

LUKE DELMEGE

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CHAPTER V.

A NOVEL THESIS.  
 "There is the Angelus, Luke," said Margery Delmege, anxiously, as Luke came in from the fields holding his Briefary open with one finger.  
 "Hurry up, you'll hardly be in time; and it won't do to keep grand people waiting."  
 Luke did not reply. He had read somewhere of a saint who was reading the *Mirabilia* of None when a great monarch was announced, and he went on calmly reading. "He was in audience with the King of Kings." So Luke read on to the end, not noticing his sister's anxiety. Then he said the *Sacrosanctae*, and then:  
 "Well, Margy, [you were saying something?]"  
 "I said you'd be late, and that won't do. There are your cuffs, and I put in your best sleeve-links; and let me see your collar. You must change that. Why 'tis all damp. What have you been doing?"  
 Luke looked calmly down on the black tresses of his beloved sister, as she fussed and worried about his toilette.

"A regular Martha!" he whispered.  
 "Martha or no Martha, you must be turned out of the house decently. Mind, come early—that is, as early as politeness will allow. And if that horrid Miss Wilson says anything offensive—I'm sure she will—treat her with silent contempt."  
 "All right, Margy. That's just in my way."  
 "And come home early, mind. Father Pat will be here to tea; and—what else?"  
 "Never mind, Margy. We'll resume the thread of our narrative in another chapter."

Margy watched his fine, tall figure as he swung down along the road, and then went back to get the tea things ready, but with many misgivings and forebodings.

The irritation of the morning had one good effect. It had steered Luke's nerves, so that it was quite in a self-confident, jaunty way he pulled the bell vigorously at the Canon's residence, and then gave a more timid knock. He was ushered into the drawing room by the tidy little servant, and announced.

Then he was frozen into ice. The two elderly ladies, dressed in black silk, with thin gold chains around their necks, looked at him for a moment, and then turned to each other.

"As I was saying, my dear, the report is that they are separated, or going to be. It couldn't end otherwise. All these naval fellows, coming up there at all hours—well, well, we mustn't be uncharitable."  
 "The only other occupant of the room was a young lad, about six and twenty years of age, who, faultlessly dressed in evening costume, leaned languidly against the mantelpiece, and would have looked ineffably bored but that he appeared to derive untold gratification from the contemplation of his own face in the looking-glass over the mantelpiece. Indeed, to further this ecstatic reverie, he had put aside carefully two vases that held summer flowers, and had even pushed away the clock with the singing birds that had fascinated Luke a few days before. And let it be said at once that the reflected image was without doubt, a beautiful one. A face, olive pale, was surmounted with a dark mass of hair that fringed and framed it to perfection; and through the tangled curls a faultlessly white hand was just now running, and tossing them hither and thither with careful indifference. Two blue-black eyes looked steadily out from that white face, or rather would look steadily to it if they were allowed. But just now it seemed an effort to look at anything but that fair figure in the quicksilver. Languor, deep, somnolent languor was the characteristic of this youthful face and figure; and a pained expression, as if the anticipation of the evening's pleasures was an unmitigated annoyance. He looked calmly at the young priest, and then resumed his studies. Luke, chilled and frozen, sank into a chair, and began to turn over the leaves of an album. Alas! he had not loosened the clasp, when a very musical but chirped out: "Within a mile of Edinburgh Town." He closed the album hastily, but too late. On went that dreadful tinkling. He took up a book called "Celebrities of the Century." He was beginning to be interested, when the door shot open, and another guest, a solicitor, was announced. He was warmly welcomed by the ladies, got a languid nod and a "How do's" from the Phidian Apollo, and took no notice whatever of Luke. He sank quietly into the sofa, and commenced the "clitter clatter" of good society. Then the door opened again, this time to reveal unannounced a fair girlish form, and a face very like that of Apollo, but topped down by feminine taste into features that were singular in their beauty, but excluded all appearance of singularity. Luke was prepared for another cold douche of good society manners; but Barbara Wilson walked straight towards him, held out her hand and said:  
 "Father Delmege, you are ever so kind to come. Mother, this is Luke Delmege, of whom we have heard so often. This is my aunt, Father Delmege. Luke, have you met Father Delmege?"

The Phidian Apollo turned languidly around; and without removing his hand from his pocket, he nodded and said:  
 "How do's?"  
 "Mamma, you missed such a treat this morning. It was Father Delmege's first Mass; and oh! it was beautiful! And dear Father Pat was there, and the sun was resting on his beautiful white hair like a nimbus. And we all got Father Delmege's blessing, and why didn't you preach? We were dying to hear you."  
 "Well," said Luke, "you know,

Miss Wilson, it is not customary to preach at one's first Mass—  
 "Ah, of course, on ordinary occasions. But we wanted to hear you, you know. Where is the blue ribbon? Why don't you wear it?"  
 "The blue ribbon?" said Luke, in amazement.  
 "Yes. Didn't you carry off the blue ribbon in Maynooth? Father Martin said that there hadn't been so distinguished a course in Maynooth for over fifty years."

"Father Martin is too kind," murmured Luke who had now thawed out from his icy loneliness, and felt grateful beyond measure to this gentle girl, who had, with the subtle and unerring tact of charity, broken down all the icy barriers of good society. Mrs. Wilson and her sister woke up, and manifested a little interest in the young athlete. The solicitor rubbed his hands, and murmured something about his old friend, Mike Delmege, "as good a man, sir, your respected father, as is to be found in the Petty Sessions District;" and even Apollo paused from his hair-teasing, and looked with a little concern and some jealousy at Luke.

Then the Canon entered with one or two other visitors, who had been transacting business with him, and dinner was announced.

"No, no," said Barbara to her uncle, in reply to an invitation; "I intend to have Father Delmege during dinner. I have lots to say to him."

"Ah, Margy! Margy! thought Luke, what rash judgments you have been guilty of! Won't I surprise you with all the goodness and kindness of this contemptuous young lady?"

The dinner was simple, but faultless. The conversation simmered along on the usual topics—sports, which occupied then a considerable share of public interest in Ireland. One young champion was especially applauded for having thrown a heavy weight some incapable distance; and his muscles, and nerves, and weight, and training were all carefully debated. If ever we become a wealthy people, our national cry will be that of the ancient Romans—*Panem et Circenses!* Then came the Horse Show that was to be held in August. Here the ladies shone by their delightful anticipations of the great Dublin carnival. Then the Flower Show, just coming on in a neighboring town. Here the Canon was in his element, and said, and with an air of modest depreciation, that he had been assured that:

"My Marshal Niel—ha—shall certainly carry First Prize; but I know that my *Gladiolus Cincquecentus* will be beaten. A happy defeat for Lady—ha—Descluse has assured me that this time at least I really must give her the—ha—victory."

"But, my dear Canon," said the solicitor, as if giving not a legal, but a paternal advice, and in a tone full of the gravest solicitude, "you ought not you know, I assure you that a victory of this kind is not to be lightly sacrificed. Consider now the money value of the prizes—"  
 "Ha! Ha!" laughed the Canon, "the legal mind always runs into—ha—practical issues. The days of chivalry are gone."

"Well, now," said the solicitor, humbly, of course, sir, you must have your little joke; but seriously now, consider the importance of gaining a prize in such a contest. After all, you know, horticulture is a branch of aesthetics; and you know, sir, with your vast experience, how important it is for the Church nowadays to be represented, and represented successfully, before our separated brethren, in such a delightful and elevating and refining pursuit as the culture of flowers."

"Ah! well, Mr. Griffiths; but chivalry—where is chivalry?" said Griffiths, driving home the argument, "but our first interest is—our one interest is—the Church. And consider your position—the leading representative of the Church in this district—I might say in this country. See what a dreadful injury to religion it would be if you were defeated, sir. Of course 'tis only a flower; but its defeat is the Church, sir, mustn't be defeated in anything or it succumbs in all."  
 "There is something in what you say—ha—indeed," replied the Canon, "and I shall—ha—give the matter further consideration. But take a glass of wine."  
 "Ah, this is wine," said Griffiths, sniffing the glass and holding it up to the light. "Now, if I may be so impolite as to venture to guess, I should say that wine cost a centum at least."  
 "Add—twenty," said the host.

"I thought so. Very unlike the stuff we have to drink at our hotels, even on Circuit. Vinegar and water, and a little, logwood to colour it. This is wine."  
 "Mr. Sumner, you are taking nothing. Try that Madeira!"  
 Mr. Sumner was saying nothing, but he was steadily absorbing vast quantities of wine. He was one of those calm, beautiful drinkers, whose senses never relaxed for a moment while the new must was poured into the bottle, and seemed to evaporate as speedily as it was taken. Luke watched him wonderingly, and with a certain amount of admiration, and was stricken into silence partly by the surroundings, which to him were unique and awful, which tripped lightly from the muscles and calves of athletes to the fine points of a horse; and from the age of a certain brand of wine to the barometrical rise and fall of stocks and shares. He had been hoping in the beginning that the course of conversation would turn on some of those subjects that were of interest to him—some great controverted point in the literature or philosophy of the past, or some point of heresy, or some historical fact that he could lay hold on, and perhaps enchain the interest of his hearers. Wouldn't some one say "Canossa," or "Occam," "Libertus," or even "Wegscheider"? Would they never return the conversation into something intellectual or elevating, and give him a chance? Once, indeed, Barbara, in reply to an observation from her aunt that she was killed

from ennui in that country place, said laughingly:  
 Lady Clare Vere de Vere  
 If time hangs heavy on your hands,  
 Are there no beggars at your gate?  
 Are there no poor about your lands?

But, alas! that was but a little puff of intellectual smoke that speedily vanished in the clear atmosphere of utter insanity. And Luke was bending over to say a complimentary word to Barbara, when the silent signal was given and the ladies arose. Luke was so absorbed in what he was saying that he did not heed a gesture from the Canon. Then he awoke to the t under:  
 "Father Delmege!"  
 and saw the Canon pointing angrily to the door. Poor Luke! He had studied all his rubrics carefully, and knew them down to every bond and genouflection that had ever been told of this rubric before. He blushed, stammered, kept his seat, and said—  
 "I beg your pardon. I do not understand—"  
 To add to his discomfort, he found that Miss Wilson's dress had got entangled around his chair. Blushing, humbled, confused, he tried to disentangle the gray silk; but he only managed to tangle it more. Then the Apollo arose with a calm smile, raised the chair, gave a bounce a kick, and opening the door with a bow that would have made Count d'Orsay die with envy, ushered the laughing ladies from the dining-room. The Canon was so pleased with the achievement that he almost forgave Luke; and Luke was questioning himself angrily—Where now is all your learning and useless lumber? And why the—do not the professors in our colleges teach us something about practical issues in daily life?

"Anything new in your profession, Louis?" said the Canon, airily, as the gentleman drew their chairs together and lighted their cigars.  
 "Oh, dear, yes!" said Louis, leisurely, "We are always forging ahead, you know; moving on with express speed, whilst you gentlemen of the Law and the Gospel are lumbering heavily along in the old ruts."  
 "Ha! Ha!" laughed the Canon, "Very good indeed! Lumbering along in the old ruts!" and what might be the newest discoveries now in medical science? Some clever way of shortening human life?"  
 "Well, no! We are beginning to touch on your province, I think. Our sappers and miners are beginning to dig under your foundations."  
 "But you won't stir the grand old fabric, Louis?" said Griffiths. "You can't, you know. You'll find bones and skulls, of course; that's your province; but you'll never shake the foundations. Will he, Canon?"  
 "Oh, dear no! Oh, dear no!" said the Canon, feebly. "But those men of science are really—ha—very enterprising, and, indeed—ha—aggressive. But I cannot see, Louis, how your noble science can conflict with theology. The schools of medicine and the schools of theology are—ha—so very distinct."  
 "They merge in the psychological school, I should say," said Louis.  
 "And psychology becomes physiology."  
 At last, at last, Luke, cometh your chance! Here is what you have been dreaming of—the whole evening's Psychology! The very word he had rolled under his tongue a thousand times as a sweet morsel. The soul! The soul! Psyche, his goddess! whom he had watched and studied, analyzed, synthesized, worshipped with all the gods of science from the "master of those who know" downwards. No bound had been seen or scented his quarry was ever strung to such tension of muscle or nerve as Luke, when at last all the twilight vistas opened, and he saw the broad fields of knowledge and science before him, and Psyche, Psyche, like Atalanta in the fields at Caldon.

"How can psychology merge in physiology?" said Luke, with dry lips, and in nervous manner. "I always considered that physiology treated only of animal mechanism."  
 "And psychology treats of?" said Louis Wilson, blandly.  
 "Of—of—the soul, of course," said Luke.

"And is not the soul a part of the animal mechanism?" said his antagonist.  
 "Certainly not," said Luke. "It is conjoined with it and distinct from it."  
 "Conjoined with it! Where?" said Louis.  
 "I have made post mortems again and again, and I assure you, gentlemen, I have discovered every other part of human anatomy; but that which you pleased to call the soul, I have never found. Where is it? What is its location?"  
 "Now, now, Louis," said the Canon, with feeble depreciation "this is going far, you know. But, of course, this is only for the sake of the—ha—ha—practical academic discussion. Proceed Mr. Delmege."

Poor Luke was now getting a little excited. He had never been taught that first of accomplishments, self-control and reserve. Indeed, he had been accustomed to success in the theses that had been arranged for students in his college, that he quite re-entred the very idea of being opposed or catechised by this young foppish doctor. When he folded his soutane in Maynooth and said, half sarcastically, in the scholastic form:  
 "Sic argumentaris, doctissime Dominus!" his antagonist had gone down pell-mell before him. And the idea of this young freshman attacking the fortresses of Catholic philosophy was intolerable. In a word, Luke was losing temper.

"The veriest tyro in philosophy," he said (it was a favorite expression of his, when he wanted to overwhelm utterly an antagonist), "knows that the soul is a simple substance, residing, whole and indivisible, in every part of the human frame."  
 "This is part of the human frame," said Louis, pulling a long black hair from his forehead. "Is my soul there or there?"  
 "Thou soul, into everlasting nothingness." He plucked the hair in places and let it fizzle away at the glowing end of his cigar.  
 "This is flippant, if not worse," said

Luke. "No one holds that a separated member carries with it a soul."  
 "Do you not hold that there is a separate creation for each human soul?"  
 "Yes. That is of faith."  
 "Where's the necessity? If life springs from antecedent life (that is your strong point against biologists), and if the soul is existent in every part, when there is life, does not the soul pass on to the new life, and become the animating principle in its embryonic state?"  
 "That is heresy," said Luke.  
 "That is the heresy of Tertullian. St. Thomas—"  
 "I thought," said his antagonist, blandly, "we were arguing as to facts, and not as to opinions."  
 "But I deny that opinions are opposed to facts," said Luke, timidly.  
 "You may not be aware," said Wilson, "that the greater part of your treatises on Moral Theology are arranged with the most childish ignorance of physiological facts that are known to every school boy who has passed his first medical."  
 "And are you aware," said Luke, hotly, "that many of your profession have passed their last medical are wise and humbled enough to acknowledge that what you call facts are still the *arcana* and mysteries of Nature?"  
 "Perhaps so," said Wilson, airily.  
 "But writers that lay down moral laws for the world, and base these laws on the operations of Nature, should try to understand these latter first. By the way, have you read anything of electro biology?"  
 "No!" said Luke, humbly.  
 "Have you read anything about psychic forces through Animal Magnetism?"  
 "No," said Luke.  
 "Have you heard of Reichenbach and his theory of Odic Forces?"  
 Luke shook his head humbly. He was stunned by the noisy emptiness of words.

Wilson threw him aside as a worthless antagonist and addressed Sumner.  
 "Did you see the last by Maupas-Summer?"  
 "The last you lent me," said Sumner.  
 "It is pretty tattered now. But really, you know, Wilson, I think these French fellows go a little too far, you know. I'm not squeamish, you know; but really, you know, that fellow makes your hair stand on end."  
 Wilson laughed rudely and shrugged his shoulders.  
 "Mea of the world, mustn't be squeamish about trifles—"  
 "Gentlemen," said the Canon, "I think we shall join the ladies at tea."  
 "I shall give you a volume by Gabriele d'Annunzio, our latest Italian writer," Luke heard Wilson saying to Sumner, as he stood in the porch to finish his cigar. "Pity those young clerical gentlemen don't read up with the requirements of the day."  
 "I think you read too much, Wilson," said Sumner. "You can't keep straight, you know, if you are too well acquainted with these things, you know."  
 "Sumner, you have a hard head for liquor."  
 "It is not in the power of whiskey to make me drunk," said Sumner, modestly.  
 "Well, I have a hard head in other matters," said Wilson. "By the way, did you ever try landrum?"  
 "No!" said Sumner. "I wouldn't venture beyond the bounds of honest liquor."  
 "You ought. Nothing braces a man like it. You see there's a total want of agility in these clergymen because they are so afraid of stimulants. I'm sure, now, my uncle would be almost clever; but you, young, he touches nothing. And that young greenhorn—"  
 "Who?"  
 "That young elergyman—a mere farmer's son—do you know that there is not on earth such a greenhorn as a clerical student? Now, if he took a little opium, according to De Quincey's prescription, well boiled, and with plenty of lemonade or orangeade, he would be passable."  
 "Well, Louis, you bowled him over crestfallenly."  
 "Yes, I should say so. And good Lord! what an accent! I wonder will he sing?"

CHAPTER VI.  
 ADIEUX.

Mortified and irritated, vexed at himself for his short-courts, savage at others for their unkindness, Luke passed into the drawing-room. Somehow, his anger gave a tinge of pallor to his brown, healthy face, that made him look quite interesting; and it was with something like kindness that Mrs. Wilson beckoned him to a seat near herself on the sofa, and chatted affably with him for a few moments. She also engaged his services in helping around the tea from a dainty wicker work table; and he was beginning to feel a little more comfortable, though still determined to escape at the first opportunity, when the Canon asked him abruptly to turn over the leaves of the music on the piano, at which Barbara was now seated. Luke was about to excuse himself by saying with perfect truth that he knew nothing about music; but in a weak moment he rose, and whilst Mrs. Wilson's fingers wandered over the keys, he stood, staccato-like, and motionless, near her. In a few seconds she nodded, and he turned the leaf with the air of an expert; and then the full absurdity of the situation broke suddenly upon him, and dyed neck and face and up to the roots of hair in deep crimson of shame and confusion. For he remembered that at the last retreat a picture of a worldly priest was held up to their reprobation—a picture painted by a strong and merciless hand. There it was, lurid and ghastly, or pitifully ludicrous, as you choose or your mood may be—the limp, unmuscular, artificial cleric, who, with all the insignia of Christ and the Cross, is perpetually sipping the manners and customs of the world, and in dress and manner and conversation is forever changing and shifting, like a mime on the stage. Ah! Luke! Luke! and hither hast thou come, even on the day

of thy first Mass. Burning with shame and self-scorn, he had sense enough left to whisper, "You will excuse me!" and retreated ignominiously to a corner, where, over the pages of an album, he thought unutterable things. He woke up, after what appeared to be an hour, by hearing the Canon say:  
 "That duet from—ah—*Trovatore*, Barbara; or, perhaps Louis would sing, 'Hear Me—ha—Gentle Maritana!'"  
 The two voices blended beautifully, and at another time Luke would have listened with pleasure, but not to-night. Oh, no! it had been a day of humiliation and suffering, and even the gentle spirit of music for once fails to bring peace and healing on her wings.

There was a hushed and whispered colloquy between Barbara and her mother, and then the former, with some hesitation, approached to where Luke was sitting, and said timidly, holding her hands pleadingly before her:  
 "Mother would like to hear you sing, Father. I'm sure you sing well—"  
 "I assure you, Miss Wilson, I'm quite unaccustomed to—"  
 "Now, I know you have a lovely baritone from the way you said the 'Prayers' to-day. Do, Father!"  
 "What could he sing?" "Believe Me, If All?" "Hush! Oh! Doth Not a Meeting Like This Make Amends?" "Absurd! There's a Bower of Roses by Bendamer's Stream?" "Sickly and sentimental! Yes, he will, by Jove! He'll take a subtle revenge by ruffling the plaudity of this smooth and aristocratic circle. Won't they laugh when they hear it at home? Won't Father Pat smite his leg like a Vulcan, and declare that it was the best thing he has ever heard in his life? But it will be impolite and shocking! No matter! He goes!"

And drawing himself up to his full height, and leaning one arm on the mantelpiece, Luke sang out in the noble baritone, that had often echoed at Christmas plays around the gloomy halls of Maynooth—  
 "From Howth away to faded Dunboy,  
 Whither Kerry's bestial came,  
 With lightning speed the summons flew  
 To Marshal Freedom's hosts.  
 From Limerick's old bastion walls  
 To Boyne's all-omened tide  
 The long watched signal swelled their  
 With Vengeance, Hope, and Pride."  
 The Canon was gasping and his face lengthening as in a spoon; the ladies smiled in horror; Apollo looked up, angry and contemptuous; Griffiths was about to say:  
 "Now, you know, Father Delmege, that's rank treason, you know"—but on went Luke, his rich voice thundering out the song of rebellion in the ears of these excellent loyalists:

"They're mustering fast—see, Silvenamon  
 His serried lines display;  
 From their burnished weapons gleam  
 In morning's ruddy blaze;  
 While proudly flows the fishing green  
 Hurrah! my boys, we've lived, thank  
 Got.  
 To set Old Land free!"  
 The Canon was shocked beyond expression; yet a tender old-time feeling seemed to dim his eyes, for the Mague was rolling past his door, and the summit of Silvenamon could be seen from the window. Luke rapidly shook hands with the ladies, whilst Barbara, in her enthusiasm, asked:  
 "Who wrote it? You must give me the words and the music, Father! 'Tis worth all the operas ever written."  
 He nodded to Griffiths, took no notice of the Apollo, shook hands with the Canon, and dashed into the cool air with a throbbing heart and a burning forehead.

He was pushing along in his swift striding way, and had reached the road, when he heard a flutter of silk behind him; and there was Barbara Wilson, a little out of breath and very white. He waited.  
 "Father," she said pleadingly, "I understand you are going on the English mission."  
 "Yes," he said wonderingly.  
 "Might I ask where will you be?"  
 "I cannot say," he said, "but in one of the south-eastern counties."  
 "Thank God," she said fervently. Then after some hesitation, and gulping down some emotion, "I want you to make a promise."  
 "If I may."  
 "You may meet my brother in England. He has been in Brighton, an assistant to a physician there. He is now in London attending St. Thomas' Hospital. If you meet him, will you be kind?"  
 "I'm not much attracted by your brother, Miss Wilson," Luke said bluntly.

"I know; but you are a priest, and his soul is at stake. You do not know, but I am afraid that he is—that he is—oh! my God! weak in his faith. You may be able to help him!"  
 "Of course, if I come across him in the course of my ministrations—"  
 "The Good Shepherd sought out the lost sheep," said Barbara.  
 "But, you know, one does not like a repulse," said Luke.  
 "It is a question of a soul," said Barbara, her eyes filling with tears.  
 "Say no more, Miss Wilson," said Luke, "you shame me. I heard your brother give expression to some shocking things this evening; and I confess I conceived a strong and violent aversion to him; but now that you have appeased—"  
 "Thank you, oh, so much! And there's something else about poor Louis—"  
 She put her fingers to her lip, murmuring. Then, after a pause, she said:  
 "Never mind. You'll find it out for yourself; but you promise?"  
 "I promise," he said.  
 "And you won't allow his arrogance and pride to repel you?"  
 "I hope not," said Luke.  
 "God bless you!" she said fervently clasping his hand.

"Hallo, old man! Alive and kicking!" was the cheery welcome of Father Pat, who, snugly ensconced in a capacious arm-chair in the parlor at Lisnalee, was stroking down the fair curls of a little lad, an orphan child of a younger brother, whom Mike Delmege had adopted. How calm and simple, and homely the little parlor

looked to Luke's eyes, dazzled and dimmed by the splendors of the Canon's house, and half-blinded from the emotions aroused during the evening. The image remained imprinted on the retentive retina of Luke's memory for many a day, and came up, amongst strange scenes and sights, to comfort him with its holy beauty. Often, in after years, when sitting at the tables of nobler men, who traced their blood back to the invaders, who bit the sands at Hastings, the cloud-dream of his seaside home rose soft and beautiful as a piece of enchantment raised to, on the streets of Southwark at midnight, when the thunder of the mighty stream of humanity rolled turbid and stormy along the narrow streets, did he see, as in a far-off picture, narrowed in the perspective of memory, the white farmhouse above the breaker, and the calm, beautiful, twilight holiness that slept above it—a canopy of peace and rest.

He saw two windows that opened on the parlor—the one looking northward over soft gray meadows and golden cornfields, that stretched away till they were lost in the purple and blue of the shadowy, mysterious mountains; the other looking southward over masses of purple heather, to where the everlasting sea shimmered in silver all day long, and put on its steel-blue armor against the stars of night. There was the tea-table, with its cups and saucers and its pile of dainty griddle cakes, out in squares, and fresh from the hands of Margery; and golden butter, the best that was made in the Golden Vale; and thick, rich cream; and fragrant strawberries, nestling in their grape-like leaves. And there was his good father, a stern old Irish Catholic of the Puritan type, silent and God-fearing and just, who never allowed a day to pass without an hour of silent communion with God, in his bedroom after the midday meal, and on whose lips the slightest whisper of indecency was punished by immediate expulsion. There sat the kindly mother, her beautiful white hair arranged under her snowy cap, and the eternal beads in her hands. There, gliding to and fro, was Margery—a perfect Martha of householdly neatness and alertness; and Lizzie, the grave, thoughtful Mary of the household; and there was Father Pat, best, and kindest, and truest of friends to whose arms children sprang for affection, and in whose hands the wildest collic or sheepdog was glad to lay his neck, and there he had valourously defended his premises. Luke flung himself into the arm chair by the southern window and asked Margery for a "decent cup of tea."

"Well, I suppose now you are fit to dine with the Duke of N—," said Father Pat. "You have passed your entrance examination into decent society to-night."  
 "It wasn't so severe an ordeal as supposed," said Luke. "The Canon was kind; and Miss Wilson—"  
 Margery paused with the teapot high in air.

"Miss Wilson made everything easy."  
 Margery drew a long, deep breath of doubt and shook her head. "But that do you know what I think, Father Pat?" said Luke.  
 "No, Go on," said Father Pat.  
 "That there's a lot of real kindness under all the Canon's formalism; and that he is at heart a good natured man."  
 "Humph!" said Father Pat. "How did you come to that conclusion? For I have longer experience of him than you, and I have not reached it yet."  
 "Well, I don't know," replied Luke. "It is a little thing; but it is little things that tell. A straw, you know, I was singing—"  
 "You were singing?" said Father Pat.  
 "Did you really sing?" said Margery.  
 "What did you sing, Father Luke?" said Lizzie, who was a more obedient pupil than her sister.  
 "I was just saying that when I was singing 'The Mater'—"  
 "Father Pat jumped from his chair. 'You don't mean to say that you sang that red hot rebel song in the Canon's presence?' he said.  
 "Every line of it," replied Luke, "and I have promised the words and the music to Barbara Wilson." He looked in a quizzical way at his sister.  
 "Well, I'm blessed," said Father Pat, resuming his seat, "but that beats Bangsinger. Wait till I tell Tim and the boys."  
 He looked at Luke with a certain feeling of awe during the rest of the evening.

"Well, I was saying," said Luke, coolly, "that I thought—perhaps 'twas only imagination—that the Canon's eyes softened, and that something like kindness came into them, as from the memory of the past."  
 "Ay, indeed! and so well there might," said Mrs. Delmege. "I will remember when there wasn't a more tender or more loving priest in the diocese than you, Father Maurice Murray. Sure 'twas well known that his sister had to love him because he had not two shoes alike; and he used to stow the mate out of the pot to give it to the poor."  
 "I mind well the day," said old Mike Delmege, in a musing way, as if he was trying to call up a fast-fading picture, "when he went in, and took up that poor girl, Bride Downey (she is now the mother of the first-born children in the parish), out of her sick-bed, sheets, blankets, and all, and she reeking with the typhus, the Lord be tunc us and harm, and spotted all over like the measles, and took her over and put her in the van for the hospital, while all the people stood away in fright, and even the man from the workhouse wouldn't go near her. And it was you, Canon Murray, that arranged her bed in that workhouse van; and sure you took the favor, and went near dying yourself at the time."  
 "He's not the same man, Mike, since then. They say the fever turned his head, and he got tetch'd," said Mrs. Delmege.  
 "No! but his grand sister, who ran away from the sickness, and went up to Dublin, where she got into a castle or

something, and married that turned that way," said Father Pat.  
 "Father Martin is a rare good man and nonsense—"  
 "Father Martin," said Father Pat, "well of an informant. Why, then, is it that there 'ud be the roadside to do Canon. Sure they see his grand widdler, and two they'd give him. And sure when he served last autumn, nothing of the Canon was had. He had only plaid turkey-cock, they say, of him that if the country parish do? He took tick and walked into when they saw I ran into rat-hole you me, Father Pat. A few priests in the Canon's house will ever be over cover bstone it."  
 "That's all Father Pat; 'tis his grand airs for 'em." "Why," said he, "he must practice both on his days and holidays. He hated the whole grand sister and Dublin, and a people."  
 "True, Margy, 'we're a plain want plain, simple. But somehow that either."  
 "Luke," said up his coat, "do not be joking, and Muster 'to-night." "I was never said Luke.  
 "You sang it!"  
 "Every line." "Down to—"  
 "No more as craved. To despot, K. God holds the reins." "Is for our right."  
 "Quite so!" "And he did." "Not up to." "Well, he have a sick-club. Jove! I wish what well, lot me see on Tuesday; Wednesday, on T. right."  
 "All right." "The best of Canon and u. not quite so occasions, but severe reprim. his future c. appointed."  
 "I think it. after they lies, 'to say few things at ing on Sunday. He gildly appro you were n your profess after dinner, they—ha—d." "It is not said Luke, spirit of legi him. Best at the time." "Grace." "This was he didn't a home."  
 "I can re the Canon, that we al learn, by— the authentic. The Can. broken only clocks." "Then," "Your rec. nephew was thought the body and a—philosophy." "Your n. to deny the soul at all, idea of being by this old never heard have 'Tong all this to a." "Ha! I prandial ar." "But you And you Odic force our profess singular e. young men There w. during whi of justice, professors sit." "I shon. resuming,