G. K. CHESTERTON

THE FLYING INN

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CHAPTER I

A SERMON ON INNS

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The sea was a pale elfin green and the afternoon had already felt the fairy touch of evening as a young woman with dark hair, dressed in a crinkly copper-coloured sort of dress of the artistic order, was walking rather listlessly along the parade of Pebblewick-on-Sea, trailing a parasol and looking out upon the sea's horizon. She had a reason for looking instinctively out at the sea-line; a reason that many young women have had in the history of the world. But there was no sail in sight.

On the beach below the parade were a succession of small crowds, surrounding the usual orators of the seaside; whether niggers or socialists, whether clowns or clergymen. Here would stand a man doing something or other with paper boxes; and the holiday makers would watch him for hours in the hope of some time knowing what it was that he was doing with them. Next to him would be a man in a top hat with a very big Bible and a very small wife, who stood silently beside him, while he fought with his clenched fist against the heresy of Milnian Sublapsarianism so wide-spread in fashionable watering-places. It was not easy to follow him, he was so very much excited; but every now and then the words "our Sublapsarian friends" would recur with a kind of wailing sneer. Next was a young man talking of nobody knew what (least of all himself), but apparently relying for public favour mainly on having a ring of carrots

round his hat. He had more money lying in front of him than the others. Next were niggers. Next was a children’s service conducted by a man with a long neck who beat time with a little wooden spade. Farther along there was an atheist, in a towering rage, who pointed every now and then at the children’s service and spoke of Nature’s fairest things being corrupted with the secrets of the Spanish Inquisition—by the man with the little spade, of course. The atheist (who wore a red rosette) was very withering to his own audience as well. “Hypocrites!” he would say; and then they would throw him money. “Dupes and dastards!” and then they would throw him more money. But between the atheist and the children’s service was a little owlish man in a red fez, weakly waving a green gamp umbrella. His face was brown and wrinkled like a walnut, his nose was of the sort we associate with Judæa, his beard was the sort of black wedge we associate rather with Persia. The young woman had never seen him before; he was a new exhibit in the now familiar museum of cranks and quacks. The young woman was one of those people in whom a real sense of humour is always at issue with a certain temperamental tendency to boredom or melancholia; and she lingered a moment, and leaned on the rail to listen.

It was fully four minutes before she could understand a word the man was saying; he spoke English with so extraordinary an accent that she supposed at first that he was talking in his own oriental tongue. All the noises of that articulation were odd; the most marked was an extreme prolongation of the short “u” into “oo”; as in “poo-oot” for “put.” Gradually the girl got used to the dialect, and began

to understand the words; though some time elapsed even then before she could form any conjecture of their subject matter. Eventually it appeared to her that he had some fad about English civilisation having been founded by the Turks; or, perhaps by the Saracens after their victory in the Crusades. He also seemed to think that Englishmen would soon return to this way of thinking; and seemed to be urging the spread of teetotalism as an evidence of it. The girl was the only person listening to him.

“Loo-ook,” he said, wagging a curled brown finger, “loo-ook at your own inns” (which he pronounced as “ince”). “Your inns of which you write in your boo-ooks! Those inns were not poo-oot up in the beginning to sell ze alcoholic Christian drink. They were put up to sell ze non-alcoholic Islamic drinks. You can see this in the names of your inns. They are eastern names, Asiatic names. You have a famous public house to which your omnibuses go on the pilgrimage. It is called the Elephant and Castle. That is not an English name. It is an Asiatic name. You will say there are castles in England, and I will agree with you. There is the Windsor Castle. But where,” he cried sternly, shaking his green umbrella at the girl in an angry oratorical triumph, “where is the Windsor Elephant? I have searched all Windsor Park. No elephants.”

The girl with the dark hair smiled, and began to think that this man was better than any of the others. In accordance with the strange system of concurrent religious endowment which prevails at watering-places, she dropped a two shilling piece into the round copper tray beside him. With honourable and disinterested eagerness, the old

gentleman in the red fez took no notice of this, but went on warmly, if obscurely, with his argument.

“Then you have a place of drink in this town which you call The Bool!”

“We generally call it The Bull,” said the interested young lady, with a very melodious voice.

“You have a place of drink, which you call The Bool,” he reiterated in a sort of abstract fury, “and surely you see that this is all vary ridiculous!”

“No, no!” said the girl, softly, and in deprecation.

“Why should there be a Bull?” he cried, prolonging the word in his own way. “Why should there be a Bull in connection with a festive locality? Who thinks about a Bull in gardens of delight? What need is there of a Bull when we watch the tulip-tinted maidens dance or pour the sparkling sherbert? You yourselves, my friends?” And he looked around radiantly, as if addressing an enormous mob. “You yourselves have a proverb, ‘It is not calculated to promote prosperity to have a Bull in a china shop.’ Equally, my friends, it would not be calculated to promote prosperity to have a Bull in a wine shop. All this is clear.”

He stuck his umbrella upright in the sand and struck one finger against another, like a man getting to business at last.

“It iss as clear as the sun at noon,” he said solemnly. “It iss as clear as the sun at noon that this word Bull, which is devoid of restful and pleasurable associations, is but the corruption of another word, which possesses restful and pleasurable associations. The word is not Bull; it is the Bul-

Bul!” His voice rose suddenly like a trumpet and he spread abroad his hands like the fans of a tropic palm-tree.

After this great effect he was a little more subdued and leaned gravely on his umbrella. “You will find the same trace of Asiatic nomenclature in the names of all your English inns,” he went on. “Nay, you will find it, I am almost certain, in all your terms in any way connected with your revelries and your reposes. Why, my good friends, the very name of that insidious spirit by which you make strong your drinks is an Arabic word: alcohol. It is obvious, is it not, that this is the Arabic article ‘Al,’ as in Alhambra, as in Algebra; and we need not pause here to pursue its many appearances in connection with your festive institutions, as in your Alsop’s beer, your Ally Sloper, and your partly joyous institution of the Albert Memorial. Above all, in your greatest feasting day —your Christmas day—which you so erroneously suppose to be connected with your religion, what do you say then? Do you say the names of the Christian Nations? Do you say, ‘I will have a little France. I will have a little Ireland. I will have a little Scotland. I will have a little Spain?’ No—o.” And the noise of the negative seemed to waggle as does the bleating of a sheep. “You say, ‘I will have a little Turkey,’ which is your name for the Country of the Servant of the Prophet!”

And once more he stretched out his arms sublimely to the east and west and appealed to earth and heaven. The young lady, looking at the sea-green horizon with a smile, clapped her grey gloved hands softly together as if at a peroration. But the little old man with the fez was far from exhausted yet.

“In reply to this you will object—” he began.

“O no, no,” breathed the young lady in a sort of dreamy rapture. “I don’t object. I don’t object the littlest bit!”

“In reply to this you will object—” proceeded her preceptor, “that some inns are actually named after the symbols of your national superstitions. You will hasten to point out to me that the Golden Cross is situated opposite Charing Cross, and you will expatiate at length on King’s Cross, Gerrard’s Cross and the many crosses that are to be found in or near London. But you must not forget,” and here he wagged his green umbrella roguishly at the girl, as if he was going to poke her with it, “none of you, my friends, must forget what a large number of Crescents there are in London! Denmark Crescent; Mornington Crescent! St. Mark’s Crescent! St. George’s Crescent! Grosvenor Crescent! Regent’s Park Crescent! Nay, Royal Crescent! And why should we forget Pelham Crescent? Why, indeed? Everywhere, I say, homage paid to the holy symbol of the religion of the Prophet! Compare with this network and pattern of crescents, this city almost consisting of crescents, the meagre array of crosses, which remain to attest the ephemeral superstition to which you were, for one weak moment, inclined.”

The crowds on the beach were rapidly thinning as tea-time drew nearer. The west grew clearer and clearer with the evening, till the sunshine seemed to have got behind the pale green sea and be shining through, as through a wall of thin green glass. The very transparency of sky and sea might have to this girl, for whom the sea was the romance and the tragedy, the hint of a sort of radiant

hopelessness. The flood made of a million emeralds was ebbing as slowly as the sun was sinking: but the river of human nonsense flowed on for ever.

“I will not for one moment maintain,” said the old gentleman, “that there are no difficulties in my case; or that all the examples are as obviously true as those that I have just demonstrated. No-o. It is obvious, let us say, that the ‘Saracen’s Head’ is a corruption of the historic truth ‘The Saracen is Ahead’—I am far from saying it is equally obvious that the ‘Green Dragon’ was originally ‘the Agreeing Dragoman’; though I hope to prove in my book that it is so. I will only say here that it is su-urely more probable that one poo-ooting himself forward to attract the wayfarer in the desert, would compare himself to a friendly and persuadable guide or courier, rather than to a voracious monster. Sometimes the true origin is very hard to trace; as in the inn that commemorates our great Moslem Warrior, Amir Ali Ben Bhoze, whom you have so quaintly abbreviated into Admiral Benbow. Sometimes it is even more difficult for the seeker after truth. There is a place of drink near to here called ‘The Old Ship’—”

The eyes of the girl remained on the ring of the horizon as rigid as the ring itself; but her whole face had coloured and altered. The sands were almost emptied by now: the atheist was as non-existent as his God; and those who had hoped to know what was being done to the paper boxes had gone away to their tea without knowing it. But the young woman still leaned on the railing. Her face was suddenly alive; and it looked as if her body could not move.

“It shood be admitted—” bleated the old man with the green umbrella, “that there is no literally self-evident trace of the Asiatic nomenclature in the words ‘the old ship.’ But even here the see-eeker after Truth can poot himself in touch with facts. I questioned the proprietor of ‘The Old Ship’ who is, according to such notes as I have kept, a Mr. Pumph.”

The girl’s lip trembled.

“Poor old Hump!” she said. “Why, I’d forgotten about him. He must be very nearly as worried as I am! I hope this man won’t be too silly about this! I’d rather it weren’t about this!”

“And Mr. Pumph to-old me the inn was named by a vary intimate friend of his, an Irishman who had been a Captain in the Britannic Royal Navy, but had resigned his po-ost in anger at the treatment of Ireland. Though quitting the service, he retained joost enough of the superstition of your western sailors, to wish his friend’s inn to be named after his old ship. But as the name of the ship was ‘The United Kingdom—’”

His female pupil, if she could not exactly be said to be sitting at his feet, was undoubtedly leaning out very eagerly above his head. Amid the solitude of the sands she called out in a loud and clear voice, “Can you tell me the Captain’s name?”

The old gentleman jumped, blinked and stared like a startled owl. Having been talking for hours as if he had an audience of thousands, he seemed suddenly very much embarrassed to find that he had even an audience of one. By this time they seemed to be almost the only human

creatures along the shore; almost the only living creatures, except the seagulls. The sun, in dropping finally, seemed to have broken as a blood orange might break; and lines of blood-red light were spilt along the split, low, level skies. This abrupt and belated brilliance took all the colour out of the man's red cap and green umbrella; but his dark figure, distinct against the sea and the sunset, remained the same, save that it was more agitated than before.

"The name," he said, "the Captain's name. I—I understood it was Dalroy. But what I wish to indicate, what I wish to expound, is that here again the seeker after truth can find the connection of his ideas. It was explained to me by Mr. Pumph that he was rearranging the place of festivity, in no inconsiderable proportion because of the anticipated return of the Captain in question, who had, as it appeared, taken service in some not very large Navy, but had left it and was coming home. Now, mark all of you, my friends," he said to the seagulls "that even here the chain of logic holds."

He said it to the seagulls because the young lady, after staring at him with starry eyes for a moment and leaning heavily on the railing, had turned her back and disappeared rapidly into the twilight. After her hasty steps had fallen silent there was no other noise than the faint but powerful purring of the now distant sea, the occasional shriek of a sea-bird, and the continuous sound of a soliloquy.

"Mark, all of you," continued the man flourishing his green umbrella so furiously that it almost flew open like a green flag unfurled, and then striking it deep in the sand, in the sand in which his fighting fathers had so often struck

their tents, “mark all of you this marvellous fact! That when, being for a time, for a time, astonished—embarrassed—brought up as you would say short—by the absence of any absolute evidence of Eastern influence in the phrase ‘the old ship,’ I inquired from what country the Captain was returning, Mr. Pumph said to me in solemnity, ‘From Turkey.’ From Turkey! From the nearest country of the Religion! I know men say it is not our country; that no man knows where we come from, of what is our country. What does it matter where we come from if we carry a message from Paradise? With a great galloping of horses we carry it, and have no time to stop in places. But what we bring is the only creed that has regarded what you will call in your great words the virginity of a man’s reason, that has put no man higher than a prophet, and has respected the solitude of God.”

And again he spread his arms out, as if addressing a mass meeting of millions, all alone on the dark seashore.

CHAPTER II

THE END OF OLIVE ISLAND

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The great sea-dragon of the changing colours that wriggles round the world like a chameleon, was pale green as it washed on Pebblewick, but strong blue where it broke on the Ionian Isles. One of the innumerable islets, hardly more than a flat white rock in the azure expanse, was celebrated as the Isle of Olives; not because it was rich in such vegetation, but because, by some freak of soil or climate, two or three little olives grew there to an unparalleled height. Even in the full heat of the South it is very unusual for an olive tree to grow any taller than a small pear tree; but the three olives that stood up as signals on this sterile place might well be mistaken, except for the shape, for moderate sized pines or larches of the north. It was also connected with some ancient Greek legend about Pallas the patroness of the olive; for all that sea was alive with the first fairyland of Hellas; and from the platform of marble under the olive trees could be seen the grey outline of Ithaca.

On the island and under the trees was a table set in the open air and covered with papers and inkstands. At the table were sitting four men, two in uniform and two in plain black clothes. Aides-de-camps, equerries and such persons stood in a group in the background; and behind them a

string of two or three silent battle-ships lay along the sea. For peace was being given to Europe.

There had just come to an end the long agony of one of the many unsuccessful efforts to break the strength of Turkey and save the small Christian tribes. There had been many other such meetings in the later phases of the matter as, one after another, the smaller nations gave up the struggle, or the greater nations came in to coerce them. But the interested parties had now dwindled to these four. For the Powers of Europe being entirely agreed on the necessity for peace on a Turkish basis, were content to leave the last negotiations to England and Germany, who could be trusted to enforce it; there was a representative of the Sultan, of course; and there was a representative of the only enemy of the Sultan who had not hitherto come to terms.

For one tiny power had alone carried on the war month after month, and with a tenacity and temporary success that was a new nine-days marvel every morning. An obscure and scarcely recognized prince calling himself the King of Ithaca had filled the Eastern Mediterranean with exploits that were not unworthy of the audacious parallel that the name of his island suggested. Poets could not help asking if it were Odysseus come again; patriotic Greeks, even if they themselves had been forced to lay down their arms, could not help feeling curious as to what Greek race or name was boasted by the new and heroic royal house. It was, therefore, with some amusement that the world at last discovered that the descendant of Ulysses was a cheeky Irish adventurer named Patrick Dalroy; who had once been in the English Navy, had got into a quarrel through his

Fenian sympathies and resigned his commission. Since then he had seen many adventures in many uniforms; and always got himself or some one else into hot water with an extraordinary mixture of cynicism and quixotry. In his fantastic little kingdom, of course, he had been his own General, his own Admiral, his own Foreign Secretary and his own Ambassador; but he was always careful to follow the wishes of his people in the essentials of peace and war; and it was at their direction that he had come to lay down his sword at last. Besides his professional skill, he was chiefly famous for his enormous bodily strength and stature. It is the custom in newspapers nowadays to say that mere barbaric muscular power is valueless in modern military actions, but this view may be as much exaggerated as its opposite. In such wars as these of the Near East, where whole populations are slightly armed and personal assault is common, a leader who can defend his head often has a real advantage; and it is not true, even in a general way, that strength is of no use. This was admitted by Lord Ivywood, the English Minister, who was pointing out in detail to King Patrick the hopeless superiority of the light pattern of Turkish field gun; and the King of Ithaca, remarking that he was quite convinced, said he would take it with him, and ran away with it under his arm. It would be conceded by the greatest of the Turkish warriors, the terrifying Oman Pasha, equally famous for his courage in war and his cruelty in peace; but who carried on his brow a scar from Patrick’s sword, taken after three hours’ mortal combat—and taken without spite or shame, be it said, for the Turk is always at his best in that game. Nor would the quality be doubted by

Mr. Hart, a financial friend of the German Minister, whom Patrick Dalroy, after asking him which of his front windows he would prefer to be thrown into, threw into his bedroom window on the first floor with so considerate an exactitude that he alighted on the bed, where he was in a position to receive any medical attention. But, when all is said, one muscular Irish gentleman on an island cannot fight all Europe for ever, and he came, with a kind of gloomy good humour, to offer the terms now dictated to him by his adopted country. He could not even knock all the diplomatists down (for which he possessed both the power and the inclination), for he realised, with the juster part of his mind, that they were only obeying orders, as he was. So he sat heavily and sleepily at the little table, in the green and white uniform of the Navy of Ithaca (invented by himself); a big bull of a man, monstrously young for his size, with a bull neck and two blue bull's eyes for eyes, and red hair rising so steadily off his scalp that it looked as if his head had caught fire: as some said it had.

The most dominant person present was the great Oman Pasha himself, with his strong face starved by the asceticism of war, his hair and mustache seeming rather blasted with lightning than blanched with age; a red fez on his head, and between the red fez and mustache, a scar at which the King of Ithaca did not look. His eyes had an awful lack of expression.

Lord Ivywood, the English Minister, was probably the handsomest man in England, save that he was almost colourless both in hair and complexion. Against that blue marble sea he might almost have been one of its old marble

statues that are faultless in line but show nothing but shades of grey or white. It seemed a mere matter of the luck of lighting whether his hair looked dull silver or pale brown; and his splendid mask never changed in colour or expression. He was one of the last of the old Parliamentary orators; and yet he was probably a comparatively young man; he could make anything he had to mention blossom into verbal beauty; yet his face remained dead while his lips were alive. He had little old-fashioned ways, as out of old Parliaments; for instance, he would always stand up, as in a senate, to speak to those three other men, alone on a rock in the ocean.

In all this he perhaps appeared more personal in contrast to the man sitting next to him, who never spoke at all but whose face seemed to speak for him. He was Dr. Gluck, the German Minister, whose face had nothing German about it; neither the German vision nor the German sleep. His face was as vivid as a highly coloured photograph and altered like a cinema: but his scarlet lips never moved in speech. His almond eyes seemed to shine with all the shifting fires of the opal; his small, curled black mustache seemed sometimes almost to hoist itself afresh, like a live, black snake; but there came from him no sound. He put a paper in front of Lord Ivywood. Lord Ivywood took a pair of eyeglasses to read it, and looked ten years older by the act.

It was merely a statement of agenda; of the few last things to be settled at this last conference. The first item ran:

“The Ithacan Ambassador asks that the girls taken to harems after the capture of Pylos be restored to their

families. This cannot be granted.” Lord Ivywood rose. The mere beauty of his voice startled everyone who had not heard it before.

“Your Excellencies and gentlemen,” he said, “a statement to whose policy I by no means assent, but to whose historic status I could not conceivably aspire, has familiarised you with a phrase about peace with honour. But when we have to celebrate a peace between such historic soldiers as Oman Pasha and His Majesty the King of Ithaca, I think we may say that it is peace with glory.”

He paused for half an instant; yet even the silence of sea and rock seemed full of multitudinous applause, so perfectly had the words been spoken.

“I think there is but one thought among us, whatever our many just objections through these long and harassing months of negotiations—I think there is but one thought now. That the peace may be as full as the war—that the peace may be as fearless as the war.”

Once more he paused an instant; and felt a phantom clapping, as it were, not from the hands but the heads of the men. He went on.

“If we are to leave off fighting, we may surely leave off haggling. A statute of limitations or, if you will, an amnesty, is surely proper when so sublime a peace seals so sublime a struggle. And if there be anything in which an old diplomatist may advise you, I would most strongly say this: that there should be no new disturbance of whatever amicable or domestic ties have been formed during this disturbed time. I will admit I am sufficiently old-fashioned to think any interference with the interior life of the family a

precedent of no little peril. Nor will I be so illiberal as not to extend to the ancient customs of Islam what I would extend to the ancient customs of Christianity. A suggestion has been brought before us that we should enter into a renewed war of recrimination as to whether certain women have left their homes with or without their own consent. I can conceive no controversy more perilous to begin or more impossible to conclude. I will venture to say that I express all your thoughts, when I say that, whatever wrongs may have been wrought on either side, the homes, the marriages, the family arrangements of this great Ottoman Empire, shall remain as they are today."

No one moved except Patrick Dalroy, who put his hand on his sword-hilt for a moment and looked at them all with bursting eyes; then his hand fell and he laughed out loud and sudden.

Lord Ivywood took no notice, but picked up the agenda paper again, and again fitted on the glasses that made him look older. He read the second item—needless to say, not aloud. The German Minister with the far from German face, had written this note for him:

"Both Coote and the Bernsteins insist there must be Chinese for the marble. Greeks cannot be trusted in the quarries just now."

"But while," continued Lord Ivywood, "we desire these fundamental institutions, such as the Moslem family, to remain as they are even at this moment, we do not assent to social stagnation. Nor do we say for one moment that the great tradition of Islam is capable alone of sustaining the necessities of the Near East. But I would seriously ask your

Excellencies, why should we be so vain as to suppose that the only cure for the Near East is of necessity the Near West? If new ideas are needed, if new blood is needed, would it not be more natural to appeal to those most living, those most laborious civilisations which form the vast reserve of the Orient? Asia in Europe, if my friend Oman Pasha will allow me the criticism, has hitherto been Asia in arms. May we not yet see Asia in Europe and yet Asia in peace? These at least are the reasons which lead me to consent to a scheme of colonisation."

Patrick Dalroy sprang erect, pulling himself out of his seat by clutching at an olive-branch above his head. He steadied himself by putting one hand on the trunk of the tree, and simply stared at them all. There fell on him the huge helplessness of mere physical power. He could throw them into the sea; but what good would that do? More men on the wrong side would be accredited to the diplomatic campaign; and the only man on the right side would be discredited for anything. He shook the branching olive tree above him in his fury. But he did not for one moment disturb Lord Ivywood, who had just read the third item on his private agenda ("Oman Pasha insists on the destruction of the vineyards") and was by this time engaged in a peroration which afterwards became famous and may be found in many rhetorical text books and primers. He was well into the middle of it before Dalroy's rage and wonder allowed him to follow the words.

"... do we indeed owe nothing," the diplomatist was saying "to that gesture of high refusal in which so many centuries ago the great Arabian mystic put the wine-cup

from his lips? Do we owe nothing to the long vigil of a valiant race, the long fast by which they have testified against the venomous beauty of the Vine? Ours is an age when men come more and more to see that the creeds hold treasures for each other, that each religion has a secret for its neighbour, that faith unto faith uttereth speech, and church unto church showeth knowledge. If it be true, and I claim again the indulgence of Oman Pasha when I say I think it is true, that we of the West have brought some light to Islam in the matter of the preciousness of peace and of civil order, may we not say that Islam in answer shall give us peace in a thousand homes, and encourage us to cut down that curse that has done so much to thwart and madden the virtues of Western Christendom. Already in my own country the orgies that made horrible the nights of the noblest families are no more. Already the legislature takes more and more sweeping action to deliver the populace from the bondage of the all-destroying drug. Surely the prophet of Mecca is reaping his harvest; the cession of the disputed vineyards to the greatest of his champions is of all acts the most appropriate to this day; to this happy day that may yet deliver the East from the curse of war and the West from the curse of wine. The gallant prince who meets us here at last, to offer an olive branch even more glorious than his sword, may well have our sympathy if he himself views the cession with some sentimental regret; but I have little doubt that he also will live to rejoice in it at last. And I would remind you that it is not the vine alone that has been the sign of the glory of the South. There is another sacred tree unstained by loose and violent memories, guiltless of

the blood of Pentheus or of Orpheus and the broken lyre. We shall pass from this place in a little while as all things pass and perish:

Far called, our navies melt away.
On dune and headland sinks the fire,
And all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre.

But so long as sun can shine and soil can nourish, happier men and women after us shall look on this lovely islet and it shall tell its own story; for they shall see these three holy olive trees lifted in everlasting benediction, over the humble spot out of which came the peace of the world."

The other two men were staring at Patrick Dalroy; his hand had tightened on the tree, and a giant billow of effort went over his broad breast. A small stone jerked itself out of the ground at the foot of the tree as if it were a grasshopper jumping; and then the coiled roots of the olive tree rose very slowly out of the earth like the limbs of a dragon lifting itself from sleep.

"I offer an olive branch," said the King of Ithaca, totteringly leaning the loose tree so that its vast shadow, much larger than itself, fell across the whole council. "An olive branch," he gasped, "more glorious than my sword. Also heavier."

Then he made another effort and tossed it into the sea below.

The German, who was no German, had put up his arm in apprehension when the shadow fell across him. Now he got up and edged away from the table; seeing that the wild Irishman was tearing up the second tree. This one came out

more easily; and before he flung it after the first, he stood with it a moment; looking like a man juggling with a tower.

Lord Ivywood showed more firmness; but he rose in tremendous remonstrance. Only the Turkish Pasha still sat with blank eyes, immovable. Dalroy rent out the last tree and hurled it, leaving the island bare.

“There!” said Dalroy, when the third and last olive had splashed in the tide. “Now I will go. I have seen something today that is worse than death: and the name of it is Peace.”

Oman Pasha rose and held out his hand.

“You are right,” he said in French, “and I hope we meet again in the only life that is a good life. Where are you going now?”

“I am going,” said Dalroy, dreamily, “to ‘The Old Ship.’”

“Do you mean?” asked the Turk, “that you are going back to the warships of the English King?”

“No,” answered the other, “I am going back to ‘The Old Ship’ that is behind the apple trees by Pebblewick; where the Ule flows among the trees. I fear I shall never see you there.”

After an instant’s hesitation he wrung the red hand of the great tyrant and walked to his boat without a glance at the diplomatists.

CHAPTER III

THE SIGN OF “THE OLD SHIP”

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Upon few of the children of men has the surname of Pump fallen, and of these few have been maddened into naming a child Humphrey in addition to it. To such extremity, however, had the parents of the innkeeper at “The Old Ship” proceeded, that their son might come at last to be called “Hump” by his dearest friends, and “Pumph” by an aged Turk with a green umbrella. All this, or all he knew of it, he endured with a sour smile; for he was of a stoical temper.

Mr. Humphrey Pump stood outside his inn, which stood almost on the seashore, screened only by one line of apple trees, dwarfed, twisted and salted by the sea air; but in front of it was a highly banked bowling green, and behind it the land sank abruptly; so that one very steep sweeping road vanished into the depth and mystery of taller trees. Mr. Pump was standing immediately under his trim sign, which stood erect in the turf; a wooden pole painted white and suspending a square white board, also painted white but further decorated with a highly grotesque blue ship, such as a child might draw, but into which Mr. Pump’s patriotism had insinuated a disproportionately large red St. George’s cross.

Mr. Humphrey Pump was a man of middle size, with very broad shoulders, wearing a sort of shooting suit with gaiters.

Indeed, he was engaged at the moment in cleaning and reloading a double-barrelled gun, a short but powerful weapon which he had invented, or at least improved, himself; and which, though eccentric enough as compared with latest scientific arms, was neither clumsy nor necessarily out of date. For Pump was one of those handy men who seem to have a hundred hands like Briareus; he made nearly everything for himself and everything in his house was slightly different from the same thing in anyone else's house. He was also as cunning as Pan or a poacher in everything affecting every bird or dish, every leaf or berry in the woods. His mind was a rich soil of subconscious memories and traditions; and he had a curious kind of gossip so allusive as to almost amount to reticence; for he always took it for granted that everyone knew his county and its tales as intimately as he did; so he would mention the most mysterious and amazing things without relaxing a muscle on his face, which seemed to be made of knotted wood. His dark brown hair ended in two rudimentary side whiskers, giving him a slightly horsey look, but in the old-fashioned sportsman's style. His smile was rather wry and crabbed; but his brown eyes were kindly and soft. He was very English.

As a rule his movements, though quick, were cool; but on this occasion he put down the gun on the table outside the inn in a rather hurried manner and came forward dusting his hands in an unusual degree of animation and even defiance. Beyond the goblin green apple trees and against the sea had appeared the tall, slight figure of a girl, in a dress about the colour of copper and a large shady hat. Under the hat

her face was grave and beautiful though rather swarthy. She shook hands with Mr. Pump; then he very ceremoniously put a chair for her and called her “Lady Joan.”

“I thought I would like a look at the old place,” she said. “We have had some happy times here when we were boys and girls. I suppose you hardly see any of your old friends now.”

“Very little,” answered Pump, rubbing his short whisker reflectively. “Lord Ivywood’s become quite a Methody parson, you know, since he took the place; he’s pulling down beer-shops right and left. And Mr. Charles was sent to Australia for lying down flat at the funeral. Pretty stiff I call it; but the old lady was a terror.”

“Do you ever hear,” asked Lady Joan Brett, carelessly, “of that Irishman, Captain Dalroy?”

“Yes, more often than from the rest,” answered the innkeeper. “He seems to have done wonders in this Greek business. Ah! He was a sad loss to the Navy!”

“They insulted his country,” said the girl, looking at the sea with a heightened colour. “After all, Ireland was his country; and he had a right to resent it being spoken of like that.”

“And when they found he’d painted him green,” went on Mr. Pump.

“Painted him what?” asked Lady Joan.

“Painted Captain Dawson green,” continued Mr. Pump in colourless tones. “Captain Dawson said green was the colour of Irish traitors, so Dalroy painted him green. It was a great temptation, no doubt, with this fence being painted at

the time and the pail of stuff there; but, of course, it had a very prejudicial effect on his professional career."

"What an extraordinary story!" said the staring Lady Joan, breaking into a rather joyless laugh. "It must go down among your county legends. I never heard that version before. Why, it might be the origin of the 'Green Man' over there by the town."

"Oh, no," said Pump, simply, "that's been there since before Waterloo times. Poor old Noyle had it until they put him away. You remember old Noyle, Lady Joan. Still alive, I hear, and still writing love-letters to Queen Victoria. Only of course they aren't posted now."

"Have you heard from your Irish friend lately?" asked the girl, keeping a steady eye on the sky-line.

"Yes, I had a letter last week," answered the innkeeper. "It seems not impossible that he may return to England. He's been acting for one of these Greek places, and the negotiations seem to be concluded. It's a queer thing that his lordship himself was the English minister in charge of them."

"You mean Lord Ivywood," said Lady Joan, rather coldly. "Yes, he has a great career before him, evidently."

"I wish he hadn't got his knife into us so much," chuckled Pump. "I don't believe there'll be an inn left in England. But the Ivywoods were always cranky. It's only fair to him to remember his grandfather."

"I think it's very ungallant on your part," said Lady Joan, with a mournful smile, "to ask a lady to remember his grandfather."

“You know what I mean, Lady Joan,” said her host, good humouredly. “And I never was hard on the case myself; we all have our little ways. I shouldn’t like it done to my pig; but I don’t see why a man shouldn’t have his own pig in his own pew with him if he likes it. It wasn’t a free seat. It was the family pew.”

Lady Joan broke out laughing again. “What horrible things you do seem to have heard of,” she said. “Well, I must be going, Mr. Hump—I mean Mr. Pump—I used to call you Hump ... oh, Hump, do you think any of us will ever be happy again?”

“I suppose it rests with Providence,” he said, looking at the sea.

“Oh, do say Providence again!” cried the girl. “It’s as good as ‘Masterman Ready.’”

With which inconsequent words she betook herself again to the path by the apple trees and walked back by the sea front to Pebblewick.

The inn of “The Old Ship” lay a little beyond the old fishing village of Pebblewick; and that again was separated by an empty half-mile or so from the new watering-place of Pebblewick-on-Sea. But the dark-haired lady walked steadily along the sea-front, on a sort of parade which had been stretched out to east and west in the insane optimism of watering-places, and, as she approached the more crowded part, looked more and more carefully at the groups on the beach. Most of them were much the same as she had seen them more than a month before. The seekers after truth (as the man in the fez would say) who assembled daily to find out what the man was doing with the paper-boxes, had not

found out yet; neither had they wearied of their intellectual pilgrimage. Pennies were still thrown to the thundering atheist in acknowledgment of his incessant abuse; and this was all the more mysterious because the crowd was obviously indifferent, and the atheist was obviously sincere. The man with the long neck who led Low Church hymns with a little wooden spade had indeed disappeared; for children's services of this kind are generally a moving feast; but the man whose only claim consisted of carrots round his hat was still there; and seemed to have even more money than before. But Lady Joan could see no sign of the little old man in the fez. She could only suppose that he had failed entirely; and, being in a bitter mood, she told herself bitterly that he had sunk out of sight precisely because there was in his rubbish a touch of unearthly and insane clear-headedness of which all these vulgar idiots were incapable. She did not confess to herself consciously that what had made both the man in the fez and the man at the inn interesting was the subject of which they had spoken.

As she walked on rather wearily along the parade she caught sight of a girl in black with faint fair hair and a tremulous, intelligent face which she was sure she had seen before. Pulling together all her aristocratic training for the remembering of middle class people, she managed to remember that this was a Miss Browning who had done typewriting work for her a year or two before; and immediately went forward to greet her, partly out of genuine good nature and partly as a relief from her own rather dreary thoughts. Her tone was so seriously frank and