

away a saint from your door, or, say, our Divine Lord Himself, how would you feel?"

"Uncomfortable," said Luke; "but I never heard of such a thing as possible."

"Well, I did, and what is more, I was the guilty one myself, may God forgive me!"

This was delightful. Luke hardly expected such a pleasure as to meet the supernatural so closely, face to face. He flicked away the crumbs from his coat and settled himself to listen.

"You'd like to hear it?"

"Well," said the old man, his face kindling, and his whole manner assuming a tone of deep reverence, "it happened to me twice; the third time, if I am forgetful of God's warning, will be my last. A few years ago I was sitting at dinner, when the door-bell was rung violently. I was almost at the door, and I was fairly bothered from beggars. I resolved that, come what would, nothing should tempt me to give another penny that day. I watched the tongue of the bell wagging, and I said to myself: 'That'll do, me boy!' Just then came a second pull, and I thought the bell was down. I jumped up angrily and went to the door. It was almost dusk. There was no head-covering, but he had a red muller round his neck and a kind of belt or cord around his waist. He handed me a letter, I didn't look at it, but handed it back without a word. Without a word the figure bowed and passed down the walk into the road. I went back to my dinner. No! I couldn't touch a bit. The figure haunted me. I put on my hat and rushed out. There wasn't a sign of him to be seen. I could see the road from my wicket for a mile or so in each direction. I looked up and down. There was no one visible. I trotted up to the police barrack. They are always on the lookout. No; no one of that description had passed. I went in the opposite direction to the forge. No; the boys had seen no one. I came back, uneasy enough in my mind, I can tell you!"

"Whom do you suppose it to have been?" asked Luke.

"St. Francis himself," said the old man. "Within a week I was down with the worst fit of sickness I ever had."

"And the—a—second apparition?" said Luke, humoring the old man.

"The second was in Dublin," said the old man, solemnly. "I was returning from the summer holidays, and had little money left. I was strolling along the quay from the Four Courts to the Bridge, and, with a young lay friend, had been examining the pile of books outside a second-hand bookshop. Just before we came to a tall, dark man opened on the quay, a tall, dark man accosted me. He was white as death, and had a look of untold suffering in his face. Again, like my former visitor, he said nothing, but mutely held out his hand. I shook my head and passed on; but in a moment I recollected myself, and wheeled round. There was the long quay, stretching as far as the eye could reach. Not a trace of him! I hurried back and spoke to the book dealer, whom I had left standing at his stall. He had not seen him. I said no more; but at dinner I interrogated my young friend.

"Did you notice a man that stopped as on the quay?"

"Yes," he said; "I did."

"Did you think now that he appeared to be in pain?"

"I never saw such a face of suffering before," he said.

"Did he—now, I tried to say, unconsciously, did he remind you of any one in particular?"

"Well," the young man replied, "if I may say it, he reminded me awfully of our Lord. In three days I was on the face of my back again, and no one could ever recover. Well, the third time—"

"The third time won't come if the Lord leaves me my senses," said the old man.

It was really delightful to Luke to be brought into such immediate contact with medievalism. What a splendid story for the salve! He would make the Master's hair stand on end. And perhaps Olivette would make her Franciscan pilgrimage to Ireland instead of Assisi. Who knows?

There was no further discussion. The two guests went away early. Luke and Father Martin were alone.

"I make," said the former, "the most frantic resolutions never to be tempted into discussing Ireland; because, although I have subdued our national tendency to hysterics, I cannot be always sure that my opponent has acquired the same self-command."

"You did very well," said Father Martin, dryly.

"Yes, indeed! but I was afraid the old gentleman might prove aggressive, he took such a tone at first."

"It was fortunate that he did not stray into further discussion, particularly on the relative of races. We should have had a most magnificent blow-up from Father Cussen, who declares that everything evil comes from England."

"Of course; he hasn't been yet out of his country," said Luke. "You must see England close at hand and Ireland in perspective to understand the vast and radical difference."

"He has only just returned from England," said Father Martin.

"A lying visit?"

"No; a holiday lasting over seven years."

"It is incomprehensible," said Luke. "Why, his accent—"

"He has retained his native Doric, and it sits well on an eloquent tongue as ever you heard."

"Then he cannot have had experience of the better side of English life," said Luke. "I'm sure it is only since my pro-removal to Aylesburgh that I have come to see the many and very beautiful traits of the English character. It seems to me we have such a lot to learn."

"For example?" said Father Martin, mildly.

"Well, take Church matters. You, here, have no public services worth naming—no great celebrations, no processions, no benedictions, no great ceremonial to enliven the faith by striking the fancy of the people—"

"You mean we don't put every benediction in the newspaper, and every presentation of a gold watch or a purse of money?"

"Well, no; perhaps that's overdone. But now I've learned so much from contact with Anglicans. I have learned, first of all, to esteem my college career as so much wasted time—"

"I thought you were First of First!" interposed Father Martin; wickedly.

"Quite so," said Luke, wincing; "but, my dear Father, who cares over there for our insular distinctions? Then I have learned that our theological course is about as wise as a course in theosophy and occultism; nay, less wise, because these subjects are discussed sometimes; theology, as we understand it, never! No one ever dreams to-day in England of making a frontal attack on our recognized positions. They simply ignore us. Look at all the trouble we had in those two treaties on the Trinity and the Incarnation! It was labor wasted; water flung on the sands—"

"I have read somewhere lately," interrupted Father Martin, "that five or six Anglican Bishops, and a very large percentage of the clergy, are Unitarians."

"Well?"

"I should say your Trinity and Incarnation would come in well there," said Luke, loftily. "These—well—painful subjects are never alluded to in polite society. They are gently tabooed. Conversation turns on the higher levels of humanitarianism and positivism, instead of raging in endless vortices of controversy."

"And the sum total of this new dogma is?"

"Seek the God in man; not man in God!" said Luke, grandly. "Work, toil, suffer in the great cause—the elevation and perfection of the race."

"You saw that cloud, passing there across the black hill?" said Father Martin.

"Yes," said Luke.

"That is your humanity, its history and its importance."

"But the Divine Immanence in man—the spirit of genius, the elation of duty, the rapture of righteousness—all the signs of what the Jewish prophet called 'the Lord's controversy'—are these nothing in the eternities?"

"That's all foolish jargon," said Father Martin. "I have been there, and I know it all. But if you want to make your gods out of a few wretched bleds, who eat carrion, and drink Oriental drugs to keep the wretched life in them, and clothe themselves in unlovely garments by night and snore unto the stars, I'm not with you. I'd prefer the gods of Greece."

"But you don't see," said Luke, impatiently. "The race is evolving through possibly the last cycle of human evolution towards the Divine. Shall we not lend a hand here? Is it not clearly England's destiny to bring all humanity, even the most degraded, into the happy circle of civilization, and to evoke from Afghan and Astartee the glory of the slumbering godhead?"

"Good heavens! why didn't you say all that an hour ago? I'd give you my next holiday at Lidoonvarna to hear you say that before Cussen."

"I shouldn't mind," said Luke, grandly.

"And you really think England has got a divine mission? I never think of England but as in that dream of Piran—vast Gothic halls, machinery, pulleys, and all moving the mighty, rolling mechanism that is crushing into a dead monotony all the beauty and picturesque of the world."

"That is, bringing it up to a level of civilization and culture," said Luke.

"And why did the Almighty create the Afghan and the Astartee, to be bunched and blasted Britain? If England's civilization was that of Catholicism, I can understand you. But even if conserved, raised up, illuminated fallen races, as the Spaniards did, and the Portuguese, it might be yet doubtful if there was a divine mission to break up noble traditions for the sake of a little more refinement, where England's mission is to destroy and corrupt everything she touches."

"Now, now, Father Martin, this is all congenital and educational prejudice. Look at your own country and see how backward it is!"

"What you call congenital prejudice," said Father Martin, gravely. "I call faith. It is our faith that makes us hate and revolt from English methods. To the mind of every true Irishman, England is simply a Franciscan stonemonster, that for over seven hundred years has been covering an immortal soul. He has had his way everywhere but in Ireland; therefore he hates us."

"No use," said Luke, who had hoped for sympathy at least from the grave and learned man. "No use! Did you ever read the Atta Troll?"

"Never!"

"Nor any of Ibsen's?"

"One or two trilles," said Father Martin indifferently. "Very little light or music came out of the Matratzengruft."

"Did you read the Laches? We have had it for discussion lately. The Master of Balliol was down, and threw extraordinary light on the philosophy of Plato. Why isn't Plato read in our colleges?"

"There is no time for such amusement amongst more serious matters. Plato is a huge bundle of sophisms, without a grain or scintilla of solid wisdom."

"Dear me! Father Martin, I really didn't expect all this from you. I thought that you, at least, would sympathize with every effort towards the higher light."

"The higher light? My poor boy, you are dazzled with a little display of green and yellow fireworks. You don't see the calm, patient, eternal stars beyond."

Luke went home moody and per-

plexed. He had been positively certain that he was on the right track; that the world was to be conquered by the world's weapons—learning, knowledge, light, science, literature, a sized by the Church, and used with deadly effect against the world. This he had been taught, everywhere—by the Catholic press, by men of "light and leading" in the Church, by his own convictions. But clearly, opinion on the subject was not quite unanimous. But then this Ireland—quaint, archaic, conservative, medieval.

"I wish I were home," said Luke. Home was Aylesburgh.

"My young friend has just taken his first false step," said Father Martin to his books; and, strange to say, it was before a huge, thirteen-volume Bekker's Plato he soliloquized. "Yes!" he said, as if in defiance to the mighty apostle, "yes! the first false step—the apostle's words, my most learned friend. And he has taken Father Tim's advice with a vengeance. He holds his head very high."

Luke entered the farmyard. The sounds of night reveling came from the lighted barn; the swift music of the violin, the patter of many feet, the loud laugh. Over in a corner, two farmers, a little balm, were protesting unbounded and everlasting friendship, whilst debating about a low shillings of the marriage money in a prospective match. Here and there a few couples strayed around, enjoying the beautiful night, and possibly speculating about their own futures. From a neighboring hedge sang Philomel!—no, that's not it! From a neighboring haystack came a mighty chorus sacred to the groves and Bacchus:—

One! One!
Lacoe! Lacoe!
Lacoe! Lacoe!

Luke knew it well, and its accompaniment:—

Poetic for Bacchus, ye d-d young numskulls. Believe it on the authority of a Trinity College man, banished for his sins to Eocelia.

It was the bugle-call from play, uttered by the old Kerry hedge schoolmaster. Luke almost felt the swish of the rattle. It was also the vesper song of the same, after he had worshipped his god and his steps were unsteady.

"There is no use, mother, in my thinking of sleeping here to-night," said Luke.

"I'm not," said the mother; "there is a little music in the barn—"

"There are two fellows stupidly drunk there in the yard," he said, "and, I suppose, several more around the grounds."

"Wish! I suppose they took a little taste too much, and it overcame them; but there was never such a wedding in the barony before—"

"I'll go down to the Canon and ask a bed."

"Do, alanna! do. Indeed you wouldn't get much sleep to-night here."

And mother leaned over on the settle to finish her Rosary.

Luke and the Canon—dined in solitary state on Sunday. It was a little dry state, but dignified. Luke and his host had now many ideas in common about things in general, and especially about the very vexed question of which seven centuries of the united wisdom of statesmen, legislators, political economists, etc., have failed to find a solution. The Canon had found it. He had turned his parish into a happy Arcady. His houses were neat and trim; his people comfortable; no poverty, no distress. "All these unhappy mendicants at your—sister's wedding were imported. There's not even one—a professional mendicant in my parish."

"I hope," said Luke, "that now that you have established this happy condition of things, the intellectual progress of the people will keep pace with their material prosperity."

"I hope so," said the Canon blandly; "in fact, I have only to suggest it—and—"

Tum! tum! tum!!! Tum! tum! tum!!! crashed out the big drum beneath the windows, the shrill fife squeaked, and the scaffold song of the Manchester martyrs, attuned to the marching song of American battalions, broke on the ear, whilst a vast multitude surged and thronged along the road that swept by the Canon's grounds. The windows rattled under the reverberation, and continued rattling, for the band had stopped opposite the rectory to serenade its occupant, and charitably infuse a little patriotism into him. He was stricken dumb with surprise and indignation. For ten minutes the thunderous music went on, punctuated now and again with cheering, and then the crowd moved away. Not far, however. They had taken possession of the national school-house, and were holding a Sunday meeting.

It took some time for the Canon to recover his equanimity. He was quite pale with annoyance. He tapped the mahogany gently with his polished nails, and said in a pitiful way to Luke:

"Isn't that very sad? Isn't it pitiable? What an—ha—object-lesson for you, my dear young friend, about the condition of this distracted country!"

Luke could say nothing but stare at the fire, where the logs were blazing, for the winter lingered yet. There they sat silent, while now and again a burst of cheering came up from the school room, where Father Cussen was haranguing the mighty audience.

Just think of it, the grave propriety involved in this," said the Canon. "There is the—ha—desecration of the peaceful Sabbath evening; the exciting of—ha—dangerous passions; and that young clergyman has been so forgetful of the duties of his sacred office as to usurp my—ha—legitimate authority, and take possession of my schools without the least reference to me."

"Whatever be thought of the political aspect of the question," said Luke, "I think he should have had your permission about the schools. I dare say there's some explanation. But are

these people the beneficiaries of your kindly exhortations in their behalf?"

"Some. Not all. This young clergyman's theory is that the condition of the people is insecure, notwithstanding my exhortations, and I am privileged to say, my influence with the landlords. Why, no landlord or agent would dare interfere with my people. I need only lift my hand and they would retire."

"The whole thing is very sad," said Luke; "I wish I were back in England."

Next day, his good mother showed him with pride and gratification the numberless presents that had been showered upon Lizzie. Lizzie helped. For a quiet young lady, as she was, no one would have expected a deep and dreadful out.

"This is from Father Pat," she said.

"God bless him," said her mother. "And this from the Canon."

"I wouldn't doubt him," said Mike Delmege.

"And Father Martin sent this beautiful set of breakfast ware; and Father Meade, whom we hardly know, this biscuitaire; and the nuns of the Good Shepherd these lovely books; and our new curate, Father Cussen, this History of Ireland—"

Very true, Lizzie; very true; Father Luke Delmege's valuable present to his sister is conspicuous by its absence.

"You'll be able to tell Margery all about the wedding," said the good mother.

"You don't know how hardly time to call," said Luke; "I've overstayed my leave of absence already."

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