life, but, what is more, I feel that I need it. War like this engenders hate and revenge. Things that happened, and are happening, that it is hard to forgive. And then, Joe, the best of us are all born with the old Adam in us. If the best of us have temptations, what about a poor fellow like me?"

Joe listened humbly. It was, though Terence had no idea of it, the most powerful sermon that

Joe had ever heard. Here, speaking to him, was a hero, a man who had looked unblinkingly day after day into the bright face of danger, a man whose life was an inspiration to all about him, a scholar who, for all his learning, had the simplicity of a child. And yet he placed himself, like the Publican, in the lowest place. He considered himself as the least of all his brethren.

“I tell you what,” said Joe brightly, “won’t it be great when you and I get back to Dublin and go up to the altar railing together?”

“It looks to me like a vision,” said Terence.

“While I was in Galway,” Joe continued, “I did go to communion every day. And I know that it made a difference. I’ll tell you what, Terence. If ever I get back to the States, I’m going to keep it up. There was a time when I thought it would be goody-goody to do a thing like that; but I know better now. If there are any braver men in the world than the Irish soldiers, I haven’t heard of them. And I’ll bet that there aren’t. Well, the bravest of them are like you, Terence. I’ve seen ’em, and I’ve heard of them.”

By this time they were rounding one of the grim, bare hills. The sky was filled with black clouds; it had grown dark; there was no moon. A gleam of light broke here and there upon one of the uncounted lakes of that region. Vague, indistinct, the hills about them loomed up dark and forbidding. For one who knew not the country progress would have been ex-

ceedingly difficult. Even to Terence and Joe the way was not so simple. At times they were forced to walk at a snail's pace and pick their steps.

In due course they came to a deep ravine through which some thirty feet below coursed a tiny stream.

"This looks pretty steep," observed Joe, straining his eyes as he peered down into the blackness.

"Suppose we go along till we get to the road. It's not more than a hundred yards away," suggested Terence. "I fancy there'll be no Black-and-Tans about tonight, after the reception we gave them."

"It's the only way," said Joe. "That stream below is pretty wide just now; even if there is a drought. Come on. Let's go."

As they crossed the bridge one of the planks gave way under Terence's feet. He was thrown roughly, but smiling rose at once only to fall again.

"What's the matter, Terence?"

"I fear," said Terence, concealing his agony under a serene face, "that I've given my ankle a bit of a twist. Help me up, Joe."

Braced by the boy, Terence attempted to walk. In vain. He could not without exquisite pain put his right foot to the ground.

"This is too bad," he said. "Joe, we're only a mile and a half or so from the rendezvous. You could make it alone."

"And leave you here?" protested Joe.

"But I'm forbidden, anyhow, to let you go unaccompanied."

"Oh, that's all right," said the boy. "I'll carry you."

"Then," returned Terence with a low laugh, "I would be a baby in arms. As it is I'm a big baby; but I haven't got that far, anyhow."

"Here's an idea, Terence: suppose you lean on my arm. We can limp it in an hour at the slowest."

"But that's asking too much of you, my boy. You're only a boy after all."

Terence reflected for a few moments.

"Perhaps this will solve our difficulty. If I had some sort of crutch——"

"The very thing," said Joe. "I see a clump of pretty stout bushes just up a little beside the road. Perhaps I could find something there that I could fit up into a crutch. I'll be back in a jiffy."

"Very good, Joe. But don't go farther away. Remember there may be danger lurking anywhere these days. Good-by, and God be with you."

Joe trotted forward briskly. Reaching the clump, he examined the bushes beside the road. There was nothing there that suited his critical eye. Perhaps he could find something to his purpose on the farther side.

He stepped off the road, took but three steps, when he stopped suddenly. His heart seemed to stop at the same moment. Beside the bushes, half buried in them, was an unlighted lorry.

One look and the boy turned to flee. But a pair of stout arms caught him and swung him about.

Uttering no sound, Joe raised his eyes upon the face of his captor. In spite of himself he could not suppress a gasp.

There was the jagged scar, the fierce face of his old enemy—the first Black-and-Tan he had encountered on his entrance into Dublin.

## CHAPTER XII.

JOE FINDS HIMSELF IN VERY BAD COMPANY.

To do Joe justice, it must be said that he was more surprised than frightened. But if his nerves were somewhat shaken for a moment, who would blame him? The dark, the loneliness, the suddenness of it all would have frightened almost into hysterics a man of ordinary bravery. Perhaps the greatest shock of all to the boy was the face of George Hill, his ancient enemy, who no doubt had been feeding fat his ancient grudge. But frightened though he was, Joe did not lose his presence of mind. It was his instinct to call for help. But he held his peace. Such a call would have brought Terence Mulry to the scene. Ankle or no ankle, Mulry would not have failed him; and Mulry, upon whose head was a price, would also have fallen, crippled as he was, into the toils.

His captor returned Joe's gaze.

"Oh!" he cried, raising his voice. "My friend, the bloody American!"

He said no more, for Joe, ducking suddenly and breaking partially away from the soldier's grasp, caught him in a special hold learned from McGroarty, and sent the fellow sprawling to the ground. Joe threw himself upon the unpre-

pared Black-and-Tan and gripped him by the throat in such a way as to stifle the blasphemous remarks which George Hill was then and there inclined to utter.

“Help!” cried Joe full-voiced.

As he spoke he was rudely jerked away, jolted to his feet, and held fast by two Black-and-Tans, who, concealed in the bushes, had up to this time contented themselves with enacting the part of interested spectators.

Joe could have bitten his tongue for calling for help. The prostrate Black-and-Tan, boiling with rage, jumped to his feet and struck the unprotected boy two blows in the face. Joe’s lip was bruised and cut and, as one of his new captors put himself between the boy and his aggressor, began to bleed.

“He’s only a boy,” explained Joe’s defender.

“A boy!” cried Hill hotly. “He has enough devils in him for a dozen men.” The fellow would have flown at Joe again; but the friendly soldier, once more interposing, said: “Come on now; you can settle this little matter when we get back to Tuam. Come on.”

Joe was bundled into the lorry; and while the machine, still unlighted, slipped into the road, Terence Mulry, creeping on hands and knees, crawled into the protecting bushes by the roadside, and, as the sweat of pain and sorrow stood out upon his face, watched Joe carried off into captivity. As the lorry went its way, Terence, still on hands and knees, proceeded at incredible speed, under the circumstances, in the

opposite direction. After going quite a distance in this fashion he arose and attempted to walk. He sank with a groan to the ground. His objective was not more than a quarter of a mile's distance—the magnificent castle, once the property of the Duke of Manchester, now the lovely home of a Belgian sisterhood. Once arrived there he felt sure that he could pick out some man about the place who would spread the alarm. But no matter how quickly he reached the castle, discovered the messenger, and sent him speeding, the awful fact remained that the lorry containing Joe was going at a rate which made all hope of immediate rescue impossible.

Terence, with a conscience sensitive to the point of scrupulosity, was troubled. Had he not been unfaithful to his trust in permitting Joe to leave his side? Had he not shown lack of prudence and judgment? In any event, Joe, the lad whom he had learned to love, Joe, whom every Sinn Feiner looked upon as the highest type of the American boy, was in the hands of the most ferocious soldiers who had ever fought since the days of Hun and Goth. Terence's eyes were wet as he resumed his progress on hands and knees. He had, after what seemed to him to be an intolerable length of time, come abreast of the beautiful chapel belonging to the duke's estate, when he saw, or thought he saw, someone approaching him. Quickly, unobtrusively, he crept into the shadow of the chapel, trusting that he had not been seen, and watched and waited. Yes, there was someone coming—

a woman garbed as a peasant. He watched her closely as she drew near. Could it be friend or foe? The odds were a hundred to one that any woman in these parts might be trusted.

“Hist!” he said.

The woman started, her right hand went under her cloak and remained there as she turned her eyes and saw a man lying on the ground in the shadow of the church.

“What may it be, my good man?” she inquired, drawing near.

“There’s an American boy been captured just now by the Black-and-Tans—three of them.”

“What!” said the woman starting. “Joe Ranly?”

“Do you know him?”

“I love him,” said the woman simply.

“Oh, thank God. Now listen, listen!”

Rapidly but with perfect coherence Terence explained the situation. The woman listened with undivided attention.

“Thank God I came upon you. Now I’m off to get help for you; and if there’s anything that can be possibly done for Joe, I’ll have it seen to.” The woman was off as she uttered these words.

Joe, in the meantime, was seated between the two Black-and-Tans who had recaptured him. George Hill was acting as chauffeur. They were going over the lone road at a speed of forty odd miles an hour. The two men between whom Joe sat were silent. In fact, as the boy

thought, they looked rather ashamed of themselves—especially the friendly soldier whom the other two addressed as Art.

Joe meditated and prayed. He was no longer nervous. Over and over, he repeated his favorite prayer, "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God," and each time he said it, his confidence grew stronger.

The night continued dark though it was already wearing on to dawn. There was a dash of red in the eastern sky.

As is known, the first blush of dawn stimulates certain birds to break from silence into song. By no stretch of the imagination could one compare these lovely creatures of the air with Black-and-Tans. Nevertheless, the captors of Joe broke into speech.

"One hour, Jim," said Art, "and we'll be safe and sound in Tuam."

"And before noon we'll settle with the rebellious widow."

"And," put in the scarred chauffeur, "I'm going to teach the saucy young lady of the house a lesson—whether she likes it or not."

"You lay off on that, Hill," growled Art.

"And you mind your own business," retorted Hill.

"That widow must be made to submit," put in James.

"Let's have a drink," said the chauffeur, bringing the car to a stop.

The three of them took out their respective flasks. Joe observed that they were nearly

empty. Another round would exhaust the supply.

“To hell with the Pope,” said George Hill, fixing unfavorable eyes on Joe.

“Is that the only prayer you know?” asked the boy.

“You keep a civil tongue in your head.”

“I’ll be glad to, if you’ll stop talking to me.”

The chauffeur raised his flask on high, as though he were about to launch it at the boy’s head; but the liquor still left catching his eye, he thought better of it, and grumbling under his breath that he’d yet settle with the cheeky American, he started the engine.

The drink had stimulated him; he in turn stimulated the car. In a moment they were tearing along the road at a speed varying from forty-five to fifty miles.

“Easy, Hill,” remonstrated Art.

“Leave it to me,” returned the chauffeur.

There was nothing else to be done; the chauffeur had his will. Five minutes later, George Hill, without relaxing his speed, took a gully. The lorry made it successfully, but suddenly slowed up and presently ceased to move.

“I wonder what’s the matter?” he inquired.

“As you are to blame for whatever is the matter,” observed Art, “you might as well get out and see.”

George Hill emptied his flask and stepping from the car proceeded to investigate.

The east had gone red. Nature was restored by the morning light to her rich colors. The

country had changed its character. The hills were gone—the fierce rocks, the treeless landscape. On one side of the road stretched a pasture land, on the other a wall about fifteen feet in height, a wall that stretched as far as the eye could see. Joe surmised, and rightly, that it was the demesne of some noble lord. The wall itself shut off from vulgar eyes a thickly wooded tract of land, that had never been under cultivation. There were several square miles of these preserves. Now and then in the proper season the lord allowed his family and his personal friends to hunt and to fish therein. For the rest of the year, it remained cloistered. That is, it was supposed to remain cloistered. As a matter of fact, many a daring young fellow invaded the sacred precincts, and bagged his hare, or killed his fish. In the eyes of England, such a thing is criminal, and the poacher, if caught, is liable to a stiff jail sentence. So long as poaching goes on, the English will never admit that there is no crime in Ireland. They have made poaching a crime, and that, of course, settles it.

Joe cast a critical eye upon the wall. It was not an inviting one, if there were question of scaling it. Its top was spiked, and covered, here and there, with bits of broken glass. There was no need of the sign "Keep out"; every foot of the top conveyed that unfriendly message.

Meantime Hill was "getting under" and going over the different parts of the engine.

“Say!” he said at last, “you fellows will have to help me.”

“What about this boy?” asked Jim.

“Yes; and that reminds me,” said the chauffeur. “We may be stalled here for some time. If they know that this boy has been captured, there may be a pursuit.”

“How could they know?” asked Jim.

“Boy,” inquired Hill, “were you alone?”

“I’m never alone!” returned Joe.

“What do you mean?” asked Hill, blanching.

“I’ve got a guardian angel,” said Joe, at once serious and jocose.

“Was there anybody else with you?” continued Hill.

“If there was, you may ask them,” came the answer.

It was only the presence of Art that caused George Hill to refrain from striking the boy with the wrench he held in his hand.

“All will have to get out; we must raise the lorry. Here, we’ll tie Joe to this tree.”

Joe made no resistance. They brought him over to a tree which grew alongside the forbidding wall. In a few minutes Joe was fastened about the feet, the waist, and the shoulders to the tree. “Now how do you feel—pretty comfortable?” asked Joe’s enemy.

Joe appeared to be deaf.

“What were you doing when we caught you?”

“I was looking for a pin I dropped around there the week before last.”

“Keep a civil tongue in your head.”

“I will, if you stop talking to me.”

“What were you doing in the hills of Conne-mara?”

“Having a good time.”

“How?”

“Chasing sardines and looking for snakes.”

Hill rushed at Joe and struck him in the face. He would have continued this brutal assault upon the helpless boy, had not the other two intervened.

“You fool!” said Art. “We may have no time to lose. Come on, let’s get busy.”

The three returned to their machine ten yards up the road, and soon were absorbed in the task of raising it into the required position.

Joe, smarting under the blow, though he had acted like a Stoic when he received it, said his favorite prayer, said it a second and a third time, and would have gone on, when a slight noise above his head distracted him.

“Hist!” said a voice barely distinct enough to be heard. Joe braced himself. He had need to. Down before his startled gaze, came an arm. He looked up, and saw sitting upon the tree, and leaning towards him, the Stormy Petrel. In her hand was a knife, and that knife quickly severed the rope that held his arms and shoulders.

“Now take this knife, and cut your bonds and run. God be with you.”

Joe was quick to obey her first injunction and throwing the knife over the wall, resumed his

old position as though he were still bound fast.

Joe was thinking hard. The simple way of escape was to run down the road while the Black-and-Tans were absorbed in their work. But even with a good start, they would in all probability recapture him. Another way was to scale the wall and lose himself in the shrubbery. Could there be another, a better, a surer way?

“One more prayer, and I’ll choose,” said Joe to himself. And once more he repeated, with the devotion and confidence of youth, “We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God.”

The wondrous prayer finished, Joe turned his eyes towards the Black-and-Tans—eyes that as they turned widened to their utmost. They were just restoring the lorry to its normal position, and Joe could see without being told that the engine trouble was over.

“All aboard!” called Hill, ironically. “Come on, Mr. Smart Alec.”

And as the three turned their eyes on the “smart alec,” they saw what for a moment they thought a miracle.

For Joe did come on. Walking forward three paces, he suddenly leaped into the tree, swung upon a branch, and, in less time than it takes to tell, took a leap like a flying squirrel over the wall.

The boy’s disappearance was followed by an outburst of rage expressed in curses and blasphemy.

“Here,” cried Hill, running to the tree. “We

can't let him go. Come on, fellows. We'll get him."

All three mounted the tree. They were, in comparison with Joe, extremely slow. But, helping each other, they did scale the wall, and, separating, started in three several directions to capture the amazing young American.

Five minutes later there appeared over the wall a face smiling like an ecstatic pussy-cat; the face was followed by arms and legs that were wriggling with joy. Joe dropped lightly to the ground, stepped airily into the machine, and, a moment later, was speeding towards the historic old town of Tuam, leaving behind him three of the most chagrined soldiers who ever disgraced the army of the crown, leaving them, as on hearing the purring of the machine they hastened back to the road, to hurl after the better man a devil's litany of oaths and imprecations.

## CHAPTER XIII.

JOE FINDS HIMSELF IN THE VERY BEST COMPANY.

FOR nearly one full quarter of an hour, Joe was so bubbling over with exultation that, though on the way, he neglected to ask himself whither he was going. The question eventually presented itself to him, and, still smiling and chuckling he brought his machine to a halt within a short distance of a rather fine looking Public House.

“If I go on,” he reasoned, “I’ll finally reach Tuam. Tuam may be all right, but that’s where my three friends are to hold their rendezvous before they settle things with the widow, whoever she may be, and her daughter. I’d like to be around when they come to settling things. But I guess that’s just precisely where I ought not to be. I seem to be born to trouble. Shall I go, or clear out of harm’s way? I wonder what that widow did, and what sort of a daughter has she?”

At this point, he fancied that he heard a sigh. He looked about him on all sides. Even as he looked, he felt sure that he heard a sob. Joe followed with his eyes the direction whence the sob seemed to come.

“O!” he exclaimed, and got down from the car.

A stone “ditch”—in America a wall—was on one side of the road. Beyond it, was a grove of trees; and there in the grove but a few yards beyond the roadside, the eager eyes of the boy had picked out the form of a woman kneeling in prayer. Her face, turned from him, was fixed on a lime tree before which she was kneeling.

Joe tiptoed forward. It was a girl. Her dark hair unconfined fell down in glossy waves to her waist. Her face was upturned, not precisely to the tree, but to a beautiful statue of Mary Immaculate, fitted into a niche in the trunk a few feet above her face. Manoeuvring carefully, Joe worked his way through some bushes to get a position where he could obtain a view of her face. As he got beyond the bushes, his curiosity was rewarded.

“Great Scott!” cried Joe. “Eileen Desmond!”

Eileen, two great tears still upon her cheeks, jumped to her feet as though a cannon ball had been fired at her ear, and turned her startled gaze upon the intruder.

Joe, it may be stated, was not over particular, at this stage of his life, about his attire or his looks. But if he had had an opportunity on that blessed morning to survey himself in a looking-glass, he might have been embarrassed in thrusting himself, as he then appeared, upon the notice of the one girl whose

presence had filled him on their first meeting with a sense of awe.

His garments were covered with a coating of mud and burrs. Without these disfigurements they were sorry enough. One eye was swollen and badly discolored; his lip was puffed and clotted with blood, and several streaks of dirt disguised whatever of beauty or seemliness was left in his badly disfigured countenance.

Eileen, like a startled fawn, looked upon this uninviting apparition and recognized the boy she had never forgotten. But how changed! Could it be an apparition? Perhaps Joe was dead and had been sent by our Lady to whom she had been just pouring forth her sorrows, to warn her. Joe dead! However, if Joe were a visitant from the other world, why should he have invited her attention to his presence by shouting out "Great Scott!" Eileen's readings had led her to believe that dead people revisiting the glimpses of the moon were not wont to use language of the "Great Scott" character.

"It's only me, Eileen," bawled Joe, speaking, in his excitement, naturally, which is very often not at all grammatically.

Then the face of Eileen, which had gone white, flushed into a rosy red.

"O Joe! O Joe!" she cried, and ran forward and, the light of ecstasy shining in her dark eyes, she caught both his hands, and, dimpling and laughing and sobbing, held to them as though they were her one safe anchor

in a surging sea of troubles. "Surely," she went on wildly, "the Mother of God has heard my prayers. Joe, she has sent you; and that means that you are going to save us."

Joe smiled—if he only could realize how villainous he looked in smiling. It was a crooked smile—not the kind that authors so commonly nowadays give to their heroes—but the crooked smile of one whose lip is swollen and refuses to function properly.

"But, Joe," continued the almost hysterical young lady, her face going from smiles to solicitude, "what has happened to you? You have been beaten, you have been dragged through mud and mire, you—you have——"

"I have been having the time of my life," interrupted Joe with another smile, the sight of which would have thrown a baby into fits. "But you have had real trouble, Eileen."

It was at this point of the conversation that Eileen came to notice that she was still clinging to Joe's hands. She started, released her hold upon the hideous youth, and gave the boy an exhibition which the drug-stores of our country have made utterly impossible to the American girl—saving to such American maidens as have managed to grow up in our jazz-ridden country with their sense of modesty unimpaired. Eileen's face grew rose-red with blushes.

"O—O——" she stammered. "I—I—beg your pardon, Joe. I was so startled that I quite forgot myself—and——"

“Cut it out,” said Joe kindly. “I am glad that you were glad to see me. But what I want to know is what’s the trouble, Eileen? I heard you crying. I saw tears on your cheeks. Can I help you?”

“Joe, they are going to burn down our house.”

“What house?”

“Don’t you see that house up the road?”

“O! is that your house?”

“Yes, Joe.”

“But who are going to burn it?”

“Three Black-and-Tans. We expect them today.”

“Say, Eileen, is your mother a widow?”

“Yes. How did you know?”

“And is one of these Black-and-Tans a bird with a great red scar across his forehead?”

“Yes—yes—yes!”

“Holy smoke!” gasped the boy, “and your mother is the widow they were talking about—and that scarred fellow said—O! if ever I get my hands on him again, he’ll get something that he’ll never forget if he lives for a century.”

Joe had worked himself into a great rage.

If smiling he looked like a villain, in his present mood he presented a face that would have given Gustave Doree new ideas in the way of horror for the illustrating of Dante’s *Inferno*.

“Joe!” remonstrated Eileen, “you scare me.”

Joe smiled wryly, and, of course, villainously.

“Those men who intend to burn your home,” he explained, “are seven or eight miles up the road. If they are coming, they will come on foot. And there,” continued Joe, pointing towards the road, “is their machine.”

“O, tell me all about it, Joe.”

“There’s nothing to tell. Last night when I was snooping along—”

“I beg your pardon, Joe.”

“O, just walking along, you know, I blundered into those fellows, and they grabbed me. They put me in their machine out in Conne-mara, and thought they’d bring me to Tuam. A flower woman, I call her the Stormy Petrel, came along and helped me get away, and while the three were looking for me, I just slipped back in their machine and motored along. I—I’ve skipped a lot, but my story will hold. Tell me, Eileen, what started those birds after your mother.”

“Joe, I’ll not say one word about it, till you come home with me. Mother and I will attend to your bruises.”

Joe thoughtfully seated himself on the ground.

“Look you, Eileen, I’ll not move one step from this spot till you tell me what’s the trouble.”

“I’ll not,” returned Eileen. “I’ll not say one word till you get a wash, and a good breakfast, and——”

“All right,” said Joe. “Here I sit, then, till those infernal Black-and-Tans come swinging along.”

This vision was too much for Eileen.

“Very well,” she said resignedly. “Yesterday, those three men stopped in front of our place, and seated in their lorry looked at the name carved over our main door. It was the name of my father, Padraig Desmond, written in Gaelic letters over the lentil.

“Then they got out and entered the place, and asked the man in charge of the bar for Patrick Desmond. The man said that Patrick Desmond was seven miles away. They asked what he was doing there, and our man said he was resting. ‘How long has he been resting?’ ‘Two years,’ was the answer, ‘and three months.’ The Black-and-Tans got angry. ‘Stop your lying,’ they said, ‘and send for him right away.’ Then it was explained to them that he was dead. They thought our bar-tender was a born fool, and he did nothing to correct that impression. Then they insisted on seeing my mother. Michael told them respectfully that her day for receiving visitors was on a Tuesday. Then, they swore. Michael apologized, and after more dialogue made up of misunderstandings, he came to our rooms upstairs. I was with mother. ‘Sure,’ says Michael, ‘if you’d let me mix them a little drink, ma’am, a little drink of me own composition, they wouldn’t be wanting to see you, or anybody for a couple of weeks or so.’

“‘No, Michael,’ said mother, ‘we’ve kept the peace, and no one has ever been wronged in this house, and no one, please God, ever will be. Within a week or two, we make over this

place to the purchasers, and it is my hope and prayer that they will come into possession of a Public House against which no charge of any kind has ever been made. Tell them, Michael, that I will be down at once.' And mother, saying a prayer and asking me to pray, too, went down. Then those men told her that she would have to remove that name above her door in twenty-four hours. 'And why?' said my mother. 'It's the name of my husband, God rest him, who led a blameless life, and died as he had lived.' They explained to her that they didn't like that style of lettering. 'But why?' she asked. 'It's too Irish,' one of them said. 'My husband put it up' she said, 'and I'll not take it down.' 'If it's not filled in within twenty-four hours,' said the ugly-faced one, 'we'll burn down your place over your heads.' 'It will not be filled in,' she answered. As the three went out, Michael who had been busy with various bottles asked them to take a drink. Of course, they would. Michael, as he spoke, glanced uneasily at my mother. She walked over to the bar, and looked closely at the three glasses. Taking them up one by one, she threw the contents upon the floor. 'Not that stuff, Michael: give them the best in the house. Here, I'll attend to them myself.' And, Joe, for the first and only time in her life, my mother served the drinks herself. As the men emptied their glasses, and handed them back to her, she threw them on the hearthstone shivering them into pieces. 'What's the meaning of that?'

asked one of the men suspiciously. 'The meaning is,' said mother, 'that I want no man who enters my place to touch a glass that has touched the lips of the likes of you.' I had come down while my mother was saying this and stood at the foot of the stairs. One of them, the scarred one, kissed his hands and started towards me. I ran upstairs, and bolted myself in."

"I'm glad I didn't know that last night," said Joe grimly.

"The other two were still puzzling over what my mother had said. It might have dawned upon them gradually that my mother's words were anything but complimentary, when the fellow with the scar started to follow me. The two called for him to return at once, which he did, and as they went out their last words were that they would be back today."

"Are there any other men with them? asked Joe.

"No, Joe: we have made enquiries, and it seems that they have been hanging around Tuam for the past four or five days. Some think that they are here for a vacation and are on a drinking bout. Others think they are deserters. If they are, it's not for their love of the Irish."

"Well," said Joe arising, "I'm willing to be fed and fixed up. And I reckon we can think up some scheme to bluff them. Come on, Eileen. I fooled those three fellows before, and I don't see why I can't do it again."

"Before you tell me how you fooled them,"

said Eileen, "you must get your breakfast, and have your face attended to."

To tell the truth, Joe was a very hungry boy. He did not proclaim this fact, but the pace at which he set out for Padraig Desmond's house was not entirely due to his desire to acquaint Eileen with his latest adventures.

Arrived at the main entrance, Eileen pounded vigorously at the door.

"Who's there?" came a voice from within.

"Eileen and a friend," the girl answered.

"Just a second, Eileen."

For some time there was a great noise as of the moving of much furniture from within.

"O, I forgot when I went out this morning," explained Eileen. "They were to barricade every door."

At the last word, a key was turned in the lock, and Michael cautiously opening the door, stuck out his head.

"Now may the Lord be betwane us and all harm," he said. "But me heart jumped out of me mouth when ye knocked. I thought it was them infernal Black-and-Tans. Come in, and," he added addressing Joe, "God save ye kindly, sir."

"Is that you, Eileen," came a motherly voice from the head of the staircase.

"Yes, mother; and you'd never guess who is with me. You never, never could guess—not in a hundred years."

Mrs. Desmond had tripped down the stairs

while Eileen was speaking. Going up to Joe, she bent kind eyes upon the boy.

“Sure, it’s Joe Ranly!” she said. “God bless you, Joe. You are welcome, O so welcome. Eileen does talk of you every hour of the day—”

“O, mother, stop,” pleaded Eileen, clasping her hands, and blushing as though she had never blushed before.

“She thinks you’re the most wonderful boy in the world.”

“Thank you, Eileen; thank you, ma’am. I’ll try to live up as well as I can to her good opinion of me.”

Mrs. Desmond, not content with shaking the boy’s hand, planted a hearty kiss upon his battered cheek.

“Good heavens!” she exclaimed. “You’ve been fighting again.”

“Again!” said Joe. “Where did you get that?”

“From Eileen,” returned the good woman. “She knows pretty much all about you from the time—”

“O, mother!” pleaded Eileen, the red signals of amiable distress again spreading themselves over her cheeks.

“From the time,” repeated Mrs. Desmond, “that you arrived in Dublin till you suddenly disappeared from Galway. Eileen has correspondents everywhere. She knows much of your story by heart—but you are hungry, Joe?”

“Not to put too fine a point upon it, I am.”

Joe was half starved. He had not had a decent meal since the morning before.

“Well, breakfast is ready. After that we’ll give you the bathroom prepared, and you’ll come out feeling like a new man.”

Joe, who had furtively glanced in a mirror during this conversation, came to realize how much he did need a good washing. Nevertheless, when he saw a plate of pancakes, hot from the griddle, and inhaled the grateful aroma of coffee, and gazed upon the bacon and the fried eggs, he quite forgot all about this crying need, and set himself so lustily to the matter in hand that the cakes disappeared with a rapidity, which, in view of the fact that he was not a conjurer, was rather startling. It was the finest breakfast of a healthy lifetime.

“Now,” said Joe arising, “I feel as if I could lick every Black-and-Tan from Belfast to Cork. O, that’s so,” he added, flushing as he caught his reflection in a mirror over the sideboard, “where’s that bathroom?”

When Joe twenty minutes later reappeared, he looked battered, but decent. Mother and daughter were ready for him, with plasters, raw beef and clothing brushes. They spent much time on the young gentleman. His own mother and sisters could not have done more. There was a couch in the room. Despite his protests, Joe was constrained to lie upon it, and while Mrs. Desmond obscured most of his features with vinegar and brown paper and raw beef, he was forced, by dint of merciless ques-

tioning, to give a full account of his adventures with the three English musketeers.

They kept him on his back for full two hours, and when he arose much of his comeliness—such is the resiliency of youth and perfect health—had returned.

“Let’s take a run around the country,” he suggested.

The hosts could not conceal their amazement.

“Why, what’s the matter?”

“But don’t you know that those three men will be looking for you?” asked Eileen.

“That’s so. O!” he added, striking his brow with his right palm. “What a fool I am. I left that machine of theirs right in the road. Unless they are bigger fools than I am, they’ll come to this house to get me.”

“Don’t you worry, Joe,” said Eileen. “While you were bathing, I sent Machael to put that machine where they wouldn’t see it.”

“Look!” said Joe, peering through the blinds.

“O, look, Eileen. Look, Mrs. Desmond!”

The two hurried to his side.

“O,” whispered Eileen, “those are the three.”

“God help us!” sighed the widow. “Are they coming to burn us down?”

“No,” said Joe, looking critically at the three limping men. “They are too worn out for any deviltry just now, I reckon. What they want badly is food and rest. I’ll bet they’ll not turn here for those things.”

“I hope you are right, Joe.”

And Joe was right. The men, each of them, glared at the house, one of them, Joe's enemy, malignantly. They paused and held a discussion.

"Pray, pray!" whispered Mrs. Desmond taking out her beads.

The men toiled on. The Desmonds, for the time being, were safe.

"Now look here, Mrs. Desmond," said Joe, when they had watched the enemy out of sight, "if I know anything of that breed, they'll come either at night or early in the morning. We needn't worry about them till curfew time, or thereabouts. How are you off for hot water?"

"We can get you a good supply of that," laughed the widow.

"It might be very handy. And who's here to help defend the house besides Michael?"

"Every night," said Mrs. Desmond, "for the last year there have come to our house four men. Every morning, before people are astir, they disappear."

"Who are they?" asked Joe mightily interested.

"What we don't know," answered the widow, "we can't talk about. Neither Eileen nor I have ever seen them come in or go out—at least, not till last night. I have the impression that they go up to our attic, but I couldn't affirm it as a fact. But last night, we sent for them, and told them our troubles. They are all anxious to stand by us. They guarded our house this morning until dawn. Then they went off

as usual. They say just what you say, Joe; that the Black-and-Tans will attempt nothing except early in the day or at curfew time."

"So those poor fellows are on the run," said Joe.

"Their likes are all over dear old Ireland," said Eileen.

"There's one strange thing, though," added the widow. "These four men say that they will not use arms in our defense."

"Those are the orders, Mrs. Desmond," explained Joe. "There's hope of peace, and although we are still at war with England technically, it is thought best by our leaders until further orders to refrain as much as possible from all bloodshed."

The hours that passed, despite the calamity which threatened the house, were delightful. Joe and Eileen and her mother exchanged views and news and confidences. Joe learned much of the family history of the Desmonds, and was duly impressed with the number of Irish Kings from which on both sides of the house they were descended. Also, he learned how, of Eileen's two brothers, one had fallen in the great war fighting under England's flag for the liberty which England was now denying Ireland; how the other brother was studying for the priesthood at Rome; how Eileen's only sister, two years older, had been taken away by the dread influenza epidemic. But what most interested the boy was Eileen herself—beautiful, innocent, holy.

Eileen, in turn, learned something of Joe's people—not much, it is true. Americans, as a class, take little interest in “the claims of long descent.” But she did learn of his adventures and misadventures, of his games and contests; and if there had been any lacunae in her knowledge of Joe's adventures since his arrival in Ireland, she got the information that filled them in.

By five o'clock of that evening, Joe and his two hosts were on the easy footing generally brought about by months of intimacy—an intimacy that took nothing away of the boy's reverence for Eileen.

An hour after supper, which Joe attacked with fresh vigor, a very small boy, in very large garments, knocked at the door, and held a whispered conference with the bar-keeper.

“Misses,” said Michael, running upstairs, “they do be saying that them Black-and-Tans are coming back.”

“When, Michael?”

“They haven't got the rights of that, ma'am. But they know that they are coming back.”

Joe, standing at the window-blinds, gave a low whistle.

“What is it, Joe?” asked Eileen.

“Michael is right,” said Joe thoughtfully. “Look out on the road there.”

“Yes, Michael; I see an old woman.”

“Right-O! And that woman is my Stormy Petrel. She's a sure sign of coming trouble.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

### IN THE MIDST OF DANGER.

**H**ALF an hour before curfew, there was a council of war. The four men who had been so long on the run were there; Michael who still insisted that he could have settled the whole trouble had he been allowed to serve the Black-and Tans one round of drinks was there. So were Eileen and Joe, and the meeting was presided over by Mrs. Desmond herself.

It was the sense of all, with the exception of Michael, that there should be no desperate measures employed. Better the house should be burned to the ground, in view of present conditions, than that a single human life should be sacrificed. The front and the two side entrances, already strongly barricaded, were to be guarded. Eileen, Michael, and Mrs. Desmond were to take turns during the night in relieving the four men.

“But where do I come in?” protested Joe.

“Joe!” remonstrated Mrs. Desmond, “will you be good enough to tell us when you last had a sleep?”

“That has nothing to do with the case,” argued the boy.

“When we are attacked, we’ll call you, Joe.

You know you haven't slept a wink since the night before last, and, even then, you had barely five hours' sleep."

"You must go to bed," said all present.

"And who will attend to the boiling water?"

"That's all arranged for, Joe," answered Mrs. Desmond. "Two of the servants will look out for that. Now, my boy, good night."

"No," said Joe. "I'll not go to bed till I'm sure they won't attack us tonight."

It took all the eloquence of every one present to bring Joe to another mind. Finally, assured that he would be aroused at the first sign of an attack, he permitted himself to be escorted to his sleeping room, where after a few prayers, he threw himself, attired as he was, upon the bed, and was almost at once locked in a dreamless sleep.

It seemed to the boy that he had had but the shortest of naps, when he was brought to consciousness by the united efforts of the four men on the run. It took them several minutes to arouse him. Shouting was of no avail; shaking disturbed him not; but when they raised him bodily out of bed, and dropped him none too gently on the floor, he betrayed some signs of uneasiness. A glass of water thrown over his face brought him to full consciousness.

"What's the matter?" he enquired, rubbing his eyes and sitting up.

"The Black-and-Tans are coming."

Fully awake, Joe sprang to his feet.

"At this hour of the night?" he exclaimed.

“It’s morning: it’s half-six,” said one of the men.

“Gee! I’ve been asleep eight hours. Are they near?”

“They’re coming along the road.”

Joe rushed from his room, and ran over to the window facing the road. Yes: there they were, all three of them, not more than a hundred yards’ distance, coming up the road from Tuam. All were heavily burdened. In addition to their guns, they carried kerosene cans, and kindling wood.

“Is there plenty of hot water?” asked Joe.

“Lashins of it.”

“And where are Eileen and Mrs. Desmond?”

“Look,” said Michael, pointing to Mrs. Desmond’s room, the door of which was slightly ajar.

Joe stepped over to say a word of greeting and comfort; but he did not speak, for Mrs. Desmond, kneeling before a picture of our Lady of Perpetual Help, with Eileen beside her, was reciting the beads with a faith and fervor, the like of which it is rare to see outside of Holy Ireland.

“If that won’t make us fight the better, nothing will,” Joe remarked. “I say, men, won’t you do me a favor? Let me take care of the front door: they will as like as not attack that first. And I want them to know that I’m here.”

The men all nodded a cordial assent.

“I’m Jack Conway, Joe,” said the youngest

of them, "and I'll stand with you. Come on, boys, ready with the hot water."

In a moment the windows overlooking the three entrances were manned. At every window, there were placed three cans, each filled with boiling water.

Meantime, the "three musketeers" had come abreast of the house, and, pausing in the middle of the road, surveyed it carefully. The blinds were down, there was no sound. Evidently, all within were still slumbering. To make sure, Jim and Art made a reconnaissance, going all about the house.

"Whisper, Joe," said Jack Conway, "if they come below us to start the fire, I think it would do no harm if you were to show yourself at once. You know, we men on the run are not known to be in this part of the country, and there's a reward up for two of us. If they think you are the only man on the premises, we may give them a surprise. And besides you are an American."

"I'll be glad to talk to them," said Joe, "and I rather think they know I am an American. But how will that help?"

"In this way: they will think twice about shooting you. No Black and Tan, unless he is a born fool, would think of doing harm to a citizen of the United States. And let me tell you something else, if the English government did not know that the Americans were watching critically their doings here in Ireland, they would be a million times more cruel and bar-

barous than they are. All the atrocities imputed to the Germans in the world war would pale into insignificance in comparison."

"Even as it is," said Joe, his eyes fixed on the three musketeers, who were now holding a council of war, "they have outdone the cruelties of the Germans in Belgium over and over. Halloa! Here they come. Now, Jack," he continued, picking up a can of water, "when I give the sign, you throw back these blinds."

The three, leaving their petroleum cans and guns at the side of the road, were now advancing, carrying in their arms dry straw, shavings and brushwood.

"Throw 'em back, Jack," ordered the boy when the would-be incendiaries were within a few steps of the main door. The sharp clapping of the shutters brought the miscreants to a stand. They raised their eyes, eyes that widened with amazement when they saw framed in the window the face and torso of Joe Ranly, in his hands a can of some liquid that was sending up clouds of steam.

"Go way back and sit down," came Joe's clear and tranquil voice.

Each of the three paused, each uttered exclamations, none of which were of an edifying nature.

"You little devil," called Hill, "how did you get here?"

"Front door," said Joe. "The door you are not permitted to use."

"Who's with you?" asked George.

“My guardian angel.”

“Where’s the widow?”

“Not at home.”

“Where’s her daughter?”

“Not at home. I don’t mind telling you, though, that they are at home on Tuesday afternoons.”

“Is anybody in the house besides yourself?”

“The only people I see around,” answered Joe, his eyes fixed on the three musketeers, “is yourselves; and I want to say right now that you are spoiling the appearance of the landscape.”

“Where’s our lorry?”

“Gone where the woodbine twineth. Say, I hope you had a pleasant walk yesterday.”

What prudence George Hill possessed was lost in the fury which Joe’s remark evoked. Dashing forward, he stooped to lay his armful of straw at the threshold, when Joe slightly tilted the can of water. Most of the hot water fell upon the straw, but some touched the soldier’s outstretched hand.

If any were asleep in the house or the neighborhood, the awful howl he uttered would have brought them to perfect consciousness. Screaming and swearing, he ran back to the road, picked up his gun, and raised it to his shoulder. Joe promptly jumped to one side, throwing back the shutters as he did so.

“Stop,” roared the Black-and Tan called Art. “You fool! Don’t you know that boy is an American? Put down that gun.”

Looking through the blinds, Joe, seeing that Hill had obeyed, threw them open once more, and addressed the enemy.

“Next time you try a trick like that, you’ll get a real dose of hot water. The best thing you people can do is to go off to some place where nobody knows you.”

But the puzzled and chagrined musketeers did not go off. They put their heads together and argued and gesticulated for several minutes.

Mrs. Desmond and Eileen now came out and standing back of the window so as not to be seen without, remonstrated with Joe.

“You’re exposing yourself too much, my dear boy,” said the woman.

“But they didn’t have their guns. There was no danger at all. And besides, as Jack Conway says, it’s just as well they know there’s an American in the house. O, that’s a fact: I forgot.” Dipping into his coat pocket, Joe brought out a small American flag, hardly more than the size of an ordinary handkerchief. “If we only had a small stick.”

Eileen was off like a flash, returning with a tiny walking stick and thread and needle. Her deft fingers finished the work of mounting the flag while the incendiaries were still consulting. Before handing it back to Joe, she kissed it.

Then Joe advancing to the window waved the Star and Stripes, singing at the top of his voice:

“ ‘O, say can you see by the dawn’s early light.’ ”

The musketeers paused and saw. To them it was like an apparition—a thing of ill omen.

Then Joe fastened the improvised flagpole to the sill of the window, and elaborately saluted. And every one in the room, including the four Sinn Feiners, stood at attention, in a position that screened them from outside, and gave that emblem of the free the hearty and reverent salute which it ever wins from all lovers of freedom.

“Halloa!” said Joe presently. “They’re up to something. Look out for squalls.”

Michael and the four Sinn Feiners scurried back to their respective posts.

“Eileen,” said Joe, “go to each of our men and tell them that the Black-and-Tans are each taking one door. My old friend with the scar is waiting for me to leave this window. Perhaps they really do believe that I am alone.”

Eileen tripped away to execute her commission, leaving Joe smiling sweetly at his adversary below.

“Look here,” shouted this worthy, as the other two took different sides of the house, “if you give yourself up to us, we’ll promise not to burn down the house.”

“What’s the worth of your promise?” asked the boy.

The man’s answer was forestalled by a loud yell: the Black-and-Tan who had advanced to the side door on Joe’s right had received a dose of hot water which sent him in a hasty retreat

to the roadside. This was enough for Art, the third man. He too retired.

"How many of you are up there?" asked Hill, moving away cautiously.

"Enough to handle your crowd," answered the boy.

The three musketeers consulted once more. The discussion waxed hot. George Hill was clearly in a minority. They argued for fully a quarter of an hour. At last, Art gave in. Throwing up his hands in protest, he said, "Very well, have it so. But I have my misgivings."

Hill picked up his gun, cocked it, and advancing within thirty feet of the door pointed it directly at the window. Joe promptly closed the shutters.

"Look you," shouted Hill, "if you dare show your face in that window, I shoot."

Eileen and her mother, before the soldier had uttered the last word, fairly dragged Joe from his perilous position.

"O, say!" growled the boy. "Are we going to stand here and be burnt out like rats in a hole? Isn't there a gun in the house? Two can play at that game."

"Each of us has his gun," answered Jack Conway, "but we're not to use powder or ball, as you know, unless it's absolutely necessary."

"Well, isn't it absolutely necessary now?"

Michael thought that it was: but the others stood with Conway.

"All right," sighed Joe. "But if we don't

shoot, they'll burn this house. Excuse me, Mrs. Desmond, but I'll take a look through the shutters.—Yes, my friend is still aiming at this window; and the other two are piling up shavings and wood, and pouring oil on them. Say, if we can't do anything else, suppose while we men watch, you and Eileen pray."

"First," insisted Mrs. Desmond, "you get away from that window, my boy."

"O, somebody must watch," he protested.

"And it's myself will do that," said Jack Conway, edging the boy aside. "Go on, Joe, and say a prayer yourself."

Joe turned towards the others.

"Come on, now," he said and made the sign of the Cross. All followed his example.

Under his breath he murmured, "'We fly to Thy patronage, O Holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all danger, O ever glorious and Blessed Virgin.'"

"Mrs. Desmond," he added, "do you and Eileen say the beads?"

"Right gladly, Joe."

"It would be a pity," commented Joe, "to see this house burnt down. Worst of all, if Eileen and her mother were captured."

"O!" interrupted Michael in amazement.

Joe swung Jack aside, dashed forward and peered through the shutters.

"Those prayers are working," he said. "Something's going to happen."

Then Joe bent his gaze not upon Hill, but

upon a figure advancing from the road—a woman, crouching low, and moving with the noiselessness and litheness of a cat. She was advancing upon Hill, the only armed man of the besiegers. His companions were at the moment applying matches to the pile of wood. Joe's eyes wandered for a moment to the roadside. The two guns of the incendiaries, thanks to the thoughtfulness of the newcomer, had disappeared. As the boy stood gazing, gazing open-mouthed and breathless till the woman was just upon the unsuspecting gunner, there was a crackling noise below. A column of flame burst out, and at that very moment, the woman, with one spring, was upon Hill, bringing him flat upon his back. As the gun fell from his hands, it went off. The woman picked it up, and standing erect raised it to her shoulder and made ready to fire.

“Great guns!” roared Joe, throwing open the window, “the Stormy Petrel again!”

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE DAWN OF A NEW ERA.

**D**EPRIVED of his gun, very much shaken, wounded in feelings, the Black-and-Tan picked himself up, and turned savagely upon his assailant. Seeing that it was a woman his rage knew no bounds—apparently. Foaming and cursing, he rushed at her. But when he found himself gazing into the muzzle of his own weapon, he ceased his forward movement right suddenly, but continued his unprintable and scurrilous invective. Eileen, listening above, crimsoned and put her hands to her ears.

Joe grew dangerously angry.

“This is too much!” he exclaimed, and, before any one in the room could realize it, he sprang upon the window-sill, let himself down supporting himself by his hands, and while Eileen rushed forward to restrain him, dropped down into the blazing embers. He alighted in the flames with the grace and ease of a panther; kicked right and left, sending the sparks and shavings flying, picked up two burning embers, threw them at the two soldiers whose eyes were glued on the flower-woman’s gun, and dashed pell-mell for George Hill.

Catching that foul-tongued blasphemer by the

shoulders, he gave the fellow a jerk that brought him swinging around.

"You flannel-mouthed rat!" Joe exploded. "To talk in that way to a helpless old woman! You call yourself a soldier? Come on, put up your fists. If you were twice my strength, I am going to give you the worst beating you ever got."

Then Joe flew at him, hammer and tongs. The fellow put up his fists. But he was beaten before a blow was struck. He was cowed. Joe's anger was awe-inspiring. Upon the man's practically unprotected face, Joe rained blow after blow. Presently, the miserable Black-and-Tan put up his opened hands to cover his face. But even that availed not. Then, he turned and ran. Joe was after him at once, after him, upon him, and bore him to the ground.

"I surrender," quavered the soldier.

"That's all very well," panted Joe. "But you come back with me and apologize to the woman you insulted."

Policeman fashion, Joe conducted his conquered foe to the flower-woman's side. Neither Joe, nor his captive, noticed an approaching vehicle; but the Stormy Petrel did. She relaxed at once, and as the soldier, repeating after Joe, said "I apologize for conduct unbecoming even a Black-and-Tan," she uncocked the gun and threw it over the hedge behind her. Joe was, at the moment, about to say a final word to his victim, when, a fierce gleam in her eye, the woman jumped past him towards the house.

The boy turned sharply, and received in that moment the shock of his life.

The two remaining soldiers, upon the Stormy Petrel's throwing away her gun, had started forward to make a dead set on her. What was their amazement when she sprang upon them, and holding one in each hand, knocked their heads together. Joe started at once to her rescue; but it was unnecessary; the defenceless woman, with two stout blows, sent both warriors to earth, and even as they fell, the door opened, and out poured the whole party of defenders—Michael, the four Sinn Feiners, Eileen and Mrs. Desmond, and the maid servants.

“Look Joe, look!” came the cry from them, as they pointed up the road.

Joe looked. A large machine was speeding towards them—a large automobile, flying from it the flag of Ireland!

“Hurrah!” cried Joe. “Three cheers for the flag.”

The three cheers, given lustily, were still speeding with the velocity of sound towards Tuam, when Joe turned to the Stormy Petrel.

“You're a wonder!” he said, grasping her hands warmly, in answer to which the Stormy Petrel threw her arms about his neck, and imprinted a kiss upon Joe's lips.

“O, I say,” protested Joe. “This is so sudden, you know. I—oh—”

“Sure, I'm no woman at all, Joe: I'm your Uncle Bernard Daly.”

Joe's eyes bulged, his lips parted, his hands

fell limp, sheer astonishment took possession of his features. He tried to speak, but could not. He was, in a sense, paralyzed.

“Joe, Joe!” cried a shrill voice that brought him back to his normal self. Before he could well turn, the owner of that voice, little Maureen, jumped into his arms, and saluted precisely in the same way as had his Uncle Bernard.

Before Joe had an opportunity to grow embarrassed, Father Dalton and John McGroarty were shaking his hands, the giant athlete putting so much strength into this manifestation of cordiality as to bring Maureen tumbling to the earth.

Then there ensued a joyous babel, out of which the young American gradually gathered the information, that a Truce had been called, that it would begin at twelve o'clock of that very day, that the curfew was over, and that every Irishman on the run could sleep from that day forth in his own home.

“And,” said Father Dalton, “you are free, Joe. No man in Ireland dare touch you. The day after tomorrow you go back to Cincinnati.”

“Where’s my Uncle Bernard?” asked the boy, looking dazed— as indeed he was.

“Here you are, Joe,” answered an ascetic-featured young man giving the boy another hug. “I withdrew to throw away forever the costume of the flower-woman. Do you know that I recognized you as my nephew when I first met you at your entrance into Dublin? I saw in

your face a family resemblance, and your initials on your luggage made me sure.”

“But why in the world didn’t you make yourself known?”

“I couldn’t, my boy. I was employed on a strange and delicate mission for Ireland. To do it, I was to create the impression that I was either dead, or had left the country. Of course, my superiors had no idea that you were coming over to see me. Otherwise they might not have put me under an order to reveal my identity to no one under any conditions. I was released of that obligation only three hours ago; but I didn’t have time to tell you till now. But here comes the District Inspector from Galway. He has something to say.”

“Mrs. Desmond,” said the Inspector, “our Black-and-Tans have a record which no amount of white-washing can make decent. But I beg you, ma’am, and I beg you, Joe, not to saddle the enormities of these three deserters upon the Crown forces. They slipped away from barracks one week ago, to carouse. Every outrage they have effected is unauthorized. I am now taking them off in irons to Galway. I apologize humbly, and black as our record is, the most of the outrages of our men represent not the wish of our government, but their own lawlessness.”

“But why in the name of common sense,” asked Father Dalton, “did the English government send such fellows to Ireland?”

“Because, Father, whenever our government tries to deal with the Irish, all its stupidity

comes into play. We have never learned how to deal with the Irish."

"But you are going to learn how this time. You'll learn that lesson," continued Father Dalton, "when you give Ireland, Holy Ireland, her freedom."

"I hope so, Father."

"Well, good-bye, Inspector. In the name of McGroarty and Maureen, I wish to thank you for bringing us along. You know, Joe," he proceeded, turning to the youth, "we were to have got here from Galway this afternoon by train. But when we arrived at Galway, and we learned that you had been captured by those deserters and escaped, and when the Inspector said that you were probably in the house which they intended to burn down—"

"How did the Inspector know all that?" asked Joe.

"He didn't. The news about you came from the Connemara hills. In fact, Joe, there's little you did since reaching Dublin that we don't know. When your Uncle Bernard, on account of his duties, was unable to watch over your safety, there were others under his guidance who took his place. You have been watched and guarded as though you were a prince of royal blood. It was Bernard who trounced Hill after he arrested you. He nearly smashed his knuckles on the fellow. Your Uncle has been near you many a time when you little dreamed it. In his disguise and out of it, he has denied himself sleep and rest to secure your safety.

It was the Inspector, though, who knew that this house was to be destroyed. Mrs. Desmond had despatched to him to protest. He was about to start when we met him, and we all got here just in time to be late."

Mrs. Desmond, who had gone into the house, now reappeared.

"Sure, you all need a good breakfast. It will be ready in five minutes, and it will be the last meal I ever serve in this house."

"Where are you going?" asked Joe.

"To Dublin, of course, to see you off."

Joe had been chatting and joking on deck for over an hour with Father Dalton, Eileen, Mrs. Desmond, John McGroarty, and his little daughter. All were in the highest good humor. No one seemed to realize the imminency of that sweetest of all sorrows, parting.

When the signal was given for all non-passengers to leave the ship, Joe bade them farewell bravely, till he came to Eileen.

She took his hand smiling; but as he held hers momentarily in his, her lips quivered, and she broke into a passion of grief.

"But I'm coming back, Eileen," he whispered, controlling with no slight effort his voice.

"When, Joe?"

"In a few years, Eileen, when I've finished my studies, and become, please God, a man. And the memory of you will help me to be a man, clean and decent. And, Eileen, I'm coming back

for you. I know I'm horribly conceited. I'm not worthy to look you in the face—"

"You are, and you're not conceited."

"Anyhow, with God's blessing, I'm coming back for you. Do you understand?"

"Joe," she said smiling through her tears, reflecting at the moment in her face the joy-sadness of Ireland, "it may be five or ten or any number of years, but ever, ever, ever, I'll pray,"—here her face went rosy-red,—"and wait for you."

THE END

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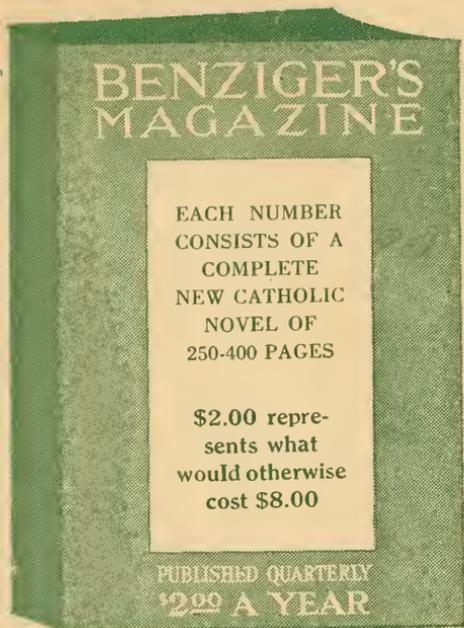
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