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 medieval 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

devotion to Ireland. He found himself, when he and they consulted together, in an atmosphere which he could breathe freely and joyfully. His leaders were men of transparent purity of purpose, of charming culture, of high ideals. Nothing they said or did jarred on him or hurt him. It was good to see the respect and admiration which these Irishmen won in the assembly of Britain's gentlemen. Their speeches, Stephen's own speeches among the rest, were listened to with courteous and flattering attention. They were praised and applauded. Great Ministers went out of their way to congratulate the Irish members on their ability and eloquence. Words of sympathy were spoken. Time was set apart for the consideration of Ireland's claims. Hints were given freely of good things to be done some day not very far off. All this was very pleasing to Stephen and to others like him.

He returned time after time to Dhulough full of hope and satisfaction. He recounted his experiences to his friends, and all of them, save old Rafferty, sympathised with him, because all of them learned to admire and love him. And old Rafferty loved him too, perhaps more than any of the others, though he had no sympathy to offer. He showed his love in other ways. He allowed Stephen to spend money on the ruinous cottage on the island; and this was no small sacrifice of pride and independence. He received and read the books which Stephen brought him back from Dublin, and almost every book published in those days about Ireland found its way into the old man's little library. In return he brought out his treasured Irish manuscripts, read and translated long passages for Stephen. When the mood was on him he recited many lines from the Æneid or perhaps the Odyssey. Stephen's scholarship was often at fault. Unless the passage was one familiar to him he missed the sense of what he heard, and was puzzled by the strange

pronunciation even of what he knew well. But the hearing of the poetry in such surroundings awakened strange emotions in him. It was a moving thing to sit on the rocks above the sea in summer time, or by the side of the smouldering turf fire when the winter air was cold, and listen to the great hexameters rolling from the lips of the worn old man. The long white beard shook with the exaggerated mouthing of the splendid words. The breeze stirred the unkempt white hair. The grey coat hung patched and ragged round an almost emaciated form. But the gestures of the old man's hands were like those of some king of ancient times who was strong and proud, and Stephen could watch passion flashing from his eyes.

Sometimes he told stories of bygone times. He remembered all the misery of the famine years, and there was a grimness which was horrible in his account of how men and women starved to death. He could tell of the exodus which followed the famine, of the broken men who went hopeless into a new world, leaving their hearts behind them in a land which had failed to afford them even graves. Then he would quote from the Latin Bible a passage from one of the prophets about the people who went in procession from their homes "hardly bestead and hungry," how they journeyed with much sighing through impenetrable gloom.

But of times later than the famine old Rafferty would not talk. It was in vain that Stephen plied him with questions, lured him with suggestive references. Of the Fenians, their plans and their hopes, of his own part in their ill-fated conspiracy, Rafferty would say nothing. Nor would he give any opinion on current political questions. He seemed apathetic and totally uninterested. When Stephen told of the praise won by the Home Rule party in Parliament the old man only smiled, much as a parent might at the

excitement of a child over some new plaything. Stephen was vexed. He hoped to get from Rafferty some word of praise, some expression of sympathy; for he himself was full of hope and meant to do great things for Ireland.

After a while he began to understand something of the meaning of old Rafferty's smile. A sickening doubt began to creep into his heart and mar the pleasure he found in his work in Parliament. It was well no doubt, to win the respect and admiration of Englishmen, to be cheered and praised. But all the fine eloquence, the flawless reasoning, the impassioned pleading, led to nothing. Kind words and hearty cheers made no difference to the figures tellers announced after divisions. Three years passed and the doubt became a horrible certainty. It appeared to Stephen that the Irish Nationalist members at Westminster were wholly impotent. They were praised as actors are praised on the stage for brilliant performances, for moving renderings of mighty human passions. But the play came to an end, and the audience, the Englishmen who had clapped their hands, went back to business, the sober business of ordering English affairs for the benefit of English people. The footlights were out. The properties of the piece lay dusty in lumber-rooms. Ireland was forgotten.

But with this result Stephen Butler was wholly dissatisfied. He was in desperate earnest, and entirely convinced that Ireland must somehow win again the constitution which had been filched from her. He drifted over to the extreme left wing of the party to which he belonged. His mind refused to rest satisfied with any compromise. His reading had made him familiar with aspirations a century old. He wanted to see the King, the Lords, and the Commons of Ireland make laws for Ireland again.

It was without any great hope that he allowed himself to be re-elected as a Home Ruler when

a new Parliament was called into existence. It was with no great expectation of any good that he scanned the list of the members of his party and noticed the new names that appeared in it. He spent the summer at Dhulough reading much and looking into the affairs of his estate. One day after fishing for a while among the rocks he bade Johnny Darcy, who rowed him, take the boat to the island. He landed as usual on the sandy beach below Rafferty's cottage. The old man's boat, a crazy tub, was there hauled up as usual clear of the high-tide mark. The oars were in her and their blades were still wet. Evidently Rafferty had been making one of his expeditions to the mainland. Stephen called aloud, announcing his presence, and then climbed over the rocks and crossed the shingle to the cottage. He knocked, and receiving no answer, entered.

Rafferty sat at the table with his horn-rimmed spectacles on his nose, reading intently a paper which lay spread out before him. It was evidently a letter, for the envelope lay on the floor, and Stephen noticed that the stamp was an American one.

Rafferty, conscious at last of his visitor's presence, rose from his chair. He folded the letter and put it in his breast-pocket. Then he spoke. To Stephen's surprise, his manner and way of speaking had undergone a change. The old dreaminess was gone. The man seemed more erect, more vigorous, his voice was stronger.

"The blessing of God on you!" Rafferty had the habit of speaking his greetings in Irish; though except a few simple phrases of greeting and farewell Stephen knew nothing of the language.

"So they tell me, master, that you have been made a Member of Parliament again."

"I have. But to tell you the truth, Rafferty, it's little good I've done there in the past."

"Little indeed. You may well say so. And

it's little good there is to be done in it. I could have told you that before ever you went there."

"And why didn't you tell me?"

"How was I to know that you wanted to do anything? You might have been one of the men who think to improve this and improve that and improve the other thing, and leave Ireland where she is, at the latter end of it all."

"They tell me, Rafferty, that you were a Fenian yourself in the old days."

"They told you the truth. I was a Fenian in the days gone by, and I am a Fenian still. My heart's with the men, most of them over the great sea now, who wanted to fight for Ireland, and didn't think much of just talking for her. Sometimes I do be feeling beaten and down, for I'm lonesome here with never a one to talk to that feels as I do. But now and again there comes a letter to me from abroad that sets me up again. I have one to-day from a man that was taken along with me, and we stood in the dock together and were condemned together. They took us on a Sunday outside the Chapel door, and we on our way in to mass! They tried us along with the rest. Better men than we were there, men that were good enough to find their death for Ireland, and did find it for her. But that would be too great an honour for me. They shut me up in gaol. They were afraid of us. Death and prison, prison and death, those were the two words that were in their mouths in those days. For we had them scared, scared till the boldest of them went white about the gills. Who have you ever scared with your speeches and your fine behaviour in that Parliament of theirs?"

"But we didn't try to scare them. We wanted to persuade them, to reason with them, to let them see what was right."

Rafferty threw up his hands. The gesture was extraordinarily expressive of amazed contempt. Then without speaking a word he went over to the

hearth and began raking with his hands among the powdered ash, collecting little fragments of turf in which some spark still lingered.

"Well," said Stephen, "what have you to say to me?"

But Rafferty made no answer. He deliberately piled his cinders together. Then he took some sods of turf from the creel that stood beside the hearth, broke them with a sharp blow on the stone seat in the chimney corner, and built them carefully round his fire. He added whole sods to the edifice until the cinders he had gathered glowed in the middle of a dull brown pile. Then he bent down on his hands and knees and began to blow his fire until the sparks flew upwards, and a flame licked the loose fibres of the turf.

"Rafferty," said Stephen, "stop that and tell me what you mean."

The old man rose to his feet and drew himself up to his full height. Stephen wondered that he seemed so tall..

"Persuade them!" he cried. "Reason with them! Persuade the Sassenach! Reason with the Sassenach! Teach Englishmen to see what is right! Wouldn't you persuade the heels of a stallion as soon when he's hot with good feeding? Wouldn't you reason easier with the horns of a bull and he thinking the field he feeds in is his own? Let him see what is right! Would you speak about the Saints and the ways of Heaven to the cur dog that has his teeth bare at you!"

The fire behind the old man blazed, and his shadow danced huge and fantastic on the wall in front of him. Stephen, standing in the doorway, blocked out the evening light from the cottage. The shadow was black upon the wall. It appeared and disappeared, threatened, as it seemed, and then vanished. It was like some fierce genius of an Arabian tale, menacing reason and life. It pictured the spirit which animated old Rafferty's words and gestures.

"It's the mistake Grattan made. It's the mistake O'Connell made. It's the mistake you are making to-day. No men in the world ever got justice from the Sassenach. No race, no people, that has felt the blight of their empire ever made them see reason or hear right in any way but the one. Fight them. Threaten them. Scare them. That's the way and that's the only way."

Stephen was silent. There flooded in on him a tide of emotion. Doubtless this was the way in which Ireland had for one brief space gained her constitution. It was men with guns in their hands, men who frightened the English effectually, who had won Ireland's rights for Ireland. But how could the volunteers be enlisted again? Who would repeat the history of a century before?

"And we did it," said Rafferty. "We, a handful of men, frightened them with all their soldiers and their ships of war. And who were we? The Church was against us. The gentry hated us. The most of the people cared nothing for us. Yet we frightened the English. But, sure, we failed.'"

Suddenly, like the flame of a candle snuffed out, the spirit with which he spoke died in the old man. He sat down on the little stone slab which was fixed in the angle of the hearth, steadying himself with his hands pressed against the wall. He huddled himself together, cowered, seemed to shrink. He covered his ears with his hands, resting his elbows on his knees. Then he began to wail.

"Och, wirrasthrue, and the sorrow, the great sorrow that is on me. Och, the good men and the brave men. They took them and they murdered them."

From his broken English he passed into Irish speech. Stephen came softly from the door and sat down on a stool before the fire. He stretched out his hand and laid it on the old man's arm,

but Rafferty took no notice of his touch. The moaning lament continued like a monotonous chant. Stephen could not understand the words, but he recognised the same phrase occurring again and again, and always uttered very plaintively. He heard now and then what seemed to be lists of names, but in their Irish form he could make nothing of them. By degrees the lament sank lower and lower till it was not possible to hear more than an exclamation now and then. At last there was silence. Stephen spoke, but he received no answer. He withdrew his hand from Rafferty's arm, and sat for a long while gazing into the fire. The flames flickered and danced. Then instead of flames came a dull red glow and a gathering of white ash round the bases of the sods of turf. Suddenly the whole pile collapsed. Powdery ash, exhausted fuel, was scattered across the hearth. Flames shot up out of the debris, and died softly away again. Rafferty stirred in his seat and awoke to consciousness. Stephen rose to go, and held out his hand. The old man took it and held it.

"I'm sorry for you," said Stephen. "In my heart I feel for you in all you have suffered."

"O passi graviora dabit deus his quoque finem," said Rafferty. "And the end won't be far off for me now, if it's the will of God. I've had my share of trouble, but it's little I'd think of it if I could see the young men with spirit in them and love of the old land."

Still holding Stephen's hand in his he walked to the door of the cottage.

"The blessing of God on you," said Rafferty. "It's a good true heart that's in you, and if it's the will of God you'll do a good day's work for Ireland yet. But who knows? Maybe you'll only break your heart like the rest of us."

Stephen left the cottage and went down to the boat. In the stern of it sat Johnny Darcy puffing at his pipe. Stephen noticed the man's face par-

ticularly as he approached the boat, struck by the strong contrast between it and Rafferty's. Both were unmistakably Irish faces. In both the physical features were somewhat the same. There were the same deep-set eyes, shadowed by prominent brows; the same small mouths, the same length between the cheek-bone and the jaw. There was, too, the possibility of the same kind of expression on both faces. Neither of them could be the face of a dull or a sensual man. But the intelligence within had marked Rafferty's face in one way. It was intellectual, and no careful observer could have doubted that Rafferty was an altruist and a spiritual man. Darcy's intelligence had developed along a different line. His face suggested a capacity for self-repression, too, but it was the self-repression necessary for continued dissimulation, the self-repression of the habitually cunning man.

"I do be wondering often," said Darcy, as he got out the oars, "at the pleasure the gentry takes in talking to old Rafferty. There isn't a week in the year, unless it's terrible wet entirely, but Mr. Hegarty has the boat out to go to the island. And if it isn't him that has it it's Father Staunton, and they bringing something, be the same more or less, to the old man. I wonder now that if so be that Rafferty was gone, and there's none of us but has to go some time, let alone an old man like him—I wonder now if your honour would give me a lease of the island? Sure, I'd tell stories to yourself and the clergy as well as another if that was what you wanted; and it would suit me to be earning my living that way better than pulling the arms out of my shoulders with the oars."

"But old Rafferty did something to deserve a quiet old age," said Stephen. "He didn't spend his days at the door of the public-house drinking every shilling he earned."

"Is it myself that you mean when you speak

of drinking? But it's joking you are, your honour. And, any way, what did Rafferty ever do beyond teaching the boys and girls in the barns in the winter time? And teaching what no one living, unless maybe the clergy or the like of yourself, has any call to know. Is it for that you'd be caring for him now?"

"For that and other things."

"Maybe it's because he was a Fenian and went to gaol? Well now, aren't you the queer people entirely? Well I mind the Fenian days. The gentleman that did be out fishing with me would talk of hanging the blackguards in a way that would make you feel hanging was too good for them. And Father Staunton would be warning the boys from off the altar not to be joining secret societies. And now there's nothing too good for one of the same blackguards that gets out without having his neck twisted on him. But sure if it's the like of the Fenians you want, there's boys in the country yet will give you your 'nough of that sort of work."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, it's not for me to be talking, but I hear there's bad feeling about the doings beyond there."

Johnny Darcy nodded his head sideways as he spoke, indicating that the bad feeling was existent southwards, somewhere in and around the village of Cuslough. Stephen asked no more questions. He knew that the people on Lord Daintree's estate had paid their rents with the utmost difficulty for two years, and that most of those on the Snell property, where the rents had been raised, were heavily in arrear. He knew that Mr. Manders had already evicted a score or so of the poorest of them, and was threatening to clear the whole countryside and lay it down in big grass farms. It was, besides, a bad year. The potato crop had been wretched, and cattle were fetching a low price at the fairs. It seemed likely enough that there would be bad feeling.

Johnny Darcy rested on his oars and leaned forward. He spoke in a low, confidential tone.

"There's notices posted up on the walls beyond and staring at you out of the windows of the shops, saying that the people is to go to a meeting on Sunday after mass. Paddy Heverin, the publican, has given the use of his field. And the word has gone out that the same meeting will be worth attending. Father O'Sullivan is to speak to the boys—and it's himself can do it. And a Member of Parliament is to be there. But sure, you're a Member yourself and know more about it than a poor man like me."

Johnny Darcy did not mention that, poor man as he was, he knew a good deal about the meeting that was to be held. He had, in fact, been employed in erecting the platform in Heverin's field, and afterwards, while drinking in Heverin's public-house, had picked up a good deal of gossip about the meeting. He knew, for instance, that the Member of Parliament who was to be chief orator of the day had been induced to attend by an assurance given confidentially by Heverin that Stephen Butler knew all about the meeting and approved of its objects. He knew also that the proposal to invite Stephen to attend had been definitely vetoed by Father O'Sullivan. He had given information enough as he thought, to secure the good-will of Mr. Butler. He had not given enough to incur the displeasure of Father O'Sullivan or Mr. Heverin. He began to row again, well satisfied with himself.

To Stephen the news was not very exciting or interesting. He did not see what either Father O'Sullivan or the Member of Parliament, whoever he might be, could do to prevent Lord Daintree getting his rents or Mr. Snell from having his tenants evicted. The subject was to him an intensely unpleasant one. He hated to think of the struggles of people who were really poor to meet heavy rents. He hated to think of the misery

which followed evictions. But the whole business seemed to him inevitable. He let his thoughts drift back to the conversation with Rafferty. That had stirred and really interested him. What he heard fitted in very well with his own experience of parliamentary life. It did seem a vain thing to try to make English people or English statesmen listen to reason, unless behind the reason there was force. And an appeal to force seemed perfectly hopeless. There was the dilemma. Reason was hopeless. Force was useless. Was there any middle way?

They reached the shore. Stephen, with two or three of the largest of the fish in his basket, walked up to Dhulough House. He dined alone at a little table spread for him opposite the fireplace. The evenings were damp, and the old dining-room, except in the warmest weather, was chilly without a fire. Opposite him, above the chimney-piece, hung an old print representing the Irish House of Commons in session in College Green. Rows of somewhat prim gentlemen in knee breeches, with frilled shirt fronts and powdered heads, faced each other. The grim features of old Stephen Butler were recognisable. He did not seem so fine a gentleman as many of those among whom he sat. He had not the intellectual face of the orator who stood with outstretched arm addressing the House. Perhaps old Stephen had no great belief in oratory, though he lived in an age when speeches were reckoned mighty things. Certainly it was not on record of him that he spoke much.

What had those gentlemen, with their clean-shaved faces and fine clothes, with their taste for speechifying and their readiness for duelling—what had they made of the puzzle of Ireland's relations with England? In the end enough of them had been bribed or bullied into solving the riddle in England's way. But before that, before money was to be had for the asking, and

coronets waited for the men who chose to put them on, which horn of the dilemma had they chosen? Had they relied on reason or force when they demanded their rights?

Stephen sat looking at their faces as he drank his wine. He knew very well what answer to give to the question he asked. Behind him—and he did not have to turn and look to call it to remembrance—hung another picture. In it some of these same gentlemen pranced extravagantly on horses outside the Parliament House, and rows of armed men—their friends, their tenants, or the workmen from the workshops of the north—stood ready. There were cannons among them, and out of the mouths of the cannons belched the smoke of burnt gunpowder. The whole army, for it was an army, gathered round the statue of William of Orange, a monarch not much beloved to-day by Irish people, but whose right to the crown he wore was based solely on a people's will; whose history provides sufficient precedent to men who take arms in their hands to assert natural human rights against the divine rights claimed by those who rule wrongly. It was sufficiently evident that the gentlemen in silk stockings among whom his grandfather sat had not shrunk from the appeal to force when reason failed them.

But then, they had force; guns and swords in their hands; men, drilled men in uniforms, with guns and swords behind them. What force had Rafferty and his associates? What more hopeless than force against England now? The dilemma remained. Reason was useless. Force was hopeless. Was there a middle way?

Then suddenly there flashed on him the recollection of a chance discussion during the last session of the old Parliament. He had been slack in his attendance, having lost interest in the performance of a meaningless drama. But he had heard of a small band of men of his own party

who had adopted new tactics—outrageous, unfair, ungentlemanly tactics, said the older men—and he, hearing vaguely of their doings, had agreed. What if these men had hit on a new way of using force—a way that was not hopeless? It might be that by insulting the dignity of England, by outraging the decencies of public life, by defying all the unwritten rules which regulate the actions of gentlemen, by doing things never done or dreamed of before, they might oblige Englishmen to listen at last. Reason clearly was useless. He had tried it, and he knew. Force, as Rafferty knew the use of it, was hopeless. All the armed men were on the other side. But there might be, there was, a middle way, a new kind of force which unarmed men could use.

CHAPTER X

IN the village of Cuslough there are three principal buildings. The police barrack stands at one end of the street, a neat, two-storied house, with whitewashed walls. Five windows face the road, three in the upper story and one on each side of the door below. All of them have black, loopholed iron shutters flung back and fastened to the wall on each side. Behind these men armed with carbines or rifles might lurk securely and fire upon a mob outside. These shutters were erected at the time of the Fenian scare, when retired military officers used to write letters to the newspapers every day detailing plans for fortifying country houses. In those days governments were more honest than they have been since. It was not pretended that the police was a civil force, existing for the protection of Irish citizens from thieves and vagabonds. It was frankly owned, by loopholed shutters and otherwise, that a military garrison held the country down. In front