

and torture, and ugly crime are not dead, and today in Ireland there are terrible crimes that make one ask: "Are we in the times of Richard Jeffries and Richard Cœur de Lion or in the present day?"

Strip off the garments of our time and we are found to be at the worst as bad as or even worse than the ancient sinners of the State. There are horrible things recorded in *No Defence*, but they belonged to the time, and in Rameses' day no worse things were done; and there are worse things done today at our very doors than were ever told in history. Look then at *No Defence* with mind attuned to the spirit of time, and when you read that men were seized in the streets and carried off to join the British Navy, ask yourself what is being done in Russia, Turkey and in more civilised countries today. Think of the Armenian atrocities and the atrocities on the Congo, and the atrocities in the late war and in Ireland today, and *No Defence* cannot shock you. We have done away with the Ships Floggings—from ship to ship—and we no longer hang for trifling crimes, and the food and pay of our navies are good, but we are not so far from ancient barbarism as our hospitals, our charities and our care of the sick and wounded and our immense benefactions would suggest. We are a long way ahead of what our grandfathers and great-grandfathers had and did, but in some ways we are still as near the worst as was seen in their days. That the world has improved there is no doubt, but polygamy still exists, and the vast increase of divorce in the English-speaking world shows that morally we are still lacking! I only say this that you may not turn from some of the horrors of *No Defence*.

It has elements that command interest: the friendship of Dyck Calhoun and Michael Clones is one of them, the fidelity of Sheila is another, the contest between Lord Mallow and Dyck is another, the fight back to honour by Dyck with so much against him is one more, and the final readjustment belongs not to melodramatic fiction, but to legitimate life in any land.