

dining-room. A huge gilt mirror hung over the mantelpiece, faded rhododendrons upside down made a grisly pattern on the wall-paper, the table was covered with a purple tasselled cloth with holes in it, and the furniture was upholstered in a material that had once been pink. The curtains drawn across the windows were yellow and grey with age and dust, and I could not bear to look at the carpet. There were four pictures on the walls, portraits of Queen Victoria and Mr Gladstone, and two enlarged photographs, coloured, and magnificently framed, that showed the curl-papery lady who had opened the door, dressed in a low-necked evening gown, with jewels about her fat, creased neck, and flowers in her hair.

The door had been left open, and presently she shouted, "Go upstairs! First on the left." The door of "first on the left" was ajar, and a baby was squalling inside. I knocked, and went into the most dishevelled room it is possible to imagine. There was a big bed in it, unmade, the bed-clothes tumbled anyhow, several broken chairs, and a washing-stand with a basin out of which someone had taken a bite. The novelist, in a dressing-gown open at the neck, and showing plainly that there was nothing but skin beneath it, was writing at a desk, throwing off his sheets as fast as he covered them. A very pretty little Irish girl, of about nineteen or twenty,