secured the privilege. Two more of the great man's admirers climbed on to the other side of the car. One of them, to lighten the burden of Darcy's responsibility, stretched an arm across the well of the car and gripped Heverin's coat collar. The party reached Cuslough safely, and the three ministering angels, reaping the reward of their charity, drank to the success of the Land League and the glory of Ireland in the room behind Heverin's bar. It was understood that they drank at their host's expense, therefore they drank freely. Heverin himself slept off the effects of patriotic endeavour on an uncomfortable horsehair sofa in the parlour.

CHAPTER XI

THAT man has a sense of the picturesque who first applied the word revolution to those upheavals which every now and then alter the appearance of society. The ancient Romans, avoiding metaphor, called them simply new conditions; but this man—Frenchman, German, Englishman, or whatever he was—saw society as a huge cart-wheel. It was stuck in the mud, and a team of exhausted fates tugged at it with no better result than now and then to make it revolve spasmodically, jerkily. No doubt in a perfectly ordered society, the socialist state of modern dreamers, the wheel would roll slowly, evenly, so that no one would remain underneath it long enough to have cause for complaint, or on top long enough to really enjoy himself. But we have not yet achieved this smooth rolling. Our wheel remains fixed, stuck fast, while those underneath groan horribly, and those on top become convinced that its position is part of the fixed order of the universe. They cannot believe

that they will ever occupy anything except their pleasant position, and laugh when the submerged portion of the community grumbles and threatens. Indeed, such are the enormous advantages which those on the upper part of the wheel possess, that a revolution would be almost impossible if it were not for their over-confidence.

Thus, in the revolution which took place in Ireland during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, power, pleasant patronage, and a good deal of property were taken from the landlord class and given to those who never before possessed any such things. But at the beginning of the revolution, at the time when the wheel which had stuck fast for more than two hundred years began to groan and quiver, nobody could believe that the matter would end in an actual revolution. It seemed far more likely that the emaciated fates which are harnessed to the Irish nation would give up their effort, and let the wheel settle down again into its old position.

Mr. Manders, for instance, heard an account of the Land League meeting from the wizened poacher who was awaiting his sentence. But he didn't believe that anything of real importance had occurred. He felt quite strong enough to deal with the forces of local disorder, sneered at the eloquence of the M.P., cursed Father O'Sullivan for a truculent priest, and laughed heartily at Paddy Heverin's share in the proceedings. His attitude was typical of that of his class. The Irish gentry and their agents were individually strong men, so strong and fearless that they did not feel the necessity for union among themselves, so independent and self-confident that not one of them would have been willing to submit to the guidance of a leader even if their class had produced one. Their self-confidence was their ruin. Frightened into union they might have successfully resisted the organised attacks of their enemies; as individuals they were perfectly help-

less. And when in the end they were frightened, instead of looking to each other for help and selecting a leader from their own ranks, they went whining and fawning round the knees of English statesmen who had their own affairs to look after, and were by no means anxious to compromise themselves by espousing the extremely unpopular cause of the Irish landlords. Thus the revolution was effected, not indeed bloodlessly, but extremely quickly and quite effectively.

Lord Daintree, possessing a great deal more political insight than his agent, being in fact one of the few who really understood what was happening round about him, formed a fair estimate of the strength of the movement which was to loose his hold upon his own property, and destroy the power of his class throughout Ireland.

"I told you long ago there'd be trouble," he said to Mr. Manders, who told him the story of the meeting at Cuslough.

"Oh, I don't think this amounts to anything much," said the agent. "I shall have to evict a few more of these poor wretches during the autumn, but there will be no difficulty in getting new tenants for the farms."

"They'll probably shoot you," said Lord Daintree, "and I shall have to get a new agent. I don't take much to the idea of being shot. At my time of life a man has to be careful of himself. I think I'll go over to London and stay there. I'm glad you've no wife and family, Manders. A decent tombstone will be as much as I shall be expected to do for you. If you've any particular fancy about the inscription you might let me know."

"All right," said Manders, smiling.

"By the way," said Lord Daintree, "if there should be any trouble about letting any of the farms that you have to clear the people off, I

think I should offer them to that fellow Heverin. I'm like the clergyman whom Browning wrote about. In the course of a long life I have known seven-and-twenty leaders of revolts, and in every case the leader, that is to say, the local leader, has been more anxious about feathering his own nest than anything else."

Mr. Manders laughed. Lord Daintree's estimate of Paddy Heverin's character was based on a general knowledge of popular leaders. It fitted in very well with his own ideas of Heverin's patriotism and public spirit.

Dean Ponsonby, who was present during this conversation, took a very serious view of the new agitation. He had himself been the victim of a minor revolution. The last time the wheel shook it had brought the finances and privileges of his church crashing to the ground.

"You'll see," he said to Mr. Manders, "more will come out of this than you think. There's no security for any kind of property, once the Church has been robbed. It's a shame for men like young Stephen Butler who are landlords and gentlemen themselves to be mixed up with this kind of thing."

"Oh," said Lord Daintree, "I don't suppose Stephen Butler admires Heverin and his Land League any more than we do. He's a sentimental Nationalist, but he won't care for his tenants striking against paying rent."

"Well, then," said the Dean, "he ought to withdraw from the whole connection, and make it plain that he doesn't countenance the agitation."

"You'd better go and tell him so," said Manders.

"I will," said the Dean; "but I don't think I ought to go alone. A deputation of the gentry ought to wait on him and explain what they think of his conduct."

"Oh, well, you can hardly expect me to join

in that," said Manders. "I am his agent, you know, and he mightn't take it well from me."

"I think you are the man to go, Mr Dean," said Lord Daintree. "After all, it's your business to give men good advice. If he will not hearken to an apron and a pair of gaiters, neither will he be persuaded though all the gentry in the county waited on him."

The Dean lost no time. He saddled his horse next morning, and rode to Dhulough. Stephen Butler received him hospitably, and invited him to stay for luncheon. But the Dean, like the young prophet who came to Bethel in the days of Jeroboam, was determined neither to eat bread or drink water lest such friendliness should deprive his message of its weight. He waved away the suggestion of refreshment and plunged at once into his business.

"Mr. Butler," he said, "this is no social call. I come to-day as a clergyman, as a dignitary of the Church, to speak a solemn word of warning to you. I hope you will not take it amiss; but whether you hear or whether you forbear, I am bound to speak out."

Stephen Butler hastily probed his conscience, searching for the recollection of some misdeed which might justify the extreme solemnity of the Dean's tone. He found no convenient crime of which he might accuse himself. He had paid subscriptions to the Church punctually, even willingly. He had attended with a smiling face functions called diocesan synods, dreadful in their dullness. He had listened on such occasions to the Dean's expositions of the financial position of the Church, and had refrained from asking whether the Kingdom of God were in reality an affair of pounds, shillings, and pence, or how the Dean had been appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Almighty. His conscience was at rest. He could not see what evil deed had called down this visitation.

The Dean began to preach, and was thoroughly happy. There are two kinds of preaching, the sort that is done in public from pulpits and platforms, and the sort that is done privately to one or, at most, two victims at a time. The clergy have no monopoly of either kind of sermon. The joy of delivering the first sort is shared by them with politicians, local and parliamentary, and the whole class of persons to whom the sound of their own voices in public places is agreeable. Many people like being preached to in this way. This is especially the case in Ireland, and Sunday, being an off day on which no work can be done, except by certain privileged classes, priests, publicans, policemen, and politicians, the people throng on Sundays to listen to those who preach. The Protestant clergy satisfy the natural cravings of their congregations for Sunday oratory by delivering themselves of long discourses in church. The Roman Catholic clergy lay more stress upon the purely liturgical parts of Divine Service, and so their people, hungry for fine words, go after mass to listen to politicians. But whether by clergy or politicians, the sermons are preached and the people go home contented. But the second kind of sermon, that delivered to a solitary victim, is not popular. The man who preaches it must have a real vocation for the work. He catches his victim with extreme difficulty, and holds him to the end by sheer force of a dominating will. He is disliked afterwards by every one to whom he has ever preached. Politicians never preach in private. They, poor men, depend upon their popularity for their daily bread, and dare not risk the delivery of private exhortations. Nor do the clergy of any Church practise this sort of preaching much, which is fortunate. The clergy, in Ireland, are unpopular enough without that. The people who sacrifice themselves for the good of their neighbours by delivering chamber homilies, are for the

most part elderly men and women with established positions and pensions from the Government. They are also people with a real vocation for their work.

Dean Ponsonby, though a clergyman, had such a vocation. As a pulpit orator he was lightly esteemed. As a setter forth of righteous ways in private he was unsurpassed and immensely disliked. Mr. Manders, whose heart was harder than a millstone, whom neither pulpiteer or politician could move beyond the fixed sum of his subscription to the extent of half a crown, shuddered and paid up when the Dean caught him alone. Lord Daintree might venture to be flippant beforehand, but he repented, cowering, when the Dean assumed the mantle of a prophet and announced that he had come to pay "no social call." Once, but never again, Lord Daintree had ventured to express his feelings, using the words uttered by an impious king under similar circumstances, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" He had been quelled, as doubtless Ahab also was, by the prophet's eye. Mr. Hegarty of late years had fled, shamelessly and very swiftly, to remote places when he suspected that the Dean came to his house charged with a few of those friendly words which it is better, in the opinion of the preacher, to speak quite plainly.

Stephen Butler had never before been subjected to such exhortation, but, at the Dean's first words, he felt an awful presage of what was coming. Thus the man with troublesome corns knows beforehand that it is going to rain. Thus the highly specialised instinct of the Minister of State warns him, even if he does not scrutinise the results of by-elections, that the voters who placed his party in power are beginning to think it about time that the other fellows had a turn. With a like presentiment of an evil time, Stephen Butler sat down and waited. The Dean stood up and preached.

His appearance was impressive. His gaiters, slightly mud-spotted, told of foul roads braved for duty's sake. His apron hung gracefully almost to his knees. His broad cincture lay unstrained and creaseless over a finely rounded paunch. Not a button of his long, straight coat showed a metal skeleton beneath its skin of good broad-cloth. He spoke of the rights of property, of loyalty, and of Stephen Butler's position in the county. He denounced agitators, socialists, atheists, nationalists, and other bad people. He mentioned with approval the British Constitution and the Decalogue. He quoted several of the remarks which Solomon made about fools, and part of one of the verses of "God Save the Queen." He descended from generalities and became personal. Stephen learned that he was one of those who scatter firebrands; who take dogs by the ears; who encourage, if they do not actually commit, breaches of the sixth and eighth commandments; whose knavish tricks good men, after public meetings and when listening to military bands, implore the Almighty to confound.

He was too bruised and battered when the address was finished to attempt any defence of himself. He sat still until the Dean, pleased as all living things are with the right performance of a congenial function, coming to the end of his homily, smiled. With something of the air of a father he approached Stephen and laid a plump, white hand on his shoulder.

"You'll think over what I've been saying. I do not press you to say anything to me now. That would be premature; but you'll give my words earnest consideration. Believe me, I speak for your own good."

Apparently the business was over.

"Won't you," said Stephen, "take a glass of wine? Just allow me to ring the bell."

He thought that the Dean probably wanted a glass of wine, and the desire to impart one was

creditable to him. So an early martyr, after the lictors had packed up their rods again, might have offered a denarius wherewith to buy a cup of Falerian wine to the chief executioner, grown somewhat hoarse with counting the strokes. The Dean hesitated. But the spirit of the prophet in him subdued the flesh. He felt that brown sherry might soften his heart, or the drinking of it rob his words of weight.

"Another day," he said. "Some other day. To-day I must be getting home. Good-day, Mr. Butler, and remember, I should not have been here to-day if I had not wished you well; if I had not been sincerely anxious for your future."

Stephen, since the Dean insisted on keeping to the part of the prophet of Bethel, lunched alone; but he ate without any very good appetite. He was not angry with the Dean. He accepted the assurance that the lecture had been kindly meant, and even admired the courage of the man who delivered it. Nothing would have induced Stephen himself to approach a defenceless fellow-creature in cold blood and shoot off a sermon at him. He believed that what was impossible for him must be very difficult for any one else. But the subject-matter of the rebuke worried him. He realised quite plainly for the first time that he was going to be very unpopular with men of his own class. At first the men whom he met in his clubs had been content to argue with him in a good-humoured way. He was, in their eyes, a well-intentioned sentimentalist; a young fool, whose silly fads would be cured by the passing of years. Now he saw that these gentlemen of Ireland were being touched on the raw by the new Land League; that they would not be tolerant of any one who was mixed up with the accursed thing. It was not easy to face the kind of unpopularity which Stephen saw before him. Yet he would have faced it bravely enough and made no complaint if there had not been at the back of

his mind a doubt—a fear that the gentlemen might be right, the Dean even might be right, in their estimate of the Land League.

Stephen was not in the least shaken in his nationalism. He still believed whole-heartedly in the right of Ireland to regulate her own affairs. But he heard and read very disquieting things about the Land League. He recognised that the Irish tenants were often hardly treated, that their position was singularly insecure, and that many landlords failed to do their duty. He did not like the methods which were adopted to set those wrong things right. He dreaded extremely lest the battle of nationalism—the struggle of Ireland against England—should be left unfought, while men engaged in another battle, a class struggle, in which Irishmen should be pitted against Irishmen. He thought that in such a battle very horrible things would be done, that fierce passions would be let loose, that mutual distrust and hate would separate Irishmen from each other in such a way that a whole generation would have to pass before union would be possible again.

He had, ever since he heard of the meeting at Cuslough, been conscious of these doubts and fears. But he had put them behind him; had locked them in at the back of his mind. Now the Dean had let them all loose. Stephen was forced to face them and deal with them. He was worried and uncomfortable.

CHAPTER XII

IT was whispered in the village that Eugene Hegarty was getting to be "queer." A man had lived in Dhulough once who had become very "queer" indeed. In the end he had threatened his wife with a carving-knife, had even