

The barren woman on the shore
Watched painfully as more and more
Her husband and her little John
Sailed eastward to the rising sun.
She cursed the sea and all its might,
And raised a prayer that, come the night
She'd gladly hear her loved ones say
"We're home again"; but through the day
The sun grew dark, the wind did rise
And lightning splintered through the skies.
The thunder roared; the woman knelt
And softly prayed; she thought she felt
A presage of sad things to be.
"O God," she cried, "bring back to me
My loved ones from the roaring main!
Oh, let them feel dry land again!"
Thus through the night she prayed.

A little cove, unknown to man,
Lies slumbering beneath a span
Of cliff that towers up on high.
In summer there the seagulls fly
To make their nests; the caplin come
To spawn their seed beneath the scum
Of floating kelp; thus do we find
This little cove, which late has a whined
Beneath the drive of wind and rain.
The storm is o'er; all's well again.
On thing has changed: beside a rock
No seagulls dive, no caplin flock.
The kelp envelops like a shroud
A figure; through a rife of cloud
The sun shines down, as the seagulls cry,
On the bloated face of a little boy.

O'FLAHERTY '56

AROUND HOME

When I was a small boy, not so very long ago, there were many things which were beyond my apprehension. (Most of them linger yet.) The last of a family of five boys and four girls, there were ample opportunities for me to observe the peculiarities of the various age groups. My oldest brother whom I called "Nanny" (through lack of pronouncing ability for which I had gained considerably notoriety) was the first to attract my attention. On an evening

he would fuss about the wash basin (a thing I abhorred) and spend what seemed hours fixing himself before the mirror. I was subjected to this routine on Sundays, but I had an uncanny feeling that he was not going to Mass. My older brothers and sisters made many pointed remarks which passed over my head, but they changed Nanny's complexion to a scarlet hue. Nevertheless he would complete his ablutions, hitch the little red horse in in the wagon and go. I knew that would be the end of him until tomorrow morning and it saddened me for he was a great story teller.

Scarcely a year later, the next brother, "Boo", took the same disease. This did not bother me as much since he could not tell stories anyhow. But he used to entertain me in his own way. He would get down on all fours, pretending he was a bear, and scare the living daylight out of me. That phobia is with me even to this day. His repeated absences left a void in my life which "Nink", another brother, attempted to fill by teaching me to step dance. I resisted his generous offer and abused his patience so that the lesson ended in the application of punches.

I had learned to regard with contempt the fastidiousness of the older boys, but the fun really began when the oldest girl, "Osh", made her debut. She frequented the mirror on many occasions during the day whether she was going out or not. I have heard since that time that women were made before mirrors and have been before them ever since. This was surely applicable to Osh. Oh, I suppose she was pretty enough, but even at that early age I could not condone vanity. The three other girls, "Tida", "Eyot", and "Skinny" followed closely in her footsteps with each addition lowering my opinion of girls in general. Their tittering and giggling almost drove me frantic. Many times I wished I was big enough to throw them out of the house. Mom called them "damn fools" and I heartily agreed with her.

"Lalu", the brother next to me was my chief companion. Although four years my senior exigency created a bond between us. He delighted in vexing me to the point of exasperation where I would seize the first available weapon and attack. If I got a lethal weapon, like a pitchfork or an axe, he would beat a hasty retreat until my ire had abated, then he would rush in and disarm me. Of the numerous battles we had I gained two decisions: once I hit him with a stone and fractured a couple of his ribs; another time I stuck a pitchfork in his leg. Apparently my father doubted the legality of such tactics because he applied several kicks and blows to my posterior on both occasions.

I fought many losing battles with Lalu and it was not

until my dog "Sandy" reached adulthood that I was able to retaliate in full. Lalu, or for that matter, nobody could lay a hand on me when the dog was around. Realizing the potency of my succor, I strolled about looking for trouble. It was this attitude that caused Sandy's untimely death. Lalu, in my absence, shot him. It was a great blow to me and I mourned the demise of my friend and protector with ardent fervor. I even prayed to God to resurrect him, but it has not happened yet. I was promptly supplied with another pup and although he did ease the pain, his helplessness afforded me no protection. Again I was at the mercy of my tormentors.

At that time it was the practice of the young people to gather on Sunday evenings for a house-dance. Of course I was put to bed when the hens went to roost, but when the dance was at our house I used to sneak downstairs to watch the performance. The actions they went through were almost incredible. The fiddle was moaning in the kitchen corner and the boys and girls on the floor kicked, jumped shouted and sweat as if they were enjoying themselves. It was one hell of a racket. How they expected me to sleep was beyond me. Usually I would become so engrossed in the proceedings that I would be discovered. At that Mom would summon the Sandman and my entertainment was over.

My outlook on life changed when I started to school. There were some over whom I had a physical superiority, and of this I took full advantage. It earned me the name of a little hellion, but it was gratifying to me after living six years as an underdog. The novelty of conquest was worn off with the aid of a few beatings administered by my victim's older brothers. From that day schooling has been my main occupation; still, my knowledge is negligible. This is probably due to a kick-back from the dancing lesson when my resistance to pedagogical endeavours was initiated.

ERNEST LARKIN '55

