

INTRODUCTION

I HAD planned this book and had read extensively of the period of the Irish Revolution and the Mutiny at the Nore, and by chance, before I began it, I had gone to Buxton in England to see a friend. I was walking on the hill-side and not far from me were three young people, two men and a girl. The girl was very pretty and one of the men was handsome. I watched them for some moments, then turned away; I was brought back by hearing the toss of a stone and a voice say: "Well, good-bye, Tim, I'll meet you at the court-house and after at the gaol!"

The young handsome man, Tim, was going swiftly down the hill-side; the other, not good-looking, was laughing—he had an honest, brave face, and the girl was blushing and looking half-sadly after the vanishing man. The words of this man are in substance the opening words of *No Defence*, and the character of Dyck Calhoun I fashioned from this young man who had gone with that cheerful taunt behind him. So, books are formed with a basis of real life and character. Whenever I wrote of Dyck Calhoun, I thought of the man at Buxton, and that man was Irish for he was called Tim, and the girl was in appearance and in mind Sheila of the hills.

Writing historical novels has infinite charm, for one is dealing with world events, and the world is so much the same in all ages that one can take a figure of today and throw him or her back and surround them with the circumstances, habits and influences of the time and get an accurate tale of the life of the period. Take the characters of Shakespeare and bring them to the life of today with their costumes gone, and on the whole the