

No. 3 — Vol. 2.

CHRISTMAS, 1912.

Price 3d.

CHRISTMASTIDE.

I.

I sing you a song of gladness,
 I bring you a greeting rare ;
 I sing you a lay of the Holy Day—
 The day that is dawning fair.
 I tell you the olden story,
 I chant you the same old rhyme ;
 I sing you a song so brave and strong—
 A song of the Xmas time.



II.

I weep when the world is weeping,
 I laugh when the world is gay ;
 One paean of praise I fain would raise
 To welcome the dawn of day.
 I sing to the kind and noble,
 I sing to the good and true ;
 I sing you my song of the Right and Wrong :
 I sing it to men like you.



III.

The stars will shine in the heavens,
 The moon with her silver ring ;
 But the stars will pale and the moon will fail,
 And who shall be left to sing ?
 Then O, let me whisper the story,
 And tell you the tale sublime,
 And sing you a song, to the weak and strong—
 A song of the Xmas time.

CATHAL LALLY.

Comrades !
 To all in the struggle we wish
 A Happy Xmas
 :: and ::
 A Bright New Year.



National Sailors' and Firemen's Union OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

Registered No. 1493.

Approved Society No. 128.

Affiliated to Transport Workers' Union.

DUBLIN BRANCH.

Manifesto and Greetings

To Sailors and Firemen of the Port of Dublin.

COMRADES—

With the year 1912 almost at an end, I deem it essential to issue to the Sailors and Firemen and all other Members of the Union this message of good will and fellowship, and to point out to all that whilst the year we are about to leave behind us has borne the fruits of your solidarity and organization in many, and I may say almost every respect, better conditions in your employment, greater concessions in regard to overtime and other equinecessary readjustments in relation thereto, with firms whose names I could enumerate here, and who hold that to deal with the officials of the Union directly is the best medium by which to settle differences between employer and employee. Yet, there are other matters in connection with the seafaring fraternity that require to be made more plain and a better understanding come to in the New Year (1913) that is expected to bring a brighter atmosphere over this dear land of ours. Now, with that object in view, a new scale of wages, diverging very little from the existing rates, has been compiled, and approved by the men of the port, together with alterations in regard to watching, whilst ships are in any port; also minor matters in reference to overtime, the handling of cargoes, etc., when on ship's articles. I, therefore, call upon all the members to do and act as they have done within the last twelve months, to remain true to themselves, loyal to their Union and its leaders, and I can promise them that the new rates of wages and conditions that have already been sent into the shipowners and shipping merchants (whose trade has gone up in leaps and bounds since July, 1911, and in a better condition than ever before), and which will be put into operation on the 1st January, 1913, will help when in operation to create a closer relationship between the employer and yourselves; it will also make to comfort your homes by your having a little more time than you do at present. Your environment will be brighter and your arduous work at sea will come lighter when you know whilst at it that your wants are being attended to by your Union.

There may be a little divergence of opinion with some of the shipping firms; still they are afforded ample time to confer on the matters that are of any vital consequence to them. But the conditions and rates and alterations are so comprehensive and just, that it is my opinion we will experience no trouble. As a matter of fact, all that is embodied in the new Regulations have in the majority of cases been conceded at a conference with our officials by some of the most respected and reputable firms who run their steamers in and out of the port.

I therefore appeal to every good man and true to see that this Union Book is clear before the year end, that all will remain steadfast, true and loyal, when we shall have no fear in the coming year, as we did in this one, of proving that although we are only Sailors and Firemen, we are entitled to the respect and a share of the world's worldly goods. A fair day's work for a fair day's wages.

To my Comrades in my own and the Transport Workers' Union I send this Message, trusting that the Christmas shall be a Happy One for all, and that the New Year shall bring us a Brighter and more Prosperous Year than the one just ceasing.

Your Fraternal Comrade,

GEORGE BURKE,
Secretary Sailors' and Firemen's Union.

Liberty Hall, Dublin.

December, 1912.

IRISH WOMEN WORKERS' UNION

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TICKETS, 1s. 6d. Each.

Don't Miss the Dance of the Season. There are only a limited number of tickets.

THE Irish Worker.

EDITED BY JIM LARKIN.

CHRISTMAS, 1912.

HEROES AND THE HEROIC :

An Address to Young Ireland.

BY STANDISH O'GRADY.

CONVENTIONALLY we speak of the Heroic Period as that which witnessed the emergence and mighty exploits of the Red Branch of Ulster and their gigantic contemporaries in the other Provinces; but really the Heroic Age never ends. There are always heroes and the heroic; otherwise mankind would die out and leave the earth empty. Wherever that which is good and right and brave and true is loved and followed, and that which is base despised in spite of its apparent profitableness, there the heroic is present. The heroic is not something to talk about, make books about, write poetry about, but something to be put into act and lived out bravely. And I write so because of late years I notice a growing tendency on the part of our young people to talk grandiloquently about the Heroes of Ireland while they themselves, and quite deliberately, lead most unheroic lives.

The Heroic has been here always ever since the Celt first set foot in Ireland, mostly indeed unremembered and uncelebrated, but from time to time shining out resplendently and memorably in certain great classes and orders of Irish mankind. Consider these various famous orders which have exhibited the heroic temper and observe their most notable characteristics.

First came the super-human and semi-divine Heroes of "The Heroic Period," conventionally so called. They were really the children of the gods of our Pagan forefathers, and their story, which has been very much rationalized by the historians, belongs rather to the world of literature and imagination than to that of actual fact.

The young Red Branch Heroes were educated in the open air and the light. There they learned to shoot javelins straight at a mark, the care of horses, their training, the management of the war chariot, and chariot steeds, the art of the charioteer, the use of the sling; practised running, practised swimming in lake, river, or the sea, and grew up and lived men of the light, of the air, and of the field.

War and the preparation for war are distinctly and always open air occupations; and that is one of the reasons—it is the physical reason—why warlike nations and warlike aristocracies have been, on the

whole, so successful and enduring. True, war is murder, and murder is always murder, always a breach of one of Nature's great laws. But there is a greater law than this merely negative one, "Thou shalt not kill." There is its positive counterpart, "Thou shalt live and be a living cause of life," and this command cannot be obeyed by nations who spend the bright day within doors. Life and light and air are inseparable.

So, Peace is eternally good: "Blessed are the peace makers." But the peaceful must be men who are alive and well, not men who are corrupting. Therefore, when a Nation cries "Pax! Pax! war is horrible," and goes indoors, it is not long for this world.

What nation will be the first to preach and proclaim universal peace, declare the devilishness of murder? Not the nation that flees from the sun and wind, and goes indoors and sits at a desk crying Pax! Pax.

Those "beautiful feet upon the mountains" will never be seen by the warrior nation, much less by the nation that goes indoors and sits at a desk and makes money—for a while.

The Red Branch were warriors, and, as such, men of the open air and the light, their lives spent in grand physical activities out of doors.

Finn and the Fianna Eireen come next in the grand roll of our heroic orders. They were essentially not so much warriors as hunters, and, as such, familiar with field and forest, rivers and lakes, mountains and the sea. They lived in the open air and the light, lived close to Nature and loved Nature well.

Said Finn:—

"I love to hear the cry of the hounds let loose from Glen Rah with their faces out from the Suir, the noise of wild swine in the woods of Mullaghmast, the song of the blackbird of letter lee, the thunder of billows against the cliffs of Eyrees, the screaming of sea gulls, the wash of water against the sides of my ship, the shouting of Oscar and the baying of Bran early in the morning," &c., &c.

They lived in the open air, and loved well all the sights and sounds of nature.

Let them pass; men of the light and the

air, diffusing from their memory after two thousand years, from their very names a gracious odour, "the smell of the field which the Lord hath blessed."

The next grand order of heroic Irishmen, though not hitherto thought of in that light, were the founders of the great monastic communities conventionally known as "the Saints." These men are absolutely historic and just as real and actual as ourselves. Also they were Heroes, and the greatest in that kind probably that ever appeared anywhere on the earth's surface to that date. They were born aristocrats, warriors, lords of the land and owners of slaves, into whose souls there flashed miraculously the great eternal truth that man ought not to live upon the labours and sufferings and degradation of other people, but that, and especially while young and strong, he ought to sustain himself and others, too, by the labour of his own divine hands. Consider that. And so the Hero-Saints of Ireland, kings and sons of kings, great chieftains and great chieftains sons and near kinsmen, lords of land and exactors of tributes and masters of working slaves went forth and ploughed the earth and sowed it and reaped it, and dug drains through marshes and reclaimed wildernesses, and made good roads, and planted orchards and gardens, and tended flocks and herds and bees, and built houses and mills and ships, and became weavers and carpenters and shoemakers, and converted waste places into paradises of peace and plenty. For, presently their magazines were overflowing with wealth, wealth which was of their own creation, not bought or acquired by violence, wealth which they scattered freely to all that were in need and to all travellers and visitors, extending to all a limitless and glad hospitality.

Why did those great men and women and secular princes and princesses, scions of a proud and powerful and martial aristocracy, undertake this slaves' work and with such pride and joy? Mainly because they were already proud and brave men, noble and beautiful-souled women, and filled already with a certain heroic ardour. Then as Christians, too, they remembered who it was whom they

worshipped and what was His life. So the eternal truth flashed in upon their souls with a blinding glory, blinding them to everything but itself. Has universal History anything to show us like the lives of those early Irish Christians? And so they passed, and our foolish mankind began to make gods and goddesses of them, and to tell silly stories about them, and Ireland's punishment to-day for all that folly is that men are more inclined to laugh at the Saints than to imitate them, and anti-Irish historians like Froude are able to tell us that we Irish have had no historical celebrities at all, only "a few grotesque saints"!

As they pass those Hero-Saints Irish imitators of their Divine Lord, we see again the re-emergence of the old Pagan-Heroic Ideal in our mediæval chieftainry and their martial clansmen, an Ideal whose realization involved necessarily violence, rapine in many forms, the war cult, the worship of the sword. Let them pass, too, however great and brave. They had at least a Pagan-Heroic Ideal which they bravely followed and in which they honestly believed. Have you any Heroic Ideal, Pagan or Christian, which you believe in as honestly and follow as bravely? The Irish chieftainry and their martial clansmen were essentially warriors, and as such men of the open air and the light.

Next emerge the Protestant Irish landed gentry of Ireland of the eighteenth century. Children of the English Conquest, the gentlemen of Ireland, successors of the defeated chieftains, men whose right to be included in our heroic types and orders will be disputed by no one who remembers that grand heroic spirit exhibited by those settlers and colonists, when, in 1782, in the face of an angry Empire, they put forth their famous and unforgettable "Declaration of Irish Independence," standing in arms, determined and defiant behind their Declaration. Their faults and follies which have been punished by the extreme penalty of extermination will be forgiven or ignored by History, which will remember only that one grand historic act of theirs and the noble spirit from which it sprung. They were not townsmen—indoor men. They were not city gentlemen, but country gentlemen; essentially men of the open air and the light.

Finally, and for the first time, emerged into visible influence and power a great class and order of Irishmen here always, though concealed, from the beginning, and which will be here to the end, the Irish peasantry, the men of the plough and spade, tillers of the earth and tenders of cattle, a great order always as the strong foundation of all other classes and interests whose grand peasant virtues and strength, derived from the Earth, the Sunlight, and the Air, need no celebration by me.

Now, all these heroic types and orders of Irish manhood from the Red Branch to the Peasant of to-day have been open-air men, men who drew into themselves the strength of the earth and the life-giving force of the sunlight and the pure air, and

who lived in close and vital touch with nature, familiar with field and forest and stream, with the plains and hill sides of Ireland. They all led their lives mainly in the open air, which were also lives of strong physical activity in the open air. Such were the Red Branch, and the Fianna of Finn and the Hero-Saints of the sixth and seventh centuries and the chieftainry and the gentlemen of the eighteenth century.

The History of Ireland is the History of its heroic types and orders, and the heroic, as our History teaches us, whatever else it may be, is something which is begotten in the open air and cherished there by the great elemental forces of Nature, and fed and sustained mainly by physical activity in the open air.

You who live contentedly within doors and found your lives, such as they are, upon unmanly effeminate occupations, nursed within doors, ought not, save as an honest preparation for action, presume to talk or write at all about Heroes and the Heroic or about Irish History which, in essence, is nothing else than the history of our heroic types and orders.

Now, the Saints, according as their primal fire burned low, began to sneak into their cloisters and libraries out of the light, and to live on the labours of serfs; and the gentlemen of Ireland, our landlord order, according as they, too, failed and their natural force abated, retreated into cities, town houses, villa residences and clubs.

To-day our peasantry aim their best thither also, that is citywards, and, as they can't get there, send thither their scions, their boys and girls; held and governed as they are by the huge superstition of our time that it is a grand thing to have money and live without labour on the labour of others. And, it is not a grand thing at all but a very mean and vile, and, as an ideal, nothing else than "a blasphemous fable and a damnable deceit."

Now, all these Heroic types fall short of the Ideal, the Ideal which this century and our time present to us. The Red Branch and the Fianna were men of blood. They are not for us; save with great reservations.

The brave chieftainry and their clansmen were, too, men of blood. They, too, are not for us; save with reservations.

The landed gentry lived without labour on the labour of others. They are not for us.

The Hero-Saints, save and except that we cannot be all celibates, are for ever and for us all a grand pattern exemplar and realized ideal. They lived mainly in the open air and the light working there with their hands at noble and useful and beautiful occupations. Otherwise they worked indoors in their workshops, and on such manly labour outdoor and indoor they erected their great spiritual, intellectual, scholarly, and artistic life. None of the other heroic types are for our imitation, save with great reservations. The Hero-Saints are.

They saw that war was wrong, infernal, contrary to Christ's law: they gave their swords to the smiths to be beaten into spades and hatchets. They saw that slavery was wrong, infernal, contrary to Christ's law. They flung away their whips and freed their slaves, and did their own work. So they became great, famous and powerful. Theirs was the greatest effort made in all time to overthrow the dominion of the evil Power which holds mankind in thrall.

They could not conquer, annex and absorb the world, nor did they ever intend to, or even hope to. Their vows of celibacy

kept them always a distinct order, and even a small order.

The Peasant labours as the Saints laboured; but he labours under compulsion, not freely and joyfully; and he works selfishly, with an eye to the main chance. He does not believe in his own great life.

The Heroic ideal of our century, of man to-day involves (1) life in the open air and the light; therefore in the country; (2) a life founded upon the useful physical activities; that is to say labour. Observe, I do not say consisting of such activities but founded upon them, as the spirituality and intellectuality, the art and the scholarship of the saints had their base and foundation in such activities. (3) Labour not devoted to money-making, but to the creation and promotion of life and all that makes life worth living.

If you have this Ideal in your souls, if you hold it and believe in it as firmly and absolutely as you hold and are convinced that money is a good thing, you will discover, without any prompting from me or another, the ways and means of reducing the Ideal into practice. Believe in anything with all your whole heart and the difficulties in the way of its realization melt away like mists before the rising sun.

Think of that life and compare it with the vile effeminate unheroic life to which the world, and for its own purposes, is inviting you to-day. It draws you into its many well-baited and alluring traps, and kills you there after a while and after it has squeezed out of you all it wants.

The Heroic Ideal of our century, of a time when no young man of understanding can believe any more in stealing, robbing, and killing, can be no other than that of our Irish Hero-Saints only, leading some such manly open-air life. You must fall in line, and marry, and multiply, and replenish the Earth.

Armed with this faith, nothing can stop you, nor can any limits be assigned to your advance.

The practical outcome of our historical review is this: If you desire to lead a brave and manly life, you will in one way or another, probably by purchase, secure possession of a sufficient area of your native land, and there create a self-maintained society, founded upon those manly physical creative activities which are exerted mainly in the open air and the light. If you determine to do that, everything that lives will be on your side. God and Nature and Man will help you; Sun and Wind, and Earth, and Water will cooperate with you and be your friends and allies. Such a Society will be a Nation, and such a Nation the whole world will not be able to put down and will not want to put down.

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AFTER HOME RULE.

By St. John G. Ervine.

I AM, I hope, addressing men and women of cool wits; I shall assume throughout this article that those who are reading it are neither mad Nationalists nor mad Orangemen; and that they are prepared to discuss the future of Ireland not after the manner of the hysterical and the bigoted, but after the fashion of those who retain their senses in all circumstances. It may, I think, be said that legislation which is passed by men in a state of indignation is bad legislation; it may also be said that the conduct of those who have made up their minds once and for all, is generally infamous. The Orangeman who declares that, come what may, he will not have Home Rule, is, to put it as plainly as possible, an ass; he may be, probably is, a kind husband and a good father; he may be, probably is, an unpleasant sort of man to encounter; his sincerity may be transparent, his honesty clear; but he is an ass; and thinking men and women do not trouble to consider the opinions of an ass. But if he is an ass—and he is—it is equally certain that the Nationalist who is convinced that when a Parliament is set up on College Green, all the ills that Ireland is heir to will disappear, is a thrice double ass. I hope I have made it clear that I dislike persons of that character; that their habit of mind is as displeasing to me as is that of a Dublin dramatic critic, one of whom lately wrote to me, and as good as stated that a West End actor was a fit person to censor Shakespeare.

The passage of the Home Rule Bill (for we may now be assured that Ireland will have self-government within the next two or three years: the peerage is already talking of submitting to the will of the people) will not be the end of men's labours for Ireland, it will be the beginning. Ireland is a land of false unities and false cleavages. On the one hand, there is the Orange workman in bond with the Orange employer, fondly imagining that his interests are identical with those of Captain Craig and the Marquis of Londonderry. On the other hand, there is the Nationalist workman leagued with the gombeen man and the wealthy grazier, childishly satisfied that a vote given for the gombeen man and the grazier is a vote given for himself. We have in Ireland the supremely ludicrous spectacle of an Orange workman bloodying the nose of a Catholic workman in the belief that he is somehow making this world a better place to live in. When I think of Irish workmen voting for rich men, it seems to me as silly as if a teetotaler were to vote for a publican or a brewer in the interests of temperance, or as if a member of the Peace Society were to vote for a manufacturer of explosives in the hope that he will exert himself to abolish war! Consider the silliness of the unity which made Michael Davitt and Parnell members of one party! Consider the folly of the unity which binds Mr. John Redmond and Mr. Joseph Devlin! Consider, without smiling, the spectacle of Mr. William Walker sharing the opinions of Captain Craig! If I take black paint

and white paint, and mix them together, the result is not black paint and white paint, but a paint which is dirty grey! Irish politics at this moment are of a dirty grey hue. After the passing of Home Rule there will speedily, I hope, be a re-assembling of definite and distinct colours: black will be black and white will be white, and dirty grey will cease to be. Then will be the time for the people of Ireland to set about the task of re-creating Ireland. We shall then have done (please whatever gods there be) with play-politics, and take to politics in earnest. Perhaps my kinsmen in Ulster will realise then that the governing classes are quite willing to allow them to drill with dummy guns and wooden cannon, that they are extremely unlikely to allow them to learn the use of real rifles. . . . Real rifles might be useful to working men in times of strike. . . . but the governing classes prefer that real rifles should be in the hands of soldiers at such times.

I have stated that we shall have to begin the task of re-creating Ireland; and I wish to repeat that statement. We shall have to teach the starved worker on the Shank-hill road, who kicks the starved worker on the Falls Road to the glory of Sir Edward Carson that that is a fatuous proceeding: that it would be better for the starved Orangeman and the starved Catholic to combine to starve Sir Edward, and feed themselves. We shall have to destroy the sweaters in Belfast. If one were to believe the statements of those who write from the point of view of a Belfast Unionist employer, one would believe that there is not anything remotely resembling sweating in Belfast; that there are no hungry children or workless men or underpaid women there. These writers point proudly to the statistics of pauperism, and say, "Behold the rate of paupers in Belfast is only one-third of that in Dublin; and is half that of Birmingham and Manchester." The contention is that there is three times as much poverty in Dublin, and twice as much in Manchester and Birmingham as there is in Belfast! Well, we should be very innocent, indeed, if we allowed ourselves to be gulled by that tale! The cause of the small rate of pauperism in Belfast is that the Board of Guardians in that city restrict the granting of outdoor relief to the minimum, whereas the Dublin Guardians grant outdoor relief freely. Any Board of Guardians can reduce its rate of pauperism to a minimum by restricting or altogether refusing outdoor relief; the Dublin Board of Guardians could do this, and probably reduce their rates as low as those in Belfast; but will anyone argue that by so doing they would be abolishing poverty? The alternative to outdoor relief, so far as the Guardians are concerned, is indoor relief, that is to say, the workman who is temporarily distressed must, with his family, enter the workhouse and become an inmate; he and his wife and children are separated; he and they are branded as paupers. It is little wonder that many poor men prefer to starve outside the workhouse! There is, however,

definite proof that there is as much poverty in Belfast as in Dublin. I have on my desk at this moment the notorious report on the health of the County Borough of Belfast for the year 1909, by H. W. Bailie, Medical Superintendent Office of Health. The report shows that the rate of infantile mortality in Belfast is 138 per 1,000 births: that of Dublin is just under 141 per 1,000 births! If, as these clever-clever Unionist writers would have us believe, there is three times as much poverty in Dublin as in Belfast, surely it would be reasonable to expect that the rate of infantile mortality in the metropolis would be three times as great as that in the northern city. In Table No. 55, Dr. Bailie compares the infantile mortality in Belfast with that of seventy-six great towns of England and Wales; the comparison shows that the rate in Belfast is higher than that in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Bristol, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and even of West and East Ham, which make no pretence to be anything else than slums. It is noteworthy that the rate in Belfast is exceeded by that in Liverpool—another stronghold of rancorous Orangemen: the only city in England where workmen are too busy battering one another for the love of God to combine to protect themselves from their employment.

Well, there is a job for the people of Ireland when the Home Rule Bill has been passed. They have got to destroy the beastly Poor Law; they have got to destroy the beastly Belfast sweater; they have got to enact a minimum wage for every man and woman in Ireland; and they have got to secure to the workers a reasonable life of comfort and leisure. They have got to remove the scandal of a desperately ill-paid agricultural labouring class. They have got to take shame to themselves that the average weekly wage for farm hands in Ireland is 8s. or 9s. per week, and they have got to remove the cause of that shame. They have to take shame to themselves that so many people in Ireland are illiterate, that elementary education is as elementary as it is, that the teachers are so few in number and so badly paid; you have to take shame to yourselves that there are few countries in Europe where so few books are bought or read as in Ireland; you have to take shame to yourselves that your men of letters fly from you lest they should be insulted by journalists of gross character. There are two young writers in Dublin of notable quality. Have you exalted them and boasted of the fact that they live in your chief city? Or is the delicate, sensitive mind of Padraic Colum, a poet of rare distinction, of less value in your eyes than the huckster-reporters who write of things they do not understand? Have any of you bought a book by Padraic Colum? Have any of your editors sought the honour of attaching him to their newspapers? I would have you note that it was an English journal which secured him for its dramatic critic: the Dublin papers passed him by, preferring to employ gentlemen who were designed by heaven to be plumbers and gasfitters. The other writer

is a man I have never seen. His name is James Stephens; and he has written a book called "The Crock of gold," which is the most joyful thing I have read this long time. Have any of you read this book, or any book by James Stephens; or are you all too busy fuddling your brains with the bible-babble of the politicians and the ill-bred, half-taught reporters?

You have got, I repeat, to re-create Ireland. In the old, ancient days, a stream of scholars went from the island to irrigate the uncultured places of Europe. That stream is dry to-day; its bed is empty. It must flow again; but its waters must be retained near its source until the meadows of the Irish mind are lush once more and fruitful. There are four million minds in Ireland to be widened and enlarged; there are four million intelligences to be wakened and quickened and made alert. We want an instructed Ireland; an Ireland that perceives and knows and understands; an Ireland where every man and woman can move easily to his or her place, and no one will be impeded because he is poor. You have no need to pray, "Lighten our darkness, O Lord, we beseech Thee;" but you must not content yourselves with praying; for prayer, without effort, is flattery; and it is worse to flatter a god than to flatter a man. You must dispel your own darkness. You must keep your hands from corruption; for in the end, the corrupter becomes the corrupted. You must keep your hands from tyranny; for in the end the tyrant becomes a slave. There is a holy flame in the human heart which you must keep alight. The vicissitudes of the soul are many and desperate: there are dark men and evil men prowling in the precincts of the spirit, seeking profit at the cost of life. It is your task, my brothers in Ireland, to destroy these men, and to deliver the soul from its dangers. It is not to landlords and slumlords, rich men and sweaters, gombeen men and money-lenders, that you must entrust the re-creating of Ireland. Such craftsmen as these will spoil the work, for they will think solely of themselves. It is you, the poor men and the men without avarice in their hearts, who must make the Ireland of our dreams.

A COUNTRY'S CRY.

Out of the country they're going, leaving their native land,
Facing unknown dangers, seeking the strangers land;
Leaving all behind them in sorrow and in tears,
Leaving home and kindred which they ne'er may see for years.

Full many a night they've listened to tales by neighbours told—
Tales of lands far distant, of roads that's paved with gold;
Listened with ears wide open, seeing only the golden side,
Never dreaming of ruin and danger in those countries wild and wide.

They've heard of the neighbours' children, of those that are doing well,
They've heard great tales of grandeur which make their fond hearts swell
But never a tale they're hearing of some of that eager band,
Who faltered and failed, God help them, in that lonely foreign land.

No tidings ever reach them of those hopeless broken hearts,
Who found no golden pavements in far-off distant parts,
With no willing hand to help them, no living heart to cheer,
'Tis dark the way before them, may their path grow bright and clear.

Then list not to tales and stories of gold and riches rare,
There's peace and joy and plenty in this Ireland, oh, so fair;
Stay at home ye sons and daughters, Erin's hope and pride,
And make this land a Nation where truth and honour bide.

Stay here in dear old Ireland, she needs the young and true,
The old are kind and faithful, but 'tis you we need, 'tis you;
'Tis you with nerve and courage, your brains, your strength we need,
To make this land a Nation, 'tis to you the young we plead,

D.L.

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Over Fifty Years'
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On a Tram Car in Wonderland.

By LIAM. P. O'RIAIN.

THIS is the story of a singular experience which came to me a little while ago. I write of it, partly because it raises, or seems to raise, some subtle and mysterious mental issues and partly because it concerns problems that are likely to be of interest to Irish workers; while, at the same time, there is a romantic flavour about it, for which, of course, no credit is due to myself.

It all began soon after 1 a.m. one morning in the Blackfriars region, beside the Thames, in London. I was the last member of the editorial and literary staff to leave the office of the only daily organ of struggling and militant democracy. I was physically tired, for the work of the night had been strenuous and varied as usual, and I was dissatisfied with myself and half a hundred other things. I felt, in the first place, that all I had done since the afternoon, and for weeks and months before, had been imperfect and unsatisfactory. In all that time I had written some scores of leading articles and notes, in regard to which I had a perfectly free hand, generally choosing my own subjects out of the things of the day—democratic, Irish, literary, artistic, etc.—that appealed to me particularly; so from one point of view there was no cause for complaint, through the hurry, excitement, and anxiety consequent on the battle we were fighting against serious odds and the necessity of attending to several things besides the writing in those crowded evenings, had all been somewhat trying. In the same period I had read and trimmed scores of special articles for the printers, had treated hundreds of letters similarly, and looked through imposing piles of proofs, and generally had lived the strenuous life in the journalistic sense. The cause, I knew, was good. There were signs of progress; thousands of tried but brave-hearted toilers had become interested and heartened. There was sometimes a general message from the home side of the Irish Sea. So as things go in the work-a-day imperfect world, there was no manifest, or at least no unusual, cause for dissatisfaction. Yet I was critical and dissatisfied.

It was borne in upon me that the many-sided work with which I had been in contact, direct or indirect—the meetings, speeches, demands, ideals of the folk in the mines, the factories, the workshops, or the railways, or the farms, in the slums, and elsewhere—had a ghastly and a tragic side. All this stress and struggle of the millions, all that we tried to do in the way of expressing and aiding it, were pitiful to contemplate. It was all a terrible index of slavery and barbarism. Democracy was compelled—so much of it as was awake and alert—to put forth all this energy and ardour, for what? The right, not to live nobly and beautifully, but with a little freedom and comfort. What Democracy was asking for and struggling for was really little more than elementary justice. All civilised states should have granted and insisted upon a hundred times as

much generations ago. The workers ought to have been put in the position to go on to an immeasurably deeper and more fruitful life than their present ideal at its highest. They were fools to ask so little, and those who resisted that little were utter tyrants and barbarians. It was a sorry and odious position altogether.

Apart from all this there were special and insistent Irish and personal problems. All those months I had ardently desired to be at work in Ireland. With all the stress and strain of the actual day my imagination had dwelt much with trends and issues of the home land. It seemed as if all the time that I worked in London an inner self kept on brooding over, and devoting itself to, Irish cares and concerns. But strangely enough those interests varied considerably, even in the course of a single day. Now, I thought much of a weekly paper, a development of one I had previously edited in Ireland; anon I planned chapters of a long story dealing in Irish with contemporary life and individualities; at other times I longed to be away in some secluded haunt where I could develop slowly-forming theories and conclusions on ancient memorials and symbols in the Boyne Valley which had intensely interested me, as they seemed to afford light and leading on the whole question of how our far-off ancestors regarded the mortal segment of the circle of life, and the Before and After. All these things at times seemed more real and compelling than the duties of the normal day.

On the night, or rather the early morning, in question, when I reached the Embankment, as it is called, the moonlit Thames had an unwonted gleam and beauty. For some inscrutable reason as I looked upon it, while waiting for a South London electric tram car, I thought of the alluring stretch of sea-scape spreading down to the lights of Bray as I had sometimes seen it in the night from Killiney Hill above Dalkey. Suddenly all sense of dissatisfaction and depression passed away. I realised that whatever our personal fates and fortunes might be, a beautiful and mysterious Ireland, much deeper than we ever consciously understood, went on from age to age.

I did not try to picture how this could be. It was something which I accepted as naturally as I would accept the new view by moonlight after the darkness preceding moonrise. That deeper Ireland simply revealed and explained itself, and at the same time brought a wondrous sense of ecstasy.

At this juncture the electric tram car appeared, and as I entered I thought how magical its application of electricity to transit already considered normal, would have seemed a hundred years earlier. I noticed next, but did not think it in the least degree strange, how rapt and serene were the faces of those who had already taken their places. All the faces were those of old, familiar friends. We exchanged no formal greetings as I passed on to the further end of the tram, where

there was a vacant place: smiling eyes and looks were all-sufficing.

The driver before re-starting the car, looked in and greeted me cordially. I noticed without any conscious surprise that he was no other than my old friend Standish O'Grady. He told me that he invariably enjoyed this early morning drive to his Wicklow farm.

I knew that my destination was not exactly Wicklow, but I quite understood that I could be set down at the proper place in due course. All those about me were bound, I knew, for most various destinations, but nothing was clearer than that there would be no mistake in regard to a single one of them. The conductor, I saw, was Jim Larkin; at least he brought on and led off people in a simple, easy way at various stages, but all the while he was able to discourse with everybody on his or her special interests and enthusiasms. Thus, when Padraic MacPiarais took his seat they chatted straight away on a subtle point in the teaching philosophy of the ancient Gaels, and we all joined in the discussion with serene animation. When "A. E." appeared the "conductor" made a passing reference to mystic cooperation in the antique Eire of our ancestors, remarking in a casual way that the point was commemorated in one of the symbols in an inner chamber at Brugh na Boinne. I remembered in a distant way that I had been puzzled by this self-same symbol, but now it was perfectly clear to me, as it was to everyone else. Meanwhile our conveyance seemed to have stopped at a thousand places, and in different ages, which yet appeared to be the same age. It ran in the most natural way through an aonach in the old Loch Carmain, through a Feis at Tara, through an Irish Trade Union Congress, through an Oireachtas, and many more assemblies, in all of which passengers and spectators seemed at one and at home.

At one stage I was conscious of a faint feeling of surprise when I noticed Jim Larkin discoursing in the most fraternal and eager way with one whom I remember as a noted publican and slum owner, and drew his attention to the apparent incongruity, but he only smiled. "The reflections of my friend and myself that are manifested in the every-day dream-world" he said, "are opposed root and branch. If he were not there, in his ugly shadow-part, I would have something the less to battle against, and would not do my apportioned earth work to the full. But now we are well inward in the world of reality, not appearance, and our more real and inner selves recognize their essential kinship. It is just the same with us and our mutual friend, the bishop."

A bishop had just joined us. He and Larkin, I knew, had differed sharply on Socialism, but now they talked in complete harmony on things compared with which Socialism seemed merely elementary. Standish O'Grady re-appeared and cheerily participated in the discourse, much to the satisfaction and joy of the bishop. His Lordship then turned to

myself, remarking how curiously our theories of life and destiny had clashed in the daily shadow-world; while now our more real selves knew how fascinating, how immeasurably deeper than we had thought was the ultimate Truth underlying the everyday earth-reflections of Truth. He spoke of his own contributions to the Irish journal I was editing, the journal which, as I walked to the Thames Embankment, I had thought of as only a dream and an ideal. Now I knew it was reality. He also referred to the contemporary novel and the treatise on ancient Irish beliefs which I had just published. These, too, on the Thames Embankment, I had imagined to be only desires and dreams; now I remembered all about their composition and publication. They had been done by the inner self on the mental plane, and had been issued by the subliminal Gaelic League, of which that in everyday Ireland was, I knew, only a mere reflection, the body, so to say, of an underlying soul. I recalled many delightful facts in connection with their progress, including an esoteric trip on a beautiful morning when "A.E.," an archbishop, and myself had gone down to de Brugh na Bóinne to settle a point on which there had been a slight obscurity of recollection. I remembered a great deal more, which I cannot here set down, about the mystic Ireland within Ireland.

The next stage on which I desire to dwell showed us Liberty Hall, Dublin. The occasion was a festival, at which the most varied kinds of Irish workers seemed to have gathered. The shining faces, the beautiful pictures, and the sense of spiritual electricity were inspiring. We readily understood the significance of everything, even before friend Larkin in a few simple words described it.

"Here," he said, "are things as they are beheld in the spiritual vision, that is to say, in the soul, of our awakened workers. The visionary is the real man," the divine spectator and creator. As he dreams and works with his creative thought, so he is."

"True," said the bishop. "What he moulds and forms in the mental world are developments of his deeper power, his part of godliness. Behold what the dreamers, the real men and women, of Liberty Hall, have created and manifested. Here is the mental, the real, the undying workers' Ireland. Similarly, in Sgoil Eanna, in the younger Maynooth, in the co-operative centres, in the Gaelic colleges, at the Feiseanna, and many other varieties of which we know, the awakening soul of Ireland, which is part of the World-Soul, and the Eternal Bounty, is manifesting that creative power which is so gloriously real, though it seems sometimes only dim and shadowy to those fractions of ourselves that we habitually know in that limited experience we call "life" and "day time." Even then, if we would sedulously cultivate our sub-conscious and subliminal selves, we would be——"

* * * * *

Just then I had a curious feeling of being at once stunned and blindfolded. Presently I found myself one of several passengers descending from an electric tramcar in London. I had reached my normal destination. I can convey no appropriate impression of how elated I felt when I pondered on the experiences I have endeavoured. "Dream" or "imagination," the reader may say. Be it so. But who will give us any satisfying explanation of the realities underlying those lightly-used words, Dream and Imagination?

SOME RAMBLING REMARKS.

By JAMES CONNOLLY.

No one at all acquainted with Ireland at the present can doubt that the country is feeling the throbs accompanying the birth of great movements. Everywhere there are stirrings of new life—intellectual, artistic, industrial, political, racial, social stirrings are to be seen and felt on every hand, and the nation is moved from end to end by the yeast-like pulsations of new influences. Amid such a renaissance it would, indeed, be a strange phenomenon if Labour remained passive; if Labour alone moved in the old ruts and failed to respond to the call for a new adventuring of the spirit. Such a lack of response would argue a lifelessness of attitude, a blindness of mental outlook in the part of the toilers which would go far to neutralise and discount the value of the higher aspirations of the rest of the nation. Considering the state of slavery in which the masses of the Irish workers are to-day, some few aspects of which we have already noted in these columns, a state of restlessness, of "divine discontent," on the part of Labour in Ireland is an absolutely essential pre-requisite for the realisation of any spiritual uplifting of the nation at large. With a people degraded, and so degraded as to be unconscious of their degradation, no upward march of Ireland is possible; with a people restless under injustice, conscious of their degradation, and resolved, if need be, to peril life itself in order to end such degradation, though thrones and empires fall as a result—with such a people all things are possible—to such a people all things must bend and flow. A large nation may become great by the mere pressure of its magnitude—the greatness of its numbers, as Russia to-day. A small nation, such as Ireland, can only become great by reason of the greatness of soul of its individual citizens.

It is, therefore, a matter of sincere congratulation to every lover of the race that the workers of Ireland are to-day profoundly discontented, and, so far from being apathetic in their slavery, are, instead, rebellious, even to the point of rashness. Discontent is the fulcrum upon which the lever of thought has ever moved the world to action. A discontented Working Class! What a glorious promise for the future! Ireland has to-day within her bosom two things that must make the blood run with riotous exultation in the veins of every lover of the Irish race—a discontented working class, and the nucleus of a rebellious womanhood. I cannot separate these two things in my mind; to me they are parts of the one great whole; different regiments of the one great army of progress. To neither will it be possible to realise its ideals without first trampling under foot, riding roughshod over, all the false conventions, soul-shrivelling prejudices, and subtle hypocrisies with which a tyrannical society has poisoned the souls and warped the intellect of mankind. Apart from this material, political and industrial forms in which the Labourer or the Woman may clothe their respective struggles, there is, in the fact of the struggle itself, in both cases, an emancipating influence which cannot be expressed in words, much less formulated in programmes.

The Struggle Emancipates, let who will claim the immediate petty triumph.

We of the Working Class have much to be thankful for in the fact that in the upward march in which we are engaged, we are permitted to reap advantages of a material nature at each stage of our journey. If our wages are not increased, our toil lightened, our hours lessened, our

conditions improved as a result of the daily conflict in which we are engaged, we know that it is because of some faltering on the part of ourselves or our fellow-workers, some defalcation on the part of some being of our army, and not a necessary or unavoidable part of the conflict itself. The Modern Labour Movement knows that a victory of any kind for the Working Class is better for the Cause, more potent for Ultimate Victory than a correct understanding of Economic Theory by a beaten Labour Army. The Modern Labour Movement is suspicious of theorising that shirks conflict, and seeks to build up the revolutionary army of social reconstruction by means of an army that fights and wins concessions for the fighters whilst it is fighting. Every victory won by Labour for Labour helps to strengthen the bent back, and enlarge the cramped soul of the labourer; every time the labourer, be it man or woman, secures a triumph in the battle for juster conditions, the mind of the labourer receives that impulse towards higher things that comes from the knowledge of power. Here and there, to some degraded individuals, the victories of Labour mean only increased opportunities for drink and degeneracy, but on the whole it remains true that the fruits of the victories of the organised Working Class are as capable of being stated in terms of spiritual uplifting as in the material terms of cash.

Let us then, with glad eyes, face the future! Ireland salutes the rising sun, and within Ireland Labour moves with the promise and potency of growing life and consciousness, a life and consciousness destined to grow and expand until the glad day when he who in this Green Isle says "Labour" must say "Ireland," and he who says "Ireland" must necessarily be planning for the glorification and ennobling of Labour.

WHEN THE FISHING BOATS CAME HOME.

The wind was shrieking o'er the ocean,
The waves were leaping high in foam,
The storm-clouds blew across the heavens,
When the fishing boats came home.

The people of the fishing hamlet,
All had crowded to the shore,
And, with eyes strained through the darkness,
Watched for those who'll come no more.

Gentle was the morning's rising;
Bright the sun and light the breeze;
But the timbers of the luggers
Scattered lay upon the seas.

And the tide cast up that Christmas morning,
On the rocks awash with foam,
Broken spars and battered corpses—
Thus the fishing boats came home!

DENIS J. GREGAN.
8th November, 1912.

DEAL WITH
R. W. SHOLEDICE,
37 HIGH STREET, DUBLIN,
For Watch and Clock Repairs.

The Workers' Friend Alarm Clock, only
1/11. Kept in repair for 12 months
free of charge. Mention this Paper.

Christmas is Coming Once Again.

And we are on the Warpath Once More.

The Trade Warpath we mean, of course, not the Balkans.

After a twenty years battle with all sorts of competitors we still hold our old forts at the Coombe, New Street, and Wexford Street against all comers, and are as fresh and eager as ever.

We are sellers of Hams, Bacon, Teas, Butter, Beef, Mutton, Pork and all those Trades Sundries.

:: What we want to push principally now is ::

Hams, Turkeys and Geese.

The prices unfortunately this year (for Hams) are not as cheap as they used to be. We may thank the big Meat Trusts largely for that (Home as well as Foreign.)

It is a curious thing that notwithstanding the increased productiveness of the earth due to the discoveries of science and labour-saving machinery, that it seems to be getting all the time harder for the ordinary people to get the necessaries of life. It is a big question, and a dry and laborious study, but withall a useful one for (ordinary) people to engage in.

BUT ARE WE DOWNHEARTED? NO, THE DEVIL A BIT.

We recognise that we ought to and must struggle for an existence, no matter what the conditions or surroundings we happen to find ourselves in, it is the penalty of our birth, and it is only a coward who surrenders. After the above neat bit of philosophy (all our own) we will come back to business again.

It is not easy to state at the time of writing this advertisement the exact prices that Hams can be sold at this Xmas. Probably Canadian and American at from 8d. to 9½d. per lb., and Irish, say in or about one penny per lb. more

But whether Home-Cured or otherwise, what we sell will be of Good Quality. Rely on us for that.

If after Xmas we learn that any other trader has sold a Ham of good quality cheaper than us, we will immediately emigrate to Canada, America, Australia, Africa—anywhere it does not matter.

But it won't happen. They cannot do it.

DON'T FORGET WE ARE ALSO BIG SELLERS OF

Irish Beef, Mutton and Pork.

And if you have got over your prejudice towards Margarine, we are big sellers of that article also. We are selling a line now which we call "Double Overweight," 2 lbs. for 1s.; 1 lb. for 6d.; ½ lb. for 3d. and ¼ lb. for 1½d. that will beat to a "frazzle" (classic American expression) anything the big dividend paying concerns can offer. It is a cheap food, and while not the same thing as butter, yet it is good.

Please don't pass our doors without coming to see what we have to offer.

We remain your humble servants,

PAT KAVANAGH & SONS,

71 & 72 New Street, 4 Dean Street, }
74 to 78 Coombe & 37 Wexford St. } **DUBLIN.**

THE MAID OF THE MILL.

By W. P. Partridge.

PART I.

THE hands of the Woolsworth Spinning Mills had gone on "strike," and consternation reigned throughout the little village nestling at the base of the rugged hill, down whose craggy sides the streamlets trickled in the dancing sunbeams, gathering strength as they went, until, tossing and foaming with a mighty roar, the giant flood swept on, and was lost to view in the deep shadows of the clustering branches waving in the slight summer breeze as it swept the airy bubbles from the bosom of the rushing waters.

Twenty odd summers before Edward Woolsworth—a young man scarce out of his teens—had succeeded his father in ownership of the huge black mills standing in the heart of the smiling valley. As a child he had stood in the nursery window of the handsome mansion half hidden among the trees and watched the mill-hands leave the scene of their daily labours, while the rays of the setting sun stole through the trees, lighting up the sombre walls of the old mill with its fiery glow. As a boy he had visited the mill in company with his father and made the acquaintance of many of the hands; he had watched in childish wonder the foaming waters rush through the opened sluices as the giant wheel groaned in its slow revolutions, lending life to hundreds of smaller ones that hummed cheerfully as they sped rapidly round and round, willingly aiding man in his toil. Later he had learned to catch fish in these busy waters, and was also taught to swim in their silvery depths. Then came the long days spent at college—days devoted to deep study and careful research. His father's sudden demise, however, recalled the promising young student to the home of his childhood, and the secrets of science were abandoned to assume responsibilities with which he was hitherto unfamiliar.

Being the only child and motherless from his hour of birth, Edward Woolsworth would have found the old home still more lonely after his father's death had not his duties at the mill claimed so much of his attention. And so devoted did he become to his new labours that years passed by almost unnoticed, and one day Edward Woolsworth awoke to the fact that he had become an immensely wealthy man. The output of the mill had more than doubled under his management; the hands had proportionately increased, and two whole new streets had been added to the village he knew in his youth, which now assumed the size of a respectable town; and all the time his "pile" in the bank kept rapidly rising until the bank officials began to regard the young mill-owner as one of Fortune's favourites.

Then came his marriage with the sister of a college chum, when the village gave itself up to general rejoicing; flags and flowers decorated every street; at night windows were illuminated and large bonfires were lighted in the streets, around which children danced and sung in endless circles while the elder folk looked and enjoyed the frolic. The mill was closed down for a

whole week and the mill hands were paid a double week's wages, and all truly rejoiced. Twelve months had come and gone since the new mistress appeared in the mill-owner's mansion, and Mr. Woolsworth's domestic happiness was crowned by the birth of a little daughter. But the bright sunshine of his happiness was suddenly plunged into total darkness by the mysterious death of the little stranger, and this dreadful occurrence so shocked its delicate mother as to deprive her of all use of her limbs. She became completely paralysed from that moment, and was never afterwards seen outside the spacious grounds surrounding the mansion. Her fond and distracted husband, oppressed by his double burden of affliction, appointed a manager to look after the affairs at the mill, and henceforth spent his time by the side of his invalided wife.

The circumstances surrounding the death of the little one were singularly sad. The mother, never possessed of a robust health, had become very delicate when the child was born, and the infant was removed to a remote part of the house, so that its cries might not distract its mother's slumbers. Sleeping peacefully in its little cot the infant lay, while its nurse sat by the window gazing out upon the well-kept garden with its wealth of flowers and enticing gravel paths. Yielding to a sudden desire to explore its treasures, she rises noiselessly from her seat and, silently unfastening the French window, steps out and steals softly along the shaded path, enjoying the fragrance of the refreshing evening air, perfumed by the scent of a million flowers. Woed by the delightful scene she lingers long among the fruits and flowers, until the chill breath of approaching night reminds her that her little charge is in danger of catching cold, as she had neglected to close the window. Quickly are her steps retraced. She reaches the open window—it is exactly as she left it. She passes through, and, bending over the little cot, gazes anxiously at the peaceful face of the little sleeper. A huge lump leaps to her throat—her heart ceases to beat; for even through the gathering gloom she clearly discerns upon the waxen features that sallow hue of the hand of Death!

The house resounds to the terrified shrieks of the demented nurse and brings the entire household to her side. The poor weak mother hearing the first cry of the nurse and with a mother's instinct, realises that her child is in danger, forgets her weakness, her illness—everything yields to the natural desire to fly to the side of her child. But before the door of her room is reached she sinks in a dead faint upon the floor. The distracted husband bears her tenderly back to bed and rushes forth to summon medical aid. The doctor arrives, and for days the mill-owner's wife hovers between life and death. And when reason once more resumes sway it is to learn that her little child has passed from her forever and is taking its endless rest in a silent corner of the adjacent churchyard. The doctor informs her that she has been very ill, and she is given to understand very gently that

it may be a long time before she will again have the power to use her limbs; indeed, he even hints that she may never regain that power as she is paralysed. He sees the big tears swelling in her eyes and running down her pale cheeks as she listens to the dreadful tidings, and he begs her to be brave and bear it for her husband's sake. Her husband, slowly entering the room at that moment, shows her how he has suffered during those terrible days. His pale, haggard face bears lines she never saw there before; while his hair of once brown, clustering curls now rivalled the snow in the purity of its whiteness. With a glad cry he rushed to her side and gathered her in his arms. The doctor walked from the room knowing—

*How love in sorrow gives solace and sustains
E'en the weakest heart to bear the sharpest pains.*

From that day Mr. Woolsworth never again entered the mills, and the mill-hands were left entirely in charge of a highly-paid official, with what results this story will tell.

PART II.

Granny Grey's Maggie was the spoiled child of the inhabitants of the village of Woolsworth—that is, if wholesale affection and caresses spoils a child. Her father had worked in the mills in the good old days, but being a rather reckless character he had been discharged by Mr. Woolsworth after the latter had satisfied himself how useless was the task of trying to reform him. After his dismissal he disappeared from the locality and was never seen more. Maggie's mother died after the birth of her child, and poor old Granny Grey—as she was affectionately called by the villagers—was left in her declining years friendless and alone, save for the little waif. But Granny's burden was cheerfully borne by the poor old woman of three-score-and-ten, and little Maggie grew up fair as the flowers she loved, with the face of an angel and the disposition of a saint—as the old schoolmaster was wont to enthusiastically describe his favourite pupil—and the description was an apt one for the lonely child with her wealth of clustering brown curls falling gracefully around her shapely shoulders and softly caressing her blushing peach-like cheeks; her shapely mouth, like the tiny rose-bud, opening to the sun's warm kisses and parting in a sweet, sad smile reveals two tiny rows of even teeth. This gentle child was beloved by the rough inhabitants of the Woolsworth village. Had not all of them a claim upon this precious little humanity? Every pay-day since her mother died did not the rough mill-hand walk straight from the mill to Granny Grey's and out of his scant earnings did he not lay down on the table his weekly contribution for "wee Maggie?" Nor were the female workers wanting in their assistance to this little mite, for generous hearts were ever planning and busy hands were ever working making Maggie the best-dressed child in the whole country around.

When illness or misfortune entered a village-home their ministering angels ap-

peared in the person of Granny and her little charge. And perhaps these missions of mercy did more to win the hearts and retain the affections of the rough villager than even the winsome beauty of the pretty child. When Granny, by her careful nursing and magic remedies, had snatched the wornout toiler from the hands of death, Maggie coaxed the feeble sufferer back to health and strength—her soft, lily-like hand wiping away the lingering dew of illness; her cheerful smile and tender voice made pain depart, and the fever-tossed patient after a restless night of anguish and suffering forgot his agonies; while gazing into those wondrous eyes, in whose sympathetic depths the bright tear-drops glistened for his sufferings, his thoughts became of angels, Heaven and God, and soothed by his thoughts, his weary lashes slowly closed, and peacefully smiling he slept to waken possessed of renewed vigour and hope, to receive the grateful greetings of his wife and children, and to join his fervent prayers with theirs that God might bless and protect Granny Grey and her little orphan.

But time flies in the little village of Woolsworth as elsewhere, and the once winsome wee Maggie grew into a tall, graceful girl of sixteen. She had passed through all the grades in the local school, and the proud villagers were wont to boast that her education equalled that of any lady in the land; and whether that boast was justified or not she certainly equalled all and excelled most in the matter of personal appearance and graciousness of manner. At this period Maggie announced her intention of joining her friends in their toil at the mill, for the ambition of the people of that village never taught them to look beyond its big, black walls, and it was a right hearty reception she received from her old friends and school-mates.

Mr. Stoddart, the manager, assigned to her a place in his office in recognition of her superior education and perhaps as a tribute to her rare beauty and excellent manner. Maggie would have been better pleased had he permitted her to take her place with the other mill-hands, but she accepted the situation with her usual cheerfulness and resignation.

Mr. Stoddart was a relentless man of business—half-man whole-brute was the description given of him by many of those employed under his supervision in the mill. He had been recommended to Mr. Woolsworth on account of his business capacity and was appointed without further inquiry and ruled the mill with an iron hand. Maggie never knew what it was to hate anyone, still she had to confess to herself that she did not like Mr. Stoddart. His attention to her, his harsh manner of addressing the mill-hands, whom Maggie knew and loved from childhood, hurt her sensitive nature and brought tears of resentment to her eyes. Always a diligent worker herself Maggie performed her duties in the office to the entire satisfaction of her exacting employer, who acknowledged her to be the best clerk he had ever known, and otherwise took no pains to conceal his admiration for her. It was customary for Maggie when leaving the mill at meal hours or in the evenings to wait for the hands, when all would delight to go home together. She was, therefore, not a little amazed when Mr. Stoddart one evening announced his intention of seeing her home. This act of unwelcomed courtesy was repeatedly performed, much to Maggie's mortification and the disappointment of the workers, who always regarded the manager with disfavour. Maggie tried numerous ways to relieve herself of Mr. Stoddart's disagreeable attention, but without avail. He simply would not be shaken off. One

day old Granny was surprised to find Maggie in tears, and on inquiring the cause of her apparent distress learned that Mr. Stoddart had asked Maggie to be his wife. "What!" cried the old woman, in astonishment, "Does the hawk seek to mate with the dove? Why, child, the hardened old tyrant might be your father. Don't spoil your eyes crying—I'll soon put a stop to his fool-acting."

"Oh, Granny," wailed the unhappy girl, "why can he not leave me alone?" and she burst out crying afresh. That night Granny Grey paid a visit to Mr. Stoddart, who received the old woman with great courtesy, expressed surprise that his admiration for her grand-daughter should have given offence, and nevertheless persisted in expressing his intention to one day make Maggie his wife.

This decision caused Maggie no small amount of uneasiness, still when she resumed her duties in the office the following morning Mr. Stoddart received her as if nothing unusual had happened, and Maggie bent closely over her books all day, while at meal hours and in the evening she was left free to go home with the mill-hands as formerly.

Mr. Stoddart's affection for Maggie soon became the topic of conversation amongst the indignant mill workers. "Marry little Maggie is it?" angrily exclaimed Jack Russell, an Irish giant of six feet two, who did the work of three men at the mill, and who was famed as much for his goodness of heart as renowned for his prowess. "Sure, I would sooner see the creature in her grave than married to that unfeeling brute." And Jack Russell's views were unanimously endorsed by the other residents of the village of Woolsworth.

It happened one day when business in the office was less brisk than usual, Mr. Stoddart again renewed his attentions in an abrupt and rather offensive manner. He had dictated several letters to Maggie during the day, and while pretending to question a statement contained in one of these he had in an unguarded moment rapturously kissed her on the mouth. With a cry of indignation Maggie sprang to her feet, while a human hurricane rushed through the office door in the form of Jack Russell. The astonished manager was firmly grasped by the collar and coat-tails and hurled unceremoniously through the glass front of the office. The sound of smashing glass was distinctly audible above the rumbling noise of machinery. As to the consternation of the mill-hands, the manager made his sudden and undignified appearance on all-fours in front of his own office in the midst of broken glass, while within Maggie Grey restrained big Jack Russell from leaping through the broken aperture made by the manager's body and inflicting still greater punishment on that terror-stricken individual. All was immediately confusion and excitement. The tidings spread like wild-fire through the mill, and of one accord the hands hastily donned their street attire, and, like the stream through the sluices, poured through the gate out into the street, carrying consternation and excitement with them.

PART III.

"I cannot for the life of me understand it—the hands at the mill to leave work, and that, too, without any apparent reason." The speaker was Edward Woolsworth, who, in a puzzled manner, walked slowly to and fro in the spacious drawingroom of the mill-owner's mansion. The person addressed was the manager, Mr. Stoddart, while an interested listener was the invalided wife of the mill-owner, who in her armchair by the

opened French window inhaled the fragrance of the evening air wafted from the myriads of flowers. "I am at a loss to account for their conduct, sir," is Mr. Stoddart's hesitating response. "That Russell is a perfect savage."

"Not when I knew him, Stoddart," the mill-owner interrupted, with some warmth. "Russell was then a gentleman every inch, and like all his countrymen he was impulsive and warm-hearted. He must have got some reason for his strange conduct. I have a feeling that this regrettable occurrence would never have come to pass had I taken a more active interest in their affairs," he added, with apparent regret.

Mr. Stoddart felt ill at ease and his face showed it and his discomfiture was complete by the announcement of the servant, who entered the room at that moment.

"Miss Grey from the mill awaits outside and desires a short interview with Mr. Woolsworth."

"Show her up this instant, Grace," the mill-owner answers, and Mr. Stoddart turns aside to avoid the challenging glance of his employer. The servant again opens the door this time to usher Maggie Grey into their presence. Pale and trembling with excitement she glances rapidly from one to the other, and with a low cry she springs to the side of the invalid seated by the window, who unobserved by the rest, has sank back in her chair unconscious when Maggie made her appearance. Tenderly she raised in her strong young arms the senseless form of the mill-owner's wife. With the practised hand of a nurse she set about restoring her to animation, while Mr. Stoddart looked on in astonishment and Mr. Woolsworth was spellbound. Surely the pale face of the unconscious woman resting in the arms of the mill-worker was reflected as in a mirror in the young face that bent so earnestly above her. Slowly the long, drooping lashes raised and grateful eyes looked into Maggie's, while a soft, sweet voice spoke her thanks. Yielding to her impulsive nature Maggie stooped and showered warm kisses upon the pale, calm face that nestled to her breast, and then covered with confusion at her own audacity she attempted to withdraw not knowing what to say.

Mr. Woolsworth recovering somewhat from his astonishment sought to express his gratitude for the services thus rendered, when the servant announced a mill-hand he said with a feeble attempt at a smile—"I expected to see one of my old friends make their appearance. You will therefore pardon my surprise. I have now had the honour of meeting you before."

"I think, sir," broke in Mr. Stoddart, with all the recklessness of a man fighting a losing cause, "it would be unwise to discuss further in the presence of Mrs. Woolsworth the affairs of the mill, as evidently we have already distressed her beyond her endurance, and I would suggest, if I may, that you send this young lady away for the present."

"No! no! do not send her away," Mrs. Woolsworth exclaimed, grasping Maggie by the hand and drawing her to her side.

"Would you send the child out of her own house, you ruffian?" an angry voice exclaimed, as the curtains of the open window were rudely dashed aside and the tall figure of Granny Grey stepped into the room and advanced to where Stoddart stood "You cur!" the angry woman hissed, shaking her thin hand in the pale face of the trembling manager. "You insulted that child in your own office this very day, and were it not for her intercession Jack Russell would have kicked the life out of your cowardly body. Go!" she shrieked, "before I forget in whose

presence I stand and strangle you with my own hands for the insult you offered to the child dearer to me than my own life. Go!" and she pointed to the door.

Pale and excited, Mr. Stoddart gazed at the face of the frenzied old woman, while the mill-owner spoke in a voice that admitted of no disobedience, and said, "Yes, Stoddart, you had better go." And Mr. Stoddart turned on his heel and walked out of their presence.

Granny Grey's story was soon told. We will let her tell it in her own words:—

"Eighteen years ago, Mr. Woolsworth," she said, "you dismissed from the mill my only son. Men said he was worthless; but to me, his mother, he was more than all the world, for I loved him as every mother loves her child, and he was all I had, and to me he was faultless. He was married at the time you discharged him, and I refused to believe the tidings when they told me he had gone away and deserted his mother, his wife, and his child. The hand of God lay heavy on me, for the mother of his helpless child died the day it was born, and a week after the broken-hearted poor mother was laid to rest. God took that little infant from me—Heavens! how I loved that child. It was a little girl. Yet as I held it to my heart it brought me back to the days when I fondled my own child—my own lost son once more looked into my face through its wondrous blue eyes, while its buried mother seemed to kiss me with its baby lips. And when it died I went raving mad. Snatching the little corpse in my arms I hastened to the house with the intention of laying it at your feet and cursing you for all the harm you had caused. I stole into the grounds undiscovered, and coming to that very window I entered by this evening, and looking cautiously into the room, I beheld such another child sleeping peacefully in its cot. In a minute I had exchanged children. The infants were dressed alike, and it would seem as if some will-power had suggested the plot and arranged for its successful operation, and before I had time to think, I was at home nursing the living child in my arms; while the little corpse of the child I loved lay here in its cot. I would have returned the baby on the following day when I had come to my senses somewhat, but I was horrified when I learned the awful results of my mad action, and my heart sank within me. As time grew on your child got to love me, and I in turn adored her, and educated her, so that one day she might be able to take her rightful place. And now it breaks my heart to give her up!" and the old woman buried her face in her hands and wept bitterly.

"Granny! Granny! help!" Maggie's voice called out. Mrs. Woolsworth had again swooned off, and lay like one dead in the arms of her newly-found daughter. The invalid was carried to bed and the doctor was immediately sent for.

Granny Grey did not have to give up Maggie after all. Both Mr. and Mrs. Woolsworth insisted on the old woman remaining in the house with themselves and their daughter. And Mr. Woolsworth insists in saying that it is to Granny's careful nursing and wonderful remedies his wife owes her complete recovery.

But Maggie is no longer the only child in the mansion, for there is a curly-headed little toddler that sits on Granny's knee and prattles in a language that only Granny and himself understands, and whom they all worship.

Mr. Woolsworth has once more resumed his old place down at the mills where Stoddart is known no more. Maggie often assists her father in the office, but her friends of the past are not neglected, for she is still the loving child we knew of old. But my romantic young readers will wish to hear of Jack Russell. Maggie's father has promoted the young Irish giant, and as Maggie herself in the long ago, gave him a permanent place in her affections, his partnership is a mere matter of time.

An Xmas Incident

By D. L.

It was Christmas week, or, to be more accurate, three days before Christmas Day. Most of the shops looked gay and bright, but particularly to the younger community did the toy shops look inviting. These shops seem to try and rival each other in the matter of new and startling inventions in the toy world. Happening to be on the look out for a few cheap and novel toys, I was gazing into the windows of one of the largest toy shops in the city. After being there some time, and not seeing anything that suited my pocket, I was just turning to go away when I was struck by the rapturous exclamations of a number of children who had collected round the window admiring everything with the impulsiveness of childhood.

"Oh what a lovely doll; just look at her beautiful hair; oh, and look at her frock. Wouldn't you like Santa Claus to bring you a doll, Norah?"

"No," said a shy looking little thing addressed as Norah, but do you think if

I asked Santa Claus would he bring me that big teddy bear?"

"I don't think he would," said the first speaker, a girl with an eager, intelligent-looking face, "because it would cost an awful lot of money, and you know Santa Claus has so many children to take toys to."

"But I'd sooner have that Teddy Bear than anything else in the world, and I've been so good for a long time now, and Mummie said that if I was good perhaps Santa Claus would bring me something nice."

"Girls are soft things, bothering about dolls and Teddy Bears. I know what I'm going to ask Santa Claus for" said a sturdy chap.

"What? Do tell us," cried the children all together.

"Do you see that big train with the carriages to it, what goes on them lines; that's what I'm going to ask for."

"What a lot of silly kids."

Everyone looked round to see where this exclamation came from, and I was surprised to find that it came from a girl about twelve years of age, who was staring defiantly at the group of children.

"Look here," said the sturdy chap "I won't let you call me a silly kid."

"Won't you," said the defiant girl. "Well you are a lot of silly kids, thinking you are going to get the toys that are in that window for Christmas. Why, don't you know that it is only the rich kids who ever get them kinds of toys. The ones you kids will get will be like those they sell in the penny bazaar."

At this there is a howl of misery from little Norah, whose eyes are fastened on the big Teddy Bear in the shop window.

"Now you've made poor little Norah cry," said all the children together.

"I didn't mean to make her cry, but what's the good of telling the kid she can get toys—"

Whatever else she is going to say is cut short by all the children turning round to gaze at a smart motor car that has pulled up in front of the toy shop. A very grandly dressed lady steps out, leaving a little girl inside. All the children stare open-mouthed at the little girl inside the motor, nudging each other, and speaking in loud whispers.

"Isn't she nice?"

"Yes; look at her lovely velvet coat."

"She's just like that big doll in the shop window."

"We'd all look nice," said the defiant girl, "if we were dressed, and fed, and taken care of like she is."

"You're a funny kind of girl," said the sturdy chap, "you seem to know a lot about things."

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"Yes, I do; a lot more than any of you kids know."

"How did you get to know about all these things?" asked several of the children.

"Well, for one thing, I'm a lot older than any of you kiddies, and then I used to listen to my father talking."

"Oh, tell us, tell us," cried the children, eager like all children are to listen to anything that has the least semblance to a story.

"Well, I better tell you first that my father is dead now."

At this statement the little children all look sorrowfully at each other, and press closer round the defiant girl. All their eagerness to hear what her father had said now seems to die, instinctively they feel that this new pal of theirs is in trouble.

"Have you any brothers," asks the sturdy chap.

"No," said the defiant girl, "there is only me and mother."

"Who buys you your food?" asks Norah.

"Mother used to work, but now she is too sick, she's coughing all the time, and the people won't have her in to do their washing, because she can't get all the work done for them."

"Did you have your tea?" asked the sturdy chap.

"No; there was only a bit of bread in the house, and enough tea to make a cup. Mother wanted to make the tea for me, but I told her that a little girl's mother who lives down stairs had asked me to go and have my tea with them."

"Did the little girl's mother really ask you?" questioned Norah.

"No, she didn't," replied the defiant girl, "but I can do better without the cup of tea than mother can."

"But, that was telling a lie," said Norah.

"I don't care," said the defiant girl, "I wanted mother to have the cup of tea, and if I had stayed in she would have made me take it. Mother is awful good. I wish I could help her."

"Do tell us something about what your father used to talk about," persisted one youngster, creeping round to the side of the defiant girl, and talking hold of her hand.

"No, don't," said the sturdy chap to the girl, and then turning to the other children he told them they ought not to ask her, as it would make her feel sorry again.

"Well, I will just tell them a few things I used to hear father say," said the defiant girl.

"Yes, do," cried the youngsters.

"Well, father used to say that it was a shame the way he had to work, and the small money he got for doing such heavy work. He also said it was wrong the way poor people had to live in the slums, never have enough to eat, and hardly any clothes to wear. He said thousands of poor people were kept down like that, so that the few hundreds of folk could be rich and have everything that was of the best."

"Well, if I can remember all you've said, I'll ask my father if it's true," said the sturdy chap.

"And," said Norah, "I wont ask Santa Claus for that great big Teddy Bear now, I'll just tell him that a tiny one will do for me, if he will take you something grand."

The defiant girl looks at the children who are anxious to be so kind to her, and one wonders what her thoughts and feelings are.

"And," persisted Norah, "do come to our house now, and my Mummie will

give you tea with me, and then you won't have told mother a lie."

If the defiant girl had any intention of refusing this kind offer, no time is given to her to do so. The children all press round, Norah taking her by the hand, evidently with the intention of taking her to her own home.

So I watched the group go, wondering what was in store for such a band of bright, hopeful, kind youngsters. Already one of their number had been forced to enter the land of sorrow and disillusion, had already knocked up against the hard places of life. Watching them out of sight I felt more bitterly disposed than ever against the system that not only deprived the grown men and women of the working classes of the comforts and healthy pleasures of life, but that also robbed the little ones of the joys and illusions of childhood. I felt inclined to say as so many say, "'tis a hard world," but as I know that it is not the world that is to blame, I say "'tis a beautiful world," but oh, so badly managed.

THE
Passing of the "Kid."
BY CATHAL LALLY.

I.

Things had been going very well with the Hanlons if it hadn't been for the strike. At least this is what the wise-aces said and they, of course, must always be right. The wise people, you know, are the people who are constantly anticipating trouble, and when trouble does come are usually to be found on the other side.

The Hanlons were a family of three—the man Joe, his wife, and the kid, aged five. They were honest, hard-working people, and, like other hardworking people, were just as unfortunate. A miserable garret in a squalid tenement within the environs of Cook Street is by no means calculated to instil into the souls of its occupants a spirit of exaltation or contentment. There is no semblance of a paradise here; there is nothing of the ideal. Cook Street is realism with a vengeance.

But the Hanlons couldn't help that. They had to put up with their lot and be satisfied. There was no use in grumbling for they were no worse off than the folk across the way or the family in the hovel underneath. Were not the Hanlons poor people? and it is an awkward thing to be poor. Now, if they had only been born—Ah! but where was the use in going on like that? Joe Hanlon would oftentimes ask himself the question with many misgivings. He used often to say things that were not always sane. Then, again, he had great thoughts of his own. He had ideas that were fine and more that were futile. But they made a man of him anyhow; and being a man is better than being a philosopher if one cannot be both. It is all very well for the pedant to philosophise so long as there is no immediate danger of his title being assailed; but one might not be disposed to indulge in what sometimes constitutes an ephemeral luxury if one had to sweep the crossings for a living. Sweeping the crossings or driving a coal dray—it's all the same; it amounts to the one thing in the end.

Poor Joe Hanlon never knew much beyond the handling of a dray horse,

though the knowledge is a powerful lot after all. It was his prowess in that direction that kept a roof over his head and that staved off for a time the starvation period that was inevitable. However, this was only his "luck," he reflected. There are people who have been luckier. But they don't live in Cook Street.

Then there were the wife and kid. They were the utter unfortunates—especially the kid. They had always called him by this name although he had been christened John. He was an uninteresting child, to be sure. He was a child of the slums, a gamin of the gutter. For all that, he was the darling hero of all Cook Street—with his grimy face, his unkept hair and his big wondrous eyes. An occasional matronly visitor to the Cook Street tenement—maybe from the Coombe—would dote on him for hours and lavish upon him a profusion of ridiculously-sounding pet names, backed up not infrequently by a stick of sugar barley. On such a momentous occasion the kid's jubilation knew no bounds. He was the pride of the Hanlons and they loved him much, for there was no one in all the world like the kid. And so their grief was twofold when the great misfortune befell them.

The Strike was the first thing that occurred, and that was bad enough. But then the kid fell ill and this was serious. In the fetid dens of Dublin slumdom this is nothing startling, for there are those there who lie in illness for a lifetime; those again who pass away before their time. The awful demon, Death, that lurks unseen in the city's byeways has no remorse, no pity.

Then as to the Strike. This was to be a bitter feud between man and man. The men who worked with Joe had all declared that they were not being treated as they might be. They must alter things, they said; therefore they would strike. Joe expressed agreement with the others, and in the end they struck. It was to be a great strike, too, for there was much involved, and it would be a fine thing if the men won. But if they were beaten—

All this was bad news for Cook Street, but things would have to take their course. The Strike was merely a something in the order of unforeseen events. The thought of the pale-faced, bed-ridden child was the direst thought of all.

II.

The awful tidings were flashed on Cook Street in all the grimness of a tragedy. Joe Hanlon had been arrested by the police! And on Christmas eve too! This was how it happened.

The Strike had now been in progress for nearly a month and was still being waged with unrelenting severity. Everywhere, almost, there was evidence of the tenseness of the struggle, and the combatants were equally obdurate. The streets, the work-yards, the quays—all were the scene of a great contest between master and man.

It was morning on the riverside and knots of men were lounging idly about. The police, too, were scattered here and there, and looked as if they scarcely knew why. But they did know why, for the "Blacklegs" had arrived and work would soon re-commence—blackleg work.

Suddenly something happened—no one can tell what. An argument—a quarrel—a free fight. Then the police intervened and they made an arrest. They brought their capture before a magistrate—a man with polished manners and polished boots, and a great deal of legal learning.

And the magistrate gave Joe Hanlon three months hard.

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When the kindly, sympathetic neighbour brought the news to Mrs. Hanlon, the gloom of a death-darkened "home" was intensified. For the kid was dying fast.

She watched all day by his bedside with tear-reddened eyes that could no longer weep, and lips that could scarcely trust to breathe a prayer. Her heart went forth in anguish, but the last hope was gone. The kid was passing surely.

At midnight the pallid child-face on the pillow became strangely animated and the frail, wasted figure sat up in bed. By the failing light of the solitary candle-end on the mantle, the trembling hands clutched at a tiny picture of the Madonna—the Mother of the Many Sorrows, to whom he had been taught to pray. He gazed a moment at the flickering light that bravely fought with the shadows; and then, with a faint cry he fell back into his mother's arms.

The pale features became paler and the wistful eyes assumed a ghastly haze. Then the candle-end spluttered and the light went out.

Away in the stillness of the night rang the joyous peal of the bells of Saint Patrick's. They were flinging out their matin song through the silence of the world. And there was no sadness in the chiming of the bells.

The song of the bells! The song of the bells! There is no sadness in the song of the bells.

It was Christmas morn.

A Stolen MS.

BY MEADE CAOMANAC.

"A letter for you, Miss Power."

In response to the voice of the maid-of-all-work, Helen Power opened the door of her bedroom, took the letter, and went back to read it.

"I suppose it's another engagement for Christmas dances," she thought, a bit wearily; "no rest for the wicked, they say—I must be very wicked, for I never get any rest."

Helen earned her living as music teacher and dance pianist, and any surplus time was employed in writing articles, verse and stories for some of the city papers. Between all, she just solved the problem of existence, but the drudgery was often almost unbearable to her. And latterly, as her contributions had met with a certain amount of appreciation, she was conscious of a growing distaste for her other occupations, but she knew that for many a long day it would be still for her "needs must." It was almost viciously, therefore, that she opened the letter. Much to her surprise a money order for two guineas met her gaze. She looked at it a moment, and smiled cynically.

"How strange that they should have accepted that," she thought. "Still, it's just the sort of thing that 'goes' in a Christmas number; a good story would have been 'declined with thanks.'"

She drew her chair over to the fire, and ruminated a bit over the history of the MS. of this story. She recalled how one December evening just 5 years ago she had gone down to her landlady's sitting-room to warm herself and have a chat, feeling lonely. One of the small boys of the family was sitting at a table engaged in drawing. Helen had been called upon to admire the grotesque pictures the young artist was creating, but her attention was quickly diverted from the pictures to the paper he had been scribbling on. It was the MS. of a story, soiled, and slightly torn. All the unwritten leaves had been well decorated by the young genius. Helen's curiosity was piqued. She asked the youngster where he had got it, and elicited the information that he had found it in the "back lane of the big houses in — Street," whilst playing there with other boys.

Whereupon Helen had struck a bargain with the little chap, and when she went up to her own room she had carried the soiled and beragglled MS. with her, whilst the small boy gazed fascinated at the shining shilling in his little hand.

On reading the MS. through, she found it had evidently been written for a Christmas story. It was poor stuff, yet readable enough; the writing was boyish. She met a name and address scribbled on the back pages several times over. Helen mused how it had found its way into the uncongenial atmosphere of the "back lane."

Suddenly a thought struck her that she would call and return it. She had done so some days later, only to find that the owner of the name—and MS., likely—had gone to Buenos Ayres a few days before. So it had lain with her all the time since, till some while before the present December she had re-written it, altering it somewhat, and changing the names. It was in no small spirit of publishing the work of another as her own that had prompted her to send it. There had been touches here and there in the story—conventional as it was—that had appealed to her: somehow the personality of the unknown author had made itself felt in many of the passages, so that the altering and re-writing had been akin to a "labour of love."

Then, in a moment of mingled vexation and freakishness, caused by the return

of a MS. of her own, she had sent John Hayes' story to the Christmas number of the "Irish —," and the money order for two guineas was the result.

John Hayes walked somewhat moodily along the crowded city streets to his hotel.

Time was when staying at hotels would have been an impossibility with John, now it came as a matter of course. The Southern Republic had dealt kindly with him—after a while. The first months had been a little of a nightmare, but that was all over now. Fate had been kinder still, for he was now back in Ireland to claim money left him by a recently deceased relative. Yet he scarcely felt elevated. He had that strange feeling of disconnectedness that one often experiences after a prolonged absence.

It was Christmas Eve, and, in spite of himself, old associations and memories were conspiring to make him feel lonely. He had two invitations for Christmas day, but he had not committed himself to either. He had an inherent dislike of being bound by promise to go anywhere—and he had scented boredom. He entered a newsagent's, and bought a few papers and magazines, and a Dublin Christmas number.

Buried in an easy-chair before a cheery fire, he perused them carelessly. He felt a bad fit of ennui creeping on, and thought with dismay of the following Christmas day.

He had been reading a story in rather a "skippy" manner, when quite suddenly he knit his brows. A strange sense of familiarity swept over him. This story he was reading, he had known it before—ay, had written it, or a bewilderingly similar one many years ago. He had kept it lovingly for long enough—for what purpose he hardly knew—what its ultimate fate was, he could not now remember, but he had a dim notion of leaving a pile of half-torn letters and papers with his landlady, who promised to burn them. Perhaps his MS. had been among them, and she had thrown them out pell-mell, or given the MS. to someone; now, changed and much improved—he admitted it quite candidly—but still his beyond all doubt, it stared at him from the pages of the "Irish —."

He tossed the papers aside and rose to his feet.

"I've got to see the girl that collared my MS.," he said.

The idea appealed to him tremendously; all traces of ennui vanished.

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He was soon on his way to the office of the "Irish ———," where he secured the address of the mendacious Helen Power.

A tram brought him almost to the door—a mean little house in a mean little street. After he had knocked, doubts and misgivings assailed him for the first time.

"Helen Power," he murmured. "It sounds rather heroic and strong-minded."

Then, startled he remembered it was Christmas eve.

"A funny night, surely, to call," he thought, "but it's a funny business altogether. Maybe, after all, it's not my story."

But here his musings were cut short by the opening of the door.

On enquiring for "Miss Power" he was shown into a stuffy sitting-room, whilst the maid went away scrutinising his card.

There was no light in the room save the fitful light of a fire. John Hayes walked to the grate and, for sake of something better to do, poked the fire till it leaped into a cheery blaze. As he did so something moved in a corner of the room, and, much embarrassed, John saw a young lady with slightly disordered hair rise from a lounge in the room.

"Good-night," she said, easily, as she came forward and looked at him. "I was up all night playing for a dance, and I was dead tired, and went fast asleep. I never even heard you come in. Did you wish to see someone?"

"I wanted to see Miss Power," he replied, with more than a shrewd suspicion that she was before him.

He glanced sideways at her. She was furtively trying to arrange her tumbled fair hair, of which she seemed to have quite a quantity.

"I am Miss Power," she smiled, pleasantly. "What do you want to see me about? But won't you sit down whilst I get a light; the fire-light won't last long?"

She turned to leave the room, but he detained her, saying:

"Don't bother about the light, Miss Power; really, I prefer this, and I—that is—er—well, we can talk it over much better in—ah—the dark."

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John had an almost uncontrollable inclination to laugh, and Miss Power was observing him with open amusement.

"The fact is," he explained, "I called about that story of yours in the 'Irish ———'"

She had thrown herself into a chair near him, quite at her ease. She started very slightly at his words.

"Very kind of you," she said, sweetly. "Did you like it?"

He felt disarmed. Her eyes held a smiling challenge.

"Yes, immensely," he responded,—"that is, with the improvements, I mean. But, Miss Power, I believe that story is mine!"

"Very likely," she said, coolly. "I found it."

Her coolness was aggravating.

John felt the ground slipping away from beneath his feet, and tried to look severe.

"Don't you think, Miss Power," he ventured, "that it was rather—ahem—unscrupulous of you?"

"No, I don't," she returned, promptly. "I think I really did you a service. You have no idea all the time and trouble that story of yours cost me; it's quite respectable now, and, you know, it was wretched stuff."

John collapsed.

"It was my first attempt," he pleaded, feebly. "And my last, too, by the way."

Across the shabby room, by the dancing firelight, their eyes met, and they began to laugh.

"I got two guineas for it," Helen said. "I suppose I should refund them to you."

"We'll see about that later," was the reply, "but I certainly think I deserve a cup of tea."

Helen rose, still laughing, and left the room. She soon returned with a cosy tea for two, and the maid with a light.

Helen's landlady was down town doing her Christmas shopping. All things considered, Helen was rather glad. Adventures came her way seldom, and this one had all the charm of novelty, and landladies are, as a rule, rather unsympathetic to adventures on the part of their boarders.

Over the teacups they chatted freely as if they had known each other all their lives.

It was with a strange reluctance that John Hayes rose at last to go.

"I know I should have gone long ago, but somehow I couldn't. I will not soon forget this evening," he said, then added, "I am awfully grateful to you for re-writing that story."

"But I thought you said I was unscrupulous," she remarked, looking at him shyly.

He looked fixedly at her a moment, then came a step nearer.

"So you are," he replied; "thoroughly unscrupulous; first you stole my MS., and now you are stealing my heart."

She frowned, but the frown ended in a smile.

His eyes rested on a bit of mistletoe in her dress; with clumsy fingers, but masterfully, he appropriated it. She demurred.

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"You know the cup of tea didn't square everything," he said, "you are still heavily in my debt."

"Oh, don't be throwing those two guineas always at my head," Helen retorted. "I more than earned them. Besides, you cannot get them to-night," she went on, audaciously, "because I spent them long ago."

"You must be an awful spendthrift; but tell me, before I go, did you not like even one little bit of my poor story?"

"I did," was the reply, looking before her dreamily. "Some of your passages I shall always remember, and your description of the little cottage was a perfect poem. I wonder does everyone some time in their lives wish for a rose-embowered cottage whose 'windows faced the whin-clad hills.'"

She was quoting from one of his own passages now. Was she laughing at him? A glance at her face reassured him. She had grown white and tired-looking.

"Listen," he said, impulsively; "I'll call for you to-morrow, and we'll go and see if we can find a rose-bower to answer the description. There won't be any roses now, but we can imagine them. An hour in the country will do you good, and there are ever so many things I want to talk to you about. Say you will come."

They were standing in the hall now, and she had opened the street-door, but he lingered awaiting her answer.

Suddenly the portly-form of Helen's landlady hove in sight. She was a good soul, but to Helen's mind now, she brought back with a rush the realisation of the drab "land of everyday," where nothing untoward ever seems to happen; the land of convention, with its false standards and meaningless restrictions.

Far beyond the tops of the gloomy houses myriads of stars were scintillating in the frosty sky. To Helen they seemed to counsel revolt.

She put her hands on John's shoulders, and pushed him gently into the street.

"Yes, I'll come," she whispered, and closed the door.

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Ali Martin Baba and His Forty Thieves ;

Or the Victory of Shemus.

A CHRISTMAS PHANTASY IN THREE SPASMS.

By "MAC."

CHARACTERS REPRESENTED :

ALI MARTIN BABA, an independent ruffian.
 HILLEL MACKEN TYRE, his chief lieutenant.
 STEW ART, an uncommonly ugly common informer.
 RICHARD WILLIAMSON, a "shady" character, known as "the Sceptre of the Pit."
 THE OWE FARRELL, with the emphasis on the "Owe."
 ALF BUNG, a magician and dealer in spirits.
 THE LORD HIGH MAYOR, a great little man.
 JOHN SCALLYWAG, the "Light" comedian, to whom there is nothing too big or too small to steal.
 THE OTHER THIRTY-THREE THIEVES.
 SHEMUS, a lively lad, who's always "larkin'."
 ITEE-DOUBLEYOU-YOU, his sweetheart.
 DR. WALTERMAN MCALDER, a concocter of pills, love philtres and amendments.
 MAC, an irresponsible and rotten rymster, and friend of Shemus.
 DEMON UNREST, in league with Ali Martin Baba.
 FAIRY ORGAN EYES, Godmother to Shemus.
 Chorus of T.C's., P.L.G's., and other Thieves, Transport men, General Labourers and Women Workers.

SPASM ONE.

SCENE.—A deserted island to the southwest of the duck-pond in Stephens Green.

As the curtain ascends a vivid flash of lightning reveals the DEMON UNREST sitting on a rocky ledge.

DEMON UNREST—

I am the great demon Unrest,
 Deeds of evil I do with zest,
 And all that is good I detest,
 Oh, the worst of all demons am I.
 The very mention of goodness I hate
 With a hatred most evil and great,
 And now at the start let me state
 There is nothing so bad I won't try.
 But business of late has been bad,
 And that makes a demon most sad ;
 To work evil mere man can be had
 And these the financiers buy.—
 But soft—surely that is an oar
 I hear midst the loud thunder's roar,
 'Tis a boat coming o'er from the shore,
 I'll hide till the cursed thing goes by.
 [The demon disappears down a fissure in the rock. He has hardly done so when the boat reaches the island. In it are two men: ALI MARTIN BABA, the independent ruffian, and MACKEN TYRE, his lieutenant. Ali is wearing the disguise of a respectable gentleman, frock coat, tall hat, gold eyeglasses, etc., and from the tail pocket of his coat sticks out a copy of the "Irish Catholic."]

ALI—

Be careful, Mack, you clumsy fool ;
 You'll have the boat right on the rocks!

Lay down your oars,—no longer pull ;
 You know my nerves won't stand such shocks.

MACKEN TYRE—

Oh, damn your nerves, likewise your eyes!

What brought you out here anyway ?

It's not for rowing, but for lies

And writing letters I get pay!

ALI—

How dare you, sir!

MACKEN TYRE—

'Tis the truth I've said!

ALI—

You mangy cur!

MACKEN TYRE—

I'll split your head!

ALI—

Your manner most ungrateful,

To me is really hateful ;

I've taken you from a doss-house,

And a heavy price I've paid.

MACKEN TYRE—

Your manner so despotic

Is getting somewhat chronic

Since you took me from my doss-house

'Tis your dirty game I've played.

ALI—

I've paid you well

Some lies to tell!

MACKEN TYRE—

I've told them well ;

I've more to sell!

ALI—

Then I'll buy no more ;

I've told you that before!

MACKEN TYRE—

You'll have to buy the lot

Whether you like it or not!

[Ali gets out of the boat and climbs on to the rocky ledge of the island sighing heavily as he does so.]

ALI—

Oh, why am I thus oppressed

By such a despicable pest?

I would call on the demon Unrest

If I thought he was found near by.

[The Demon come from his hiding place.]

DEMON—

I am the great Demon Unrest,

Deeds of evil I do with zest,

And all that is good I detest,

Oh, the worst of all demons am I!

ALI—

So you are the Demon Unrest?

DEMON—

Pray what is the name of my guest?

ALI—

Ali Martin Baba is my name,

Perhaps you have heard of the same?

DEMON—

'Tis a name that I know very well ;

I assure you 'tis honoured in hell!

ALI—

Honoured! And pray tell me why?

DEMON—

You'll find out that when you go, by and bye!

And now, pray tell me, do

What I can do for you?

ALI—

As you know I'm a ruffian bold,

Who'll do anything to get gold ;

No matter how shady the means

Or how desperate may be the schemes.

'Tis gold that I'm anxious to get

For gold is my one only pet,

I've sunk lots of money in rails,
 In America, Ireland and Wales.
 Hotels, too, and shops I have tried
 And trams for the people supplied
 In finance I'm reckoned a king,
 Indeed I'll finance anything.
 Where a high dividend can be made,
 Or director's fat salary paid ;
 I have done very well up till now
 But the fat's in the fire, I vow!

DEMON—

Dear Ali, what's the trouble,
 Some trade or banking bubble?

ALI—

Ah, no, 'tis no small thing like that
 Indeed I wish it was, that's flat,
 It's something that's a great deal worse,
 A something that just makes me curse.

DEMON—

Don't keep me in suspense, I pray,
 But what it is just kindly say!

ALI—

There's been the greatest possible fuss,
 All caused by a man they call Shemus.
 He sees through my disguise and game,
 And calls me "ruffian" plump and plain.

DEMON—

Well may you curse ;
 He must indeed be an agrivator.

ALI—

He's what is worse—
 An infernal Labour Agitator!

DEMON—

Oh, father of all friends defend me,
 And to this Shemus please don't send me!

ALI—

Why say you that—art thou afraid?
 As art the forty thieves I've paid?

DEMON—

Do you not know these Labour men
 Are specially blessed by providence then,
 In fighting for the starving poor
 They're guarded by the angels pure?

ALI—

Angels or not, Shemus must go!
 May I look to you for help or no?
 My forty thieves are not much use
 Except when hurling foul abuse.
 They fight amongst themselves to see
 Which of the bunch can most fleece me.
 I'm growing tired of their sloth and din,
 And some other method I must begin
 Of getting rid of this Shemus boy,
 Who, I confess doth much annoy.
 He swears my workers I rob and sweat,
 Were it not the truth I might forget,
 But as it is, it is much too true,
 To get rid of him then I must look to you.

DEMON—

To help your plan I'll try my best
 For these agitators are a pest
 To all good ruffians such as you—

ALI—

Swear then, sweet Demon, you'll
 be true!

DEMON—

On the word of the Demon Unrest
 I swear to work with a zest
 To rid you of Shemus the pest,
 For the worst of all demons am I!

[They go down to the boat, where they find Macken Tyre stretched out on the bottom, fast asleep. He is talking in his sleep and is evidently dreaming of his doss-houses in the days before he took to journalism.]

MACKEN TYRE (sleeping)—

Tea in the pot may be got, all hot,
All hot may be got the tea in the pot;
A penny the pot is all the price—
A ridiculous price for tea so nice.

ALI (giving him a kick)—

Waken up now you fool and quit your talk,

MACKEN TYRE (waking up)—

Wh-what's that? Be the powers out
o' this you'll walk.
Get out o' my doss-house you mouldy
ould shrew,
Eh!—I forgot where I was and all
about you!

ALI—

So I see, but that doesn't matter a rap,
Just shove off the boat and let us get
back.

MACKEN TYRE—

Who's the bloke you found, and are
bringing undressed?

ALI—

'Tis an old pal of mine, the Demon
Unrest!

MACKEN TYRE (terrified)—

Do you really mean to tell me
That you've bought the very devil?

ALI—

Don't call him such a name, dear Mack!
But try and be more civil!

[The demon sits up in the bow of the boat, laughing rather sarcastically at the terror of Macken Tyre, who is sitting trying to recollect some of the prayers he knew when he was paid for proselytising. On the island which they have just quitted **FAIRY ORGAN EYES** comes from behind the rock, where she has been during all the conversation between Ali and the Demon. She is evidently well pleased at having discovered the plot, for she starts to dance on a flat rock by the light of the moon; some unseen piper giving her feet the tune.]

FAIRY ORGAN EYES (singing)—

Dancing so lightly, singing so brightly,
Gaily and laughingly banishing care;
Thus do the fairies live,
Their's is the power to give
Joy to the poor who find joy so rare.

I'll sing as brightly, I'll dance as lightly,
Until my true-hearted Shemus I find,
Then at that very hour
I'll give him the power
To make the hard lot of the poor more
kind.

The poor will dance lightly, they'll sing
as brightly
As I now do on this rocky isle;
When Shemus wins the fight
And puts unrest to flight,
Then all the angels in heaven will
smile.

[The Fairy trips to the side of the water where she embarks upon the back of a swan, who at once carries her over to the shore, where the Demon and Ali Martin Baba, together with Macken Tyre, have already disappeared.]

SPASM TWO.

SCENE—The snug of Alf Bung, the magician, which is specially reserved for secret senaces. When the curtain goes up there are several choice spirits gathered upon the magic carpet. Prominent among the rest is The Owe Farrell in a very "spiritual" condition, discussing the pros and cons of the loan of five shillings which the "Spectre of the Pit" is alleging in loud and beery accents was made by him to the Lanky Malthusian upon the day of North Dock Election. Stew Art sits alone in the corner next

the door. He is busily occupied switching the flies off his face; said flies persistently gathering there mistaking his face in all probability for a piece of underdone steak. John Scallywag is sitting at the table. His attention is engrossed with a set of brass weights for scales. He is picking the leaden plugs out of them and filling the holes with soap. As he says himself, "they are much more easy to carry about when they are lighter," and of course he should know. The magician and proprietor of the snug, Alf himself, is very much occupied out in the bar. He has found a stranger and, acting upon the Biblical injunction, he is trying his best to "take him in." Finding the stranger is not drunk enough for such a purpose he leaves the bar in charge of the barman, and enters the snug. He has scarcely done so when those in the snugery are again interrupted by the boisterous entrance of the Lord High Mayor.

LORD HIGH MAYOR—

Boom, ta re ra ta trat,
My trumpeter has just dropped dead
Boom ta re ra ta trat
So I'm blowing it myself instead.
I'm the greatest little Mayor this city
ever had,
And I've stamped out every little thing
that might be termed bad,
That I haven't stamped myself out
I'm sure you'll all be glad,
Boom ta re ra ta trat.

Boom ta re ra ta trat,
It ain't all beer and skittles being Mayor,
Boom te re ra ta trat,
But though it should lack both I do
not care;
With the chains and robes upon me,
sure I look so very sweet,
With me photos in the "Telly" and the
"Freeman" every week,
Could I only break up Shemus my joy
would be complete,
Boom ta re ra ta trat.

THE SPECTRE—

We thank you, dear Lord Mayor,
For your most instructive speech,
That you now will take the chair,
And talk some more we do beseech.

JOHN SCALLYWAG (advancing)—

As a representative man about town,
In a position to know your own renown,
I beg just to state
No Mayor so great
Has ever been found in this city.

CHORUS—

We beg just to state
No Mayor so great
Has ever been found in this city.

JOHN SCALLYWAG—

Of Mayors I've known quite a few
But never a Mayor like you,
For a man of your weight
'Tis a pleasure to state
You're the largest small man in the city.

CHORUS—

For a man of your weight
'Tis our pleasure to state
You're the greatest light-weight in the
city.

LORD MAYOR (recitative)—

I thank you all, both great and small,
For this your kindly greeting,
I'm sure you all see how delightful to me
Is the duty of holding this meeting.
We are here to discuss how to deal with
Shemus,
A truly upsetting young fellow,
A real agrivator, a damned agitator,
Who denounces our vices as mellow.

[They all join hands and dance around the table, singing as they do so.]

CHORUS—

So now to business let us go,
And the anxious people tell,
How we saved them from the foe
And sent Shemus to —
The place where he is going
Wherever that may be,
Of course there is no knowing—
But from him we must be free.

THE OWE FARRELL (breaking from the ring and jumping on the table, where he does a solo "Can-Can" on the top while he sings.)

Yes, to business let us go
And cut the cackle shorter,
I'm a business man I knew—
Let's discuss a pint of porter.

[The "Spectre of the Pit" catches his friend affectionately round the neck, butts him in the stomach, and lays him out beneath the table, where he remains during the rest of the meeting.]

THE SPECTRE—

I've laid out the Malthusian youth
In a manner that somewhat uncouth;
Should he venture to rise
I'll just blacken his eyes,
And blacken them well in good sooth.

THE LORD MAYOR—

To business let us now proceed,
And don't mind that immoral weed,
I fear he's most unstable—
Leave him beneath the table!

CHORUS—

He is indeed unstable,
And best beneath the table.

ALF BUNG (recitative)—

While we wait on Macken Tyre,
And his boss, the chief of all thieves,
I'll give a tune on the lyre,
And sing you a song by your leaves.

ALF BUNG (song)—

A great magician am I,
And up to all manner of tricks;
There's nothing too tricky to try
Or nothing that's bad I can't fix.
In spirits I deal,
Men's senses I steal,
But I never can feel

As homeward they reel,
The slightest compassion for them
Those drink-sodden, weak, foolish men.

I am a great man at the bar
Though I ain't very much up in law,
I pull a pint quicker by far
Than any man ever I saw.
As a general rule
For every damn fool
Who is my poor tool,
The pints I will pull,

And when they are full to the bung,
On the street I have them all flung.

[Alf's song is just finished when Ali Martin Baba, with Macken Tyre and the Demon Unrest come in. Their entrance is greeted by applause; the Lord High Mayor standing up on his chair the better to see and be seen.]

ALI MARTIN—

I am sorry that I'm late
But the reason let me state—
I had to go as far as Stephen's Green;
But this demon I have got,
Who for us will do a lot
And he'll make this Shemus shuffle
from the scene.

LORD MAYOR—

For this, good Ali, take our thanks,
We're glad the devil joins our ranks.

DEMON UNREST—

I thank you merry gentlemen,
I'm sure we'll get on well,
And I'll return your kindness
When we all meet in hell.

ALL—
I've discussed the killing of Shemus
With my friend the Demon Unrest;
And this is the plan he commands as
The plan that will kill him off best.

CHORUS—
Oh tell us, oh, tell us,
What is the plan,
To rid us, to rid us
Of this awful man.
We are most uneasy while he doth live,
And for his sudden death our thanks
we will give.

DEMON—
Listen!

CHORUS—
Listen!

DEMON—
My plan it is easy and plain;
The details of it now I'll explain.
As you know we often doth go
To the forest on Sunday, and so,
'Tis on Sunday I'll try and nab him,
From the arms of his sweetheart I'll
grab him;
With your trusty men at my call,
We'll carry him to the North Wall
Then into the river his body we'll throw
And down among the dead men he
will go.

CHORUS—
Hear! Hear!!
'Tis clear!
In the river his body we'll throw,
And midst the dead men he must go!

LORD MAYOR—
The plan is good,
And as the time is fleeting,
I think I should
Just put it to the meeting.

CHORUS—
The plan is good,
And as the time is fleeting,
'Tis understood
It's passed by this here meeting.

MACKEN TYRE—
Just before going away
Let us have a final drink;
Let old Ali Martin pay;
He will not refuse I think.

THE SPECTRE—
Sit tight!

STEW ART—
All right!

ALI BABA—
I'll stand,
My hand!

STEW ART—
I've been silent far too long,
E'er you go I'll sing a song.

STEW ART (song)—
A common informer am I;
A man who's perpetually dry;
I beg just to state
There's no man so great
As myself when it comes to hard drink-
ing.

I ne'er had the head of a thinker
I've just got the face of a drinker,
I'm not quite a beauty
But at doing "shift" duty
I can quaff off a quart without winking.
[They all go off after Stew Art has
told them of his life history. Alf
himself going with them. When
the snug is empty Dr. Walterman
McAlder jumps up from the table
where he has been sitting all the
time disguised as a pewter pot. He
is evidently very excited, and he
dances about and sings.]

DR. WALTERMAN MCALDER (song)—
I am a concocter of pills,
For all ills, for all ills,
And love philtres too I can brew
Makes love true, very true.
Some doctors just mend
But I mend and amend,
I mend and amend without end.

I'm glad I've discovered this plot,
This vile plot, this vile plot,

And as for that rascally Mayor
In the chair, have a care,
I'll move to amend
That his salary end
That it end I will move to amend.

WALTERMAN MCALDER (recitative)—
And now I'll go and look for Mac,
To put him on the plotters track,
Besides I must kick up a row
About that song I've just sung now;
'Tis easily the worst song in the play
And why he made me sing it I can't say,
I tried my best some majesty to lend it,
But as it is I must have it amended.
[The doctor goes off grumbling.]

SPASM THREE.

SCENE.—A forest, adjacent to the
Custom House, North Dock. The
overhanging branches of the trees
merge together at the top, giving
the appearance of an iron railway
bridge—a curious phenomenon, in-
deed, considering that there is no
railway bridge to be found any-
where near the forest in question.

On a grassy knoll stands Shemus,
his arms thrown protectingly
around the waist of Itee Double
You You, while all around them, in
and out among the trees, dance a
large number of Transport Workers,
General Labourers and Women
Workers in a ring. While they dance
they sing

CHORUS—
Merrily, joyously, dance and sing,
Lads and lasses in a jingo ring.

TRANSPORT MEN—
Transport Workers from Dublin Port,
Out for a holiday, out for sport.

GENERAL LABOURERS—
Labourers we who work in the city,
Holidays are very scarce, more's the
pity.

WOMEN WORKERS—
We are Women Workers out for the day,
Free from sweated labour we romp and
play.

ALL—
Lads and lasses in a jingo ring,
Merrily, joyously, dance and sing.

SHEMUS—
I trust, my friends, you'll happy be,
For it is my dearest thought,
I've tried my best to set you free
From the hardness of your lot.
A few more shillings in the week,
From your employers I did seek.

CHORUS—
A few more shillings in the week
From our employers he did seek.

SHEMUS—
It was not very much, I vow,
Though it took a lot of getting,
And the bosses hate me well by now
As their profits I'm upsetting.
They'd pay the price for my poor head,
Could they but grab me, live or dead.

CHORUS—
They'd pay a big price for his head,
Could they just grab him, live or dead.

[A white dove flies down from an
overhanging branch, and lands
at the feet of Shemus, where it
sits looking up into his face. She-
mus bends down to stroke it, and
as he does so, the dove suddenly
takes the form of the Fairy Organ
Eyes.]

ORGAN EYES—
Do not look with such surprise
For you know me very well.
I'm the Fairy Organ Eyes
Of my virtues you oft tell.

SHEMUS—
I'm most sorry, at the moment;
I forgot your pretty face,
But the glory of your raiment
And your lithsome winsome grace.

Are as that virtuous heart of thine
Enshrined within this heart of mine!

ITEE DOUBLE YOU-YOU—
Oh, Shemus,
Dost thou love another?

SHEMUS—I do, but
'Tis my dear God-Mother!

ITEE—
Ah, that is a different tale,
A different story quite,
My poor heart did very near fail,
I got such a terrible fright.
I feared 'twas some other
And not your God-Mother
But this is a different tale
And makes me feel quite all right.

SHEMUS—
Dear Itee, calm your fears,
For Organ Eyes I've loved for years,
And she, dear fairy, loves us twain,
She'll never let us part again!

FAIRY—
Yes, that is true, and Shemus, boy,
I wish both you and Itee joy,
But list' awile—some bold bad men,
Are close upon your track again.
There's Ali Martin, prince of thieves,
And Macken Tyre with his tea leaves,
Stew Art, likewise the Lord High Mayor,
And Alf Bung with his friends are there.
The Demon Unrest is with them too—
They've vowed to put an end to you!

SHEMUS—
Then let them come,
They'll find, by gum!
That in a scrum
I'm somewhat rum.

CHORUS—
Yes, let them come
And things will hum,
For in a scrum
He's somewhat rum!

FAIRY—
That's very good, but my dear lad,
A better plan is to be had.
In fact, a plan I've just invented,
Whereby they can be circumvented.

SHEMUS—
Let's hear the plan you've just invented
Whereby they can be circumvented.

FAIRY—
When I was coming to this place,
I met the Doctor face to face;
You know McAlder, that's the man,
He, too, has heard of Ali's plan.
Just how he heard it I don't know,
But he has heard of it, and so,
I met him coming here to you,
To warn you of their plotting too.
I also met your friend called 'Mac,'
Who, with the Doctor, I sent back
Towards that Alley named after Swift,
Some quarts of tea I bade them lift;
Tea made by Mr. Macken Tyre
Ali Martin Baba's first-class liar.
If 'Mac' can lift that poisonous brew
We'll poison all the villainous crew,
To make them drink it I will try,
And when they drink it they will die!

SHEMUS—
I wish some other means you'd try
For that's a painful way to die,
But still it's just what they deserve
And for such dirty skunks 'twill serve
But who is this that comes this way,
Just have a look and tell me, pray!

FAIRY—
The doctor and the rhymster 'Mac,'
With keg of tea are coming back!
[Through the trees appear "Mac"
and the doctor, and between them
they carry a small keg, which,
judging by its appearance, seems to
have at one time contained Jem
Johnnieson's "Three Swallowhawk"
whiskey. The two appear to be in
a heated and quarrelsome state.]

MAC—
Oh, shut up, do!
You make me sick.
I'm tired of you,
Dry up, avick!

DOCTOR—
I do wish that your ways you'd amend,
You rascally rhyming buffoon,
Or I'll try all your nonsense to end,
It's a move I will make very soon.
You give me the hump,
On your face I'll jump
You ugly word-twisting baboon.

FAIRY—
Oh, what is all this trouble about,
And what has put the both of you out?

MAC—
This infernal concocter of pills,
With his passionate love for amending,
Is much worse than all other ills;
To the devil I'm after him sending.

DOCTOR—
It's not to the devil I'll go—
To the madhouse your verses will send
me;

They're the very worst jingle I know,
If you don't stop them quick they
will end me.

SHEMUS—
Now, boys,
Stop all that noise!

FAIRY—
I see
You've brought the tea!

SHEMUS—
To this tree bring o'er the cask,
Lay it down upon the ground,
They'll forget about their task
When the barrel they have found.

FAIRY—
They will get gay and frisky
When they think they've found some
whisky.

MAC (who has climbed up a tree for the
purpose of reconnoitering)—
From this tree

I can see

The crowd of villains coming.

The Demon
Leads them on

And all the rest are running.

Behind trees,
If you please,

Let all of you be going,

Till you see

Them drink tea

Let none of you be showing.

Mac slides down the tree and all
hide themselves. In a little while
Ali Martin and his party are seen
approaching through the trees,
and at length they all come to the
tree under which the barrel of tea
is lying. Stew Art sees it first and
makes a rush for it, closely followed
by the "Spectre of the Pit." The
Owe Farrell, in his anxiety to reach
the barrel, steps rather heavily upon
the Demon's tail. The Demon
Unrest turns around in great pain
and fury, thinking that Ali Martin
Baba has been trying to pull his
tail, and get the better of him.
In revenge the Demon rushes at
Ali with lowered head. The solitary
horn of the Demon pierces Ali
Martin's left breast and Ali sinks
down to die. Ali does die; an easy
task for him as his breath merely
stops. He has no trouble in de-
livering up his soul, as he has been
soulless for many, many years.

Macken Tyre checks his mad
rush to the spot where he thinks the
whiskey is, in order to pick his
chief's pockets. The Lord High
Mayor has a great fight between
his desire for a drink, and his other
desire to make a speech. His desire
for a drink wins the mastery and
he goes off to join his friends.
Arrived at the barrel he sees that
all his friends are already stretched
out upon the ground. Thinking
them to be all drunk, he curses
them for their greed and bends
anxiously over the barrel. He finds
that there is still some drink left
and he drinks it. In a moment he
too, like the others, falls upon the
ground and dies.

Macken Tyre's tea has done its
deadly work well—they are all
dead.

The Demon Unrest examines
them all in a vain search for their
souls, but, like Ali Martin Baba,
he discovers to his disgust that they
haven't any, with the exception of
Owe Farrell, whose small soul still
remains, but in a very dry and
leathery state. The Demon spurns
it with his foot, and collects all the
bodies to convey them off to the
charnel house where they may,
perhaps, do for fuel.

As the demon goes off with his
collection of atrocities, Shemus, the
Fairy, Itee and all the others
come from their hiding places.]

ITEE—
From your enemies you're now free—
They have drunk up all the tea.

FAIRY—
Oh, Shemus, my boy, I'm glad,
That these villains have all passed
away,

Their tricks have been really too bad,
But at last you have won the day.

SHEMUS—
If you are glad
Then I'm glad too,

I've won the day
All thanks to you.

[The chorus join hands in a ring and
dance and sing as they did before.
Shemus and the I.T.W.U. stand
together on a grassy knoll in a loving
embrace, while the good Fairy
Organ Eyes sits smiling at them.]

CHORUS—
Merrily, joyously, dance and sing
Lads and lasses in a jingo ring.

TRANSPORT MEN—
Transport Workers from the Dublin Port
Out for a holiday, out for sport.

GENERAL LABOURERS—
Labourers we, who work in the city
Holidays are very scarce, more's the pity

ALL—
Lads and lasses in a jingo ring,
Merrily, joyously, dance and sing.

CURTAIN.

NOTE.—The playing rights of this phan-
tasy are strictly reserved, but it may be
played without fee or license in Timbuctoo,
The Sicilly Islands, the South Dublin Union,
the Portrane Asylum, or the Hillel Men's
Shelter.

The First and Last General Strike.

By FRED BOWER.

It was the last day of the year 1919, and
the mean, dejected-looking streets of a large
manufacturing town in the north of Ire-
land, were wrapped in a blanket of fleecy
snow. Though but three o'clock, the
shop windows were already lit up to catch
the eye of a chance straggler, but such a
day, in such a town, did not invite many
to face forth unless stern necessity com-
pelled. In a cosy, spacious room, over
a dentist's workrooms, two men were
pacing the floor now and again, one or
the other would look through the window
at the almost deserted streets beneath,
then resume his pacing.

"I tell you, Tim," at last spoke one,
the clean shaved, youthful owner of the
aforementioned dental establishment, "I
am tired of the game. Yes; absolutely
tired. Let me see; two thousand years
since Christ died. Isn't it. Yes. And
what have we got to show for his dying.
Nothing; absolutely nothing. Yes, Tim,
I'm sick to damnation of the whole human
race. But a week ago, the pulpit and the
press were prating about "Peace and
goodwill to all men," and now,—well—
look there; and he pointed through the
window to a bent and haggard old man
and decrepit woman who had emerged
out of the dark into the reflected light of
the shop windows opposite. Look at them
Tim: just look at them. Made in the
image of God! Eh? God! If I could
only find the one chemical compound
I have been after all these years, I'd
shatter the whole blooming universe—
but there—what is the use of talking?"

The excitement died with his speech,
and he sank down on a rich upholstered
settee, and closed his eyes as in medi-
tation. It was now his friend's turn to
speak. Tall and dark, there was hardly
a thing in common between the two men.
Stay, there was one, and that counted for
everything. Both were tired of witnessing
the misery and poverty of the people
who made up the great percentage of the
inhabitants of the town in which they were

now residing. The dentist, James
O'Keeffe, or Jamesy, as his cronies called
him, had learned his business in a charity
dental hospital, and contact with the peo-
ple of the abyss, had set him studying the
poverty problem. Then he met Tim
Brown, the agitator. Before long he felt
that there was an underworld in Ireland
which he and his people had not even
glimpsed. Whilst pastors and masters
had been egging the workers on to fight
about trivialities, they, the workers, had
not had time to study the cause of their
own poverty. But a sharp conflict or
two with police or soldiery, when several
of their class had been murdered for
demonstrating in the streets during a
strike, had set many of the keenest in-
tellects thinking, and these were now
bending their energies towards getting
more of the workers into the practical
chambers of the country. But the ex-
citable little dentist could not wait for the
time when enough of the workers would
be organised into a voting machine, to
vote the landlords and masters out of
their positions. However, his companion
Tim was speaking—

"Well, Jamesy, old boy, what about
it? Of course it's no use talking, as you
say, but what are you going to do?
You've gone through the whole gamut.
Feeding the poor, clothing the poor,
helping the poor to get jobs, but never
showing them how to end their poverty.
It's all right for you to be issuing your
anarchistic leaflets, advising the poor
devils to shoot their masters down, but,
a revolver, even at half a crown, is as far
from his reach as a Dreadnought, to the
man who hasn't a penny to buy bread
with. Only tell them what to do, and
show them how and they'll do it, eh?
Will they? You've been telling them all
summer to pay no rent, and the few who
followed your advice were thrown on the
streets with their few sticks, and you,
yourself, had to shield them, or some of
them, till they got another house. No,

Jamesy ; go on with your invention, and then we will see what we can do with it."

And now just a word about this invention which the two social reformers were interested in. It all came about through the dentist, passing a street corner orator, having his attention called by a remark, passed in illustration. The speaker, a young Socialist, had been showing that air, the most necessary thing in the world, was, strange to say, the cheapest.

"Without air, said the enthusiast, no man in Ireland could live more than seven or eight minutes. Without food, no man could live much longer than about thirty or forty days.

Without shelter, (and clothing comes under that heading, seeing its real use is to shelter or protect the human body from the elements), no man could live through many weeks of our trying climate. But air, as I said before, is the cheapest thing in the world. And why? Because," continued the enthusiast, "it cannot be bottled up. Were it possible to bottle up the air supply of the country, the capitalists could do as they do with the food and shelter supplies of this Ireland of ours, and could, aye, and would, charge us what they liked for every gasp we took. And in case any in this audience think they would not be able to do so, let me tell them, that, behind the demands of the Air Trust, would be the police forces and soldiery of the Crown, to shoot down any who should resist their demands. They do it now with the food and shelter supply of your people, and, if it is legal to so do, why should it not be legal to so treat the people and their air supply. No landlords made the earth from which comes all our food and shelter supply. No Air Lords made the air. Sooner or later some mad genius will arise and construct a machine, or discover a gas, which will enable him to render the air unbreathable, then, fellow slaves what are you going to do about it? Pay his price? Yes, brothers, you will, because, self preservation is still the first law of nature." In a few earnest sentences the speaker concluded, the crowd dispersed, and Jamesy O'Keeffe found himself ruminating on the remarks which had attracted his attention. "Some mad genius," as the speaker had quaintly put it, might arise, etc. Well, are not all geniuses mad? Are not all poets mad? Are not all people mad, or surely they wouldn't tolerate such a system in the world as the present, with one half the people starving, one quarter only just keeping their heads above water, and all, in order that another quarter, or less, may live in idleness and luxury.

Many days after, O'Keeffe was experimenting with the other generating machine in his workshop, when the idea of the street corner agitator came to his mind. His studies had told him that atmospheric air, which we breathe, is a mechanical mixture of practically seventy-eight parts nitrogen, twenty-one of oxygen, and one of argon. True, there were infinitesimal traces of other ingredients as, carbon dioxide, free hydrogen, neon, krypton, and xenon, also a very small proportion of water vapour. The latter, he knew, was the substances which kept the sun's rays stored and distributed, cooling our summers and warming our winters. Perhaps there was something in the idea. Perhaps he, Jamesy O'Keeffe, was to be the mad genius who was to invent the wonderful machine that was to make its inventor the next powerful man in the world, second only to God. At the immensity of the potentialities of the idea, he stood appalled.

Months had rolled on. Without weary-

ing the reader with the complexities of description, suffice it to say that Jamesy O'Keeffe had gone mad. Mad on one idea. He, he, alone, was to be the mad genius. He had sought the young orator out and found from him that the young enthusiast knew absolutely nothing of chemistry. The idea he said had come to him to use as an illustration, but he had no belief that such a power would be possessed by any human being. At least not in his time—and so on. "But here comes a friend of mine, Tim Brown. Tim, this gentleman thinks there might be something in that illustration I sometimes use, about the private ownership of air, food and shelter."

Tim shook hands with O'Keeffe, and from that day they were staunch bosom friends. Many a night, after trying to keep a large meeting of the boys in order, or after a trying day fencing and sparring with an extra greedy boss for more money and better conditions for "our chaps," as he lovingly called his members of the Union over which he presided, he would seek an hour's restful companionship with the dentist Jamesy. He had seen the dentist rapidly pass into the idealist.

"It's no good, Jamesy" he would say. Get back to your forceps. It's the molar system you must shine in, not in the solar. You thought when you had got your monster megaphone arrangement fixed up on that lonely mountain top that you had only to turn the handle and all would happen like reading a book, and the only result was, that we both had a devil of a cold for two months after. No more sneaking away from my boys on health pretexts for me, the while I am pulling my insides out with your wheels and springs and what not, up, up, up, dodging everybody. Nobody must know, nobody—see us. Pah! Give it up, Jamesy lad, give it up. Count it one of the things That can't be done and give it up." Tim was alluding to the time when Jamesy had almost got as mad as himself, when, a few months before, he had told him he had invented a machine to do the trick. Stripped of technicalities, it amounted to this. Jamesy's idea was, that, given a machine, and a force which could eat up, as it were, the water vapour in the atmosphere, the air would become so cold, that human life could not exist. Each day the sun shone, so much if it's heat was caught by this water vapour in the air we breathe. Otherwise, some days we would be scorched to cinders almost, by the sun's rays, and, the next day, freezing to death. He had discovered a means of attracting this vapour from the air. A huge trumpet attachment drew it from the surrounding atmosphere, and ran it in the form of a stream down the mountain side where he had surreptitiously erected his machine. But, beyond making the atmosphere in the immediate neighbourhood of the machine a few degrees colder, he had not got any appreciable distance towards his goal. And when his chum had pointed out how, even if he succeeded in making this earth a very cold place, it would be about ten centuries before all the coal and heat-providing elements of the earth were exhausted, then Jamesy scrapped his machine, and went home. Not to give up the idea. Oh, no! Jamesy O'Keeffe was of the stuff that does or dies.

And now we get back to the time where our story starts. Jamesy had another idea, by which he thought it possible to capture the air supply of the nation. But, beyond telling Tim that it was to extract the oxygen out of the air by means of an insidious mysterious gas which he would let loose into the atmosphere, and which he was just on the point of discovering, Jamesy had kept it to himself.

Long in the night the friends sat, discussing the everlasting problems of capital and labour, when the clock in the neighbouring cathedral, striking two, called Tim to his duties.

"I must home, boy," he said. "I'll catch it now off the missus if she's awake, and what with young Peter teething, it's awake she will be. Good-night, and the friends parted.

Next day was an important day for Tim, the President of the United Irish Workers was to interview some of the nobles of the town. Rumours of strikes and lockouts were flying fast, and the business interests had asked the man, whom they would like to see shot, to be so kind as to receive a deputation to try and show him how naughty it was to allow men to come from their toil and demand more of the wealth they produce, instead of leaving it to their masters (themselves), who, in their own good time, and as soon as the business would allow, etc., etc., would give the workers a little more, etc., etc. How sick Tim was of the whole game. Only last summer he had engineered a big rise for "our chaps," only to see it taken off them again a month after, in the increased cost of rent and foodstuffs. However, to get along, the meeting was held. From suppliance they got to cajolery, from cajolery to threats, consigning them and their tactics to the nether regions Tim had strode from the meeting place in disgust. Two weeks afterwards one would have thought the town in a state of siege. Foot soldiers were marching and counter-marching. Sections of smart dapper troopers, in all the emblazoning of war trappings, were parading the business quarters of the town. The strange part of the whole scene was the almost utter absence of civilians. One or two ventured out, but the majority kept to their houses. A no-rent and sit tight manifesto was issued by an almost invisible army of nightly distributants. One week, two weeks, three weeks, went by, yet still the citizens kept to their houses. Then, seeing that the workers were determined to stay and die, if need be, rather than give them a pretext for shooting them down by assembling in the streets, the authorities conceived the diabolical idea of cutting off the water supply.

Meantime, what of the men's chosen leader, Tim Brown. Since the first few days he had not been seen, and the second week-end had arrived with none to tell of his whereabouts. The discontented and envious, and they are always numerous where, and when a born leader, who can lead, does lead, had spread all kinds of fantastic rumours about his absence. Those who knew him in reality put the best complexion on the case by saying he must have been secretly imprisoned by the civil and military authorities. The civil authorities, by the way, merely had to take off their cotton and corn exchange garb, and put on the plumed hat and gilt embroidered coat, to become the military authorities. They were one and the same people. The poor fools and tools, who murdered their own flesh and blood for a shilling per day and all found, were not the authorities. They were the blind Judases from Labour's womb. However, things were moving to a climax on this, the third week of the general holiday. Before, certain sections had had to take a rest whenever the masters desired. When work slackened and little profit was to be made in running factories, this and that employer would discharge one, two, or ten thousand workmen at his pleasure. No thought as to whether the men and their dependents were financially fitted to stand a prolonged idleness. Things booming up again, this section might be

re-employed, and another section of the workers in another industry would be discharged in their hundreds and thousands. And now, the workers were simply saying when they themselves would take their periodical rest and had resolved to take it, all together. Surely they had as much right to say when they would have their rest as their masters had, one would think. However, the stoppage of the water supply to the workers' quarter of the town helped to hasten things, and gradually the people came from their hovels and tenements like frightened rabbits. And now loud growls were heard against their absent leader, Tim Brown, or the authorities, whom his staunchest friends believed, had spirited him away. And then it happened. You have all heard the rest. Although it is now the year 1950, and thirty years have passed away, there are thousands of people who passed through that time and are still with us to tell us the details. This account was only written to show the few points that led up to the final overthrow of man's injustice to man. Our children's history books record the happenings of the period. Our past histories had been absolutely worthless as guides as to how our (the common people's) ancestors lived, being merely a recapitulation of the whore-mongering's and debaucheries of past European Kings and Queens, and courtiers generally. Events in family lives of our ancestor's rulers, which the poorest man amongst us would blush to see written of his own ancestry, were given, day and dates of liassons, perfidy, brutality, all were chronicled, and the strange part of it was that the descendants of these gilded prostitutes proudly boasted of their blue-blooded ancestry, whilst the House of Commons, and House of Lords were filled with men, whose only claim to notice at all lay in the fact that a few hundred or

less years ago, some female strumpet in their family had been a harlot to Royalty. However, we all know how, in the year 1920, the great ending came. How, about 12 o'clock in the day, every living thing within five miles of the town on strike, was struck with a sense of suffocation. Horses, dogs and cats, as well as human beings, gasped and panted for air. In three minutes the population was prostrate. Then gradually, their breathing got less laboured, and in ten minutes all was normal, except a few people with weak hearts which were more affected by the shock. Then a burly figure might have been seen wending his way to the town hall, where the Mayor sat with his satellites and the higher placed officers of the military, waiting for something to turn up. However, long ere he got there he was recognised, but the men who had denounced him for his absence uttered no word of reproach. There was that in his eyes which told the bravest of them that he was desperate. At length Tim reached the Hall, and pushed past the flunkey who barred his approach till he had sent in his card. "I am my own card," he said, "although not gilt-edged like yourself, where's your boss?" Pointed to a room the returned leader entered. Seated around a table covered with glasses and decanters, were the leading citizens, or successful rigands in the commercial world as we now know them to have been. They were all agog now, talking of the recent peculiar feeling they had undergone. "What is it?" they were asking each other, and none could tell. Then Tim had entered without any formality, and, marching up to the Lord Mayor demanded a hearing. But I am only going over old ground. All the world knows how Tim Brown laid down his challenge. How his friend, Jamesy O'Keefe, had, at the last moment, discovered the negative to

oxygen. How he had been able to throw into the atmosphere a gas which willed the oxygen. The oxygen taken from the air, the residue, were not life-sustaining, and gradually, the people would choke and die. How his first experiment from a small hill-top outside the town had proved the possibilities of the invention. How, when the authorities refused to force the money-mad financiers to let go the people's means of life, he had gone back to Jamesy and put an extra pressure on. Again he came to the Town Hall. And our readers will know how, though in the meantime the hospitals and stores had been denuded of their oxygen cylinders by the few cunning rich who knew of them. Yet, these soon give out, and when he at last told them that he had determined to end all life if it was necessary in order to end degradation and poverty, they temporised.

And you will know how he was watched and followed by a body of soldiers told off to capture and smash the apparatus. How Jamesy turned on the full pressure as they came to his capture and how they all fell choking and died ere they got within fifty yards of him. How he and Tim had got the antidote to the gas they had discovered and were immune from its effects. How, at last, to save their own carcasses, the money interests gave way and granted all that the most advanced thinkers demanded. After having tried to buy the invention, as they said, "to use in the cause of Briton's arms in other parts of the world." How the organised workers refused to part with the secret under any terms, and threatened to use it on any section of the people who dared to talk of war. How eventually war was abolished, masters and slaves ceased to be longer terms of meaning, and how the first general strike was the last, is all common history in our country.

A Christmas Eve Affair.

By "Tredagh."

Resting at the verge of a small hill, which is situated a little distance from the high road, is a very modest, lone, thatched house. Ireland is pre-eminent for such like houses—the outcome, no doubt, of a rotten system of government. Of course this particular house had an irremediable modesty about it; and the ingenious hand of the twentieth century man could never convert it into anything other than such as described—a very modest low thatched house. Geographically, it was assigned to the West of Ireland, and at that time of which I write, the December moon fell flush upon it, but failed to make it look cheerful or gay.

An unspeakable solitude and gloom hung over the household of Ned Bracken, agricultural labourer. The much talked of Christmas preparations were hopelessly abandoned. Window blinds were drawn down; the door, which craved a little paint, stood ajar; and to peep into the kitchen would never reveal its contents, for a candle stuck on a table in the centre of the room, was struggling helplessly with life, like a person in the final stages of consumption. Trouble, with all its concomitant woes, pervaded the atmos-

phere of Ned's domicile. And why? Why should a workingman's home bear such a miserably depressing aspect, when that joyful day—Christmas—was fast approaching? The reason is obvious—obvious because Ned's grey-haired mother, who was living with him, had, some time back, predicted trouble. Never did she think that it would come so soon; and, certainly, Christmas was farthest from her mind as the time for the accomplishment of her prediction. Peggy Bracken—for that was her name—had a mania for laying out sad ends for those who differed from the adage—"A rolling stone gathers no moss." That her every prognostication turned out to be true, the writer cannot say; but her latest one was apparently truthful enough. All the time Peggy kept saying that trouble was forthcoming to the house; and came it had come!

That morning, after Ned had finished breakfast, a series of rat-tat-tats came to the door. Rising from the table, Ned answered the knock; it was the postman.

"Bracken!" said the letter-carrier, and immediately he thrust a letter, which

bore a typewritten address, into Ned's hand.

Rather surprised, Ned took the missive, and forthwith entered upon the process of reading, which, to say the truth, was a difficult task for him—his education being impaired. Embarrassed—and this for the simple reason that letters were foreign things to his home—he opened the document, which bore the imprint of a steamer at either top corner. Reading the printed matter, to his horrifying consternation he elicited the tragic information that his son—an only boy—was dead!—had found a watery grave! Having gone through the epistle several times in a confirmatory sort of way, Ned's whole nerve system began to behave in a disorderly fashion. His state can be better imagined that described. Quivering through and through—with face an ashy pale—he repaired to the bedroom, and flung himself, utterly prostrate, on the bed. His wife was out backwards when the letter arrived, and was not aware that anything of an unusual nature had happened. Ah, but soon—only too soon!—would everything be known to her! Old woman Bracken was fast asleep in

the same room where Ned was, and she, likewise, was in ignorance of the occurrence.

II.

We shall leave Ned alone for the present; leave his mother in her slumber, and the woman of the house to perform her duties—presumably, now, the fattening of the fowl for Christmas. Let us get on the track of the one who caused all the trouble—a lean, lanky, brown haired, sun-burned youth, over whose head nineteen summers had flown.

About seven months back Tom Bracken could be seen knocking round the garden, the property of "his honor!" the local lord of the soil. Tom found the work fairly congenial: hours and wages notwithstanding. One day he was asked to lend a hand in the farm-yard—something or other was wanting to be done. Tom, with characteristic optimism, consented to go.

Towards the close of the day the particular piece of work was finished, but he remained after the rest of the men had gone home, to stow away the tools. When everything was done to his satisfaction he put on his coat, and when leaving, forgot to bolt the farm-yard gate after him. Whistling the local pipers' band tune, he wended his way homewards.

Next morning on returning to his gardening duties he found that a great many of the shrubs and flowers were all destroyed—presenting a pitiful sight; and, so, too, did the look on his own face. Just then it struck him about his forgetting to close the gate the previous evening, thus affording the farm-yard inhabitants greater scope for roaming, and a horticultural feast in the bargain. Tom knew well that dismissal was inevitable when the "masher" saw this sorry spectacle. And, indeed, he had not very long to wait for it. There was absolutely no way of making the garden presentable to the eye, or else he would have adopted it.

Close on mid-day the "masher" with a "monarch of all he surveys" air, strutted round, as was his wont, to inspect things. When he beheld the mutilated state of his garden he was absolutely flabbergasted! In a raging manner he asked Tom "was it he who did the deprecation?"

After hearing the whole truth from him he did not treat Tom like a George Washington; but, instead, told him to clear out of the place—adding that if he did not—and that very soon—he would have him put up. This "Ascendancy chip of the block" had good personal reasons for speaking in this peremptory way; for his garden productions, when exhibited at the various flower shows, generally added more to his already superfluous wealth. And to see money's worth wantonly destroyed was daggers to his greedy heart.

Tom, when told to go, needed no further telling. Gripping his coat, he flung it across his shoulder, and waited till he was clear of the place before putting it on. He made straightway for home.

Arriving, he met his mother and told her about his dismissal without a moment's notice. She listened—as only a woman would—to his story, and when finished, chided him for being so careless in leaving the gate open—pointing out how his father nearly lost his work a year or so back through this self-same gentleman.

Weeks passed by, but nothing turned up to Tom. Try as he might work on any farm in that side of the country would not be given him. He, therefore, resolved to go to sea.

That he got a berth of a ship is evident; for news of the ship's wrecking, with loss

of all hands, has been officially intimated to his father.

III.

When Mrs. Bracken returned to the kitchen she wondered where Ned was; because it was habitual with him to sit for a time after a meal and indulge in the luxury of a pipeful of tobacco. Crossing to the door she undid the lock and glanced up the road, but found no trace of him. Thinking he had left for work earlier than usual she strolled into the bedroom to apprise her mother-in-law that it was time to get up; but, to her amazement, there was her husband lying, face downwards on the bed, and sobbing lamentably. Reaching his side she endeavoured to rouse him, but to no purpose.

"Ned," she cried, emotionally, "why are you crying?"

Without answering her, Ned placed the letter in her hand. Mrs. Bracken on receiving the letter, knew at once that something serious was wrong. When she came to the word "dead!"—Tom was dead!—she gave a wild scream, and fell fainting on the floor. The awful thud caused by the fall, awoke the sleeping inmate who, after rubbing her eyes, looked round the room excitedly. Seeing husband and wife wailing, Peggy, without waiting to be told the cause of the sorrowing, burst into tears. Her true Irish nature had got the upper hand of her, and involuntarily did her tears flow. The climax was reached when the sad news was imparted to her. The scene was one which was heartrending to behold! That year Christmas in Ned's home would be dark and dismal.

When the adjacent neighbourhood got wind of young Bracken's fate, Ned and his wife became the objects of profound sympathy. Everywhere they went people offered them kind words in the great misfortune that had befallen them. Those words, although comforting to them in their trial, only served to keep their dead boy more prominently in their minds; plunged them deeper and deeper into the morass of sorrow and despair; and shattered all hopes of festivity at Christmas.

IV.

It was two days before Christmas, and that quaint West of Ireland spot was wrapped in a raiment of snow. As far as the eye could reach the country was garbed in white. Within the confines of Bracken's home, Christmas festoonry was lacking. Holly and ivy there were none. No paper chains ran diagonally across the house. Nor did even a Christmas motto grace a position on any of the four walls. Around the fireplace was black with smoke, for no whitewashing had been done. Anyway Mrs. Bracken had lost heart in everything since Tom's reported demise. On previous Christmas occasions this little home had the reputation of being rich in the matter of bunting and festoonry. But now, it revealed a very recent visit from his grim majesty—Death!

Christmas eve's coming was heralded by a further, and much heavier fall of snow. A little before six that morning Ned trudged through the snow to his work, with spirits anything but buoyant. At the usual hour—eight o'clock—he came home to breakfast. Being Christmas eve, all three breakfasted together. Four chairs were drawn round the table, but one chair—Tom's—was vacant. Silently they ate the drink; an it pwoeddbu poorest Christmas that had come to the house since Ned and Mary (his wife) tied the nuptial knot—nigh twenty years ago! After breakfast, Ned prepared to return to work, when a tattoo was played

on the door.

"That noise at the front door sounds familiar to me," said Ned, looking towards his wife.

"Wait—don't open the door till it comes again," returned his wife, hastily.

The noise did not come again.

"I better see who it is, Mary," said Tom; and, with this remark, he walked to the door and opened it. Right into him rushed a figure all covered with snow—it was Tom! Words fail in describing with what surprise and wonderment all three gazed at the boy whom they believed was resting at the bottom of the ocean. Fully five minutes fled, but no one spoke. No one even dared to move. Tom could not understand. When the snow had melted from his clothes, with searching eyes they realised that it was Tom right enough; but, without uttering a word they rushed to him, and flung themselves upon him, weeping with joy. Tom was perturbed at all the commotion; but when the crying had subsided he learned the cause of it all.

"I was surprised," he said, on my entry, to see the statue-like attitude of the whole lot of you. So you thought I was drowned?"

"Of course we did," returned his father. "We got a letter from your shipping Company, stating that your ship had sunk with all hands."

"The ship did go down certainly" said Tom, "but I, after clinging to a spar for several hours, was picked up by an American-bound steamer. I got the next ship leaving America," continued Tom, "and parted with her at Queenstown. But then, I am feeling rather hungry now; to-morrow night I will relate the whole thing to you."

"Very good!" rejoined the other three, satisfactorily.

That evening mother and son went into the market-town shopping. Tom was the most attractive personage in the town that day. Shyly he gave his hand to all and sundry, and by night that limb was mightily tired from the ordeal. After all, things brightened up considerably, Bracken's home. This brightness was solely due to Tom's safe return. At twelve o'clock on Christmas eve night, when the church bells were ringing Christmas day in, gathered round the fire, on which the pudding was boiling, and near by a kettle singing for making the punch, sat the occupants of the house. Ned's house had undergone a rapid transformation. Christmas day was not so bad after all!

"TREDAGH."

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"ONCE UPON A TIME."

By T. KELLY.

HENRY the Second, the first King of England, who ever set foot in Ireland, kept Christmas of the year of grace, 1171, outside the walls of Dublin in Hoggin Green (now College Green). Many lies and much nonsense has been written by the various British Historians concerning the state of Ireland before the arrival of the Anglo-Norman Knights and King. The Kingdom, we are told, was in the most wretched condition, the natives depraved and demoralised beyond description, and it was in order to save the Irish from perdition that the pious Henry came hither. The same story has been told ever since in connection with the conquests of the British Empire the world over. It was for the salvation of souls that the British went out to other lands, to bring the message of the Gospel to the natives, but, as a well-known Irish writer observes, before the Gospel was sent the gunboat in order to make the way easy.

To get the truth of the position of the Irish previous to the Anglo-Norman's coming one needs but to refer to the many able and truthful historical works which have been written on the subject by John O'Donovan, Wilde, O'Curry, Petrie, Sir John Gilbert, and others of the past generation, and Mrs. Stopford Green and Sean Gall, and J. F. Biggar, to mention but three who in our time have by their scholarly research utterly refuted the calumnies of the British scribes. Henry Hallam, in his view of the "State of Europe During the Middle Ages," when writing of slavery, states that "in England it was very common to export slaves to Ireland, and that the English often sold their children and other relatives to be slaves in Ireland, until the Irish, in a National Synod, agreed to emancipate all the English slaves in the Kingdom, and put an end to the practice." This is evidence with a vengeance of the need the Irish had for the Anglo-Norman mission.

We are told that there was not in Dublin at this time any house or building large enough for Henry to hold his Christmas Court, and so a grand pavilion was constructed in Hoggin Green hung with gorgeous tapestries and other fancy decorations to please the eye, and therein were held great festivities and splendid banquets to which the native Irish chiefs and their retainers were invited, and some few of them accepted the invitation, and are stated to have been completely astonished with the grandeur and luxury of the entertainment.

There are still extant documents which give a list of the stores, plate, and other preparations for Henry's coming, and evidently the same ideas still govern English statesmen's minds regarding the Irish, for on the recent visit of King George the same gorgeousness of equipage, gold plate, and tempting victuals and viands were displayed, and the accounts of the goings on in Dublin Castle reminded me of the jousts and tournaments, mimes and music of the Court of Henry, whose char-

acter as a man or monarch did not, to say the least of it, entitle him to be a missionary. Gilbert tells us, in his "History of the Viceroys," that his temper was so violent that he was known to have torn the flesh of the shoulder of a page with his teeth, and also on occasions, strip himself naked and fling himself on the palace floor acting like a maniac. He was scarcely ever known to have kept his word and in his capacity as a monarch his crimes are well known. A good insight of his domestic life is shown by his eldest son, Richard's answer to the clergy who appealed to him to be reconciled to his father: "The custom in our family is that the son shall hate the father, our destiny is to detest each other; this is our heritage, which we shall never renounce. From the devil we came, to the devil we shall go."

Henry, through stress of the exceptionally severe winter weather, had to remain in Ireland until the following April, so he set about establishing as best he could the Anglo-Norman laws and customs, having first given to the adventurers FitzGislebert, called Strongbow, De Lacy, Fitzgerald, Fitzstephen, De Cogan, and De Courcy, the whole country almost, reserving the seaport towns for his own control; and Dublin he conferred on the City of Bristol, first making Hugh De Lacy Viceroy. Henry also had a Synod called at Cashel, and some of the English clerics got admission to it, and attempts were made to have established a predominance of the foreign influence as far as possible over the Irish Church. A Parliament was also held at Lismore, and some of the Irish chieftains were induced to attend it and several statutes passed. Courts of Justice having been established and other institutions set up, Henry left Ireland believing that the foundation of a future loyal English state had been laid. He did not go further north than Dublin nor further south than Cashel; he did not receive any submission from the Irish worth talking about; he was not acknowledged Lord of Ireland, his Lordship being a myth; but with the usual effrontery of British statesmanship he proceeds to do as he pleases with this country. Subsequent history shows how far the Anglo-Norman settlement was a success, and suffice to say that even to this day there are Irish who do not acknowledge England's dominion.

Historians differ as to the early history of our city. I believe that it was first but a fishing village for the Gael, who never looked with friendly eye on the life lived within walled towns; their wish was for pastoral life; and the cities of the Gael were centres of learning and piety. When the Danes came they selected as their centres places near the sea, and the small but well-selected site of Dublin was occupied by these hardy fighters as their city; but the class of existence these people led precluded anything like civil life being established amongst them, and, with the exception of Christ Church, and probably St. Michan's and St. Auden's Churches, no other

buildings of any note are recorded of their time; breast-works and walls and other fortifications were their erections. In more than a century after the battle of Clontarf they still remained in Dublin, and it was not until the arrival of Strongbow and his mail-clad warriors that they were driven out.

The Bristolians having been settled in the city by Henry's orders proceeded to carry out in the full all the desires of their monarch. The Irish were not allowed to live within the walls; no intercourse was to be held with them. Neither bread nor ale for themselves nor corn for their horses were to be given to them. They were not to be admitted to apprenticeship of any trade or craft, and they were to be regarded and treated as enemies, for Dublin was to become the rallying place for the men of the dominant race, the centre of English civilization and influence, and the city from which English laws and customs would spread all over Ireland.

It is said that the best laid schemes of mice and men are often thwarted and broken, and certain it is the schemes of this period of the English were not successful. The Irish naturally resented the attempts made to deprive them of their rights and liberties. Even under the Danes in time of peace the Gael could come and live and trade in Dublin if he cared to; but now he was shut out by the arrogant foreigners, consequently we find many records which show how the men of Bristol were brought to their senses. We read that King Henry established his Exchequer where Exchequer street is to-day, and this was near to the walls, which were close to the Castle; but the "mountain enemy," as the Irish were called, came down one day "in plumps" and plundered the Exchequer, killed all the guards, officers, and barons, so that it had to remove within the walls. St. George's Church was founded in George's lane, now George's street, by the pious Bristolians, but had to be abandoned; they could not say their prayers in comfort, as the "mountain enemy" might be waiting for them outside. And on Easter Monday, in the year 1209, known as Black Monday, a great disaster befel the Bristol men, who, as the old chronicler tells, "were wont to rove and roile on the Monday in Easter week and went to the wood of Cullen (Cullenswood)", and were enjoying a game of hurley, "not heeding the mountain enemy that lurketh under their nose," when suddenly the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles from the Wicklow Mountains came upon them, and a fight ensued which resulted in the utter defeat of the Bristolians, and a further colony of them had to be brought over.

It soon became evident that a different spirit must direct those in power within the walls of Dublin. The Gael was no mean enemy and he was fighting for his own land. The first shock of battle with the mailed warriors of the Anglo-Normans had put him to a disadvantage. Their armour and discipline were new.

Unequal they entered the battle,
The Galls and the Irish of Tara;
Fair satin shirts on the race of Conn—
The Galls in one mass of iron;

But as time went on the Gael was not being vanquished, and he was not becoming English; it was quite the other way. Besides both races were of the one religion, and we soon observe that orders were given that the Irish who desired to visit the sacred relics in Christ Church or to pray at the Shrine of Our Ladye of Trim were to be allowed to do so in safety and peace. Of this period Mrs. Green in her great book, "The Making of Ireland and Its Unbeing," says: "From a history of the towns it is clear that the original English settlers had been led by interest and intelligence to enter into the civilization and become faithful citizens of their new land connected with its people and devoted to its fortunes. Left to themselves, English and Irish joined in fruitful alliance—the English accepting Irish culture and jurisprudence, and enriching it with their own organization of business and municipal laws. The picture of Galway, or, indeed, any other town illustrates this fortunate union, by which civic property was assured, the gaiety and urbanity of life enhanced, and a common net-work of interests spread over the country."

The municipal system of government of cities and towns was probably brought into Britain by the Normans and then into this country. Charters were given to Dublin by Henry and his successors establishing the various modes of civic rule. Markets were established, and the Fair of St. James, which was held in the city, became famous over Europe, and merchants and traders from France, Belgium, and Italy came to it. Donnybrook Fair dates from 1204 and continued down to the middle of the nineteenth century. Gilbert in his work on the Historical and Municipal Documents of Ireland, 1172 to 1320, gives a list of the various commodities sold at the fairs. From this it will be seen that every necessary and most of the luxuries of life were bought and sold. The Corporations or Guilds were formed very early in the Anglo-Norman occupation of our city; these consisted of two kinds—Religious and Craft Guilds. The Religious Guilds were those of St. Anne and Corpus Christi and the fraternity of St. George, and the Craft Guilds were—The Merchants or the Guild of the Holy Trinity; Tailors, or Guild of St. John the Baptist, Charter dated 1417; Smiths, or Guild of St. Loy (1471); Barber Surgeons, or Guild of St. Mary Magdalen (1446); Bakers, or Guild of St. Anne (1464); Butchers, or Guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary; Carpenters, Millers, Masons and Tylers, or Guild of the Fraternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the house of St. Thomas the Martyr (1507); Shoemakers, or Guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary (1404); Saddlers, Upholsterers, Coach and Coach Harness-makers or Guild of the B. V. Mary; Cooks, or Guild of St. James the Apostle (1441); Tanners' Guild (1279); Tallow Chandlers, or Guild of St. George; Glovers and Skinners, or Guild of St. Mary (1290); Weavers, or Guild of St. Philip and James; Shearmen and Dyers or Guild of St. Nicholas; Goldsmiths, or Guild of All Saints; Coopers, or Guild of St. Patrick, near Dublin; Feltmakers Guild; Cutlers, Painters, Stainers, and Stationers, or Guild of St. Luke the Evangelist (670); Bricklayers, Plasterers, or Guild of St. Bartholomew (1670); Hosiery, or Guild of St. George; Curriers' Guild; Brewers and Malsters, or Guild of St. Andrew; Joiners,

Coylers, and Wainscoters' Guild and Apothecaries, or Guild of St. Luke.

Most of these Guilds were in existence long before the dates of the Charters which I have noted. For instance, the Merchants' Charter is dated 1451, but in the book of Gilbert's, which I have last referred to, is given a list of the names of the Guild Merchants in the years 1256-7. From this it appears that there were physicians, spicers goldsmiths and representatives of every craft and trade from all parts of Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, Flanders, Brabant and money dealers from Florence enrolled in the Dublin Guild of Merchants and we read that a number of poor men of Ireland were freemen of divers crafts in London, and the men of Dublin and Drogheda joined the Corpus Christi Guild of Coventry; and, again, Irishmen flocked in numbers to Bristol and took their places on the Town Council there, until an order went forth that no Irishman born within the Country of Ireland, of an Irish father or mother, should be admitted to the Common Council.

At first the Irish were not admitted to the Guilds but when the first generations of the Anglo-Normans had passed away, and their descendants were becoming more Irish than the Irish themselves, more than half of the membership of the Craft Guilds were Gaels. The work of the Guilds was to protect their trade interests to settle quarrels, to assist brothers in distress, and have fitting burial and funeral ceremonies.

Their meetings were held with great solemnity, masters and wardens being annually appointed these to see to the execution of orders and to search for all unlawful tools and products. The Tailors' Charter empowered the Guild to inquire into all offences connected with the art of tailors; to punish offenders by fine and imprisonment; to take full cognizance of all disputes between tailor and tailor and their apprentices and servants. Apprentices being bound should be brought before the master wardens and clerk, and if found to be of "free condition" of the English Nation and of good conversation were admitted as apprentices for seven years and at the end of this term to be brought by his own master and the Master and Warden of the Guild to the Guild Hall of Dublin, and then to be received into the freedom of the city in the presence of the Mayor and bailiff. The other Guilds were the same, constituted and worked as the Tailors. Most of the Charters empower the Guild to punish falsity, fraud, deceit, oppression extortion, and every other crime committed against the trade in Dublin, or within six miles of it. The Saddlers had a franchise of fifteen miles.

The Guilds had chantries or small chapels erected in various of the city churches, and priests appointed to minister. Thus the merchants had Holy Trinity Chapel in Christ Church, the Tailors in St. John's Church, which was in Fishamble street; the Barber Surgeons first in the Church of St. Mary Magdalene near Cornmarket, when it was pulled down, in Christ Church; the Carpenters in the Lady Chapel in St. Thomas's Abbey, and they gave 1 lb. of wax yearly to the light of the altar of the Blessed Virgin; the Shoemakers the Chapel of the B. Virgin in St. Michael's Church, which stood where the Synod Hall of Christ Church now stands. On the eve of the festival of their patron saint the Guild attended Vespers, and on the festival attended Mass and then assembled in some tavern for a goodly dinner, and when this was over proceeded to the election of their

officers for the coming year, and the rest of the evening was spent in festivity. We find from the records that members absent from Vespers and Mass were noted and fined, and their names and the amount of the fines are given. There is also given an account of the dinners and the cost. The pageants or processions held in the City during the year were attended by the Guilds, each of which had to represent some sacred or historical subject. The pageant of Corpus Christi seems to have been the principal, and for this the Guilds made their best show. In the Municipal Records edited by Gilbert there is given an account of the Corpus Christi pageant of Midsummer 1498, at which the "glovers represented Adam and Eve, with an angel following berying the sword." Corvisers (Bootmakers), Cain and Abel, with an altar and the offerance; Weavers: Abraham and Isaac, with their altar and a lamb; Smiths, Shearmen, Bakers, Slaters, Cooks, and Masons: Pharo with his host; Skinners, House Carpenters, Tanners, for the body of the Camel and our Ladye and her child, with Joseph to lede the Camel and Moyses with the Children of Israel and porters to bear the Camel, and painters and steyners to paint the head of the Camel. Coopers: the Shepherds with the Angels singing Gloria in Excelsis Deo; Corpus Christi Guild: Christ in His passion with three Marias and Angels bearing serges of wax in their hands; Tylors: Pilate with his fellowship, and his Ladye and his Knights; Barbers: Ananias and Caiaphas; Fishers: the Twelve Apostles; Merchants: the Prophets; Butchers: Tormentours with their garments well and cleanly painted.

Fines were also inflicted for any absenting themselves or for any defect in the tableaux. St. John's Eve and the eve of St. Peter and St. Paul's day were regarded as special festivals, and lights were lit in the Fishambles and Winetavern streets. During stormy weather bells rang calling for the prayers of those at sea in ships, that they might reach safe havens.

Some of the other special characteristics of the Guilds may well be noted; special tribunals for adjudicating on all causes arising from the exercise of the mechanical trades were formed; efficiency and skill were demanded. The best hands in the world, as an Irish saying has it, are the hands of a good carpenter, a skilled woman, a good smith. A carpenter was judged by his skill with the compass, a well-measured stroke, and his joining together without calculating, without warping; the Smith by an edge upon a blade, weaving chains and a mosaic ball. James Kelly of Trim, was admitted into the Carpenters' Guild and four pounds was paid him for "paynting Our Ladye's Tabernacle." One sister, Margaret Harford, belonged to this Guild. The Irish were always great builders. The masons generally formed themselves into bands and companies, going about the country, working under a master mason; and when Queen Elizabeth wanted to build fortifications against the Scotch she got three hundred good and fit masons from Ireland to do it. Laws had to be passed preventing the use of gold and silver in the harness for horses, so splendid was the work turned out by the saddlers. The Act of 1448 states that the profusion of gold and silver which adorned harness created a scarcity of these precious metals. And is it necessary to say anything of the magnificence of the goldsmiths' work, especially of the silver chalices and goblets braized with gold, and of the other gifts to Christ Church which are mentioned in the obits and martyrology of that church? The hand

of the skilled woman was shown in the weaving of woollens and fine linen, silk and cloth of gold, and the dresses of the merchants' wives were generally of the last-mentioned beautiful and costly fabrics. There were no indecent tight-fitting skirts in those days. The year 1451 was a year of jubilee, and Margaret O'Carroll, wife of the chieftain of Ely O'Carroll, is described celebrating the festival of their patron saint: "And Margaret, on the garretts of the great Church of Killeagh, clad in cloth of gold, her dearest friends around her, her clergy and judges, too; and first of all she gave two chalices of gold as offerings that day on the altar of God Almighty."

And what of the labourers? As far as I can see, they were in many respects better off than to-day. It was shown in an action at law about the year 1820, when the Merchants' Guild took steps to assert their right to certain dues which they had for generations received from the selling of coals on the coal quay that the wages paid the coal labourers before the Reformation were as good if not better than the wages paid then and living was much cheaper. If the so-called Reformation brought all the good its champions claim for it, I doubt if the lot of the worker can be said to be better. After this Reformation came poor houses, mad houses, stums and slum landlords, food adulterators, sweaters, and the multitudes of the saddest of all sisterhoods—the sisterhood of the streets—with other evils which were unknown in the Dublin of pre-Reformation times.

The regulations for the good conduct of the apprentices were severe. Whipping before the Mayor was the penalty for pilfering, playing at unlawful games, haunting taverns, or lying excessively. The apprentices were not allowed to be "mashers," regulations as to their dress were laid down, and the apprentice that wore his master's cast-off clothes was regarded as an example of everything that was good. Notwithstanding these regulations—and what regulations will ever curb youth?—the apprentices seem to have asserted themselves very often, and many a riot and many a tumult took place in consequence of their "boies' play." It must have been a great day for them—"America at home," in fact—that Whit Sunday of the year 1486, when the mysterious historic personage, Lambert Simnel, had himself crowned "King of these realmes," under the title of Edward the Sixth, in Christ Church, all the great officials of the land attending and paying him homage, and after the ceremony he was carried on the shoulders of the great Darcy of Platten in the County Meath, a man of herculean build, around the city amid scenes of much joy, the whole affair giving great offence to that wily old gentleman, King Henry the Seventh of England. Of the family of Darcy of Platten, two centuries later, in the list of sequestration and forfeitures, made after the Boyne, the family name appears to suffer for their adherence to the cause of the Stuart King. On another occasion a tumult prevailed because the Prior of Kilmainham, a powerful ecclesiastic in those days, laid claim to meadow land belonging to the Dominican Fathers who were great favourites among the people, and they soon made the prelate forego his claim. And, again, we read that—"One Henry White, an apprentice to Benet, a merchant, was pitching of a carte of haie in the High street, and having offered boies play to passengers that walked to and fro, let a pottle of his haie fall on a souldier's bonet as he passed by

the cart. The souldier, taking his knavish knack in dudgeon, hurled his dagger at him, and having narrowlie missed his chest, he sticked it in a part not far off. White leapt downe from the cart and trust the souldier through the shoulder with his pitchfork, whereupon there was great uproar in the citie between the souldiers and the apprentices, inasmuch that Thomas Barber been the Mayor having the King's sword drawn, was hardly able to appease the fray in which divers were wounded and none slain. The Lord Deputie issued out of the Castle, and came as far as the pillory, to whom the Mayor posted through the crowd with the sword naked under his arm, and presented White that was the brewer of all this garboile to his Lordship whom the Governor pardoned as well for his courage in bickering as for his reckless simplicitie and pleasantness in telling the whole discourse whereby a man may see how so maine bloudie quaarrells a bralling swashbucker may pick out of a pottle of haie namelie when his brains are forebitten with a bottle of nappie ale."

The science of surgery being now so eminent, and our Dublin surgeons equal at least to the best in Europe, a few words on the barber surgeons will not be out of place here. In the early days the clergy were the physicians and surgeons, but at the Council of Tours held in 1163 laws were made prohibiting the higher orders of the clergy from practising medicine at all, and confining the monks to the practice of physic only, as bloodletting was not considered a practice that the clergy should follow. The servants of the monks who helped them heretofore in operations were called barbers, and these then took up the practice of surgery and opened near the dwellings of the great, little shops for haircutting, shaving bathing, curing the wounded, bleeding, tooth-drawing, and they put out the bandaged pole that all might know where to apply to in time of need. As well as the barbers, the smiths took up the practice of surgery at the same time, and one shudders at the thought of the rough and ready methods of the sturdy village blacksmith with his sledge hammer and his assistants with the chisel taking off limbs, welding shin bones, and cutting and shutting knee joints.

The Barber Surgeons' Guild continued to be composed of members who practised surgery, shaving, hair cutting, and wig-making for centuries, and it was not until about 1780 or so that the surgeons got a charter to become a separate body, and the College of Surgeons founded still the red and white bandaged pole, signifying red for the blood and white for the bandages, remains outside some of the barber shops in our city. Others have blue and white and green and white, and green and red. What can they mean, unless it is that blue-blooded aristocrats or green patriots are the clients of these establishments. A good number of the barbers do not put out the pole at all now, which is a mistake, as it is the only mark that is now left of the honourable foundation of the barbers' calling.

Of the religious guilds I cannot write now. Indeed with the exception of the Guild of St. Anne very little is at present known. Mr. Berry, late chief of the Record Office, has written a history of this guild, and much of other guilds as well, and the citizens are under a debt of gratitude to him for his work, but unfortunately it is only for the learned societies he and others write, and as far as the working classes are concerned these learned societies might as well be in Persia. Whether it is a superstition or not, the workers are not supposed to take any interest in history, or know anything of it beyond the very limited

teaching of it they get during their too short sometimes attendance at school; but those who know the working class of our city will agree that their intelligence is as high as any other class, but their opportunities are not the same, and the criticism that is always ready to be heaped upon them whenever an occasion occurs is often tinged with a reference to their ignorance, which is a great mistake, and arises from the fact that those who criticise do not understand, and probably do not want to understand or know anything of the workers' state; at the present moment the working man who looks for a living wage and for better conditions for his family life is often denounced by the politicians as a Socialist and a danger.

It is but right to remark here that as early as the year 1320 a university was established in connection with St. Patrick's Cathedral, and the rules for the conduct of it are set out in Ware's Antiquities of Ireland, but of its history there is little said only that due provision was not made for the number of students who entered it. Some little traces of this foundation can be observed in subsequent centuries, and Cardinal Newman in one of his essays on University life speaks in splendid terms of it.

How the festival of Christmas was kept in these days we read that Thomas Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare, was invited to a new play every day in Christmas of the year 1528, wherein the taylor's acted the part of Adam and Eve; the shoemakers represented the story of Crispin and Crispianus; the vintners acted Bacchus and his story, the carpenters that of Joseph and Mary. Vulcan and what related to him was acted by the smiths, and the Comedy of Ceres, the Goddess of Corn, by the bakers. Their stage was erected in Hoggin Green, and on it the prior of St. John of Jerusalem, of the Blessed Trinity and of All Hallows, caused two plays to be acted representing ouraviour and His Apostles.

The Christmas candle and the decoration of holly and ivy, the pleasant greetings and the interchange of gifts, not the Christmas box, as this is a purely English modern custom, the singing of the old Christmas rhymes, such as

God rest you, merrie gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Criste your Saviour
Was born upon this day.

and

Jesus Criste christen kinge,
And His mother, that sweete thinge,
Helpe us in our neede.

The solemn mass at midnight which ushered in the great feast, and in some of the dioceses of Ireland it is still publicly celebrated, and if our ecclesiastical superiors were to restore the celebration of midnight mass in the parish churches, no class in the community would welcome it more than the working people.

I have now finished, as it would take up too much space for me to continue the history of the craft guilds during the painful episodes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and down to 1840, when they were dissolved. Some other time we may have the opportunity of considering this, but I have done my best in the foregoing remarks, with reverence, I hope, to bring back the memory of times and men who once were and are now no more, of the men who in the days gone by made Dublin's name and prestige well known and honoured throughout Europe; of the craftsmen of our ancient city who believed that the "Lord is the strength of those who labour," and their spirit seems to say to us now "do likewise."

INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATION.

This being especially the season of universal friendliness and of good resolutions, it might be well for us to glance back over the year that is passing from us, and note some of the mistakes which we made: in order that, in the new year which we are about to begin, we may move along better lines. I suppose we are all agreed that one of the greatest mistakes we have made in the past is in each person and each little group trying to live their lives by themselves, and independent of their fellows. We know that sectionalism has defeated all the recent strikes in England, and therefore it behoves us all to pull ourselves together and do everything in our power to bring about a closer unity both between the different groups, and also among the whole body of individual workers—many of whom, alas, are still outside of any organisation whatever, and are trying, in their primitive way to work out their own salvation by themselves.

This applies especially to the women—and therefore to each individual woman I would say, "It is up to you personally to do your share in improving the lot of your fellow-women, and raising the standard of living in this country." And it is no use for anyone to say, "I am too poor, or too over-worked, to do anything." You can do something—the poorest of you—if you like, and by so doing you will be improving your own position too. The ones in rather better circumstances, particularly, can do a great deal, by giving up a little of their spare time—if shop girls, for instance, were to give up one evening in the week to go amongst their poorer neighbours and preach to them the gospel of co-operation and unity, and persuade them to join the "Women Workers' Union"—much might be done without any expenditure of money at all. The great need of everyone, and particularly of the women workers of Dublin, is to overcome silly class prejudices, and that idea that the girl who is doing common work at a lower wage is an inferior creature, not fit to associate with. Unfortunately she often is less cultivated—less civilized; but if each of us felt we were in a measure responsible for her—and above all realised that she is a constant menace to us, for the lowest always tends to drag all surrounding it down to its own level—then a more determined effort would surely be made to raise the level of existence of our more unfortunate sisters.

Now it seems to me that very little will ever be accomplished by wage earners, as such, in the direction of improving their own conditions, because they have no possible means of forcing the employers to give more than they really feel inclined—temporary improvements certainly are gained sometimes by a successful strike, but the gain, as a rule, is very soon negated by an all-round rise in prices, and a compulsory rise of five per cent. in wages is invariably accompanied by a rise of at least ten per cent. in prices. The big employers always manage to be the gainers in the long run, and, as we all know, the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer every year, so that the task of equalising matters becomes yearly more difficult.

The suggestion which I want to make is for the workers to become their own employers, and thus gradually to squeeze the capitalists out of industry altogether. But before this can be accomplished, the organised workers must draw much closer together, many Unions must be amalgamated, and all, without exception, linked together into one national federation. There is certainly a movement in

F. HATCHEL,

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that direction on foot in England at present, but it will have to be carried a great deal farther still.

My suggestion is, roughly, that the Unions, whenever a period of peace has left them with a certain balance in their hands, should start some co-operative industry—which would be inexpensive to set going, and which would produce some commodity extensively used by the workers of the country (this latter provision, because, of course, such an industry would be absolutely boycotted by the employing classes)—and in this industry would be employed—either temporarily or permanently—such members of the Union as found themselves out of work. The moneys usually expended in unemployment benefit would thus be providing the workers with useful employment under the best trades union conditions, and instead of being a fruitless drain on the members who were in employment, would be providing an excellent investment for the Union funds. It may be (I write in ignorance of Trade Union rules, and subject to correction) that the operatives in any skilled trade would object to taking up some other work—necessarily less skilled; but it seems to me that if they were doing it for their own advantage, and not for an employer, and provided they were careful not to poach on the preserves of any other organised body, there could be very little objection to it.

I would suggest that the profits from such an industry should be all retained in the general fund, and not be divided, in the form of extra benefits or otherwise, among the members; as by that means a substantial war chest could in time be built up, which, if some of the strongest Unions carrying on a co-operative side-lines as suggested above, were to federate and place the joint funds so accumulated in the central exchequer, should enable them eventually to lay a hand upon the big industries. This would be made possible in two ways. Firstly, through the independent employment of their out-of-work members by the Unions themselves, a very much larger number would be attracted into the Union ranks, with the result that the available supply of "independent" skilled labour would be so much reduced that their employers would have to think twice before provoking a strike; and in the event of one taking place, the men could hold out twice as long, as the members employed in the co-operative side-industry would keep them supplied with funds. Besides which, by saving dividends, the co-operative labour firm would probably be able to cut prices sufficiently—as their business increased—to considerably raise the purchasing power of the workers' wages, so far as most of the necessaries of life were concerned. This would also tend to make them more independent of their employers, as the less likelihood there were of a strike or lock-out reducing the workers to a very acute state of distress, the less prospect would there be, from the em-

Pork Butcher and
Sausage Maker,
Sausages Fresh Daily.

ployers' point of view, for the success of such measures.

In the course of time, therefore, all manufacturers engaged in these branches of industry taken up by the co-operative Unions, would find themselves forced to lower their prices in order to compete for trade, and if any attempt on their part to lower wages were met by the threat of a strike which would have every prospect of terminating in the workers' favour, they would have no course left but to either reduce dividends or give up their business. It will, of course, be understood that for the success of such a scheme federation among the unions would have to be effected to a far greater extent than at present, in order that, when it became necessary to lower prices in such trades as, for instance, the bakery and ready-made clothing, any attempt to reduce wages might be met by the threat of a general strike in all the big industries as well.

In the event of a strike in any of the trades which had been entered upon by the co-operative Unions, the co-operative branches would continue work, but they would, of course, be very careful to supply only the genuine organised workers, and would, under no circumstances accept fresh customers while the strike was in progress—this in order to guard against the possibility of proprietary distributive agencies protecting themselves against the loss of customers while the ordinary channels of production were closed, by dealing with the co-operative producers, only to drop them again as soon as the strike or lock-out was settled.

This method ought to be distinctly useful in another way also, for as the workers began to get a hold on the big industries—transport, spinning, etc.—by reducing prices while keeping up wages, they should be able so to force down the value of the industry that one firm after another would be glad enough to dispose of their business to the co-operative federation of Unions at quite a reasonable price.

The process would, of course, be very slow and gradual, but that would be all the better, as it would leave the workers time to develop from amongst themselves the administrative ability necessary for controlling capital upon such a large scale, and which, if sprang upon them too suddenly would probably only lead to confusion and land them in the hands of clever and unscrupulous adventurers.

I make no suggestion as to what co-operative industries it would be advisable for the workers to start with, as the Committee of each Union would know best what branch of industry would be best fitted to take up. In the matter of providing capital to start the industry with, if the accumulated funds at the disposal of the Union were insufficient, a special levy on all the members would probably not be objected to for such a productive purpose.

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A Happy Christmas Ending.

By J. C.

It was just a fortnight previous to Christmas, 1913, and the strike had lasted fully two months, so everything was scarce, and food almost impossible to procure. The firm of Messrs. P. Malone and Son, of Malintown, had persistently refused to even receive a deputation from the men, or their Union, although the wages paid to their employees was such, that, living as they were, in a state of semi-nakedness and starvation, was compulsory and not through want of care or economy. Jack Nolan, a bright-faced, cheery fellow, sound in wind and limb, acted as secretary and adviser to the men, who had organised themselves under his direction, to force Malone through power of combination, to recognise that they were tired of pleading for a fair wage and had determined that, with no matter what sacrifices, to end the continued hopeless fight against poverty and distress, and convince Malone that they at least, had a right of voice in a matter that concerned themselves and their families vitally, with the result that the strike above mentioned was declared. It had now spread right through the village and taken root at the railway stores, where the men there in sympathy with their cause had been instructed to handle no goods for the firm of Malone. No goods left for Malones and no goods were received there, as the pickets were sharp and did their duty well.

Malone had a daughter, "May," a winsome lass of about twenty years, and who looked, to all appearances, with favour on the employees of her father, and on their demand for a just payment for work done. Many times she appeared at the meeting of the men, unknown, of course, to her father, for whenever the chance came he impressed on her mind the villainous conduct of his servants, and the absurd and impertinent demand they were making against their best friend. In all these interviews he laid weight on the fact that Jack Nolan was the prime cause of the upheaval of the workers, and protested again and again, that Nolan was a coward at heart, a blackmailer, and a man that if his followers were not careful, would profit by their blindness and stupidity. This led Miss Malone to watch carefully Jack's doings, and when addressing the meetings urging the men to stand firm, but not to use violence, with his commanding voice, a voice that had a true ring in it; she wavered in her belief of her father's opinion of him.

As the days passed, and Christmas was within a few days distance, things assumed a very critical condition; the workers, through seeing their wives and children hungry, got out of hand, and only for the unrelenting pressure brought to bear on them by Jack, tragic deeds would have been enacted, and the tyrant Malone would not have gone about so free and unmolested as he did. The fact of his being allowed to be at large without injury or insult, made his ignorant mind imagine that it was fear and cowardice on the part of the strikers.

During the past few days an intimacy had sprung up between Miss Malone and

Jack, brought about mainly by the fact that Jack's mother was ill, caused by want of proper nourishment for a woman of her age. Jack's wage was, like all the rest of the strikers', a small one, and nothing to spare each week, for the rainy day. The small allowance made by the Union to him on account of his work there, was generally waived by him to allow of all the funds available lasting as far as possible towards the conclusion of the dispute, which was as necessary for the life of the workers as the air they breathed. Miss Malone would bring to Mrs. Nolan some little delicacy that she could possibly hold over nearly every day, and on one occasion a conversation arose between her and Jack about the trouble at the mill, Miss Malone asking Jack would it not be possible for him to stop the strike and end the misery among the workers. "No," said Jack! "It is impossible for me to advise the men otherwise than to stand firm against the tyranny of Mr. Malone."

"It is very hard for me to listen to you speak thus of my father," Miss Malone replied.

"It may be hurtful to you to hear it, but it is also hurtful to me to have to use such a name to the father of one whom I respect so much."

"Do you think it would be possible for me to induce father to change his ways with the men and alter their ways of living?" said May.

"I do not think, Miss Malone, that even you would alter his opinion until such time as he realises that the men are determined to hold out, no matter at what cost to themselves."

"Well I will try, and perhaps the persuasion of his daughter will soften him. I hope that success may crown your efforts. Good evening, Mr. Nolan. I will call again to-morrow evening; who know, perhaps I may have good news."

"Good evening Miss Malone, and God speed your errand, though I have little faith in your success." Jack felt a lonely feeling at his heart when she left, and the seeds of love were gradually being sown in him.

When Miss Malone reached home she went straight to her father's library, who received her with a pleasant smile, this love for his daughter being the only redeeming feature of his otherwise harsh and tyrannical nature. "Father," said May, "I have a request to ask."

"What is it, my child; anything in reason I shall be pleased to grant."

"Father, do you know; I am of opinion that you are treating your men harshly, and that I myself would willingly sacrifice a great deal to see you grant the workers their demands."

"May, my child, what you ask is impossible. These men must be taught a lesson, and be made to remember that I am their employer."

"But consider, father, the awful misery that you are causing to hundreds of your people while money is being uselessly hoarded up which would relieve their wants."

"My dear child, I cannot allow you to interfere with me in this affair, especially when that ruffian Nolan is at their head. He is the person responsible for the misery, not me. He will yet be glad to come to me for comfort."

"I don't think he would get it if he did," answered May. "But I am convinced entirely in the honesty of his dealings with the men, and also that his demands are just and right, and no man would refuse them who had any regard for the workers that toil and slave for him."

"Enough! I will hear no more. Never mention Nolan here again. Don't turn the love I bear you into hate; don't make me forget the promise I made to your mother; but if you champion this disturber again I shall be compelled to act with you as I have done with him, and cast you away from me."

"Do so. Rather would I turn away from you, my father, than have an honest man and a faithful leader think that May Malone had withdrawn her sympathy from a cause that she believed to be purely justice." She passed out and made haste to perform the usual evening visit to Mrs. Nolan, but failed to see Jack, he being away addressing a meeting of his followers. On returning from her visit she fell heavily on the frozen ground and received a nasty sprain on her left foot, and, being unable to walk, became unconscious through cold, pain and exposure in the lane near Jack's cottage, and which was unfrequented except at times when Jack or his mother came or went that way. It was an hour later that Jack returned, desolate and depressed, having just left his comrades without the wherewithal to tide them over Xmas, and thinking to himself that perhaps he was wrong in forcing the matter so far, and bringing the men to such utter want, above all at this season of goodwill. But no; again he pictured the men working like slaves, and the wives and children-at home practically starving, and then his vision changed to the home of his employer, and his mind and heart again became firm, and he resolved that no matter what the result, the fight must go on. Just then he saw some dark form on the road ahead, and, hurrying to the spot, discovered the unconscious body of a female, who, on closer examination, proved to be Miss Malone. He caught her to his breast, fearing that death had overtaken her, but her heart beat faintly, and he thanked God that at least for the present she had not gone to the "bourn from where there is no return." Tenderly lifting her in his strong arms, he forgot all about the difference in their station of life, and the love that lay dormant sprung up in his heart. "May, my darling! Speak to me," he said. But her still cold form answered not. He hastened to his mother's cottage, and Mrs. Nolan, a comely old lady, upon opening the door and seeing Jack with his burden, said in a very excited voice, "Oh, Jack! oh Jack, what is it! What is it!"

"It's Miss Malone, mother; she has met with an accident, and I am afraid she is seriously hurt."

"Oh, the poor lady," echoed Mrs. Nolan, who hurried to make the couch as comfortable as possible. She got hot water and massaged the injured foot, bathed her cold temples, and was rewarded after some effort by a slight colour rising on her cheeks. Gradually her eyelids opened, and she muttered very faintly "Where am I? Oh, I remember! Father, Jack is an honest man, he is true to his trust, and I love him in spite of what you may say against him."

Jack was as much astonished as his mother, as, although he loved May, he never for a moment thought his love was returned, ran to Mary's side, held her in his arms and pressed his lips to hers—the first kiss of love between them.

His mother then told him to go for a doctor, as she did not know exactly what to do. Jack hurried away, feeling himself as if walking on air, proud of his love, even though she was the daughter of his colleagues' oppressor, and in the knowledge that his love was returned. He searched in vain for a doctor, the village medico having been called to a patient in the next town. He determined to see Mr. Malone and inform him of his daughter's accident. He accordingly proceeded in haste to Malone's house, where the servant informed him that Mr. Malone would not see him, and to be gone from the door.

"But I must see him; it is a matter that concerns his daughter."

"What do you know about my daughter, you blackguard" came a voice from within, and then followed Malone himself.

"Your daughter has met with a serious accident. I cannot find a doctor, and she lies at present in my house in care of my mother."

"You scoundrel. How dare you inveigle my daughter into your house. Is this a new scheme of yours, when your other fails. I would rather my daughter dead than mixing with such scum."

"I have no time to waste with such as you, sir; but were it not for the fact that you are her father you would bitterly repent these words. If you refuse to send a doctor to your daughter, I at least, will get one for the woman I love."

"You love! You love! I will go at once and take my daughter home. Go back to your house, you low dog, such a lady as my daughter would never mate with such as you." He slammed the door, and there was nothing left for Jack to do but go in his search for a doctor.

Mr. Malone, immediately on Jack's departure, got his carriage and pair and was driving towards Nolan's home when he happened on a meeting of the men strikers, and immediately on seeing him they forgot all law and order, and, being without their adviser, and not under any control, the sight of the cause of all their misery being too much for them, they rushed his carriage with the intention of doing him severe injury. The horses, terrified at the shouting of the men, took flight, and, getting their bits between their teeth, galloped off at an alarming rate and threatened to dash the occupant to death at any moment.

Jack was on his way home, unsuccessful in his search for a doctor, hearing the sound of angry words and the rush of horses' feet, hastened to see what was wrong. He crossed the hedge from the field, just in time to see coming towards him the runaway carriage, and, bracing himself for the task, rushed to the nearest horse, and hanging on to the rein, dragged, by sheer force, the horses to the side of the ditch. The carriage was overturned, but the horses were brought to a standstill. Several strikers were soon on the scene,

and, pulling the injured carriage into the road, they found that Mr. Malone had received severe injuries. When they saw the results of their hasty rush they regretted their action. They attended to his injuries as best they could, carried him home, and placed him in bed. Jack hastened to procure a horse from Malone's stable, and went with all possible haste to the adjoining town, eight miles distant, where the doctor had gone to, brought him at once to Malone's house where, after an examination, the doctor pronounced his injuries very grave. Jack then drove to his own cottage and found Miss Malone much better, Mrs. Nolan having tendered to her in a way that surprised herself, and making her very comfortable indeed. He told her gently of her father's accident, not mentioning the fact that it was in coming to take her from Jack's home he met them. He then carried her to the carriage waiting, and drove with all haste to her father, where the doctor was busy doing his utmost to bring Mr. Malone back to consciousness. May was brought to her father's side, Jack consoling her; for the love she bore her father was great indeed, and the angry words she used to him in their last interview made her more anxious that her father at least might be able to recognise her and obtain his forgiveness in case the worst should happen. All through the day—Xmas. eve—Jack and May (now much better) watched over the silent form, but no sign of returning consciousness appeared till about 9 o'clock in the evening, Mr. Malone slowly opening his eyes, called for his daughter, and May going forward, was warned by the doctor not to speak too much, as he was in a very dangerous condition, and any little exertion might prove fatal.

"May my child," said her father, in a low weak voice, "I want to speak to you! All during my stupor I was constantly tormented by dreams of the workers and their wives and children. Their destitution, caused by my hard ways, was always before me. So now I want to make amends before it is too late. Tell Nolan that I have not forgotten his noble deed in rushing to save me, and placing himself in deadly peril. Send him to the workers, and tell him that their demands are granted! and that the wages for the months they were on strike shall be paid to them immediately, so as to give them cheer to-morrow, Xmas. day. Wish them all a happy Xmas. and ask them for their forgiveness. He then fell into a sleep, and the doctor told May that the crisis had come, and it now required little time to see whether he would live or die. May kissed her father, and hastened to inform Jack the glad news of her father's relenting, and that the sorrows were over for the workers.

Jack left to bring the good news to his fellow men, who cheered and cheered that they had won the day, and that the awful suspense and anxiety was over, and dispersed to their homes to bring the comforting news to their wives and children.

Jack, calling again at Malone's to see how the patient was progressing, was told that Mr. Malone had passed the critical point, and would recover now with care, also that Mr. Malone was most anxious to see him as soon as possible. On Jack going to his bedside, Malone asked Jack to forgive him for all the cruel words he used towards him, and, grasping his hand, he warmly shook it, and then placed it in Miss Malone's, and said, with a catch in his voice and tears rolling down his cheeks, that his one wish was that Jack should take over the management of the mill, look after his people well, and, as soon as the new year was entered upon, he hoped

to be strong enough to give May unto Jack's charge for better or worse.

"I forgive you fully," said Jack, "for anything you may have said or done to me, and will look with pride now after your interests as well as your workers. The prize you have given me in your daughter, will be safe in my keeping, and we shall begin a new year friends, both employer and employed."

"My darling," said Jack, turning to May, and placing his arms round her waist lovingly, said "our happiness is now complete."

She nestled into his arms, and pressing her head on his breast said, in one word, "darling."

They moved towards the window. Twelve o'clock struck by the village clock, and the bells of Xmas. rang out: "Peace on earth; goodwill towards men."

CADIT QUAESTIO.

Michael asked me yesterday—
(Michael is a kid I know),
Asked me if I'd kindly say
Whither comes the fleecy snow;
So I frowned becomingly—
('Twouldn't do to look a fool),
Told him half the weighty things
That I ever learnt at school.
Michael cocked his head aside,
Said he wasn't satisfied

Michael pondered for a while,
Sore, perplexed, it seemed to me;
How to gather common-sense
Out of my philosophy;
Then he asked me plain and straight
(Said he'd thought it long ago)
How 'tis every Christmas time
That we don't have lots of snow.
When I brushed the point aside
Michael wasn't satisfied.

Next he asked me why on earth—
(If it could be managed so),
We don't have a Christmas day
Every second week, you know?
This, he said, would please him much!
Oh! it would be glorious fun,
Would not all the folk rejoice—
Everybody—everyone?
When I haltingly replied,
Michael wasn't satisfied.

Michael listened patiently,
Then the beggar laughed outright;
And of what he thought of me
I have no desire to write;
But he wanted to be told—
(This is what called forth the rhyme)—
Why we cannot all rejoice
Any how, or any time.
When I tactfully replied,
Michael was NOT satisfied.

OSCAR.

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A TRAMP.

"Feeling quite better, now?"

The listless figure addressed looked up at the trim, smiling nurse.

"Yes, I suppose I am," he said, drearily, as he passed on; "but"—with a mirthless laugh—"I feel too weak even to beg."

The nurse scanned the face of the outgoing patient a moment keenly, then, with a brisk "Good-night!" she passed on to her duties.

Down the broad steps of the hospital, and through the crowded city streets the ragged figure took its way with shuffling uncertain steps. A fortnight before an ambulance had brought him to the hospital in an unconscious state. A motor had skidded, they told him, and for a while the poor, wasted life seemed perilously near its perplexing journey's end.

He had suffered more from shock than from injuries; his nerves were totally shattered; even now at every sound he started. The incessant traffic made his head throb.

The streets were unusually crowded; he remembered someone had said it was Christmas eve. He wondered, in a vague sort of way, how many years ago was it since Christmas had meant anything to him.

Yet, once he had had both position and prospects in his native city. The manager of the firm where he had been employed had moved him on a slight pretext to make room for a ne'er-do-well brother of his own.

It is hard to regain a footing on the ladder of life.

The dismissed man fought for a while against the fierce odds, then lost hope, and drifted where'er the tide listed.

He felt tired now, and breathless; he saw the flaring lights of a public house, and thought he would be the better of a drink. He had a few shillings in his pocket that some men in the ward had collected and given to him on his leaving. He went into the shop, asked for a drink and drank it greedily.

The place was crowded; the noise of raised voices, the clinking of glasses soon proved too much for his shattered nerves.

He shambled to the door, and so on again out in the streets. He felt dazed. A strange, uncontrollable wish came to him for the quiet of the country roads, anywhere, so long as he got free of the jostling crowds.

A tram near him had just stopped on its way to the suburbs. He crossed the road deliberately, and stepped inside. The electric light showed his rags up woefully against the plush cushions. A well-dressed, perfumed lady drew ever so slightly away as he sat down beside her, the disagreeable odour of iodoform still hanging heavily about him. Her little daughter looked askance at his rags, then from him to the cold face of her mother. Her lips formed the words, "a tramp!"

It was nothing. He was quite used to that now.

The tram stopped at a pleasant suburb. He got out, and walked slowly along a deserted road bounded by hedges.

The air seemed to revive him, the quietness to soothe him. Long ago this road had been a favourite with him, and a girl whose face even now haunted him.

On he went with half-closed eyes, his fancy conjuring up the short-lived dream of his dead yesterday.

There was nothing of the typical Christmas weather about the night, the air was balmy, the heavens ablaze with stars, and silent fields stretched away on either side.

The steps of the ragged pedestrian lagged. He crossed a stile, and lay down in

a field. The grass was wet with night-dew, but he was too accustomed to that to mind it.

Half the length of the field away stood the cottage of the owner of it. It kept him from feeling utterly alone. He experienced a strange tugging sensation at his heart. His mouth felt parched. He longed for a drink of water. A great fear assailed him. Was he dying here and alone? A cold sweat of terror broke over him. Swift as it came, the fear passed. He lay back again, his face to the sky, his outstretched hand clutching the short grass.

A langour stole over him.

He was on the road again—he and she, and the hedges were white with hawthorn. Beyond the spreading fields the solemn hills sloped away, and overhead the stars came out and watched them—the same stars that looked down now on the peaceful face of the dead tramp.

MEADB CAOMANAC.

TEDDY'S DARK XMAS. EVE.

Little Teddy Byrne sat cowering over the grate where the fire used to be. His mother sat on a stool nursing a sick baby, who now and again moaned pitifully.

"Why is father so long, mother?" asked the little fellow.

"Because, dear, he has gone to see the manager of the mill, and if that gentleman is out, your father will have to wait until he returns. But, perhaps, he will bring us good news, and that, Teddy, is worth waiting for."

Teddy did not reply. He was getting used to seeing his father come home sad and weary. He, poor little fellow, was beginning to understand too, why his mother seemed to go thinner and more care-worn every day. He remembered a Xmas. day in the past when he had got so many nice things to eat, and had had so many fine toys given to him, that in his prayers that night he had asked God to send Xmas. every day. And on this Xmas. eve he sat shivering over an empty grate.

"Ah! There's father," he cried; starting up and running to open the door, as a heavy tread sounded on the stair. His mother looked up anxiously, but one look at her husband's face made her own face sad.

"No settlement yet, nor sign of one, Mary," said he. "I believe myself 'tis all that new manager's doing. He wants to make the big profit out of the poor workers, and get a good name for himself with the owner of the mill."

"Ah, Tom," she replied, "'tis weary waiting I am, with not a bite to put into the mouths of the children, nor a bit of coal to make a fire. 'Tis a mighty poor Xmas. we'll have entirely. Did you see the manager yet?"

"Indeed we did. Tim O'Hagan and myself went up to the house, and he told us we could go in on the old terms."

Mary lifted her head proudly. "I would die of starvation, Tom, before I'd do that; but oh! the poor children" and the tears filled her eyes.

Little Teddy was earnestly watching his mother, and thinking. He had often seen the mill-owner drive past in a splendid carriage, and now his father said Mr. Guest was in London. Then Mr. Guest did not know of the strike, he thought to himself. Surely if he knew so many people had no bread to eat, he would at once throw open the mill and give them the wages they asked for. He, himself, had so much money that he would not miss a little more. Oh! if he only knew.

Teddy sat up straight in sudden resolve. He would let the mill-owner know all about it. That Penny which Mike O'Donnell gave him, and which he was saving up to

help to get a sixpenny ball, would buy a stamp. Several times he had thought of buying bread for the baby when she was crying, but mother had once told him that baby could not eat bread. Perhaps Paddy Ryan, who was a little better off than he, could get him an envelope and a piece of paper; and although he did not know in which London street Mr. Guest lived, he knew where "The Towers" was, and he would send his letter there. His father and he had often walked down the road past the beautiful house, and Teddy had longed to have a race up the smooth avenue, with the trees almost meeting overhead. Seeing his father and mother absorbed in their talk, he quietly slipped out. Sure enough, Paddy Ryan was outside, and after swearing him to secrecy, and borrowing a stump of lead pencil, Teddy and he sat down at a stone in the yard to write their precious letter. The paper was dirty and there were smuts on the envelope, but they were the only ones Paddy could get, so they had to do.

Just as they were finishing their laborious task, Paddy's mother called him, and he had to go. Teddy was too impatient to wait, and as Paddy did not return immediately, he rushed off to post his letter. The post office was the corner shop at a busy crossing, and usually Teddy was very careful to look both ways before attempting to cross, but to-night he was too excited and ran straight on. A shout almost at his ear made him start back, only to strike against the wheel of a carriage which was passing at a good pace. The rapidly revolving wheel sent him reeling forward, and, as he fell, one of his legs doubled up under him. He was conscious of an intense shooting pain, and then he knew no more.

"Poor little beggar! How he held on to that letter is a mystery. Was it not strange to find it addressed to you? Read it again, Guest," were the first words Teddy heard when he opened his eyes. He tried to collect his thoughts. Surely he was in a carriage, and was that his letter of which they were speaking. What was in it? He remembered saying that mother's heart was broken, because baby was dying, and they had no bread. Was Mr. Guest there? Ay, surely, for now he heard a voice read his letter, and, raising himself a little, he saw Mr. Guest's face. Was that a tear he saw stealing down the gentleman's cheek?

At that moment the other occupant of the carriage noticed him. "Hallo! my little man; how are you now," said he in a cheery voice.

"All right, sir, thank you," said Teddy.

Just then the carriage drew up, and Teddy was carried out, and into the nicest room he had ever seen. A doctor, who had been telephoned for, was waiting, and, after examining Teddy, he said that he would be slightly lame for life, but otherwise he would be all right.

Teddy's father and mother were notified at once by Mr. Guest himself, and the couple of large hampers that accompanied him showed that he had not forgotten either their needs or the season. Next day, to the surprise of all, notices were posted on the gates of the mill stating that work would be resumed on the following day at the increased rate of wages.

That happened years ago, and if now you walk down the Mill Road of a certain northern town any day at lunch-time you will probably meet the manager. He has a slight halt in his walk, but his cheerful face and bright eyes are very attractive. He is our old friend, Teddy.

A. M. SCOTT.

THE WIDOW'S CURSE.

By An Claspín Dub.

I.

NEATH THE SHADOWS OF SLIABH COLLAIN.

Maire was the eldest of the family. She was eighteen years of age on Small Christmas eve and this was Christmas night—the one night in all the year for gladness and merry-making—but the household of the Kellys knew little of Christmas happiness for many years. No Christmas ever came to them as long as Maire could remember but there was a death of some one of their family, either in their own house or in one of their friends'; and to-night Maire put her little sister and two brothers to bed and sat watching by the bedside of her dying mother. The heavy breathing of the worn figure in the bed jarred on the sensitive nerves of the young and tender girl, as she sat by the fire gazing into its glowing embers and wondering what the morning would bring. It was lonely in the room, the fire was making her sleep, and, notwithstanding her mother's strict injunctions to go to bed, she was determined to watch through the night, or at least until her mother recovered from the spell of weakness into which she had fallen about an hour before. But it was hard to keep awake. The holly and ivy she had so tastefully placed seemed now so much useless lumber. The seasonable greetings—most of them the work of her own hands, were now as so many mockeries and the sight of the worn figure in the bed unnerved her completely. She went to the window and looked out. The snow had ceased falling, and the blue of the sky was intensified by the whiteness of the snowy carpet which covered the fields and gardens as far as she could see around. The candles were still burning in the windows of the neighbouring farmhouses, for it was not yet midnight; but the silence was intense and oppressive. The neigh of the horse from the adjacent stable, or the scream of an awakening hen was all that broke the stillness as the minutes dragged wearily along. Now and again Maire turned from the window to look upon the pallid face of her sleeping mother. Consumption, the doctor said, would take her before the spring; but it seemed hard to think that one, who only a short while before seemed the embodiment of good health, would now be called away so quickly. Only two years before, on St. Stephen's day, Maire had walked behind the coffin of her father, and last Christmas, her aunt lay dead in a neighbouring room, and so it was as long as she could recall—now a brother, now a sister, now an aunt—always a relative called away on Christmas day. Christmas happiness then she never knew; and she wondered why. Would she know it ever? These were, her thoughts as she looked out on the virgin snow and gazed dreamily towards the stars twinkling brightly through the frosty air.

One by one the shutters of the neighbouring windows were closed, and the lights lost to her view. She turned towards the bed and was surprised to find her mother awake, gazing on her with a sad, compassionate look in her soft grey eyes.

Maire went to the bedside, and, taking her mother's hand in hers, asked her how she felt. For some time her mother was silent, but at last, controlling her emotion, she told Maire to close the shutters and bring a chair beside her. Tears stood in her eyes as she looked on her daughter sitting patiently waiting for her words. At last they came.

"Maire," she said, "I am feeling well, never felt so calm and quiet; but I will not see you to-morrow, and I want to tell you a story which affects you as well as me. Maire, we are cursed! The curse of Widow Kelliher has followed us for ever so long, and to-night it has fallen on me."

"My father was a rent-warner, and for years he collected the rents for Lord Trener here around and in Cillmhaile. He used to go to Widow Kelliher to collect her rent, and every year or gale day she paid him, but, God forgive him to-night, he wanted her little place, and nothing my mother could do would prevent him. So he said she did not pay her rent and he was sent to put her out, and he went on a Christmas eve to do it. We begged of him to stay at home and leave her in for Christmas, but we might as well be talking to the wind. I remember it well Maire. She was very poor at the time, and when he went in she was boiling a little skillet of stirabout on a couple of smuthauns of bogdeal for her six little ones. The Christmas candle was lighting on the window sill, and she asked him to let her give their supper to the childer, and then she would give him possession. But he flung the stirabout out in the street, skillet and all, and told her to eat it outside. And when he had them all out he flung the Christmas candle out after them, and locked the door. Kate Kelliher, God forgive her for it, went down on her knees, and prayed that he may never light a Christmas candle but for a corpse of his own. And she got her prayer. Every Christmas since we have a death in our family, and in order to remove that curse someone belonging to the Kelliher's must light a candle in that window—for this by right is Kate Kelliher's house, and there is no chance for us until that is done. Maire, I know you and Jack Kelliher are great, and if he asks you, take him and save all of us that are left. He is poor, but let him light a Christmas candle of his own here as owner of this house and we are—"

Maire lifted her mother's head as she was seized with a spasmodic fit of coughing, and when it was over waited for her mother to resume, but she only pressed her hand when Maire leaned over her to kiss her cheek as she passed away. As Maire closed the lashes over the blue grey eyes the Christmas candle flickered, blazed and went out. The curse of Kate Kelliher had proved itself again, and Maire Kelly was alone with the dead.

II.—DESERTED IN DUBLIN.

"Yes, said Jack, I will go and hear him; but I will not believe what he says. I've heard men like him before, but I never knew them to do any good; all raimeis and balderdash. I've heard Willie Merdond talking down in Ennis about the evicted tenants, but where are they to-day—the most of them in the workhouse, and more of them, like myself, working like slaves here, or in the workhouse if they can't—"

"There he is Jack" exclaimed Bill Coleman, as a tall man with stooped shoulders, in a whitish waterproof overcoat passed by. "That's Larry; we'd better go inside and hear him."

Jack consented, and they went in just as the applause which greeted the man who had passed by them a few moments before was dying away. He was still standing at the head of the hall, his hair hanging carelessly over his forehead, his eyes fixed on the ground. He was out of his waterproof and his shoulders looked straighter, and his face several years younger, as he started to speak. He spoke routine for several minutes but then, warming to his subject, his right hand pounding the table vigorously whilst his eyes blazed, as he jerked out sentence after sentence of denunciation on the employers of sweated labour in the city.

"Go," he said "in the morning into the factories and the industrial dens of your proud metropolis, and work your lives out there day after day; give them not alone the labour of your hands, but the blood of your hearts, squeezed out of you in the impure air and in the unwholesome and insufficient food which the miserable pittance they give you in the shape of wages allows you to buy. Go, and when your young lives are wasted, when your hopes are broken, and you have given of your best—go into the abode of misery with the badge of a beggar on you for the rest of your life—go into the workhouse!

"Do not take my words for it; do not credit me if you can deny it, if you can live on it—if anyone in this hall to-night can live decently on the wage he or she is getting for their labour. I defy contradiction when I say you are slaves of the cruellest system that ever disgraced the face of any country. You don't know what freedom or justice is—you have no conception of them. You were born in slavery and you allow yourself to live in it. Do you know that the capitalistic gadgrind under which you labour has no parallel—and God only knows when you will free yourself from it."

He sat down, amidst an outburst of applause, which had not ceased when Jack Kelliher was on his feet, facing manfully the crowd of staring faces around him. It took him some time to get under way, and when at last he did find words his voice was broken and tremulous.

"The speaker," he said "told you you were slaves to the worst system of gadgrind in the world—does he know what the landlord system is? Does he know that I have been the victim of landlordism

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before, and that to-day I am a slave as well now—a slave in my work, with a wage fit to keep me barely alive? Does he know that many like me have been victims of both? Does he know that one is as bad as the other?"

Complete silence reigned when Jack Kelliher sat down. The excitement of the crowd was intense, everyone was anxious to hear what "Larry" would say in reply, and their anxiety had not long to wait for relief. His reply was characteristic.

"I am delighted" he said, to find a man with a soul at last, and courage to proclaim it. I do know the landlord class, and further I do know that until the evicted take up their own case no other people will; no other class can do your own work for you; they may bless you when you start, or curse you as you meddle or mix with their interests, but they cannot stop a just cause if you engage in it in earnest. I hope our friend will wait in the room after the meeting, so that I may have a longer chat with him."

It was an hour afterwards that Jack met the speaker. The speaker he found to be a dual personality. The leader he was on the platform; the man and counsellor of it, and as man to man they talked and exchanged confidences.

Jack, since he left his native parish had had an eventful time. It was now some seven months since he bade his old mother adieu and went to Liverpool. Failing to find suitable work there he came across to Dublin, and for some months his luck was the hardest. At last he got some kind of work which kept him alive. But a week ago he was dismissed, and might have starved but for a pal, who divided with him, and on whose suggestion he came to hear Larry Jimson that night. The labour leader read how matters stood with Jack, and, locking his office, both men stepped out into the streets. It was past midnight, but "Larry" knew a respectable house where he would get Jack lodgings until he could get him some work, and, without mentioning the matter to him, he faced along Tara street, and into Great Brunswick Street, and turned into Westland Row. He spoke little but smoked away as they passed along the now deserted streets; but, at the corner of one Jack started and stood. A girl was sitting on a window sill, and, in the full light of the electric bulb, Jack recognized Maire O'Kelly. She was crying bitterly, and was almost unable to speak she was so overcome with her situation. Her story was harder than that of Jack. A month after her mother's death, Maire gave up the farm—she said she had no claim to it—so she sold off the stock and sent her little brother and sisters into a

convent school, and gave all the money for their keep and education, save a few pounds that paid her way to Dublin, where she had by advertisement obtained a situation. For three months she slaved there until her health broke down, and when she was fit to resume work they did not want her back. Her money was now gone, so she must take any kind of work that would come her way, and the work she did get was in a match factory. What she endured there she could not tell; but, to one used to the green fields and the open country the cramping influence and the unwholesome fumes must have been awful. Then, one day she got jammed in the lift. Her hand was caught, and as she was temporarily disabled out she must go. For several weeks she was ill, but when, at last she was sufficiently recovered, she went around in a vain endeavour to get work of some kind or other. She got work for a few hours a day from the wife of a gentleman who lived out in one of the Dublin suburbs, but this allowed her barely two bad meals each day, and with winter fully upon her, and her clothing not of the best, her hope sank within her. Even the casual work from the lady ceased, and for three days she existed on what threepence purchased for her. That very day she had called on this lady, the wife of a fire-eating patriot, whose speeches were punctuated with swords and bullets—for any kind of work, but after calling three times during the day she was told by this amiable lady that she had done all she could, and that she would advise her to leave Dublin, and go home. In the heavy drizzle all day she had walked about, until now she was drenched through, she had sunk exhausted on the first available seat. The trials she suffered during that night she did not tell, but her tears were dried as she found that now she would not be deserted. It was not easy to find both lodgings at such an hour in the morning, and when it was done Larry Jimson sat in Jack's room for some while and discussed his prospects.

"Ah," said Jack, "I am glad I met you. I know what earnestness is to-night. I will for ever be thankful and—" But Larry was gone.

It is Christmas again, and a bright fire of turf burns in the kitchen of Kate Kelliher. Holly and mistletoe and seasonable mottoes are hung around. The walls are newly limewashed, and the furniture newly painted, and the fragrant smell of roast turkey comes from a pot by the fire. Everything is bright and shining and Maire Kelly moves quickly about,

making all arrangements complete for the night.

Jack is gone to the railway station to meet his little brother and sisters-in-law who are coming by the same train as Larry Jimson, who is to be their guest for Christmas day. At last they arrive and are welcomed profusely by all, but more particularly by Maire. It is not easy for Larry, who knows little of a farmer's house, to make his way towards the fire to which he is invited, for it is twilight, and no light is yet burning inside, save that given by the fire, which makes the shadows dance fantastically on the walls.

When all is over and they have collected in all their goods, Jack lights the Christmas candle and places it on the window sill, and Widow Kelleiher prays that all may be well and happy again. As the flame strengthens around the wick the shadows disappear into the corners, as the sorrows fade away from those affected by the widow's curse.

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Christmas Day in Ireland.

BY "SHELLBACK."

ONCE again we are approaching the great Festival of Christmas, dear to the hearts of everyone, but doubly so to the sons and daughters of Ireland, at home and abroad. Dear, because it is a time when the good fairies are supposed to be working to their full pitch, in their good natured line. Dolls for little Kitties, motor cars, and tin soldiers for little Neddies, and a kiss for the old man and the old woman, from the days gone by. With most people it is a season of "Peace on earth and good will towards man," when, for the time being, poverty takes flight, and everybody imagines themselves millionaires, and everything in the shop is theirs—always providing they have the money to buy. It is also a fine time for the "hupper" classes—a time for re-arranging their leases and rent-rolls, and acting the part of the fairy godmother to their less fortunate countrymen; that, while not costing them too much, provides them with all sorts of gratification, and what they call "experiences." Then there are the ruling classes. They, too, consider Christmas a pleasant time. They also prate about it being a time of peace on earth and good will towards man, and their conduct shows how firmly they believe it. Let us hark to the boom of the guns along the Turkish frontier. Let us in imagination view the marching and counter-marching of the armies of the Balkans, armed with the most devilish devices for murder, and let us count the thousands and thousands of our proletarian brothers, whose maimed and disfigured bodies carpet the track of advancing civilization in that part of the world, and let us fully appreciate the fact that it is quite within the range of probabilities that even before the dawn of Christmas Day shall break the nice, kind gentlemen who rule us will be demonstrating their belief in the peace on earth theory by flying at each other's throat, and with Dreadnought and bayonet trying their level best to stain Europe red with blood.

Of course, I quite agree that we, the workers, don't want that sort of Christmas. We much prefer our old friend of the icy cap and snowy mantle, with his old face shining with the glow of health, peace, and good nature. We are quite sure that he is a decent old chap, who would be very good if he was let, and we would gladly spend the time of his visit in feasting and merry-making were it not that somehow the cold of the winter winds has a way of sneaking even through the cabin walls, right up to the turf fire itself, and often finds its way to the deepest recesses of our hearts that would entirely freeze us if there was no immediate prospect of hot scalding tears to restore them to something like normal temperature.

However, it comes but once a year, and, rich or poor, we all have our own way of paying due regard to it. In England the day is spent in eating and drinking all kinds of indigestible compounds that, like virtues, usually bring their own reward. A few days before the festival itself the shops are dressed up, and vie with the ladies in showing off their charms. The clown makes his bow, and the merry Christmas

Pantomime is to the fore again, with its time-worn catches and jokes, clothed in new raiment, it is true, but laughed at and enjoyed for all the world, as if they were never heard of before, or as if the audience was not in the secret. "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year" greets even the strangers as they journey to and fro with all the ruddy-cheeked pleasure in the world. Everyone seems happy, and pleasure reigns supreme, despite the fact that poverty as well as plenty has a firm footing here. In Ireland there is an attempt at similar hilarity, and to some measure the people enjoy themselves, but the friendly Christmas greeting means very little to most people in that country beyond the fact that the "wisher" himself is in a merry mood, and has serious intentions of enjoying himself somewhere and somehow. To the ordinary workers there the wish savours rather more of tragedy than comedy, for to them the coming of Christmas does not mean just merely the hanging up of holly and mistletoe, the crackling of yule logs, or the mixing of punch. On the contrary, although they are proverbially light-hearted, they are also proverbially generous in their affections, loving and kind in their home life, and although they may "welt the flure in the rale old style," to many thousands of their class, in their hillside cabins, in their farmsteads, in office, mill, or shop, the approach of Christmas brings up memories of other and past Christmases, when the heart was younger, the family ties unbroken, and the home brighter, though the store was slender, when the glitter of hope's bright promise of better days coming, lit up every eye, and lent flavour to the "praties" of the poorest poor, so that they really seemed to burst their skins with gladness, and enjoy the prospect with the rest.

True it is that in every land, as well as in Ireland, the people mingle sorrow, more or less, with their Christmas cheer. That places in the family circle once occupied, but now vacant, are particularly noticeable on these occasions. That even death itself may have taken away some one of the home group—some one beloved. This is the common lot of humanity, but it is a remarkable thing that in the latter case the Irish people, though their hearts are sick to bursting point, know how to meekly submit to the bitter blow with a quivering and reverend "Thy Will be done." Ireland, although smarting from the wrongs in a greater degree than most nations suffer from, has in addition one that is peculiarly her own. She has suffered for many years from the ravages of a greater monster than even death, and with this Christmas will come the memory of a Christmas that Dan or Norah spent with them at home—the Christmas before Pat or Eileen went to America—and for the next few days the one looked-for event upon which their happiness at Christmas will depend is the postman's arrival at their door, and the welcome that gentleman will receive is assured; for, sure, won't he be bringing a letter from the heart that is over the sea to that of father or mother, sister or brother at home.

To many thousands of our people the Christmas greeting will conjure up a picture of Dublin Bay or Queenstown Harbour. Once again they will see the noble steamer swinging to her anchors; once again they will brave the passage from the beach to her tall and merciless side; will, again, in their minds, clamber to her deck and join the weeping multitude who, like themselves are experiencing a parting more bitter than the grave. Once more will they feel the terrible shock when the order was given "for the shore," and the full force of the parting became suddenly realised, and filled their hearts with that bitter black despair that the emigration curse seems to have bequeathed to so many of the Irish race. True, many succeeded in the countries they went to; but at what a cost? Many more were no better off than when in the old land; for it did not follow, no more than it does now, that every Irishman going to England was sure of becoming a British general, just because so many of them had attained that rank; or that an Irishman in the United States, Canada, or Australia was a future statesman because Ireland has been so well represented in the past on the governing bodies of these States. There was one thing they were sure of in the foreign country—they could live.

The great red winter sun still rises and sets over an Ireland where families have been decimated by the continued operations of cursed, cruel conditions for generations, that by denying men and women the right to live in their own land have forced them in their youth and strength to voluntary exile. The screw of the landlord and the unjust employer has driven them away in their thousands from their homes and their lovers to earn their bread in foreign countries, under strange laws and among unfamiliar surroundings; and the old men and women they left behind draw up to the chimney corner as the great day of Christmas draws near, and pray that they may live to see it if only to hear how Barney or Mary is doing in that country they have gone to, that seems so very far away, that christenings and tombstones just mark the miles. "A Happy Christmas" implies news from absent dear ones, who, in the flesh, have in many cases gone for ever. "A Merry Christmas" is a mere make belief among the poorer classes.

Well, we must not any longer put up with it. We must make it possible for a Christmas greeting to mean, as it ought to do, fun and devilment in every Irish home. Without saying one word either for or against Home Rule, Free Trade, Liberalism, or Toryism, I need only point out that the passing of the Irish Nation has been steadily proceeding during all the years these forces have occupied the political arena. That be any of them, either good or bad, the emigration of the Irish people has continued.

It is an admitted fact that the cause of Irish emigration is a wages question (like most of the troubles affecting every one of the workers in the British Isles), and with wages questions none of the political parties propose to deal.

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In our Underclothing and Millinery Department will be found pinafores for the little girls and boys; dresses, coats, hats, fur sets, ladies' blouses; millinery, underclothing, furs and coats. This is where the sensible married man and woman come to. Huge Stock of sensible presents.

In our Ready-Made Clothing Department will be found men's, youths' and boys' clothing of all classes; hats, caps, ties, silk mufflers and boys' jerseys. This is where you will find the right article at the right price. Hundreds of common-sense gifts.

In our Fancy Department will be found toys, dolls, Christmas cards, and thousands of lovely presents to make the children happy.

We have made elaborate arrangements for the Christmas rush. We are well prepared to serve you, and as in the past, our Stocks are large, our variety enormous, our price absolutely the lowest in the city. We give you a hearty invitation to come and see our Christmas Display, believing we have exactly what you want.

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The wage earners of Ireland alone must force the pace towards improved conditions and the stopping of such wasting horrors as emigration; for "who would be free himself must strike the blow" is a proverb as true to-day as it was the day it was first written.

Then let us all be doing our little bit. The organization and combination of all workers and of both sexes, representative of every phase of industrial activity, is the one method by which the old and hated conditions will be for ever effaced. Such an organization could establish a system of Government, both national and local, that would secure for every Irish worker a fair share of the produce of his or her labour, and drive out of existence the sharks and the Shylocks of the political and commercial classes whose one desire is to re-people Ireland with their serfs. Under industrial rule Ireland, though an old, old country, would present all the attractions of a newly-discovered land teeming with wealth. The "Transport Workers' Federation" ought to prove a good basis upon which to construct national industrial solidarity. With its leader, Jim Larkin, it done more last year to check emigration by raising the wages of the workers than any of the cult of politics has done ever since the great betrayal.

With a solid national army of men and women, whose first care would be to secure their own happiness, what a different note would be sounded by the greeting "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year": and what a glorious time would our people enjoy when, on that particular Christmas next following the culmination of their hopes, instead of the postman, the Barneys and Maries, the Paddies and Eileens, would come joyously trooping from all parts of the earth "back to Ould Ireland again."

A New Year's Wish.

Health and the fairest gifts of life
I wish from my heart for thee,
Whilst the bells are ringing the glad year
in
In a tumult of melody.

The pure, deep joys of the soul be thine—
Zeal for the loftiest cause—
May never a care have dimmed thy path
When the year to its ending draws.

A kindly heart for the lowly and weak—
Scorn for the lust of gold—
All the glory of love and its ecstasy
For you may the New Year hold.

And thus while the bells ring merrily on,
I breathe this prayer for thee,
May thy noblest hopes and fondest dreams
Their ripest fruition see.

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Our Irish Children.

The most beautiful thing that Ireland has are her children—I might almost say the most beautiful thing in the world is an Irish child.

I have been in many lands, and though children are always beautiful, nowhere have I seen quite the same ethereal soul beauty in the eyes, the same brilliancy of colour, the same quickness of mind as among our little ones.

A race which produces such children should be great. In their clear, wild eyes there is hope, in their shapely limbs there should be strength and freedom for themselves and their country.

Yet Ireland is not free, and our race does not produce to-day many heroes or great minds. I think it is because there are sombre buildings called schools, where a system invented by England, and carried out by ourselves, is enforced, and into these schools all the beautiful child life of Ireland is forced.

In them the children are taught (it is easy to do so now for generations have been so taught) to forget the high deeds of our ancestors, the language they spoke and the songs of their poets, and they are taught also to forget the beauty and the sacredness of the land, the beauty of the mountains, the lakes and the rivers, the sweetness of the growing grass and of the flowers.

Once I was going to buy a nightingale in a cage, the bird had been lately caught, and the man who was selling it said:—"You must keep it in the dark, ma'am, for a week or so till it has time to forget Nature. I have never been able to buy a wild bird since I heard those words. Our children are being taught to forget Nature, and in crueller conditions than the caged wild birds, who are given plenty of food, when people do not forget them, while Irish children are being starved till all the strength and brightness is gone out of them and the overflowing life-force is tamed.

They come out of those terrible schools, children with the weariness and weakness of old age and suffering upon them and unable to help themselves or their nation.

School life must always, I think, entail a certain amount of suffering on a child. The hours of restraint and effort are hard, but the joy of acquiring new powers compensates when the the life-force is left intact and buoyant and the physical health is unimpaired.

The Irish National Schools' suffering is turned into torture by long hours of restraint, rendered sterile by starvation. In Ireland the National Schools are the anti-chambers of the lunatic asylums and the workhouse; they are the foundation-stones of tuberculosis sanatoriums; they are the sombre factories for the destruction of our race.

Are we mad or are we only thoughtless that we allow this race-suicide to go on? What drug have we taken that has weakened in us the sense of collective responsibility?

Ireland is the only country in Europe where starvation of children is not only allowed but enforced by law.

Here children are taken from their parents under threats of fine or imprisonment, and are shut up from 9.30 in the morning to 3 or sometimes 3.30 in the afternoon without food or the means of procuring it, in over-crowded, ill-ventilated class-rooms; healthy children, with children already in various stages of consumption, all starving and suffering together. Many of the children have had

no breakfast before coming to school in the morning, most have only had breakfast of bread and tea, often only bread and tea without milk (see the statistics in Sir Charles Cameron's pamphlet "How the Poor Live"), and when they get home at about 4 o'clock they will probably get bread and tea again, for they are children of parents whose life energy has been broken and whose life-earning capacity has been destroyed, and in some cases their sense of responsibility also, by the same system of school-day starvation.

If you systematically destroy by starvation the physical strength of an individual, you cannot be surprised when he seeks the temporary illusion of strength in drink, though drink in these conditions means often the madhouse, and always the loosening of the sense of personal responsibility.

Some may think that I have forgotten that it is for an Xmas Number that I am writing this article, but I have not Xmas is the children's season when the Christmas Child came down and glorified childhood for ever. It is the season of hope, of beginning, when the light begins to grow. Irishmen and women, let us make a solemn vow for the sake of the Christ Child, that child-starvation shall be put an end to in Ireland.

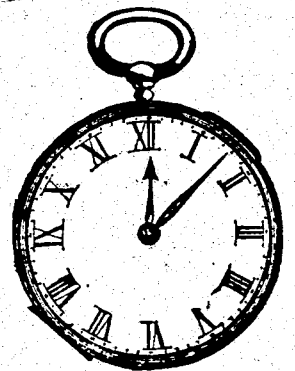
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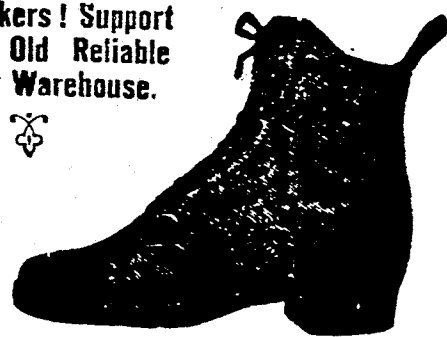
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