

“LET THE ROOF FALL IN”

that led nowhere, hearing always too late that by some other way or route he could have saved time and fatigue. He was being constantly misdirected, and always encouraged; everyone seemed to want to detain him with desultory talk. The statement that it was “but a step” led him from one fatigue to another. He was nearly two days getting from Bandon to Tralee. Afterwards he found it could have been accomplished in a few hours.

And when he got to Tralee, it was only to hear that Widow O'Brian's farm, she that was O'Daly's sister, was not at Tralee at all, but at Listowel; and strongly they advised him not to go there. For she and her niece that was staying with her were surely being boycotted. Widow O'Brian's farm was, rightly speaking, Dan Maguire's farm.

Derry had hard work to get away from the inn at Tralee without hearing a complete history of the feud between Dan Maguire and Widow O'Brian. It was all about a bit of land that did not amount to half a dozen Irish acres. It had led the two belligerents, and their respective sympathisers into unheard of raids and reprisals. The feud between Dan Maguire and Widow O'Brian was the topic of the whole country-side, but now things were getting serious. For Dan's rick had been fired, and there was talk of cattle-maimers, and one of the widow's men had been shot at from behind a hedge. All Tralee congregated in the public-house to tell him about the feud and the farm, once the news got about that there was a gentleman inquiring.

But the only word of it Derry heeded was that the widow had a niece staying with her.

Widow O'Brian's farm was as little like an English homestead as the fair domain of Dunstons was like the wild disorder, and picturesque ruin, of Castle Ranmore. Derry saw broken hedges, and a field that seemed to be