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Dancing Town

Being the First Part of "The Wind Bloweth"

By DONN BYRNE, *Author of "Messer Marco Polo," etc.*

Drawings by GEORGE BELLOWES



BECAUSE it was his fourteenth birthday they had allowed him a day off from school, his mother doubtfully, his uncles Alan and Robin with their understanding grin. And because there was none else for him to play with at hurling or foot-ball, the other children now droning in class over Cæsar's Gallic War, he had gone up the big glen. It was a very adventurous thing to go up the glen while other boys were droning their Latin like a bagpipe being inflated, while the red-bearded schoolmaster drowsed like a dog. First you went down the graveled path, past the greened sun-dial, then through the gate, then a half-mile or so along the road, green along the edges with the green of spring, and lined like fortifications with the May hawthorn, white, clean as air, with a fragrance like sustained music, a long rill of rolling white cloud. There was nothing in the world like the hawthorn. First it put out little bluish-green buds firm as elastic, and then came a myriad of white stars. And then the stars

dropped, and the red haws came out, a tasteless bread-like fruit you shared with the birds, and the stone of it you could whip through your lips like a bullet . . .

He left the main road and turned into a loaning that came down the mountain-side, a thing that once might have been a road, if there had been any need for it, or energy to make it. But now it was only a wedge of common land bounded on both sides by a low stone wall. Inside one wall was a path, and inside the other a little rill, and betwixt the two of them were firm moss and stones. And here the moss was yellowish green and there red as blood. And the rill was edged with ferns and queer blue flowers whose names he did not know in English, and now the water just gurgled over the rounded stones, and now it dropped into a well where it was colorless and cold and fresh as the air itself, and oftentimes at the bottom of a pool like that would be a great green frog with eyes that popped like the schoolmaster's . . .

And to the left of the loaning as he walked toward the mountain was a plantation of fir-trees, twenty acres or more, the property of the third cousin of his mother's brother-in-law, a melancholy, thin-handed man who lived on the Mediterranean—a Campbell, too, though one would never take him for an Ulster Scot, with his la-di-da ways and his Spanish lady. But the queer thing about the plantation was this, that within, a half-mile through the trees, was the ruins of a house, bare walls and bracken and a wee place where there were five graves, two of them children's. A strange thing the lonely graves. In summer the sun would shine through the clearing of the trees, and there was always a bird singing somewhere near. But it was a gey lonely place for five folk to lie there, at all times and seasons, and in the moonlight and in the sunlight, and when the rain dripped from the fir-trees. And all the company they had was the red fox slipping through the trees or the rabbit hopping like a child at play or the hare wide-eyed in the bracken . . . They must have been an unsociable folk in life to build a house in the woods, and they were an unsociable folk in death not to go to the common graveyard, where the dead folk were together, warm and kindly, lying gently as in their beds . . .

He turned now from the loaning to the mountain-side, passing through the heather on a little path the sheep made with their sharp cloven hoofs. In single file the sheep would go up the mountain-side, obedient as nuns, following the tinkle of the wether's bell, and they hunting a new pasture they would crop like rabbits. Now was a stunted ash, now a rowan-tree with its

red berries,—*crann caorthainn* they call it in Gaidhlig,—and now was a holly bush would have red berries when all the bitter fruit of the rowan-tree was gone and the rolling sleets of winter came over Antrim like a shroud. .

. . . Everywhere about him now was the heather, the brown, the purple heather with the perfect little flower that people called bells, all shades of red it was, and not often you would come across a sprig of white heather, and white heather brought you luck, just as much luck as a four-leaved shamrock brought, and fairer, more gallant luck . . .

A very silent place a mountain was, wee Shane Campbell thought, not a lonely, but a silent, place. A lonely place was a place you might be afraid, as in a wood, but a mountain was only a place apart. Down in the fields were the big brooks, with the willow branches and great trout in the streams; and fat cattle would low with a foolish cry like a man would n't be all there, and come home in the evenings to be milked, satisfied and comfortable as a minister; wee calves shy as babies; donkeys with the Cross of Christ on their back; goats would butt you and you not looking; hens a-cackle, and cocks strutting like a militiaman and him back from the camp; quiet horses had the strength of twenty men, and scampering colts had legs on them like withes. Up here was nothing, but you never missed them.

The only thing to break the silence up here was the cry of an occasional bird, the plaintive call of the plover, the barking of an eagle, the note of the curlew, a whinny as of a horse of Lilliput, the strange noise a pheasant makes and it rising from the heather: *whir-r-r*, like a piece of elastic snapping.

Barring these, you 'd hear nothing at all. And barring a mountainy man or woman, and they cutting turf, you 'd meet nothing unless it were the sheep.

You 'd never hear the sheep, and you coming; you 'd turn a wee bluff in the hill, and there they were looking, a long, solemn, grayish-white line, with aloof, cold eyes. You could never faze them. They 'd look at you cool as anything, and "What license have you to be here?" you 'd think they were saying. Very stupid, but unco dignified, the sheep.

But up to the top of the mountain, where wee Shane was going, you 'd find no sheep; too bare and rocky there. There 'd be nothing there but a passing bird. On the top of the mountain was a little dark lake into which you could n't see more than a foot, though they said the depth of it went down to the sea. There were no fish in it, people said, and that was a queer thing, water without fish in it, wee Shane thought, like a country without inhabitants. In the sea were a power of fish, and in the rivers were salmon, long and thick as a man, and pike with snouts and ominous teeth, and furry otters, about which there was great discussion as to whether they were fish or animal . . . And in the lake—Lochkewn, the Quiet Lake—were trout with red and gold and black speckles; and perch with spiked fins; and dark roach were easy to catch with a worm; and big gray bream were tasty as to bait, needing paste held by sheep's wool; and big eels would put a catch in your breath . . .

But in the lake on the mountain-top were no fish at all, and that was a strange thing . . .

There was another eery thing about the mountain, and a thing wee Shane

was slightly afraid of. Oftentimes you 'd be sitting by that lake, and sunlight all around you, and you 'd turn to come down, and there 'd be a cloud beneath you, a cloud that rolled like soap-suds, that bound the mountain as by a ring, and the lonely call of a bird . . . and you 'd feel shut off from the kindly earth, as if you were on another planet maybe, or caught up into the air by some flying demon, and you knew the world was spinning like a ball through the treeless fields of space . . .

And what could a wee fellow do up there but sit quiet and cry and be terribly afraid? And your cry would be heard no more than the whinnying of the curlew . . . Or you might venture down through it, and that was more terrible still, for the strange host of the air had their domicile in the clouds, and there they held cruel congress, speaking in their speechless tongue, and out of the clouds they took shape and substance . . . their cold, malevolent eyes, their smoky antennæ of hands . . . and nothing to turn to for company, not even the moody badger or the unfriendly sheep . . . There was no going down. You must stay there by the lake, and even then the cloud might creep upward until it capped mountain and lake, and enveloped a wee fellow scared out of his wits . . .

Nevertheless, he was going to the top of that mountain, clouds or no clouds. For he had heard it said that the mirage of Portcausey was being seen again—The Devil's Troopers, and the *Oilean-gan-talamh-ar-bith*, the Isle of No Land At All, and the Swinging City, and they were to be seen in the blue heat haze over the sea from the Mountain of Fiona . . .

And wee Shane was going to see it,
clouds or no clouds, host or no host of
the air . . .

§ 2

He had won half-ways up the mountain now, and from the brae of heather he could see the glen stretch like a furrow to the sea. The Irish Channel they called it on the maps in school, but *Struth na Maoile* it was to every one in the country-side, the waters of Moyle. Very green, very near, very gentle they seemed to-day, but often they roared like giants in frenzy, fanned to fury by the winds of the nine glens, as a bellows livens a fire. But to-day it was like a lake, so gentle . . . And there was purple Scotland, hardly, you 'd think, a stone's throw from the shore—the Mull of Cantyre, a resounding name, like a line in a poem. It was from Mull that Moyle came, *maol* in Gaidhlig, bald or bluff . . . a moyley was a cow without horns . . . The Lowlanders were coming into the Mull now, and the Highlanders being pushed north to Argyll, and westward to the islands, like Oran and Islay . . . He knew the Islay men, great rugged fishers with immense hands and their feet small as a girl's. They sang the saddest sea-chanty in the world:

*'S tric mi sealltuinn o'n chnoc a's airde,
Dh' fheuch am faic mi fear a'bhata;
An tig thu'n aniugh, no'n tig thu amai-
reach,
'S mur tig thu idir, gur truagh a ta
mi.*

"From the highest hilltop I watched to see my boatman," went the sense of it. "Will you come to-day or will you come to-morrow? And if you never come—oh, God! help me!"

And there was a chorus to it that was like a keening for the dead:

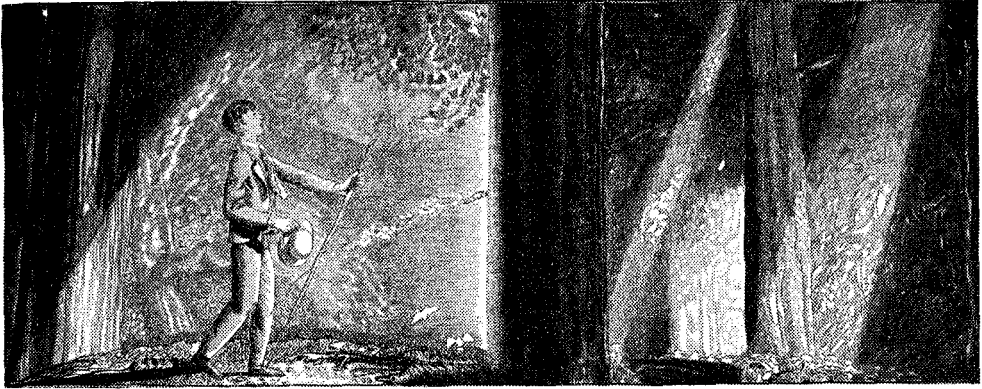
*Fhir a' bhata na horo eile! Fhir a' bhata
na horo eile!
Fhir a' bhata na horo eile! Mo shoraidh
slan leat, fhir a' bhata!*

My heart's good-by to you, O man of the boat! . . .

But nearer than Islay was their own Raghery,—Rathlin Island the maps had it,—he could see now to the north. A strange little world of its own, with great caves where the wind howled like a starving wolf, and the black divers went into the water like a bullet . . . It was in the caves of Raghery that the Bruce took refuge, and it was there he saw the spider of Scots legend . . . Rathlin was queer and queer . . . There were many women with the second sight, it was told, and the men were very big, very shy, very gentle, except when the drink was in them, and then they would rage like the sea . . .

A strange, mystical water, the Moyle, to have two isles in it like Islay of the pipers and Raghery of the black caves . . . It was over Moyle that Columkill went in his little coracle to be a hermit in Iona, the gentlest saint that Ireland ever knew . . . And it was over the Moyle that Patrick came, landing whilst the Druids turned their cursing stones and could not prevail against him . . . And it was on the Moyle that the Children of Lir swam and they turned into three white swans, with their great white wings like sails and their black feet like sweeps . . . And in the night-time they sang a strange, sad music, and the echoes of it were still in the nine glens . . .

And northerly again were the pillars



of the Giant's Causeway, blue-black against the sun . . . They were made so that Finn MacCool, the champion of the giants, could take a running jump over to Scotland and be going deer-hunting in the forests of Argyll. So the country folk said, but wee Shane thought different, knew different. The Druids had made it for their own occult designs, the Druids, that terrible, powerful clan with their magic batons, and their sinister cursing-stones, and their long, white, benevolent beards . . .

And there, green and well kept as a duke's garden, was the Royal Links of Portrush. And the Irish golfers said that it was harder than St. Andrew's in Scotland and better kept . . . There King James had played a game before he went down to the defeat of the Boyne Water . . .

"And if he golfed as well as he fought," Shane's Uncle Robin used laugh, "they s'ould never have let him tee up a ball on the course!"

Eigh! how wonderful it all was! wee Shane felt: Raghery and the waters of Moyle; Portrush and the Giant's Causeway; the nine glens with the purple heather, and the streams that sang as they cantered to the sea; the crowing grouse and the whinnying

curlew, and the eagle barking on the cliffs; the trout that rose in the summer's evening, and the red berries of the rowan; the cold, clear lakes, and the braes where the blueberries grew . . . He could well understand the stories they told of Wolfe Tone, and the great rebel in the gardens of Versailles. Napoleon had found him weeping amid all that beauty.

"Don't be afraid, Monsieur Tone. I shall keep my word and send General Hoche to Ireland."

"It 's not that, sir; it 's not that." And Tone could not keep the tears back. "Och, County Antrim, it 's far I 'm from you now!"

§ 3

He had reached the cairn of round stones that marks the town land of Drimsleive, and was turning the brae when a voice called to him:

"Eh, wee fellow, is it mitching from school you are?"

An old woman in a plaid shawl was coming slowly down the hillside. He recognized her for Bridget Roe MacFarlane of Cushendhu, a cotter tenant of his Uncle Alan's.

"No, cummer," he told her; "I 'm not mitching. I got the day off."

"For God's sake! if it is n't wee

Shane Campbell! And what are doing up the mountain, wee Shane?"

"Ah, just dandering."

"I was up mysel'," she went on, "to the top of it, because I heard tell there was a cure for sore eyes in the bit lake on the top. Not that I put much store in such cures, but there's no use letting anything by. I got a pair of specs from a peddling man of Ballymena," said she, "but they don't seem to do me much good. I'm queer and afeared about my eyes, hinny. It would be a hard thing for me to go blind and none about the wee bit house but mysel'."

"Ay! I should think it would be a terrible thing to be a dark person," wee Shane nodded.

"Och, it would n't be so bad if you were born that way, for you'd know no different. And if you went blind and you young, there's things you could take up to take the strain from your head like a man takes up piping. But when you're old it's gey hard. If you're an old man itself, it's not so bad, for there'll always be a soft woman to take care of you. But if you're an old cummer, without chick or child, it's hard, *agra vig*. My little love, it's hard."

"Maybe it's in your head, Bridget Roe. My Uncle Robin says there's a lot of sickness that's just in your head."

"I trust to my God so, and maybe your Uncle Robin's right, for there does be a lot in my head, and it going around like a spinning-wheel. I'm a well ken't woman, wee Shane, too well ken't, and that's the trouble. You've no' heard because you're too young and you would no' understand. I was away from here for twenty years," she said, "for more nor twenty. And I knew a power of men in my time, big

men, were needful of me. And a power of trouble I raised, too, and it does be coming back to me and me in my old days . . . But you'll be wanting to be getting on?"

"Och, no, Bridgeen Roe; there's no hurry."

"It does me good to have a wee crack, the folk I see are so few . . . Ay! There was a power of trouble. There were two men killed themselves and families broken up all by reason of me. I meant no harm, wee Shane, but it happened, and it does be troubling me in my old days . . . And I sit there afeared by the peat fire, and when I've thought too much on it, I get up and go to the half-door. And I look out on the Moyle, wee Shane, and I think: that's been roaring since the first tick of time, and I see the stars so many of them, and the moon that never changed its shape or size, and it comes to me that nothing matters in the long run, that the killed men were no more nor caught trout, and the rent families no more nor birds' nests fallen from a tree . . . None of us are big enough that anything we do matters . . . And then another feeling comes on me, that God is around, and that He'll be dreadful hard . . . And a wee bit of luck comes my way . . . The hens, maybe, are laying well, and there's a high price on the eggs, and I think, sure He's the Kindly Man, after all . . . But if my eyes leave me, Shane Beg, what will I do? . . . Sure, I won't have the moon or the stars or the waters of Moyle to put things in their place . . . And there'll be no luck about me, so as I'll know Himself is the Unforgiving Man . . ."

"But some one will take care of you, Bridget Roe."

"And who, *agra*? 'T is not in me to go to the poorhouse, and take charity like a cold potato . . . And my name is MacFarlane, wee Shane, and they 're a clan that fights till it dies, that never gives in . . . And it is n't to the big ones I knew I 'd be writing for help . . . Sure I see them now, what 's left alive of them, sitting by their firesides, figuring out their life, and tired with the puzzle of it; and then they 'll remember me for an instant, and a wee joy will come to them in the dim twilight. They 'll remember as you 'd remember an old song you had n't rightly got the air of . . . But you knew it was sweet, and there was a grand swing to it . . . Aye, they 'll remember me, and they looking into the heart of the fire . . . And you would n't have me write them now and tell them I 'm only an old *cailleach* in a cabin on the mountain-side, and my eyes, that they 'll remember, are dull like marbles . . . You would n't understand, wee Shane . . . But I 'm blethering too much about myself . . . And where is it you were going, my little jo? Where is it?"

"I heard tell the Dancers were to be seen from the mountain-top over the sea, and I thought maybe I 'd go up and gi'e them a look, cummer . . . just a look."

"So you would, wee Shane, so you would . . . You would n't be your father's son or your uncles' nephew if you were to let a marvel like that pass by . . . It 's after adventure you are, and you only four and ten years old . . . 'T is early you begin, the Campbells of Cosnamara . . ."

"But sure that is n't adventure, cummer, to be seeing the Dancers in

the heat haze of the day . . . Adventures are robbers and fighting Indians and things like in Sir Walter Scott."

"Oh, sure everything 's adventure, hinny, every time you go looking for something queer and strange, and something with a fine shape and color to it. Adventure is n't in the quick fist and the nimble foot; it 's in the hungry heart and the itching mind. Is n't it myself that knows, that was a wild and wilful girl, and went out into the world for more nor twenty years, and came back the like of an old bitch fox, harried by hunting, and looking for and mindful of the burrow where she was thrown? . . . As we 're made, we 're made, wee fellow; you 're either a salmon that hungers for the sea, or a cunning old trout that kens its own pool and is content . . . Adventures! Hech aye!"

"Well, I hope your eyes get better, cummer. I do so."

"I know you mean it, Shaneen Beg, and maybe your wish will help them, maybe it will."

"Well, I 'll be going on my way, Bridget Roe."

"And I 'll be finishing mines, wee Shane Campbell . . . And I hope to my God you 're better off at the end nor me—me that once talked to earls and barons, and now clucks to a wheen o' hens; me that once had my coach and pair, and now have only an ass with a creel o' turf; and no care of money once on me, and now all I have is my spinning-wheel, and the flax not what it used to be, but getting coarser . . . And my eyes going out, that were the delight of many . . . I hope you're better off nor me at the end of the hard and dusty road, wee Shane. I hope to my God so . . ."

§ 4

He thought hard of what the cunner of Cushendhu had said about his family, and he on the last leg of the mountain. That he was his father's son puzzled him more than that he was his uncles' nephew, for there was little mention of his father in the house. At the dead man's name his prim Huguenot mother from Nantes would purse her mouth, and in her presence even his uncles were uncomfortable, those great, gallant men. All he knew was that his father, Colquhoun Campbell, had been a great Gaelic poet, and that his father and mother had not quite been good friends. Once his Uncle Alan had stopped before a ballad-singer in Ballycastle when the man was striking up a tune:

"On the deck of this lonely ship to America bound,

A hush in my throat and a mist of tears in my eyes—"

His Uncle Alan had given the man a guinea.

"Why for did you give the singing man a golden piece, Uncle Alan?"

"For the sake of an old song, laddie, an old and sad song . . . A song your father made . . . It was like seeing his ghost . . ."

"But my father, Uncle Alan—"

"Your father was the heart of corn, wee Shane, for all they say against him . . . I never knew a higher, cleaner heart, but he was easy discourag't . . . Aye, easy thrown down and easy led away . . . I was fond of him . . . Am . . . always, and no matter . . . However . . . shall we go and see the racing boats, wee fellow? Hmm?"

And that was all he ever got from Uncle Alan. But he knew some of his

father's songs that were sung in the country-side . . .

*"Is truagh, a ghradh, gan me agas thu im
Bla chliath!*

*No air an traigh bhain an ait nach robh
duine riamh,*

*Seachd oidhche, seachd la, gan tomh,
gan chadal, gan bhiadh,*

*Ach thusa bhi 'm ghraidh 's do lamh
geal thomam gu fial!"*

"Oh, God! my loved one, that you and I were in Dublin town! Or on a white strand, where no foot ever touched before. Day in, night in, without food or sleep, what mattered it? But you to be loving me and your white arm around me so generously!"

He could n't understand the song, though the lilt of the words captured him. What should people accept being without food or sleep? And what good was a white arm generously around one? However, that was love, and it was a mystery—and a terror . . . But that song could not have been to his mother. He could not imagine her being generous with even a white arm. And none would want to be with her on a strand without food or sleep; that he instinctively felt. She was a high, proud cliff, stern and proud and beautiful, and that song was a song of May-time and the green rushes . . .

And other songs of his father's were sung: "Maidne Fhoghmhair—Autumn Mornings," and "In Uir-chill, an Chreagain—In the Green Graveyard of Creggan . . ."

A queer thing that all that should be left of his father was a chill silence and a song a man might raise at the rising of the moon . . .

Silent he was in his grave, dumb as a stone, and all his uncles were silent, too, barring the little smile at the cor-

ners of their mouths, that was but the murmuring of the soul . . . There were paintings of them all and they young in the house, their high heads, their hawks' eyes, Alan and Alec and Robin and Mungo . . . And Mungo, too, was dead with Wellington in the Peninsula. He and three of his men were all left of the Antrim company. "Christ! have I lost this fight, too?" He laughed, and a French ball took him in the gullet. "Bugger that!" He coughed. "He might have got me in a cleaner place!" And that was the end of Mungo . . .

And Alec had gone with Sir John Franklin to the polar seas, and come back with the twisted grin. "'T was a grand thing you did, Alec, to live through and come back from the wasted lands.'" "'T was a grand thing they did, to find the channel o' trade. But me, I went to find the north pole, with the white bear by the side of it, like you see in the story-books. And I never got within the length of Ireland o' 't! Trade, aye; but what 's trade to me? It 's a unco place, the world!"

His father he could imagine: "Poor Colquitto Campbell! He wanted to bark like an eagle, and he made a wee sweet sound, like a canary-bird! Ah, well, give the bottle the sunwise turn, man o' the house, and come closer to me, a *bheilín tana nan bpog*, o slender mouth of the kisses!" His father, wee Shane thought, must have worn the twisted grin, too.

He knew what the twisted grin meant. It meant defeat. He had seen it on his Uncle Alan's face when he lost the championship of Ireland on the golf links of Portrush. And that morning he had been so confident! "'T is the grand golf I 'll play the day, and the life tingling in my finger-tips!" And great golf he did play, with his

ripping passionate shots, but a thirty-foot putt on the home green beat him. All through the match his face had been dour, but now came the outstretched hand and the smile at the corner of the mouth:

"Congratulations, sir! 'T is yourself has the grand eye for the hard putt on the tricky green!"

The wee grin meant that Alan had been beaten.

And Uncle Robin, too, the wisest and oldest of them all, who had been to Arabia and had been all through Europe and was Goethe's friend, he had the twisted grin of the beaten man. Only occasionally you could get past the grin of Uncle Robin, as he had gotten past it the day Uncle Robin had spoken of his brother, Shane's father. And sometimes when a great hush was on the mountains and the Moyle was silent, Uncle Robin would murmur a verse of his great poet friend's:

Über allen Gipfel

Ist Ruh.

Auf allen Wipfel,

Spueherst du

Kaum einen Hauch.

Die Voegelín schweigen in Walde
Warte nur, balde.

Ruehest du auch!

The sharp u's and heavy gutturals were so like Gaidhlig, it seemed queer wee Shane could not understand the poem; but Uncle Robin translated it into Gaidhlig:

Os cionn na marbheanna

Ta sìth—

And the melody of it was like the plucking of a harper's strings. So much in so little, and every note counted, and the last line like a dim, quaint bar:

Beidh sìth agad fein! "You will rest, too!"

A queer thing, the men who were beaten and smiled. A queer thing the men who, beaten, were more gallant than the winners. A queer thing for the cummer of Cushendhu to say, she who was so wise now after the hot foolishness of youth, that he was his uncles' nephew and his father's son. A queer thing that. A queer, dark, and secret thing.

§ 5

The memory of his Uncle Robin stuck in his mind and he going up the mountain. His Uncle Robin knew all there was to be known in the world, the immense learned man. When he was spoken to of anything strange, he had always an explanation for it. When the mirage off Portrush was mentioned, he could talk at length of strange African mirages that the travelers see in the desert at the close of day, oases and palm-trees and minarets, so you would think you were near to a town or a green pasture and you miles and miles away. And there was a sight to be seen off Sicily that the ignorant Italian people thought was the work of Morgan le Fay. And in the Alps was a horror men spoke of and called the Spectre of the Brocken . . .

All these strange occurrences were as simple as the alphabet to Uncle Robin. He would explain it as a sight reflected on the cloud and thrown on a sea mist or a desert as on a screen, using difficult words, like "Refraction," and words from Euclid, like "angles." But Uncle Alan would object, Uncle Alan mistrusting difficult words and words from Euclid. Alan would raise his head from splicing a fishing-rod or cleaning the lock of a gun or polishing a snaffle:

"You were aye the one for explana-

tions, Robin. Maybe you 've got an explanation for the gift?" By the gift Uncle Alan meant the second sight.

"Ah, sure; 't is only mind reading and sympathy."

"Oh, my God! Now listen, Robin. You ken when you dragged me from the horse show the last time we were in Dublin, to the library of the What-you-may-call-him—Archæological Society or so'thin'. You ken the book you showed me about Antrim, and what was seen off the cliffs one time. There was a great black arm in the air, and a hand to the wrist of it, and to the shoulder a crosspiece with a ring, like one end of an anchor. And that disappeared. And then immediately there showed a ship, with the masts and sails and tackles and men, and it sailed stern foremost and it sank stern foremost, all in the red sky. And then there was a fort with a castle on the top of it, and there were fire and smoke coming out of it, as if a grand fight was on. And the fort divided into two ships, that chased each other, and then sank. Then there was a chariot with two horses, and chasing that was a strange thing like a serpent, a snake's head at one end, and a bulk at the other like a snail's house. And it gained on the chariot and gave it a blow. And out of the chariot came a bull, and after it came a dog, and the bull and the dog fought as in a gaming-pit. And then suddenly all was clear, no cloud or mist or anything in the northern air. Am I right or amn't I? Wasn't that in the book, Robin More?"

"It was."

"And now, Robin, my man, was n't that signed by respectable people: Mr. Allye, a minister, and a Lieutenant Dunsterville and a Lieutenant Dwine and Mr. Bates and twelve others, all

of whom saw it near or around the time of the Boyne Water. Was n't it signed by the decent people?"

"It was."

"And what explanation have you got for that, you and your master of arts of Trinity College!"

"They were daft—gone in the head. Daft or drunk."

"My song! And maybe John was daft when he saw the vision of Patmos!"

"I would no' be surprised."

"Na, Robin More; you would not be surprised if you saw a trout that cantered or a horse that flew. You'd have an explanation. You're the queer hard man to live with, Robin, with your explanations."

Willie John Boyd, the servant boy, removed his cutty pipe and hazarded a suggestion.

"Queer things happened in the auld days."

"If there were queerer things nor you in the auld days," Alan laughed, "it must have been like a circus . . ."

But might n't they both be right? wee Shane thought, and he trudging up the mountain-side. His Uncle Alan knew an awful lot. There was none could coax a trout from a glass-clear pool with a dry fly like Alan Campbell. He knew the weather, when it would storm and when it would clear, and from what point the wind would blow to-morrow. He could nurse along the difficult flax and knew the lair of the otter and had a great eye for a hunting fox and a better eye for a horse than a Gipsy. Might there not be things in Nature, as he said, that none knew of? And might n't there be explanations for them, as Uncle Robin, who had read every book, claimed there were?

Might n't they both be right, who thought each other wrong, and they arguing by the red fire, fighting and snarling like dogs and loving each other with the strange soft love of lovers when the trees are a-rustle and the moon high? . . .

§ 6

He had thought to come up to the top of the mountain where the cairn was, and the dark and deepest lake, and to sit down in the heather and wait a half-hour maybe while the curlew called, and then have Dancing Town take form and color before his eyes, hold it until every detail was visible, and then fade gently out as twilight fades into night. He had thought to be prepared and receptive.

But suddenly it was upon him, in the air, over the waters of Moyle . . .

A sweep of fear ran over him, and he grew cold, so strange it was, so against Nature. Clear and high, as in some old print, and white and green, the town and shore came to him. The May afternoon was in it, hot and golden, but the town itself was in morning sunlight. A clutter of great houses and little houses, all white, a great church, and a squat dun fort, and about it and in it were green spaces and palm-trees that swayed to a ghostly breeze. And the green ran down to a white beach, and on the beach foamy waves curled like a man's beard. And in the air the town quivered and danced, as trees seem to dance on running water . . .

On one side was Ireland, and on one side was Scotland, and high in the air between them was Dancing Town . . .

No one was in the streets that wee Shane could see, and yet the town was

lifelike, some tropical city where the green jalousies were closed in the heat of the midday sun, and where no one was on the streets, barring some unseen old beggar or peddling woman drowsing in the shade. The town was sleeping not with the sleep of Scotland, that is the sleep of dead majestic, melancholy kings, nor with the sleep of Ireland, that is tired and harassed and old. It was not lonely as sleeping lakes are where the bittern booms like a drum . . . It slept as a child sleeps, lips apart and chubby fingers curled, and happy . . . And all the time it quivered in the clear air . . .

In the morning, wee Shane thought, it woke to bright happiness, the green parakeets chattered, the monkeys whistled, the lizards basked in the sun. And the generation of the town came out and gossiped and worked merrily, until the heat of the sun began to strike with the strokes of a mallet, and then they went into the cool, dark houses and slept as children sleep. And then came blue twilight, and lamps were lit in the green spaces, and into the odorous night would come the golden rounded women with the smiles like honey, and the graceful feline men . . . A woman's laughter, a man's song . . . And the moon rising on tropic seas, while a guitar hummed with a deep vibrant note . . . And the perfume of strange tropic trees . . .

But meantime the town danced in the clear air . . . And—

"It's gone!" said wee Shane.

One moment it was there, and the next there were only Ireland and Scotland and the waters of Moyle, and a ship going drowsily for the Clyde.

And for a long time he waited, thinking Dancing Town might come again.

But it did not come. The schooner off the Mull lay over, and the Moyle awoke. A breeze rambled up the mountain, and the heather tinkled its strange dry tinkle. And afar off a curlew called, and a grouse crowed in defiance.

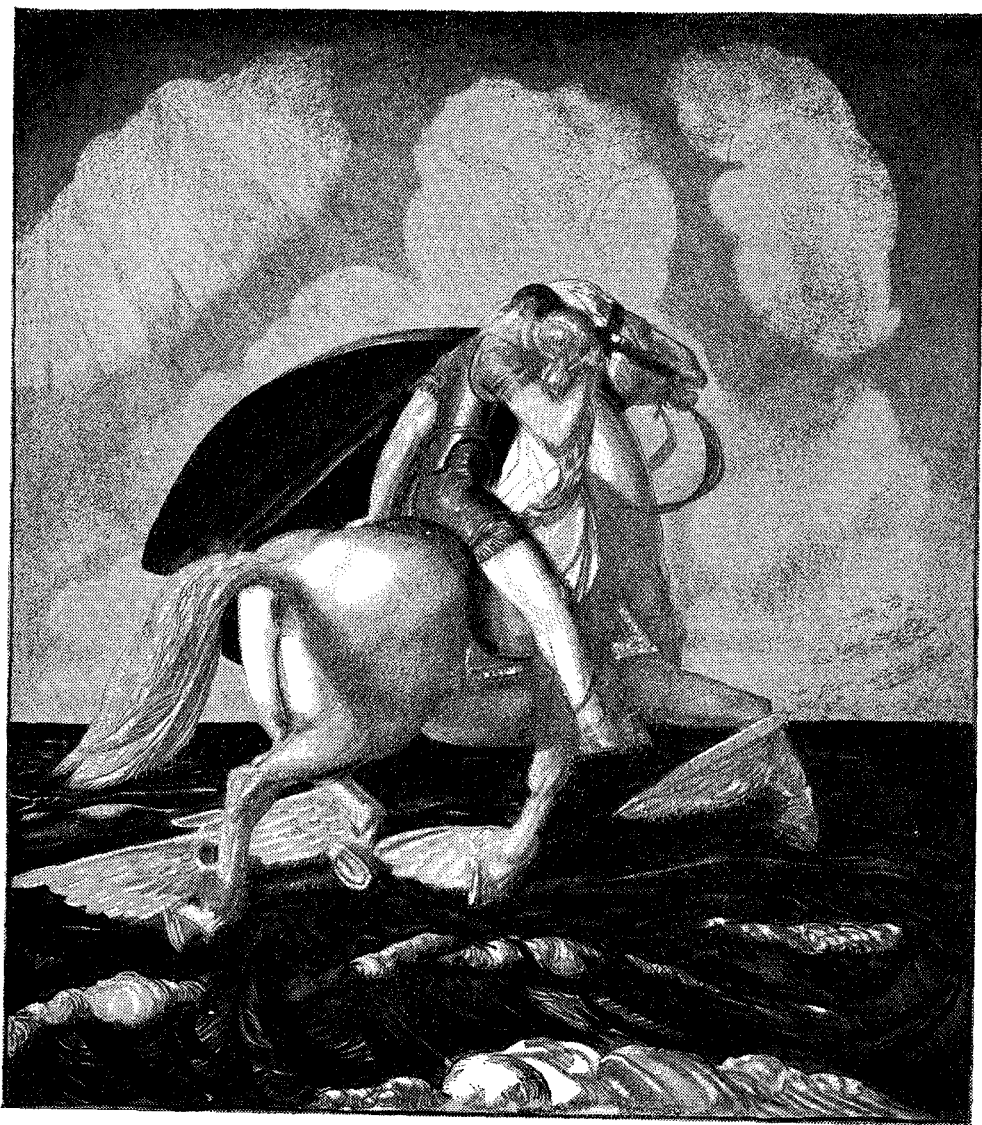
The moment of magic was by, and wee Shane went down the mountain . . .

§ 7

As he went down the mountain he tried to puzzle out the why and wherefore of Dancing Town.

Of course there were things you could not explain, like the banshee; or the Naked Hangman, who strides through the valleys on midsummer's eve with his gallows under his arm; or the Death Coach, with its headless horses and its headless driver. There was no use bringing these matters up to Uncle Robin. Uncle Robin would only laugh and shout: "Havers, bairn! Wha's been filling your wee head with nonsense?" But you could no more deny their existence than you could that of Apollyon, whom you read about in "Pilgrim's Progress," and who wandered up and down the world and to and fro in it; or of the fairies, whose sweet little piping many heard at night as they passed the forts of the little people; or of the tiny cobbling leprechawns, who knew where the Danes had hid their store of gold in crocks such as hold butter . . . Of these there was no explanation but the Act of God. And Uncle Robin was queer. He put no store in the Act of God.

Now, if it had been an angel he had seen in the high air, it would have been the Act—or the banshee, and her crooning and keening by the riverside, with



her white cloak, her red, burnished hair . . . But it was an island he had seen, a dancing town, with his own hard wee Scots-Irish eyes. And that was not an Act of God; it was a fact, and so outside his Uncle Alan's bailiwick and within his Uncle Robin's. His Uncle Robin would say it was the reflected image of some place in the world. Aye, he'd take his Uncle Robin's word for that. But where was it?

Surely, as yet, it was undiscovered. It had the quiet of a June evening, that land had, and a grand shimmering beauty . . . And if it was known where it was, would n't the mountainy folk be leaving their cabins, and the strong farmers their plowed lands, and the whining tinkers be hoofing the road for it? . . . If it was known where that land was . . .

It occurred to him it must have been

that land his father meant and he writing his poem of the Green Graveyard of Creggan. While he was sleeping under the weeping yew-trees the young queen had touched the sleeping poet on the shoulder.

"A *shiolaigh charthannaigh*," she said, "O kindly kinsman, *na caithteor thusa ins na nealtaibh*, let you not be thrown under the clouds of sorrow! *Acht einigh in do sheasamh*, but rise in your standing, *agas gluais liomsa siar 'sa' rod*, and travel with me westward in the road. *Go Tir Dheas na Meala*, to the shimmering land of honey where the foreigner has not the sway. And you will find pleasantries in white halls, persuading one to the strains of music . . ."

Surely his father, too, had seen Dancing Town!

And it was an old story that Oisín had found it, when he rode with the princess over the waves on a white horse whose hoofs never touched water, and he abode with her in *Tir nan Og*, in the Land of Them Who are Young, for a thousand years or more, until the great homesickness for Ireland took him, that takes the strongest, and he came for a visit on the white horse; but the girths of the saddle broke, and he fell to the ground, and the horse flew away. And he who had been strong and young and beautiful became old and bald and blind, and Patrick of the Bells and Crosses took him, and put him with the groaning penitents, who beat their breasts under the fear of hell . . . And he, who had known *Tir Nan Og* and the Silver Woman, was a drooling ancient with a wee lad to lead him . . . But that was just a winter's tale with no sense to it.

But there were other things in books that had the ring of truth to them.

There was the voyage of Maeldun, who had set out in his coracle, and visited strange islands . . . The Island of Huge Ants was one, and wee Shane had seen in his geography book pictures of armadillos, and he shrewdly surmised that Maeldun had been to South America . . . And there was the Island of Red Hot Animals, but that was a poser. Still and all, the rhinoceros had armor like an old knight's, and that would surely get red hot under the suns of the equator. It would explain, too, why the rhinoceros favored the water, like a cow in July . . . Sure that was it: Maeldun had been to Africa. And Maeldun, too, had found the Fortunate Isle . . . Brendan, too, had known it. Was n't it in old charts—St. Brendan's Isle? He said he found it, and surely a saint of God would n't lie . . .

Och, it was there somewhere, but people were different from what they were in the ancient days. They did n't bother. If they had told his father about it, sure all Colquhoun would have done was to call for pen and paper.

"*Mo bhro'n air an fhairge*," he would have written: "My grief on the sea—how it comes between me and the land where my mind might be easy—" And then he 'd have lain back and chanted it. "*A vourneen*, did you ever in all your life hear a poem as good as my poem? Sure old Homer's jealous in the black clouds. Was there ever a Greek poet the equal of a Gaelic one? *Anois, teacht an Earraigh*—now the moment spring comes in, 't is I will hoist sail, *inneosad mo sheol* . . .

And Alan Donn might have started to find it, but at the first golf links he 'd stop, "to take the conceit out of the local people, and to give them something to talk of, and they old men," or

to match his coursing greyhound against any dog in the world for a ten-pound note, or to deluther some red-cheeked likely woman . . .

And Uncle Robin might hear of it, and he 'd sit down and write a book, saying where it probably was, and how you might probably get there, and what the people were probably like, and whom they were probably descended from . . . And the book would be in all the libraries of the world, and people would be writing him telling him what a great head was on him, and he 'd mutter: "Nonsense! Nonsense! All nonsense!" and stroke his great red beard . . .

But would n't it be the funny thing, the queer and funny thing, if he himself, wee Shane Campbell, were to go out and discover that island, and to own it, and to have it marked in the maps and charts, "Wee Shane Campbell's Island," for all to read and see? . . .

"Decent wee fellow, is it about here somewhere the house of the McFees?"

Shane had turned into the main road that ran along the sea-shore on the way homeward when the voice hailed him. It was a great black-bearded man, sitting on the ditch, holding his shoes in his hand. His face was tanned to mahogany, and in his ears were little gold rings. He wore clothes that were obviously new, obviously uncomfortable.

"If you keep on the road about a half-mile and then turn to the left, and keep on there until you come to a loaning near a well with a hawthorn-bush couching over it, and turn to the left down that loaning, you 'll come to it. It 's a wee thatched house, needing a coat o' whitewash. It 's got a byre with a slate roof, and a rowan-tree near it. You canna' miss it."

"Now is n't that the queer thing," the big man said, "me that thought I knew every art and part of this country, and that could find my way in the dark from Java Head to Poplar Parish, can't remember the place where I was born and reared? Forty years of traveling on the main ocean and thinking long for this place, and now when I come back I know no more about it than a fish does of dry land." He stood up painfully. "And me that thought I would come back leaping like a hare am now killed entirely with the great soreness of my feet."

"You 're not accustomed to walking, then, honest man?"

"'Deed, and you may say I 'm not, decent wee fellow. I 'm a sailorman, and aboard ship there 's very little use for the feet. You 've got to be quick as a fish with the hands, and have great strength in the arms of you. And you must have toes to grip, and thighs to brace you against the heeling timbers. But to be walking somewhere for long, hitting the road with your feet like you 'd be hitting a wall with your head, it 's unnatural to a sailing man. A half a mile, did you say?"

"Honest man," said wee Shane, troubled, "are you looking for any one in the house of the McFees?"

"For a woman that bore me and put me to her breast. An old woman now, decent wee fellow."

"You 'll no' find her, honest man."

"She 's dead?"

"I saw her with the pennies on her eyes not two months gone."

"So my mother 's dead," said the big man. "So my mother 's dead. Ah, well, all her troubles are over. It 's forty years since I saw her, and she the strapping woman. And in forty years she must have had a power of trouble."

"She looked unco peaceful, honest man."

"The dead are always peaceful, decent wee fellow. So my mother's dead. Well, that alters things."

"You 'll be staying at home then, honest man?"

"I 'll be going back to sea, decent wee fellow. I had intended to stay at home and be with the old woman in her last days, the like of a pilot that brings a ship in, as you might say. But it would have been queer and hard. Herself, now, had no word of English?"

"Old Annapla McFee spoke only the Gaidhlig."

"And the Gaidhlig is gone from me, as the flower goes from the fruit-tree. And there could have been little conversation betwixt us, she remembering fairs and dances and patterns in the Gaidhlig, and me thinking of strange foreign ports in the English tongue. Poor company I 'd have been for an old woman and she making her last mooring. I 'd have meant well, but I 'd have been little assistance. Forty years between us—strange ports and deep soundings. Oh, we 'd have been making strange."

"Ah, maybe not, honest man."

"How could it have been any other way, decent weelad? She'd have been the strange, pitiful old cummer to me, who minded her the strapping woman, and I 'd have been a queer bearded man to her, who minded me only as a wee fellow, the terror of the glen. People change every day, and there 's a lot of change in forty years."

"And, besides, it would have been gey hard on me, wee lad. The grape and spade would be clumsy to my hands, there being no life to them after the swinging spars. And my fingers, used to splicing rope, would not have

the touch for milking a cow. And I 'd feel lost, wee fellow, some day and me plowing a field, to see a fine ship on the waters, out of Glasgow port for the Plate maybe, and to think of it off the Brazils, and the pampero coming quick as a thrown knife, and me not aboard to help shorten sail or take a trick at the wheel. And it might have made me ugly toward the old woman. And I would n't have had that at all, at all . . . But she 's finished the voyage, poor cummer . . . And it 's a high ship and a capstan shanty for me again . . . And all 's well . . ."

"It 's a wonder, honest man, you would n't stay on land at peace and you forty years on the sea."

"Well, it 's a queer thing, decent wee fellow, but once you get the salt water in your blood you 're gone. A queer itching is in your veins. It 's like a disease. It is so. It spoils you for the fire on winter nights and for the hay-fields in the month o' June. And it puts a great bar between you and the folk o' the dry land, such as there is between a fighting man and a cowardly fellow. It 's the salt in the blood, I think; but you 'd have to ask a doctor about that."

"I 'm not saying it 's a good life. It 's a dog's life. It is so. And when you 're at sea you say: 'Was n't I the fool to ever leave dry land; and if I get back and get a job,' says you, 'you 'll never see me leave it again. It 's a wee farm for me,' you 'll say. And then somehow you 'll find yourself back aboard ship. And you 'll be off the Horn, up aloft, fighting a sail like you 'd fight a man for your life, or you 'll be in the horse latitudes, as they call them, and no breeze stirring, and not a damned thing to do but

holystone decks, the like of an old pauper that does be scrubbing a poor-house floor. And you say: 'Sure I 'd rather be a tinker traveling the roads, with his ass and cart and dog and woman, nor a galley slave to this bastard of a mate that has no more feeling for a poor sailorman nor a hound has for a rabbit. It 's a dog's life,' you say, 'and when we make port I 'm finished.'

"But you make port and you stay awhile, and you find that the woman you 've been thinking of as Queen of Sheba is no more nor a common drab. And the publican you thought of as the grand generous fellow has no more use for you and your bit silver gone. It 's a queer thing, but they on land think of nothing but money . . . And one day you think, and the woman beside you is pastier nor dough, and the man of the public house is no more nor a cheap trickster, and you 're listening to the conversation of the timid urban people, and the house you 're in is filthier nor a pig's sty . . . And you say: 'Is this me that minds the golden women of the islands, and they with red flowers in their hair? Is this me that fought side by side with good shipmates in Callao? Am I listening to the chatter of these mild people, me that 's heard grand stories in the forecastle of how this man was marooned in the Bahamas, and that man's leg was bit off by a crocodile, by God? Me, the hero that dowsed skysails, and they crackling like guns . . . Is this lousy room a place for me that 's used to a ship is clean as a cat from stem to stern?' . . . And you stand up bravely, and you look the man of the public house square in the shifty eyes, and you say: 'Listen, bastard! Do you ken e'er a master wants a sailing man? A sailor as knows his trade, crafty in

trouble, and a wildcat in danger, and as peaceful as a hare in the long grass?' And you 're off again on the old trade and the old road, where the next port is the best port, and the morrow is a braver day . . . So it 's so long, decent wee fellow! I 'm off on it again. It 's a dog's life, that 's what it is, the life of a sailing man. But you could n't change. I suppose it 's the salt in the blood . . ."

"You 're off, honest man?"

"Aye, I 'm off, wee fellow. And thank you kindly for what you told me, and for telling me especially the old woman looked so peaceful and her with the pennies on her eyes."

"But are n't you going up to see the house?"

"I don't think I will, wee lad. I 've had a picture in my mind for forty years of the big house was in it, and the coolth of the well. And maybe it is n't so at all. I 'd rather not know the difference. I 'll keep my picture."

"But the house is yours," wee Shane urged him. "You 're not going to leave it as it is. Are n't you going to sell it and take the money?"

"Och, to hell with that! I 've no time," said the sailing man, and he limped painfully back down the road . . .

§ 8

His Uncle Robin had gone off to discuss with some Belfast crony the strange things he used discuss, like the origin of the Round Towers of Ireland or the cryptic dialect of the Gaelic Masons or whether the Scots came to Scotland from Ireland or to Ireland from Scotland, all very important for a member of the Royal Irish Academy. And his mother had gone off shopping to buy linen for the house at Cushen-

dhu, poplin for dresses, delft from Holland for the kitchen, and glass from Waterford for the sideboard in the dining-room. And because he was to go to the boarding-school that night, and thereafter would be harsh discipline, and because his Uncle Robin had known he was on the point of crying, he had been allowed to wander around Belfast by himself for a few hours with a silver shilling in his pocket. And wee Shane had made for the quays . . .

The four of them had sat in a cold, precise room that morning, his Uncle Robin, his mother, wee Shane, and the principal, a fat, gray-eyed, insincere Southerner, with a belly like a Chinese god's, dewlaps like a hunting hound's, cold, stubby, and very clean hands, and a gown that gave him a grotesque dignity. And he had eyed wee Shane unctuously . . . And wee Shane did not like fat, unctuous men. He liked them lean and active, as glensmen are . . .

And the principal had spoken in stilted French to his mother, who had responded in French that cracked like a whip. And the principal had licked the ground before Uncle Robin. It was "Yes, Doctor Campbell!" And, "No, Doctor Campbell!" where the meanest glensman would have said "Aye, maybe you 're right, Robin More," or, "Na, na, you 're out there, Robin Campbell."

"The old hypocrite!" It was the only word wee Shane could describe the master by, a favorite word of his Uncle Alan's.

And in the corridors he had met some of the scholars, white-faced fellows; and the masters—they had mean eyes, like the eyes of badgers.

"I dinna want to go!" He blurted out on the quays of Belfast.

"Where dinna you want to go, wee laddie?" A black, curly-headed man with gray eyes and a laugh like a girl's stopped short. He had blue clothes and brass buttons and stepped lightly as a cat.

"I dinna want to go to school."

"Sure, all wee caddies go to school."

"I ken that. But I don't want to go to school with a bunch of whey-faced gets, and masters lean and mean as rats, and a principal puffed out like a setting hen."

"Oh, for God's sake! is that the way you feel about it? Laddie, you don't talk like a townsman. Where are you from?"

"I 'm from the Glens of Antrim. From Cushendhu."

"I 'm a Raghery man myself. *Tha an Gaidhlig agad?*"

"*Tha, go díreach!*"

"So you 've got the Gaidhlig, too? Who are your people, wee laddie?"

"I 'm a Campbell of Cushendhu."

"For God's sake! you 're no a relative of Alan Campbell's, wha sailed with Sir John Franklin for the pole?"

"I 'm his nephew."

"I 've sailed under your Uncle Alan. He 's the heart o' corn. And so they 're going to make a scholar out of you, like your Uncle Robin. Oh, well, oh, well. Would you like to come around with me and see the ships?"

"I 'd like fine to see the ships."

"You 'll see all manner of ships here. Square-riggers, fore-and-afters, hermaphrodites. You 'll see Indiamen and packets from Boston. You 'll see ships that do be going to Germany, and some for the Mediterranean ports. You 'll see a whaler that 's put in for repairs. You 'll see fighting ships. You 'll see fishers of the Dogger Banks, and boats that go to Newfoundland,

where the cod do feed. All manner of sloops and schooners, barkantines and brigs, but the bonniest of them all lies off Carrickfergus."

"And who 's she, Raghery man?"

"The *Antrim Maid* is her nomination."

"And do you sail in her?"

"I sail in her, laddie. Sail and sail in her. Mines from truck to keelson she is, and I 'm master of her. Father and mother and brother to her, and husband, too. I 'm proud of her." The Rathliner laughed. "You may notice."

"And why for should n't you be? She must be the grand boat surely, man who sailed with my Uncle Alan . . ."

§ 9

"Raghery man, you who 've sailed the high seas and the low seas, did you ever put into an island that has great coolth to it and great sunshine, a town quiet as a mouse, a strip of sand like silver, the waves turning with a curl and chime? . . ."

"Where did you hear tell of that island, wee laddie? Was it in the books you do be reading at school?"

"I saw it, and it dancing in the sun. From Slievenambanderg I saw it, and it over the waters of Moyle."

The Rathliner sat on a mooring bitt on the quay and filled his pipe.

"I ken that island," he said. "I ken it well."

"And what name is on it, Raghery man?"

"The name that 's on it is Fiddlers' Green."

"Were you ever there, Raghery man?" There was a sinking in wee Shane's heart.

"I was never there, laddie, never there. Oftentimes I thought I 'd

raised it, but it was never there, wee laddie, never there. There 's men as says they 've been there, but I could hardly believe them, though there 's queer things past belief on the sea. There 's a sea called Sargasso, and if I told you half the things about it, you 'd think me daft. And there 's the ghosts of ships at sea, and that 's past thinking. And there 's the great serpent, that I 've seen with my own eyes . . .

"Aye, Fiddlers' Green! Where is it, and how do you get there? The sailormen would give all their years to know."

"Why for do they call it Fiddlers' Green?"

"It 's Fiddlers' Green, laddie, because it 's the place you come to at the cool of the day, when the bats are out, and the cummers put by their spinning. And there 's nou't there but sport and music. A lawn like a golf green, drink that is not ugly, women would wander with you on to the heather when the moon's rising, and never a thought in their mind of the money in your pocket, but their eyes melting at you, and they thinking you 're the champion hero of the world . . . And all the fiddlers fiddling the finest of dance music: hornpipes like 'The Birds among the Trees' and 'The Green Fields of America'; reels like 'The Swallow-tail Coat' and 'The Wind that Shakes the Barley'; slip-jigs would make a cripple agile as a hare . . . And you go asleep with no mate to wake you in a blow, but the sound of an old piper crooning to you as a cummer croons . . . And the birds will wake you with their douce singing . . . Aye, Fiddlers' Green . . ."

And they were silent for a minute in the soft Ulster sunshine.

"Would you have any use for a lad like myself aboard your ship, Raghery man?"

"Och, sure, what would you do with the sea, wee fellow?"

"I ken it well already, Raghery man. And I'm no clumsy in a boat. I can sail a sloop with any man. Close-hauled or full and by, I'll keep her there. With the breeze biting her weather bow, I'll hold her snout into it. Or with the wind behind me, I'll ride her like you'd canter a horse."

"I might take you to learn you seamanship and navigation, but you'd be no use as a sailor, wee laddie, and it's not for a Campbell to be a cabin-boy."

"Take me to learn the trade, then. Take me now."

"I'd like fine, wee fellow, but I could n't do it. You might be cut out for a scholar for all you think you're not. Or it might be a soldier you're meant for. I could n't interfere with your life. It's an unco responsibility, interfering with a destiny, a terrible thing . . ."

"Will you talk to my Uncle Robin? Will you?"

"Och, now, how could I talk to your Uncle Robin, him that's written books, and is counted one of the seven learned men of Ireland? Sure, I would n't understand what he'd be saying, and he'd have no ear for a common sailing man. If it was your Uncle Alan, now . . ."

"There's not a person in the world but has the ear of my Uncle Robin. And there's none easier to talk to, not even the apple woman at the corner of the quay. Will you come with me and talk to him?"

"I could n't, laddie. Your Uncle Alan, now . . ."

"I'll do the talking, then; but will you come?"

"Och, wee fellow, it would be foolish . . ."

"You would n't have me think hard of a man of Raghery?"

"No, I would n't have any one think hard of the folk of Raghery, so I suppose I'll have to come. I don't know what your Uncle Robin will say to me for putting notions in your head. It's awful foolish. But I'll come . . ."

§ 10

"So there'd never be the making of a scholar in me, Uncle Robin. A ship on the sea or a new strange person would be always more to me nor a book. I can read and write and figure; what more do I want? And, och, sir, the school would be a prison to me, the scholars droning and ink on their fingers, and the hard-faced masters at the desk. I'd be woe for the outside, for the sunshine and the water and the bellying winds—"

His Uncle Robin tapped the window-pane of the club and thought hard. The Rathlin sailor stood by, puzzled.

"But, childeen asthore, sure you don't know now what you want. Your career, laddie! Think a bit! The church, for instance—"

"Och, Uncle Robin, is it me in the church that must say my prayers by my lee lone, so loath am I to let the people see what's in me? I'd be the queer minister, dumb as a fish—"

"You once had a notion for the army, laddie."

"So I had, sir, and fine I'd like the uniforms and the swords and the horses, but I would n't have the heart to kill a man, and me never seeing him before. If a man did me a wrong, I'd kill him quick as I'd wash my hands,

but never seeing him before, I could na, I just could na—"

"It 's a clean thing, the sea," the Raghery man ventured.

"He 's so very young," objected Uncle Robin.

"There 's nothing but that or the books for me, Uncle Robin. A sailor or a scholar—and I don't think I'd make out well with the books."

"The books are n't all they 're cracked up to be, wee Shane. I 've written books myself, and who reads them but a wheen of graybeards, and they drowsing by the fire . . . Knowledge, laddie, I have that . . . And it is n't even wisdom. Knowledge is like dry twigs you collect with care to make a bit fire you can warm your shins at, and wisdom is the gift of God that 's like the blossom on the gorse . . . I 've searched books and taken out the marrow of dead men's brains, and after all, even all my knowledge may be wrong . . . Your father's name will be remembered as long as the Gaidhlig lasts, for songs that came to him as easily as a woman's kiss . . . And your Uncle Alan's footprints are near the pole . . . And Mungo is remembered forever because he died with a laugh . . . Not that I 'm saying anything against them, wee Shane; better men will never be seen . . . But Daniel Donnelly's name is remembered because he beat Cooper in a fight, and songs were made about it . . . And I 'll be remembered only when some old librarian dusts a forgotten book . . . And I was supposed to be the wise pup o' the litter, with my books and my study . . . And all I have now is a troubled mind in my latter days . . . Aye, the books! . . ."

"Shall I go to sea, sir?"

"Is it up to me? And how about your mother, laddie?"

"Oh, there 's little warmth within her for me, sir. She 's a bitter woman. She does na like my father's breed."

"Are you your father's breed through, wee caddie? Are you Campbell all? Here, gi' us a look at your face. Aye, the eyes, the nose, the proud throw to the head of you. I 'm afeared there 's little of your mother in you, laddie; afeared there 's none at all."

"I 'm no' ashamed o' my kind, sir."

"And you 're set on going to sea?"

"I 'd like it fine, sir."

"And if it does na turn out the way you thought it would, you 're not going to cry or turn sour?"

"I thought you knew me better nor that, Uncle Robin."

"I do." The big man laid his hand on the boy's shoulder and smiled at the shipmaster. "Take him, Raghery man!"

§ 11

Though all was wonder to wee Shane, there was so much of it that it flicked through his head like a dream: the hazy September afternoon; the long, lean vessel like a grayhound; the sails white as a swan's wing; the cordage that rattled like wood; the barefooted, bearded sailors; the town of Carrickfergus in the offing; the *lap-lap-lap* of water; the silent man at the wheel; the sudden transition of the friendly Raghery man into a firm, authoritative figure, quick as a cat, rapping out commands like a sergeant-major.

The town of Carrickfergus began to slip by as if drawn by horses. The mate ran up the ladder of the poop.

"Topsails, McCafferty!" the Raghery man ordered.

"Topsails, sir."

A minute later there came the mate's voice from amidships:

"Sheet home the topsails—and put your backs into it!"

Patter of feet. An accordion began to whine like a tinker. Creak and strain. Faster lapping of water. A song raised in chorus:

"As I came a-tacking down Paradise Street—

Yo-ho! Blow the man down!

As I came a-tacking down Paradise Street—

Give us some time till we blow the man down!"

"A trim little bumboat I chanced for to meet!

Blow, bullies, blow the man down!

A trim little bumboat I chanced for to meet!

Give us some time till we blow the man down!"

"She was round in the counter and bluff in the bows!

Yo-ho! Blow the man down!

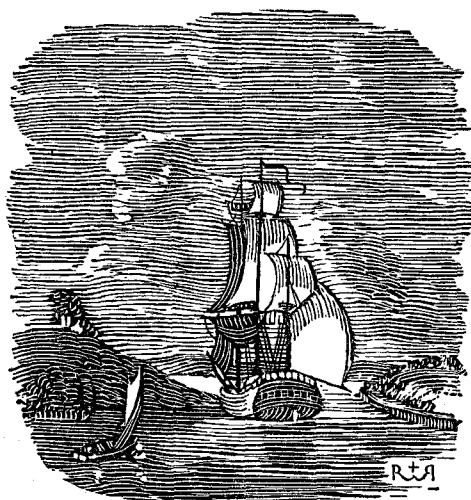
She was round in the counter and bluff in the bows!

Give us some time till we blow the man down.

Blow the man down!

Blow, bullies! Blow the man down!"

(The end of the first part of "The Wind Bloweth")





An Unpublished Concord Journal

By FRANK SANBORN [Edited by GEORGE S. HELLMAN]



Frank Sanborn as a young man was in the confidence and association of the famous Concord group in which were Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow, Alcott, Hawthorne, Channing, and others. Journals were then the fashion. Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau, and others were, in almost daily entrances, making them the storehouses of their ideas. Young Sanborn as a senior at Harvard began in this journal, in 1854-55, to follow in their footsteps. The new and fascinating material in this journal we shall leave the reader to discover for himself. The portrait of Thoreau which accompanies the text is from the only known oil-painting of the Hermit of Walden, and has not before been reproduced.—G. S. H.

*N*ovember 2, 1854. Suddenly I went to Concord by railroad, and getting to Mr. Emerson's house at 2 o' cl'k, found him just arrived at home from Keene. We sat by the dining-room fire and talked awhile—of Stonehenge and of new theories, of Bossuet and his book, of cones, etc. Speaking of pines, Mr. Emerson said Issac Porter offered to shew him on his Maine woodlands trees a thousand years old, for there is no limit to the life of trees; they die only by accident.

We walked out across the pasture to Walden Pond, and Mr. Emerson spoke of an Englishman, Cholmondely, who had lately come to Concord, a Preel man, a Puseyite, who had been to Australia and written a book called "Ultima Thule" thereupon.

"He is the son of a Shropshire squire, and is travelling during his nonage. He is better acquainted with things than most travelling Englishmen are; they are a *singularly verdant race*. The Englishman who stays at home and attends to what he knows is one of the *wisest* of men, but their travellers are most unobservant and self-complacent.

I asked this man if he saw any difference between our autumn foliage and that of England. He said no, but all men who have eyes notice it at once; ours is tulips and carnations compared with theirs. So, too, he told me he went to hear a Mr. Parker in Boston; he thought him able, but was shocked at some of his doctrines. He began," said Mr. Emerson, "to talk to me about *original sin* and such things, but I said: 'I see you are speaking of something which had a meaning once, but has now grown obsolete. Those words once stood for something, and the world got good from them; but not now.'"

Just then we met the man himself, and Mr. Emerson invited him to dinner on Saturday.

November 20, 1854. Coming in from Agassiz's lecture, found Mr. Alcott in my room. Talked with him a few minutes and then took him to dinner. There we spoke of Agassiz and science. Mr. Alcott complained of naturalists that they *begin* with matter,—they should begin with spirit,—as in the "Vestiges" the author supposes