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CHAPTER VII

THE BEGINNING



ANY months elapsed before Robert Fletcher heard any more about a situation in London. Sometimes he thought his employer had forgotten him in the stress of other matters claiming his attention. These were stirring times in the political world, the early days of the Irish agitation, which was engaging the earnest attention of all in authority. Robert Fletcher, among his many studies, found time to make himself completely master of the situation, and his intimate knowledge of the whole Irish question would have shamed many a member of the House. Sometimes John Fletcher was surprised at the keen, intense sympathy he exhibited towards Ireland—it amounted almost to a passion. John himself was not without feeling for the romantic, lovable people who had within their own nature all the elements of unrest and turbulence, but it was rather the dreamy, bookish interest of the poet than of one actively interested in the struggle.

"Man, Rob, ye are clean carried awa!" he said one evening to his adopted son when he had listened with patience to a more than usually bitter tirade