clever, and without resentment or contempt think that the scoffers are posing. Believing themselves with an intensity of faith which comes near to being actual knowledge, they give every one else credit for believing too. It is almost always possible to outwit these simple men, to overreach them, to lead them into foolish action. Circumstances occasionally overwhelm them and bring their life-work down in crumbling fragments. It is never possible to shake their faith or drive them into angry defence of their creed.

Before his visit was over Lord Daintree came to believe that he had discovered such a man in Stephen Butler. He became exceedingly interested, more interested than ever, in the young man.

"It will be," he said, "most fascinating to watch him. Ireland to-day gives him what looks like an opportunity. Of course he'll join these Tory-Nationalist gentlemen, and get himself into a perfectly impossible position. But Ireland to-morrow—what will that Ireland make of him?"

## CHAPTER VIII

NO reasonable man, that is to say no Englishman, can understand why the Irish are discontented with the position of their country. Has not Ireland got the same laws as England? Does not an Irishman pay the same taxes as an Englishman? Are not the Union Jacks which decorate Irish custom-houses on the King's birthday quite as voluminous as those which flutter in England? Do not the Irish share with their neighbour Saxons the inestimable privilege of taunting the sun because, however the earth may twist and turn, there is always some little strip of the British Empire gaping for rays of light and heat? What more can Irishmen want?

And yet the Irish are not content. This is a very curious fact. It is indeed quite unaccountable to the reasonable, that is to say the English, mind. For it is not as if just one section of the Irish people was discontented. No Irishman is really satisfied with the condition of his country. It has from time to time been supposed that the Protestant democracy of the north is fanatically attached to the Union with England. But it is not. The Orangeman is desperately frightened of the Pope, and believes that, but for the English connection, his thumbs would be in screws and his body on a rack. But he has no real love for England or the English. Remove the bogey priest from before his eyes, and the rags of his political Unionism will drop off from him. He will stand before the world just such a man as his ancestor was in 1778 or 1798, a volunteer or a United Irishman, naked and unashamed. He will be quite prepared to kick or otherwise contemptuously propel into the Boyne anything at all, from a King's crown to an Act of Parliament. It is sometimes thought that the Irish gentry are as sincerely loyal to England as the gentlemen of Leicestershire or Kent. But they are not. The discipline of the rifle corps of English public schools, the training in cricket and football afforded by the universities, even the culture imparted at Sandhurst, only serve as a veneer to hide the rough grain of the Irish wood underneath. Now and then something happens—quite a dull and apparently uninteresting thing perhaps—and the Irish gentleman begins to hum a tune suspiciously like the Shan Van Vocht. Quite recently a Royal Commission published a Blue Book in which it appeared that Ireland was overtaxed. To the amazement of everybody, the Irish gentry rose up in their various counties and proclaimed the startling fact that they were Irishmen. Fortunately there were able statesmen at hand who knew how to

quiet them, but for a few weeks it really looked as if a new Royal Commission would have to be appointed to prove that the first one had been tampering with the truth. And the Irish gentry may do the same thing again any day. Nobody can feel sure of them. There was an elephant once in the Zoological Gardens which used to take coppers in the gentlest way from the hands of little children and carry them to his keeper. He was the tamest elephant ever seen. But one day, quite suddenly, he killed his keeper. Wise people say that he must have had the toothache and been cross, but it is far more likely that some trifle made him realise that he was a noble sort of beast by nature, and that there was a want of dignity in becoming an animated penny-in-the-slot machine for the amusement of nursemaids and their charges. Every now and then some such dim apprehension of his own proper part in life smites the Irish gentleman. He waves his trunk ferociously, and probably some day he'll give the keeper a nasty blow on the head, carry no more pennies to his shops, and do no more marching in remote corners of an empire, which is not his, with heavy cannons on his back.

Thus in the year 1870 a number of Irish gentlemen were extremely angry at the disestablishment of their Church. They said, that the English had made a treaty with them in 1800, and that one of the articles of the treaty was that the Church should not be disestablished. Of course, this was a ridiculous way of talking. Treaties are not things which anybody dreams of keeping unless the other party to the treaty has a great many guns. And the Irish gentry had given up keeping guns for nearly a hundred years. Still, they did talk of broken treaties, and formed themselves into what they called a Home Government Association. They even appealed to the people of the country, the very

people whom they had been taught to consider as natural enemies. And the people, who for the most part had forgotten about the treaty, and certainly cared nothing at all about the Church, rallied round these gentry and sent a number of them, as many as fifty, to the English Parliament. In those days gentry and people alike believed that something might be done by means of speechmaking at Westminster.

Young Stephen Butler spent a good deal of his time alone at Dhulough. He was hospitable in the manner of dinners, but the number of neighbours who could be asked to dinner was very small and their counter invitations were necessarily few. There remained many evenings which had to be spent alone in the library at Dhulough House. Stephen found himself thinking very often of the story of his grandfather's oath. He never went into the little church without picturing to himself the scene of the swearing. The great bare, low-ceilinged dining-room of his home; the dark wainscoted library with its huge open hearth; the noise of the sea outside; the bleak landscape; the sombre, slate-sheathed walls of his house, all suggested to him the fierce old man who had hated so unwaveringly. It seemed as if something of old Stephen Butler's spirit dwelt in the place.

Reading the newspapers, Stephen came to feel strongly attracted to the vehement Irish gentlemen who were pleading their country's cause in Parliament. He studied their speeches, and felt that there was in them neither baseness nor selfishness. Their methods of work appealed to him. There was none of the blatant bombast of the demagogue, none of the crafty scheming of the ambitious politician. They spoke openly the things that were in their minds, proclaimed the end they had in view and the means by which they hoped to attain it. There was a warmth in their words, a flow of genuinely patriotic feeling,

a transparent purity of motive. When they reached the Houses of Parliament at Westminster, they behaved there as gentlemen should in an assembly of gentlemen. They stated their case boldly; appealed to reason and to justice; claimed that right should be done because it was right; were perfectly confident that they would prevail. All this attracted Stephen Butler.

One evening he opened his heart to Mr. Manders. He had accepted the agent's invitation to dinner, and Dean Ponsonby and Lord Daintree having both been obliged to decline, found himself *tête-à-tête* with his host. Questions of game preservation and the wickedness of tenants who shot foxes exhausted themselves, and when the punch was brewed Stephen Butler began to express his admiration for Isaac Butt and his followers.

"D—d fools," was Mr. Manders' brief comment.

"Why fools?"

"Well, in the first place, because nobody minds their talk. You don't suppose the English will be silly enough to give them what they want? Why on earth should they? I'm not an Englishman, thank God, but if I was I'd see Ireland under the sea before I lifted my heel off it. These fellows are simply playing the Fenian game in another way. Give them an inch and they'll take an ell. No sane Englishman would dream of giving them Home Rule."

"But if the thing is right?"

"Right be d—d! Besides, it isn't right. Home Rule would simply mean handing the country over to a pack of priests and blackguards. No gentleman could live in it. I know the Irish, and, if you'll excuse my saying so, you don't. The only security we have for our lives and properties is the power of England. Right! How can it be right for gentlemen and Protestants to go handing their own class over to the

tender mercies of Papist rebels? Right! The thing's wrong on the face of it."

Stephen was neither frightened nor irritated by this outburst. He reasoned with his host. He set before him the disadvantages under which Ireland suffered on account of her connection with England. He argued that no single class ought to stand for its own advantage to the detriment of the nation as a whole. He suggested that perhaps the gentry and the Protestants would suffer less than Mr. Manders supposed in an independent Ireland. Mr. Manders seemed entirely unimpressed. He reiterated at intervals a few phrases of invective —"Fenian murderers," "Damned rascals," "The scum of the country." But it was not only the Irish Nationalists whom Mr. Manders despised. He had an equal contempt and dislike for the English. "I never sit in the room with an Englishman," he said, "without wanting to throw a boot at his infernal head."

Stephen drove home with an uneasy feeling that he had made a fool of himself by talking to his agent, and that Mr. Manders was hopelessly hostile to the very idea of Irish nationality. In this he was wrong. His arguments had fallen upon barren soil, but his earnestness and simple straightforwardness had left an impression on Mr. Manders.

A few days afterwards Lord Daintree called at the agent's office. His tenants were clamouring for a reduction of rent. He did not intend to grant it.

"I can't do it, Manders. I'm sorry for the poor devils, but I can't do it. I want every penny of my income. My son can't manage to live on his allowance. He makes large calls on me, and I must have money."

It was at this time a matter of common gossip that Captain the Honourable Eustace De Lancy had been made to pay heavy damages to a lady

who danced in a London music-hall. The young man had been indiscreet enough to write compromising letters to the fascinating damsel, and she had produced them in court to the immense delight of a judge, several lawyers, and a jury. It was likely that Captain De Lancy's ordinary expenses were heavy enough. The price of an incidental flirtation of this kind was a serious addition to them.

"I have a letter from Snell," said Manders; "wanting his rents screwed up a bit. He hints at evicting on a large scale and consolidating farms for grazing. It's been a bad year, too."

"I'm sorry," said Lord Daintree; "but what am I to do? A man must live."

"Of course he must; and after all the land is yours, not theirs."

A smile fluttered over Lord Daintree's lips. It broadened. He laughed. Mr. Manders looked at him in surprise.

"You wonder why I laugh. Well, just as I said to you 'a man must live,' it occurred to me to think how Stephen Butler would have answered if I'd made the same remark to him. How do you think he'd have taken it?"

"I don't know." Mr. Manders was not very quick-witted; and he felt a curious dislike to making fun of Stephen Butler.

"Well, I'll tell you. He'd have said: 'A man must live! But supposing two men feel the necessity equally strongly? Supposing the poor devil of a tenant feels that he must live too?' Eh, Manders?"

"Stephen Butler's got queer notions. But he's a fine fellow; I like him."

"But what do you think of his politics?"

"His politics are rotten. But I'm not sure that they are any rottener than my politics or yours. If we are to be robbed—and it looks as if that's what's coming—we may as well be robbed decently by our own people here in Ireland,

where we can make some sort of fight for ourselves, as by a pack of beastly English shopkeepers—Methodists, most of them; people we can't get at."

It seemed that Stephen Butler's arguments had after all produced some effect upon Mr. Manders. A man is not an Irish patriot because he dislikes nonconformist English grocers. Still, he has advanced from the position of the believer in that great heart of the English people which is supposed to beat sympathetically for poor Cinderella—Ireland, of the tatters and the bogs.

Besides Lord Daintree and Mr. Manders there was no one with whom Stephen could make friends, except Mr. Hegarty, Dean Ponsonby, and Father Staunton. Mr. Hegarty attracted him from the first; but there were great difficulties in the way of establishing an intimacy. The clergyman was extremely shy. A visit to the rectory resulted in an interview with Mrs. Hegarty instead of her husband. The lady, gaily bedecked in honour of Stephen's coming, talked loud to him of fashionable people whom neither of them knew, retaining month-old gossip gathered from ladies' papers. While she talked she rolled her eyes. They were very fine eyes, bright blue, and like those of King Solomon's lady friend, liquid as the fishpools of Heshbon. Mr. Manders found delight in their revolutions; but for Stephen Butler they were expressionless as those of the fish which inhabited the oriental monarch's ponds. Even when Mr. Hegarty was present during one of the visits, it was impossible to get quiet speech with him on account of the extreme attractiveness of his wife. When Stephen invited them to dinner at Dhulough House things were no better. Mrs. Hegarty, bare-armed and bare-chested as if for a great ball, talked more extensively than ever; and when at last she swept from the room it was impossible to sit long with her husband who would drink

no wine. Once Stephen brought over Dean Ponsonby to meet the Hegartys at dinner. But the experiment was not a success. The older clergyman evidently regarded Mrs. Hegarty as an extremely vulgar woman; and after dinner, though he drank his wine satisfactorily, ignored Mr. Hegarty entirely, and bored his host with detailed accounts of the financial position of the disestablished church.

Father Staunton proved to be much more approachable and much more agreeable to Stephen than the clergy of his own church. The old priest dined frequently at Dhulough House. He told delightfully humorous and kindly stories about the peasantry. He had a store of local antiquarian knowledge. He delighted in discovering and discussing the old pamphlets and papers which lay on the shelves of the library. He cast light on the obscure intrigues and tangled policies which make the study of the history of Ireland during the first half of the nineteenth century difficult.

He took Stephen out to see Rafferty on his island. The old man was reserved and silent at first. He distrusted Stephen, fearing the patronage, perhaps the charity of a landlord and gentleman. But Father Staunton's kindly flow of talk thawed Rafferty after a while. Irish manuscripts were produced and exhibited. The old Homer was put into Stephen's hands. The priest, with his foreign learning and his appreciation of the beauty and pathos of the old Fenian schoolmaster's culture, was just such a guide and companion as a man might choose who wanted to understand the strange, lost Ireland which Rafferty represented. Stephen's modesty and simplicity of manner commended him to Rafferty.

"There's one thing more," he said, "that maybe I might show you"

He stood on a wooden stool and unhooked from the nails on which it hung an old rifle.

"Now," said Father Staunton, "put that back. I see you have the barrel of it polished as bright as the spoons Mr. Butler stirs his tea with. Now what's the good of it? Isn't it time for an old man like you to be giving up such thoughts? It's not fighting you ought to be thinking of at your time of life. Put it back."

"It's not you I'm wanting to show it to, Father. Don't I know you don't care for the likes of it? The clergy was always against us and you as much as another. But Mr. Butler might like the feel of the gun in his hand. They say his grandfather was a man who might have had a gun of the sort himself."

"Come along, come along, Mr. Butler," said Father Staunton. "I have a reputation to lose if you haven't. And besides, the tide's ebbing, and we won't get ashore to-night if we let the boat get high and dry on the beach."

Stephen rowed home in silence. He was moved by the flash of light cast suddenly on Rafferty's character. The old man who loved the Gaelic poetry so well, who read and recited Greek hexameters, cherished his ancient rifle more carefully even than his books. It was, perhaps, his dearest possession. Once he had hoped to take his place with it in the fighting line of Ireland's militia, her modern Fianna. Was the hope dead in him yet? There was something in Stephen which responded sympathetically to the old Fenian's spirit. Father Staunton, guessing perhaps at what was passing through his friend's mind, spoke to him while they walked from the boat towards Dhulough House.

"Let Ireland alone, Mr. Butler. It's peace and quietness that we want. Aren't the people well enough wherever they have a good landlord like yourself? No good comes of their agitating and fighting. I know the way that work ends. Half a dozen poor fellows, that might have been contented with their wives and children, get

hanged, and the men that led them into trouble slip across to America and take the people's money with them."

"Come in with me and stay for dinner," said Stephen.

"I can't to-night. I'd like to, but I can't. I'm expecting my new curate. He's at the presbytery by this time, and he'd think it queer if I didn't go home to welcome him."

"Well," said Stephen, "I'll call on your curate to-morrow, and you shall both dine with me the next night. What's his name?"

"Father O'Sullivan."

But Father O'Sullivan refused not only the first, but all subsequent invitations from Stephen Butler. He remained aloof. Stephen meeting him in the village street, could get no more than the stiffest recognition in return for greetings meant to be friendly. Yet the young priest was an interesting man to look at. He had clear grey eyes and a face with a suggestion of strength in it. The set of his head on his shoulders and his confident walk gave an impression of force and vigour which was singularly attractive. Stephen would have liked very well to be friends with him. But the priest's whole manner when they met was eloquent of a settled watchful hostility. It was in vain that Stephen made one effort after another to get, as it were, inside his guard. Once, seeing him standing at the door of the chapel, Stephen addressed him—

"I've been thinking, Father O'Sullivan, that you must often feel the want of books in a quiet place like this. I shall be very pleased if you make any use you like of my library. It will be always at your disposal, and if I am not at home when you call, my man will show you where the books are."

Father O'Sullivan thanked him, but not very graciously. Stephen was vexed and hurt. He had meant to be kind, and it seemed to him

that he had been rudely repulsed. In fact, Father O'Sullivan had not meant to be rude. He was a proud man, intensely suspicious of anything like patronage or condescension. He had behind him a family history of a kind not uncommon in Ireland in those days. He had been brought up to regard the Protestant gentry of Ireland as an alien race, a foreign garrison. He thought of them, believing that the experience of his father and grandfather entirely justified him, as oppressors and despoilers of the people. He was himself of the people, the son of a tenant farmer, and he was proud to consider himself one of a down-trodden race. He, like Stephen Butler, cherished a hope, was prepared to labour for an end. Stephen, looking into the future, saw there the political freedom of Ireland—the restoration of a national life, the duties and the glory of which would be shared by all classes and by people of every creed. Father O'Sullivan, fixing his gaze on nearer things, saw the emancipation of one class, the downfall of another, and the honour of a Church long despised. For Stephen, with a larger vision, this priest and every Irishman was a potential friend. To Father O'Sullivan, Stephen was a landlord and a Protestant, therefore necessarily an enemy.

For a time the settled coldness of the young priest troubled Stephen. After a while he came to forget it. Life began to open wide before him. His mind was occupied with larger matters than the conduct of the people of Dhulough and the neighbourhood. He got into touch with the men who were then the exponents of Ireland's aspirations, and came to take part in the work of the party which represented Irish patriotism in Parliament.

For Stephen it was particularly easy to enter public life. He bore a name honourable in Irish history. He was prepared to devote himself to the work of the party which attracted him. It

was not long before a constituency was found to elect him, and he was looked upon as a hopeful recruit by the gentlemen who then pleaded the cause of Ireland at Westminster.

In England and elsewhere men have got to be more or less careful in choosing their representatives, because the representatives, once chosen, may possibly, in spite of the existence of the House of Lords, do something—pass a Bill or impose a tax—which will affect the life of the elector pleasantly or unpleasantly. Irish representatives, through no fault of their own, are debarred from making laws. All they can do, and all the people expect them to do, is to make speeches. Therefore it doesn't much matter to Irishmen who they return to Parliament, and almost any one who really wants to can secure a seat. Nowadays people even pay the politicians small annual salaries, and receive, it must be confessed, excellent value for their money in the delightfully sonorous speeches which lighten the general dreariness of life, very much as the gibes of court jesters did the lethargy brought on by the heavy drinking at mediæval feasts. When Stephen Butler was a young man the system of salaries had not yet become a necessity. Men of independent means still made the necessary speeches in the spirit of the sportsmen who, for the public good, hunt foxes without asking fee or reward. It was probably even easier then than it is now to take part as a public man in the political life of the country.

## CHAPTER IX

AT first Stephen Butler's experiences as a Member of Parliament were wholly delightful to him. He associated in close friendship with the men who were certainly earnest in their