

'I mean, a present for America.'

'In that case I will accept it.'

He half lifted the canvas cover.

'Ah! I guess what it is: four nightingales, four singing souls! You are very, very French, Barbarin. I shall never forget.'

'Faith,' said the young fellow, 'I don't know whether they're males or females; that's a chance we have to take. But my mother told me only yesterday that they made such a racket that for three nights in the spring she could n't sleep.'

It required fully half an hour to explain all the precautions that must be taken for the journey—how to feed them, and when to open the cage, preferably on a mild, cloudy day—and also to come to an understanding on the subject of the climate which is best for nightingales; for the United States is a vast Empire.

I have no idea which state will obtain the four trapped singers. I know simply that they started across the ocean; that the captain had in his hands three pages of directions, written in a bold, firm hand; that a colonel, a millionaire manufacturer, and a naturalist were advised of their dispatch; that Miss Florence Dolly gave orders that a cable should be sent her on their arrival in port; and that she had to start herself before she received it.

Toussaint Barbarin, who has gone back to his trade, awaits every day the promised letter postmarked Philadelphia, New York, or San Antonio, Texas. He is patient and hopeful. However, he says sometimes:

'I like the Americans, and I gave them a present that nobody else had thought of giving them. If the ship did n't arrive, whether they were four females, or even four males that I put in the cage, it would be bad luck for America.'

L'Echo de Paris

THE PARNELLITE

BY BRINSLEY MACNAMARA

THERE was little about him now to tell anyone at all that he had been a fierce political man in his time, save, perhaps, a portrait of Charles Stewart Parnell by the side of a portrait of William Ewart Gladstone, in the little musty, best room that he called the parlor. His mind had failed to include anything so richly as his memories of the ending of Parnell. He had hoped after that that the like might never happen again in Ireland while he would be living. He had seen blood spilled on the street of his native village, and the sudden beginning of enmities which could never die.

He had put into that losing battle the full energy of his prime and stood by Parnell, and this was no small thing for a man to have done in those days, yet even in this poor, quiet place had been found a few just men to stand up for the truth. He could still remember well the foul things that had been said of 'The Chief' in this very place, and how every great, derisive roar of an anti-Parnellite had gone to his heart. Poor Parnell! It had caught at every noble instinct that was in him to feel the doom that was closing in around that fine, proud man who had done his best for Ireland. It was a bitter thing to have to endure the sight of him being driven down by some of the very men he had made.

'God knows, but it looks like striking poor Ireland in the face!'

He remembered well to have said this to a faithful brother Parnellite one night that opposition meetings had been held in the village, and dark, angry men, with bands and banners, and sticks and stones, had marched through one another's meetings and opened each other's heads. He had

seen men, who had once fought together and suffered for Ireland, Fenian men, too, and this was the hardest of all to witness, draw blood from one another with cuts of ash plants along the skull. Yet, through all the darkness of this sad period, he could see always, as in a holy picture, the handsome face with its expression so brightly kindled by the burning eyes, which gave it a look like that of a saint going through his martyrdom in the olden times. But they had been defeated in this place, for the mud of all the mean villages in Ireland had been flung in the face of Parnell.

He had attended the funeral of 'The Chief,' and ever after he was fond of saying, whenever a political discussion would arise, and he might have a few drinks in him, something he had said for the first time on that memorable day in a public house in Dublin, that 'his heart was in the grave above in Glasnevin with his noble, martyred king.' Then had followed a period of desolation and gloom which was almost as a complete lapse in his memory. Sometimes the dead quietness of everything made him wonder why a fellow should be so mad when he was young. His only son was a harmless lad, but sure there never was a bit of excitement worthy of anyone with the real political blood in him, now that even the memory of Parnell was almost faded and gone.

Yet now, with the despondence of all the drifting years so heavy upon him, did it seem all the more strange that a touch of the old, fine madness could have returned upon Ireland. This time the division was perhaps not so ugly of origin, for it was the public record of a whole party, not the private character of one man that had made it. But the village had suddenly developed a quality of excitement, of eventfulness, which was comparable

only with that of the days he remembered so well. He had not taken much notice of the young political party in its rapid rise, for his way of looking upon anything new was the way of all old men, and simply to call it 'Foolish! foolish!' But his son was one of the new political men, and it warmed his mind more than a little to know that the son must have some of the spirit in him that had made the father stick to Parnell. He could hear the cheering and the bands upon the street every night, yet so great is the change wrought in a man by the years that he never felt any desire to become a part of the excitement now. There were times when the whole thing made him laugh to himself, and he had never done this in the old days when he had so seriously taken sides.

'Damn it, but it's curious,' he would say as he laughed, 'and this is a quare, mad country anyway, to think that there must be two parties of fine political men in it always and they striving as hard as they can to kill one another. And when any of our powerful political fights is over and done with a fellow feels inclined to ask what the blazes was it about? But all the same, of course, I'll never regret the way that I stuck to Parnell.'

The fight in the village was growing fiercer daily. The young men were very strong in numbers and in spirit, but the backers of the Old Party were putting their best into the contest. And he who had once been a passionate, political man was taking neither side.

'Musha, I'm getting a bit too ould for that kind of thing,' he would say, when the political men of the present and of both parties came to ask him why. They would point out that men much older than he, even former colleagues of his own, were actively engaged in fighting like devils on either

side. This always seemed to stir him a bit as well as to be reminded of the old prophecy that it might yet come to pass that a man would be turned five times in his bed to see was he fit for service. It was service for Ireland that was rather obliquely hinted in the prophecy. And poor Ireland, as of old, was again the real issue in these days. All around him thickly, loudly, endlessly was the same great talk of Ireland. It suddenly seemed, after all the years in which nothing had been done, as if everyone wanted to do something for Ireland. Each set of political men now solemnly declared that theirs was the only party that had ever done anything for Ireland. All over Ireland there was a great shout of 'Ireland!' It rose up wildly to the skies. He could stand out no longer.

That night he went up through the village in the darkness and the rain, and for a little while moved as a political neutral upon the outskirts of the rival meetings. He listened with a certain gladness to the tremendous outbursts of cheering and the immense noise of the bands. As he gave attention to the rival speakers he could not suddenly detect any great difference between the rival policies. Then he began to notice things that reminded him of the old days and the memory of Parnell. He saw men who had been faithful Parnellites with him upon the opposite platforms now and he was blinded by passionate, political thoughts. The anger that it stirred in him rose higher with the angry movements of the crowds. Something flashed across his blindness. The first blood had been drawn. A famous Parnellite had struck another famous Parnellite. It was worse than a blow to him who had fought well with these men then and seen the Fenian men strike the Fenian men on that wild day so long ago.

His arm was still a stout arm in spite of his years, and, in the name of God, he would fight again on the side where most of his old comrades were. This was, of course, on the side of the Old Party, and his son was on the other side. It was a queer thing for a man to be against his son. But there was a fierce tumult in his mind. The other political men were moving down on them, but he would stand by most of the men who had stood with him by Parnell. Meaningless, passionate cries and the sound of sticks swishing to the blow filled all the air around him. Suddenly someone seemed to have struck him and he saw a frightened face in the darkness as he fell. It was his son! Oh, Mother of God, it was his son! He thought he saw him stagger away with a look of shame in his eyes.

They did not speak to one another of what had happened as part of their conflict through being different political men, but an unusual reserve seemed to spring up between them in the days which followed, as if each might be secretly thinking whether it was an uglier thing for a son to have struck his father than for a Parnellite to have struck a Parnellite, or even a Fenian to have struck a Fenian. The noise of the fight would die away, but the thought of this would remain a long while in their minds. And even as they remembered it the confused mumblings of them as political men would commingle somehow into a kind of coherence:

Like that — striking poor Ireland in the face — killing poor Ireland — the way they murdered Parnell.

The Irish Statesman

SKEPTICISM AND SPIRITS

It is only youth that has the energy to be bothered with everything. There comes a time when one's mind is 'made