STEPHEN CRANE

THE O'RUDDY

EXTENDED ANNOTATED EDITION

The O'Ruddy

Stephen Crane/Robert Barr

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Stephen Crane – A Biographical Sketch

By Thomas L. Raymond

Stephen Crane is a name which suggests a Newarker as strongly as any name can. One of the seven men who represented Newark in a boundary settlement, with some men from Elizabeth, on a hill out in Weequahic Park, was Jasper Crane, who was one of the founders of Newark, two hundred and fifty-five years ago, and whose farm came to the southwest corner of Broad and Market streets. One of his descendants, Stephen Crane, was a member of the Continental Congress and had four sons who were soldiers in the Revolution. From Jasper Crane and Stephen Crane was descended our Stephen Crane, who also won fame, but not the sort his ancestors had, for he won his in the world of letters, as a great artist of his craft.

His father, the Reverend Jonathan Townley Crane, D.D., was born in Connecticut Farms and later moved to Newark. He became a Methodist, — his family had been Presbyterians, I fancy, until his generation,— and was Pastor of the Central Methodist Church on Market Street, and later Presiding Elder of the Methodist Conference for Newark. His wife was Mary Helen Peck, and both were strong in intellect, writers, he of theology, she, after his death, for the "New York Tribune." It was in Newark, at 14 Mulberry Place, that Stephen Crane, whose memory we honor tonight, was born on November 1,1871. The simple red brick three-story house still stands there, a ghost of the dear old Newark of the seventies and eighties, when its

streets were quiet and shady and its life serene. To realize that such a life as Crane's came from such a house and such surroundings requires some forcing of the imagination. He was the youngest of fourteen children, and it is evident that the family supply of theology and religious piety had run out before this last Crane was born, for he does not seem a likely heir of such ancestors. He was taken from Newark in 1874, when his father, in the itinerancy of his ministry, was called elsewhere.

The Cranes moved from Newark to Bloomington, which is across the Raritan River from Bound Brook, where they lived for two years. Stephen's brother Edmund tells some amusing stories of him in his early years. The boys, of whom there were seven in the family at this time, used to go down to the river to swim, taking Stevie with them. He says: "We often took Stevie bathing with us in the Raritan River about half a mile above the bridge. There was a smooth, sandy bar extending from the south bank across the river, very shallow near the shore and growing deeper toward the middle of the river. Stevie would wade in the shallows watched by one of us. Wading breast deep in water he would stretch out his arms and waving his hands, would achieve what he called 'fimming.' He started to 'fim' to 'Wee-wee' (Willie), my next older brother, who was farther out in the river. As the depth gradually increased the water came up to his chin, then to his mouth, and then to his eyes, but he kept steadily on, and I plucked him out, gasping but unscared, just as his yellow hair was going under. We boys were naturally delighted with his grit."

From Bloomington the family removed to Paterson and two years later to Port Jervis, where Stephen first went to school. He was eight years old before beginning school. Because of his delicate health he had not been sent to school before this and it seems his parents had not

attempted to teach him in any formal way; but his mind was active and bright and he soon passed from class to class until he was studying in classes with children older than himself. In 1880 his father died and his mother took the family to Newark, where they lived for a short while in the Roseville section, then went to live again in Port Jervis. About two years later they removed to Asbury Park, where Townley Crane, an older brother, was in charge of a news bureau for the "New York Herald" and "Sun" and the "Philadelphia Press." Stephen attended school in Asbury Park, and in 1888 we find him reporting "Shore News" as an aid to his brother Townley. Mrs. Crane at this time was reporting the religious news of Ocean Grove. Townley's connection with the "Tribune" was terminated abruptly in the fall of 1888 through a very amusing incident. It seems that young Stephen reported a parade of a certain patriotic order in Asbury Park in the summer of 1892, but in his report of it, he gave full play to his sense of humor and "made a burlesque of the whole performance," ridiculing the marchers, their clothes, and the way they marched. The order was growing very strong in numbers and influence at this time, and the Republicans were anxious to obtain their votes for Harrison and Reid, who were that year running for President and Vice-President. The story Crane had written was approved by William J. Devereux, who was in charge of the news bureau because of Townley's absence, without careful reading. Thinking it of little importance, he sent it on and it duly appeared the next morning in print. It caused great indignation among the men of the order in the State of New York, and in fact everywhere, and since Whitelaw Reid was the editor of the "Tribune" and Republican candidate for Vice-President, it turned them against the ticket.

The state, the vote of which decided the election, was carried by Cleveland by about a thousand votes, and so it

has been said that Crane made Cleveland President of the United States. This is Mr. Devereux's account of the incident, and it appeared contemporaneously, I believe, in the "Trenton Times." Others tell of a parade of labor men upon which Crane's comments were equally unwelcome, but in which he treated the subject from another point of view, that of the social psychologist, and we are left to choose between the two accounts. Both stories relate to the same incident, however, but Billy Devereux's is far more colorful.

The process of educating Stephen Crane was never completed in the academic sense. It is said that he went to Pennington Seminary, then to the Hudson River Institute at Claverack, New York, a military school, then to Lafayette College in 1890, where he remained but two terms, then to Syracuse University, which he left after one year, in 1891. Though endowed with a fine mind and a penetrating intelligence, he was a poor scholar; bad in his English, fond of going out of nights and smoking a pipe; not a hard worker; unreasonably often absent from his classes, a possible cause of the abrupt termination of his stay at Lafayette; but "a good fellow," considerate, gentle, though ready to use his fists in a good cause with effect when necessary; a baseball player, and a good one. Finally, we are told that while at college he spent what time he could in typesetting rooms of local newspapers, and that this very elementary stage in literature inspired him with the desire to write. One more item of interest about his college days: he read a great deal, but out of his courses, and into late hours of the night. This is the picture of Stephen Crane at school and college which I gather from the many sources of information placed in my hands. It is a probable picture, and his later life gives no contradiction to the truth of it. It is very interesting also. Genius cannot be harnessed; the school of genius is unorganized and undisciplined, and we

cannot but feel that all through these years, no doubt vastly irksome to him, he had his eye on his goal, he knew what he was about; consciously or unconsciously he was fitting himself for his remarkable career.

On leaving college he was fated, however, to find himself in a far more bitter school — the school of poverty and disappointment, of fruitless effort and failure of recognition; a school in which he paid with hunger for the printing of his first book; in which he once said: "I would give my future literary career for twenty-three dollars in cash at this minute." After leaving college he sought work without success on some New York newspaper, toiling through Park Row, upstairs and downstairs, from one editor's office to another; but was obliged to take a position in a mercantile house, which he soon gave up. He went through all the poverty and privation in these days that one must know who determines to live his own life and express his own soul, but at last was employed by the "Tribune," on the staff of which he worked for over a year. Crane later joined the staff of the "Newark Morning Times," a journal whose short career will be recalled by some of us old grayheads. He worked for the "Times" a short while for $10 a week and then returned to New York City. Here he lived a life of great poverty, writing special articles for Sunday newspapers and doing any writing he could to make a living.

He came to know the men who were then prominent in the literary circle of New York —Richard Watson Gilder, Hamlin Garland, Thomas Masson, Edward Townsend, and others. He investigated the life of the East Side and of the slums. The urge of art was strong in him and he wrote his first novel, "Maggie, a Girl of the Streets," a story of a sordid family of the slums, for which he unsuccessfully tried to find a publisher. Eventually it was privately printed and

published under the pseudonym of Johnstone Smith, and came to the notice of William Dean Howells, who recognized at once the genius of its author. From this time Howells was his friend, encouraging him, helping him, and giving him his start. Then came the book that proved the turning-point in his career, bringing him from obscurity into full light as a writer of great force and imagination, "The Red Badge of Courage," published by Appleton in 1895, after first appearing in a Philadelphia newspaper. "The Black Riders and Other Lines" followed, published by Copeland and Day in Boston in 1895 in beautiful form, a choice little book which I predict collectors will seize upon. This was followed by "George's Mother" (1896); "The Little Regiment and Other Episodes of the American Civil War" (1896); "The Third Violet" (1897); "The Open Boat and Other Tales of Adventure" (1898); "The Monster" (1899); "Whilomville Stories" (1900); "Wounds in the Rain" (1900); "Great Battles of the World" (1901); "The O'Ruddy" (1903), which at his death was unfinished and was completed by his friend Robert Barr.

Upon these books the judgment of Stephen Crane as an artist must be based. It is, I think, a rich product for so short a life. It is apparent that writing books in New York City, lover of action and adventure that he was, had made him restless, and no doubt Crane gladly seized the opportunity to go to Cuba, where the uprising that led to the Spanish-American War was well under way. In the fall of 1896 he was engaged as correspondent for the "New York Journal." Having determined upon this adventure, he was obliged to await the secret sailing of the filibustering ship that was to take him to Cuba. Receiving sudden notice of its time of departure, and having no opportunity to arrange his private affairs, he wrote his brother hasty directions for their disposition in case of his death, which he evidently anticipated as a likely result of his enterprise.

The steamer was wrecked off the Florida coast, and for several days and nights he and three others of the crew were tossed about on "the abrupt waves," as he calls them. He tells his story in "The Open Boat," and splendid reading it is! They were at last rescued, dragged up on the beach, one of them dead, after Crane and one of the others had done all the rowing, taking their turns at rest in the wet bottom of the storm-tossed little boat. This fearful experience must have injured his health permanently; still he did not give up his intention of going on to Cuba but waited around to find other means of getting there. After futile efforts, he writes his brother in March, 1897: "I have been for over a month among the swamps further South [of Jacksonville], wading miserably to and fro in an attempt to avoid our darned U. S. navy. It can't be done. I am through trying. I have changed all my plans and am going to Crete."

He was not yet weary of adventure. The Graeco-Turkish war had broken out, and before resting up from one terrible experience he was rushing to another, planning to go to the scene of war in Crete as correspondent of the "New York Journal." Apparently he went to Crete by way of England. This was his first visit to England, and it was here in all likelihood that he was engaged as field correspondent of the "Westminster Gazette." When the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898, he was back in New York, and the spirit of adventure took him off" again to Cuba as war correspondent of the "New York Journal" and the "New York World." He was at Guantanamo, Santiago, and Havana and in Porto Rico. He was mentioned in official dispatches for gallantry under fire with the marines near Guantanamo. Did he leave Cuba after the war by way of Mexico? It is merely a surmise of mine that he did, because some of his stories in "The Open Boat and Other Tales" indicate an intimate acquaintance with Mexico City, the Mexican plains, and Mexican life generally. He certainly knows the

American bar in Mexico City, the adobe hut, the Mexican peasant, the Mexican sky and night. He knows his Texas also, and in all probability he came back to New York leisurely through Mexico and Texas, filling his mind on the way with those impressions, sharp of outline and rich in color, of what he saw and heard, of which he has written so beautifully in many short stories. I especially recall "The Bride comes to Yellow Sky,""The Five White Mice," "One Dash—Horses" as fine glimpses of life in Mexico and in Texas.

Though I have not seen any of his articles as war correspondent, several of the admirers of his literary work express the opinion that he made a great mistake in attempting to do other than imaginative writing. He was evidently not a success at journalistic writing at any time in his career. Unhappily it was the hardships of the sort of journalistic work he had chosen that injured his health and laid the foundation for tuberculosis which developed later and brought his young and remarkable life to an all too early close. He had tasted of the sweets of life in England on his first visit there in 1897, and the lure seems to have called him back after his return from the war in Cuba. He had friends there; he was understood and appreciated by the best minds in literature; English life appealed to him, and no doubt his shattered health was a further motive in his determination to live in England. No wonder he felt the spell of England when we find he had such friends there as Joseph Conrad, H.G. Wells, and Ford Madox Hueffer. Each has written of him since his death in the highest appreciation of his art, and it is apparent that his personality was extremely attractive to each apart from his art. There are charming little personal touches of reminiscence in these few, too few, pages that these men have written. Conrad says: "My wife and I like best to remember him riding to meet us at the gate of the Park at

Brede. Born master of his sincere impressions, he was also born horseman. He never appeared so happy or so much to advantage as on the back of a horse.... Those who have read his little tale 'Horses' and the story of 'The Open Boat,' in the volume of that name, know with what fine understanding he loved horses and the sea. And his passage on this earth was like that of a horseman riding swiftly in the dawn of a day fated to be short and without sunshine." These words are from one of the most eminent men of letters of today, and one considered by many the greatest living novelist in the English language. When he went to England with his wife, whom he had married in 1898, and whose maiden name was Cora Taylor, they lived at first in a little house in Limpsfield, in Surrey, a short way out of London.

When I was in England in 1912 I spent most of my time in London, making trips to Oxford and Canterbury but otherwise seeing little of England. It is a curious coincidence, however, that I did spend several days in Limpsfield visiting some friends. It is but a short trip from London, but the little place is a charming example of an ancient English town, in the midst of English country, with its narrow winding principal street through the centre densely lined with very old and very diminutive houses, with casement windows of diamond paned leaded glass. At the head of the street is the thirteenth century parish church crumbling in its Gothic beauty, and outside the town is the great stretch of "common grounds" inevitable in an English village. There are, off from the main street, some beautiful houses, old and new, with their charming gardens and stately trees, and altogether one can hardly imagine a more delightful place for a writer to be in. I did not see the house in which Crane lived, but we have a vivid picture of him in those days from the pen of that fine writer, brave soldier, and generous friend and critic of young artists and

young movements, Ford Madox Hueffer, in his recently published "Thus to Revisit." He was placed in a wonderful environment here for a young man of letters. Joseph Conrad and Hueffer lived nearby; a few miles away was the great Henry James, himself an American by birth; and I have a most delightful memory of a Mr. Pye and his interesting wife and daughters, who had one of those charming places off the main street, and whose wonderful house and garden have been an inspiration for me ever since. They were the friends of Rupert Brooke, Charles Ricketts, Robert Bridges, Sturge Moore, and many others of those finest intellects in England, and were no doubt typical of the residents of the place. This will give some idea of the environment in which Crane found himself in Limpsfield.

The literary crowd in England sought Crane out and made much of him, and evidently took him to their hearts at the same time rendering full appreciation of his genius; nevertheless he had very hard sledding, incurred large debts, and was greatly worried about his future; but he lived the wild kind of life he loved, sitting around in his shirt sleeves, wearing riding breeches and leggings with a great Colt in his belt, and roaming over the country on what Hueffer calls "a great coach horse." Hueffer was visiting at his house one evening, awaiting with his wife his return from London. When Crane arrived he announced that he had received a commission to write anything he was moved to at twenty pounds for a thousand words. He radiated gladness that night, and proceeded to rent an abandoned and unrestored Elizabethan manor house, called Brede Place. There he lived the life of a Tudor baron of the sixteenth century. The floors were covered with rushes, and bones were thrown from the table to be gnawed by the stray dogs and lost cats that filled the house. Hosts of miscellaneous guests partook of the bizarre

hospitality of its master, who sat upstairs in a little room over the front porch writing to earn the money to support it all. This is Hueffer's picture. Meanwhile a dread disease was sapping away his life, and finally he went to the Black Forest in Germany in the vain hope of recovery; but his hardships and exposure in the wars had too deeply marked him, and he died at Badenweiler on June 5, 1900. He is buried in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Thus passed from this world in his thirtieth year one who in a short life had made for his name a permanent place in English literature. The Newark-born boy had strayed far from home in thought as well as in deed. His legend is in the making. I have tried to gather all the fragments of information together and make a consecutive story of them, but have been obliged to resort freely to conjecture. No attempt seems to have been made to write his biography, and such facts as I have been able to make use of have been gathered through the enterprise and interest of Professor Max Herzberg, Mr. William Hamilton Osborne and others, who have most kindly placed at my disposal the results of their efforts.

Crane was a lovable fellow, inspiring affection in all who knew him, every one calling him "Stevie," "dear Stevie," "poor Stevie"; he was careless of his material affairs; he liked the active life—horseback riding, baseball playing; he was fond of the sea, of horses, of guns; he loved adventure, free living, and outdoor life; and he was brave, indeed he wore his own red badge of courage. He was short and slight of figure, his hair light, his eyes blue, and his complexion swarthy—the ensemble was handsome. He lived the life of privation, of poverty, and of adventure so typical of genius; he preferred independence to comfort, and an interesting life to a dull and prosperous one, that he might express himself and have his say. He was quiet and

thoughtful in manner but brilliant in conversation, adopting the rough speech of the street though quite capable on occasion of using the splendid English of the classics.

The East Side of New York and the life of the very poor, the gangster, the woman of the streets, the bartender of the slums, the Mexican greaser, the Texas cowboy, the ordinary sailor,—these were an open book to him and the material for his art. He mastered their manners and their speech, and could think in their terms. Yet he knew letters! One cannot read him without feeling that He knew English and French literature. He had studied Flaubert, Maupassant, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Henry James. He used "the most economical forms,"—to quote Hueffer again, a phrase that I like,— wrote forcibly and simply; he was a master of words, and hated extra words and digressions, as well as both rhyme and formal meter. In short, he had a method and knew what he was doing.

In this he is rare. In this he was, unconsciously probably, one of the founders of a school. We must recall that he wrote in the famous nineties, was of the nineties, and was in England during the nineties. This was one of the most marvelous periods of flowering that the arts have known; a great renaissance in writing and the graphic arts was under way, and an English critic like Hueffer can place Crane beside Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and William H. Hudson as the pioneers of a new method of writing English fiction, a method in which effect was not to be gained by sensational plot, by rhetorical descriptions, by padding out the story, by unnecessary words and lines, but one in which "the most economical of forms" was used, in which truth was aimed at, in which the effect came from reality rather than from artificial means. And yet such writing is all art. The highest craftsmanship is required. The effects

appearing so simple on the page are far from being arrived at as simply as it would seem.

"The Black Riders and Other Lines" is one of the earliest volumes of so-called free verse, though the mighty Whitman, of course, had begun to use it fifty years before. I look upon "The Black Riders "as a momentous book in English verse, and it was in this and in the free verse of Hueffer that the splendid modern school of Ezra Pound, T. S. Elliot, and others had its source.

Hear this poem:

In Heaven,
Some little blades of grass
Stood before God.
"What did you do?"
Then all save one of the little blades
Began eagerly to relate
The merits of their lives.
This one stayed a small way behind,
Ashamed.
Presently, God said,
"And what did you do?"
The little blade answered,
"Oh, my Lord,
"Memory is bitter to me,
"For if ever I did good deeds,
"I know not of them."
Then God, in all his splendor,
Arose from his throne.
"Oh, best little blade of grass!" he said.
This is another:

There were many who went in huddled procession,
They knew not whither;

But, at any rate, success or calamity,
Would attend all in equality.
There was one who sought a new road.
He went into direful thickets,
And ultimately he died thus, alone;
But they said he had courage.

So much for the form of his verse; its substance is that of a gentle, generous, but blindingly true and sharp view of this complicated life of ours and its problems; it is the attitude of one who says," We know not good nor evil"; of the divine One who said, "Judge not that ye be not judged." It is the pitiless picture of us as we are in our own hearts and in our own souls as contrasted with the agreeable and smug portrait we draw of ourselves to make our lives easier.

"The Red Badge of Courage" is an amazing book. Written by one who had never seen or smelled the smoke of battle, he lives for us again the life of a young soldier boy from a farm in New York State, in his late teens, who goes out to war gaily enough, but who is subjected to months of inaction in camp. What troubles him under the tension of camp life is how he will act under fire when fire comes. He is not at all sure of himself, but dares not confess to his comrades. He tries in vain to find some similar emotion in his fellow soldiers. He stands bravely, if unconsciously so, the first violent impact of war. The enemy retreats; he and the other troops relax, relieved immensely; but no sooner have they thrown their weary bodies on the ground than the enemy is seen coming toward them again. Many run away in panic and he with them. Crane lives the life of this boy, who later wins glory on the field, and for four days—the action of the book is but four days—we know him as we know ourselves or better. It is magnificent writing: no word is wasted, we can skip no page, we must follow this mind as

long as the mirror is upheld for us. This book must take its place and will among the great books of English literature.

Confucius once said: "In the beginning of my relations with men I heard their words, and I believed their actions conformed to them. Now, in my relations with men, I hear their words, but I examine their actions." This is true psychology, and Crane is very much interested in this phase of psychology. His characters are continually saying what they do not mean from one motive or another. In "The Red Badge of Courage," Henry Fleming, the hero, himself full of doubt about his own courage, but never expressing the doubt, seeks to find the thoughts of the other soldiers, but their words convey no sign of the fear in their hearts. In "The Third Violet" we find two lovers continually saying what they do not mean. The cowardice of love makes liars of them, and each is helpless to discover the mind of the other. And we find this same theme running through many of his books. Men's faces and words are a stone wall behind which we cannot penetrate the thought. This is the phenomenon of life that attracts him; the impact of personalities whose motives are inscrutable, one to the other. It is one of the deepest studies in which man can engage—the interpreting of the human mind. During the years that I have been reading, I have come to feel a sort of personal presence of the writers whose works attract me. With such a man as Crane, as with Whitman or Walter Pater, Dostoevsky or Henry James, I can read anything they have written with delight because their minds have become familiar to me and reading them is like hearing them talk. It becomes more and more the man and less and less his work, as is the case with certain friends we have known. His works are merely an expression of him, part of the atmosphere he radiates. He has no good and no bad novels or essays or poems for me, because in all he says I come to know him better, and can talk with him more intimately. Of

course I know his work varies in quality; but he is my friend, my guide, my inspiration—part of my life. I have felt this curiously enough about Stephen Crane. This may not be intelligent criticism, but I know if I can stand as much of any one friend's society as he will give me, there must be something unusually fine about that friend, and so I feel about Stephen Crane. I say it is curious that I should feel this of Stephen Crane because he died so young. Yet he had made his great pilgrimage through life, he had felt, he had learned, he had known. His soul was afire. He was rich in vast experience though his years were few. You feel there is an immense residue of Crane which he does not express, has not had time to express, maybe could not have expressed, which gives every word he writes a value, which lends a grace to his life and his thought. Some of his work I have not been able to find, but I feel a delightful sense of having more of him in store for me.

We can safely give him a high place to-day, and I believe we can rest assured he will hold it. He is part of that fine procession of genius which has made our new world eminent in the arts: Emerson, Whitman, Whistler, La Farge, Henry James, Lafcadio Hearn, Charles Eliot Norton, Stephen Crane—each in his chosen form of expression has compelled the admiration of the whole world. It seems provincial to claim Crane for Newark, but Newark should be glad of him and Newark may well take pride in him. But had he been born in Central Africa, we might well meet here to do his memory honor. It is fine of you Schoolmen to have erected a tablet to his memory. Let those who say that there is no inspiration here in our city to high triumphs in the splendid world of art stand before that tablet, read it, and know that through privation and suffering, in spite of uninspiring surroundings and lack of sympathetic understanding, in spite of ill health and poverty, one born Newarker gallantly pushed ahead to his goal, courageously

fought the fight for art, and gained for himself a place of eminence and distinction recognized by two continents.

The O'Ruddy

Chapter I

My chieftain ancestors had lived at Glandore for many centuries and were very well known. Hardly a ship could pass the Old Head of Kinsale without some boats putting off to exchange the time of day with her, and our family name was on men's tongues in half the seaports of Europe, I dare say. My ancestors lived in castles which were like churches stuck on end, and they drank the best of everything amid the joyous cries of a devoted peasantry. But the good time passed away soon enough, and when I had reached the age of eighteen we had nobody on the land but a few fisher-folk and small farmers, people who were almost law-abiding, and my father came to die more from disappointment than from any other cause. Before the end he sent for me to come to his bedside.

"Tom," he said, "I brought you into existence, and God help you safe out of it; for you are not the kind of man ever to turn your hand to work, and there is only enough money to last a gentleman five more years.

"The 'Martha Bixby,' she was, out of Bristol for the West Indies, and if it hadn't been for her we would never have got along this far with plenty to eat and drink. However, I

leave you, besides the money, the two swords,—the grand one that King Louis, God bless him, gave me, and the plain one that will really be of use to you if you get into a disturbance. Then here is the most important matter of all. Here are some papers which young Lord Strepp gave me to hold for him when we were comrades in France. I don't know what they are, having had very little time for reading during my life, but do you return them to him. He is now the great Earl of Westport, and he lives in London in a grand house, I hear. In the last campaign in France I had to lend him a pair of breeches or he would have gone bare. These papers are important to him, and he may reward you, but do not you depend on it, for you may get the back of his hand. I have not seen him for years. I am glad I had you taught to read. They read considerably in England, I hear. There is one more cask of the best brandy remaining, and I recommend you to leave for England as soon as it is finished. And now, one more thing, my lad, never be civil to a king's officer. Wherever you see a red coat, depend there is a rogue between the front and the back of it. I have said everything. Push the bottle near me."

Three weeks after my father's burial I resolved to set out, with no more words, to deliver the papers to the Earl of Westport. I was resolved to be prompt in obeying my father's command, for I was extremely anxious to see the world, and my feet would hardly wait for me. I put my estate into the hands of old Mickey Clancy, and told him not to trouble the tenants too much over the rent, or they probably would split his skull for him. And I bid Father Donovan look out for old Mickey Clancy, that he stole from me only what was reasonable.

I went to the Cove of Cork and took ship there for Bristol, and arrived safely after a passage amid great storms which blew us so near Glandore that I feared the enterprise of my

own peasantry. Bristol, I confess, frightened me greatly. I had not imagined such a huge and teeming place. All the ships in the world seemed to lie there, and the quays were thick with sailor-men. The streets rang with noise. I suddenly found that I was a young gentleman from the country.

I followed my luggage to the best inn, and it was very splendid, fit to be a bishop's palace. It was filled with handsomely dressed people who all seemed to be yelling, "Landlord! landlord!" And there was a little fat man in a white apron who flew about as if he were being stung by bees, and he was crying, "Coming, sir! Yes, madam! At once, your ludship!" They heeded me no more than if I had been an empty glass. I stood on one leg, waiting until the little fat man should either wear himself out or attend all the people. But it was to no purpose. He did not wear out, nor did his business finish, so finally I was obliged to plant myself in his way, but my speech was decent enough as I asked him for a chamber. Would you believe it, he stopped abruptly and stared at me with sudden suspicion. My speech had been so civil that he had thought perhaps I was a rogue. I only give you this incident to show that if later I came to bellow like a bull with the best of them, it was only through the necessity of proving to strangers that I was a gentleman. I soon learned to enter an inn as a drunken soldier goes through the breach into a surrendering city.

Having made myself as presentable as possible, I came down from my chamber to seek some supper. The supper-room was ablaze with light and well filled with persons of quality, to judge from the noise that they were making. My seat was next to a garrulous man in plum-colour, who seemed to know the affairs of the entire world. As I dropped into my chair he was saying—

"—the heir to the title, of course. Young Lord Strepp. That is he—the slim youth with light hair. Oh, of course, all in shipping. The Earl must own twenty sail that trade from Bristol. He is posting down from London, by the way, to-night."

You can well imagine how these words excited me. I half arose from my chair with the idea of going at once to the young man who had been indicated as Lord Strepp, and informing him of my errand, but I had a sudden feeling of timidity, a feeling that it was necessary to be proper with these people of high degree. I kept my seat, resolving to accost him directly after supper. I studied him with interest. He was a young man of about twenty years, with fair unpowdered hair and a face ruddy from a life in the open air. He looked generous and kindly, but just at the moment he was damning a waiter in language that would have set fire to a stone bridge. Opposite him was a clear-eyed soldierly man of about forty, whom I had heard called "Colonel," and at the Colonel's right was a proud, dark-skinned man who kept looking in all directions to make sure that people regarded him, seated thus with a lord.

They had drunk eight bottles of port, and in those days eight bottles could just put three gentlemen in pleasant humour. As the ninth bottle came on the table the Colonel cried—

"Come, Strepp, tell us that story of how your father lost his papers. Gad, that's a good story."

"No, no," said the young lord. "It isn't a good story, and besides my father never tells it at all. I misdoubt it's truth."

The Colonel pounded the table. "'Tis true. 'Tis too good a story to be false. You know the story, Forister?" said he,

turning to the dark-skinned man. The latter shook his head.

"Well, when the Earl was a young man serving with the French he rather recklessly carried with him some valuable papers relating to some estates in the North, and once the noble Earl—or Lord Strepp as he was then—found it necessary, after fording a stream, to hang his breeches on a bush to dry, and then a certain blackguard of a wild Irishman in the corps came along and stole—"

But I had arisen and called loudly but with dignity up the long table, "That, sir, is a lie." The room came still with a bang, if I may be allowed that expression. Every one gaped at me, and the Colonel's face slowly went the colour of a tiled roof.

"My father never stole his lordship's breeches, for the good reason that at the time his lordship had no breeches. 'Twas the other way. My father—"

Here the two long rows of faces lining the room crackled for a moment, and then every man burst into a thunderous laugh. But I had flung to the winds my timidity of a new country, and I was not to be put down by these clowns.

"'Tis a lie against an honourable man and my father," I shouted. "And if my father hadn't provided his lordship with breeches, he would have gone bare, and there's the truth. And," said I, staring at the Colonel, "I give the lie again. We are never obliged to give it twice in my country."

The Colonel had been grinning a little, no doubt thinking, along with everybody else in the room, that I was drunk or crazy; but this last twist took the smile off his face clean enough, and he came to his feet with a bound. I awaited him. But young Lord Strepp and Forister grabbed him and

began to argue. At the same time there came down upon me such a deluge of waiters and pot-boys, and, may be, hostlers, that I couldn't have done anything if I had been an elephant. They were frightened out of their wits and painfully respectful, but all the same and all the time they were bundling me toward the door. "Sir! Sir! Sir! I beg you, sir! Think of the 'ouse, sir! Sir! Sir! Sir!" And I found myself out in the hall.

Here I addressed them calmly. "Loose me and takes yourselves off quickly, lest I grow angry and break some dozen of these wooden heads." They took me at my word and vanished like ghosts. Then the landlord came bleating, but I merely told him that I wanted to go to my chamber, and if anybody inquired for me I wished him conducted up at once.

In my chamber I had not long to wait. Presently there were steps in the corridor and a knock at my door. At my bidding the door opened and Lord Strepp entered. I arose and we bowed. He was embarrassed and rather dubious.

"Aw," he began, "I come, sir, from Colonel Royale, who begs to be informed who he has had the honour of offending, sir?"

"'Tis not a question for your father's son, my lord," I answered bluntly at last.

"You are, then, the son of The O'Ruddy?"

"No," said I. "I am The O'Ruddy. My father died a month gone and more."

"Oh!" said he. And I now saw why he was embarrassed. He had feared from the beginning that I was altogether too

much in the right. "Oh!" said he again. I made up my mind that he was a good lad. "That is dif—" he began awkwardly. "I mean, Mr. O'Ruddy—oh, damn it all, you know what I mean, Mr. O'Ruddy!"

I bowed. "Perfectly, my lord!" I did not understand him, of course.

"I shall have the honour to inform Colonel Royale that Mr. O'Ruddy is entitled to every consideration," he said more collectedly. "If Mr. O'Ruddy will have the goodness to await me here?"

"Yes, my lord." He was going in order to tell the Colonel that I was a gentleman. And of course he returned quickly with the news. But he did not look as if the message was one which he could deliver with a glib tongue. "Sir," he began, and then halted. I could but courteously wait. "Sir, Colonel Royale bids me say that he is shocked to find that he has carelessly and publicly inflicted an insult upon an unknown gentleman through the memory of the gentleman's dead father. Colonel Royale bids me to say, sir, that he is overwhelmed with regret, and that far from taking an initial step himself it is his duty to express to you his feeling that his movements should coincide with any arrangements you may choose to make."

I was obliged to be silent for a considerable period in order to gather head and tail of this marvellous sentence. At last I caught it. "At daybreak I shall walk abroad," I replied, "and I have no doubt that Colonel Royale will be good enough to accompany me. I know nothing of Bristol. Any cleared space will serve."

My Lord Strepp bowed until he almost knocked his forehead on the floor. "You are most amiable, Mr. O'Ruddy.

You of course will give me the name of some friend to whom I can refer minor matters?"

I found that I could lie in England as readily as ever I did in Ireland. "My friend will be on the ground with me, my lord; and as he also is a very amiable man it will not take two minutes to make everything clear and fair." Me, with not a friend in the world but Father O'Donovan and Mickey Clancy at Glandore!

Lord Strepp bowed again, the same as before. "Until the morning then, Mr. O'Ruddy," he said, and left me.

I sat me down on my bed to think. In truth I was much puzzled and amazed. These gentlemen were actually reasonable and were behaving like men of heart. Neither my books nor my father's stories—great lies, many of them, God rest him!—had taught me that the duelling gentry could think at all, and I was quite certain that they never tried. "You were looking at me, sir?" "Was I, 'faith? Well, if I care to look at you I shall look at you." And then away they would go at it, prodding at each other's bellies until somebody's flesh swallowed a foot of steel. "Sir, I do not like the colour of your coat!" Clash! "Sir, red hair always offends me." Cling! "Sir, your fondness for rabbit-pie is not polite." Clang!

However, the minds of young Lord Strepp and Colonel Royale seemed to be capable of a process which may be termed human reflection. It was plain that the Colonel did not like the situation at all, and perhaps considered himself the victim of a peculiarly exasperating combination of circumstances. That an Irishman should turn up in Bristol and give him the lie over a French pair of breeches must have seemed astonishing to him, notably when he learned that the Irishman was quite correct, having in fact a clear

title to speak authoritatively upon the matter of the breeches. And when Lord Strepp learned that I was The O'Ruddy he saw clearly that the Colonel was in the wrong, and that I had a perfect right to resent the insult to my father's memory. And so the Colonel probably said: "Look you, Strepp. I have no desire to kill this young gentleman, because I insulted his father's name. It is out of all decency. And do you go to him this second time and see what may be done in the matter of avoidance. But, mark you, if he expresses any wishes, you of course offer immediate accommodation. I will not wrong him twice." And so up came my Lord Strepp and hemmed and hawed in that way which puzzled me. A pair of thoughtful, honourable fellows, these, and I admired them greatly.

There was now no reason why I should keep my chamber, since if I now met even the Colonel himself there would be no brawling; only bows. I was not, indeed, fond of these latter,—replying to Lord Strepp had almost broken my back; but, any how, more bows were better than more loud words and another downpour of waiters and pot-boys.

But I had reckoned without the dark-skinned man, Forister. When I arrived in the lower corridor and was passing through it on my way to take the air, I found a large group of excited people talking of the quarrel and the duel that was to be fought at daybreak. I thought it was a great hubbub over a very small thing, but it seems that the mainspring of the excitement was the tongue of this black Forister. "Why, the Irish run naked through their native forests," he was crying. "Their sole weapon is the great knotted club, with which, however, they do not hesitate, when in great numbers, to attack lions and tigers. But how can this barbarian face the sword of an officer of His Majesty's army?"

Some in the group espied my approach, and there was a nudging of elbows. There was a general display of agitation, and I marvelled at the way in which many made it to appear that they had not formed part of the group at all. Only Forister was cool and insolent. He stared full at me and grinned, showing very white teeth. "Swords are very different from clubs, great knotted clubs," he said with admirable deliberation.

"Even so," rejoined I gravely. "Swords are for gentlemen, while clubs are to clout the heads of rogues—thus." I boxed his ear with my open hand, so that he fell against the wall. "I will now picture also the use of boots by kicking you into the inn yard which is adjacent." So saying I hurled him to the great front door which stood open, and then, taking a sort of hop and skip, I kicked for glory and the Saints.

I do not know that I ever kicked a man with more success. He shot out as if he had been heaved by a catapult. There was a dreadful uproar behind me, and I expected every moment to be stormed by the waiter-and-pot-boy regiment. However I could hear some of the gentlemen bystanding cry:

"Well done! Well kicked! A record! A miracle!"

But my first hours on English soil contained still other festivities. Bright light streamed out from the great door, and I could plainly note what I shall call the arc or arcs described by Forister. He struck the railing once, but spun off it, and to my great astonishment went headlong and slap-crash into some sort of an upper servant who had been approaching the door with both arms loaded with cloaks, cushions, and rugs.

I suppose the poor man thought that black doom had fallen upon him from the sky. He gave a great howl as he, Forister, the cloaks, cushions, and rugs spread out grandly in one sublime confusion.

Some ladies screamed, and a bold commanding voice said: "In the devil's name what have we here?" Behind the unhappy servant had been coming two ladies and a very tall gentleman in a black cloak that reached to his heels. "What have we here?" again cried this tall man, who looked like an old eagle. He stepped up to me haughtily. I knew that I was face to face with the Earl of Westport.

But was I a man for ever in the wrong that I should always be giving down and walking away with my tail between my legs? Not I; I stood bravely to the Earl:

"If your lordship pleases, 'tis The O'Ruddy kicking a blackguard into the yard," I made answer coolly.

I could see that he had been about to shout for the landlord and more waiters and pot-boys, but at my naming myself he gave a quick stare.

"The O'Ruddy?" he repeated. "Rubbish!"

He was startled, bewildered; but I could not tell if he were glad or grieved.

"'Tis all the name I own," I said placidly. "My father left it me clear, it being something that he could not mortgage. 'Twas on his death-bed he told me of lending you the breeches, and that is why I kicked the man into the yard; and if your lordship had arrived sooner I could have avoided this duel at daybreak, and, any how, I wonder at his breeches fitting you. He was a small man."