for further details at the late Mr. and Mrs. Barney Geoghegan's home in Liverpool. It is now occupied by their worthy descendants. You will see devout and also patriotic pictures on the walls there. But over the mantel-piece you will see the photo of a genial gigantic tiger smiling blandly and giving no reason whatever to conjecture that he in the slightest degree regretted the part he played in what has long since passed into history as "The Famous Cook-street Elopement."

T. A. FITZGERALD, O.F.M.

Songs of Time and Songs Eternal

"Quæ sursum sunt sapite."—Coloss. iii. 2.

Why art thou ever singing, little bird?
And sheddest thou no tear?
And frettest thee no fear?
Brought yesterday no sorrow?
Nor dreadest thou the morrow?
Hath trouble then thy soul serene ne'er stirred?

How findest thou our earth, O little bird?
Hast thou a nightless morn?
And deathless art thou born?
And doth no darkening cloud
Thine airy home enshroud?
And hast thou in the wind no wailing heard?

And when thou soarest high, O little bird,
Doth nought eternal gleam
Through skies and make thee dream
And higher long to soar?
And sweeter songs to pour?
And of eternal skies hast thou no word?

Then soar and sing thy song, O little bird!
I'd rather weeping be
Than singing thus like thee;
For time an end will bring,
And I shall soar and sing;
And where will thou be then, my little bird?

JOHN CARR, C.SS.R.

ST. BENEN IN DROMAHAIR

BENEN'S INFLUENCE—THE LEITRIM HARPERS—A MEMORABLE CONTEST

SAINT PATRICK delayed a considerable time, though, according to one authority for merely the greater part of a year, in North Leitrim. At Dromahair, as Dr. Healy testifies, he built a church, monastery and convent. But so long as there were parts of Ireland yet to be brought to the light of the Gospel and the knowledge of Christ there could be no rest for the Apostle. He could not remain on in Dromahair, he could not settle down anywhere. At last, under the pressure of his burning zeal, he reluctantly turned his footsteps away from the banks of the Bonet. On leaving it, however, he did everything that was possible for the beauty-dowered land that had so appealed to his heart. He left behind him "to watch over the infant Church which he had destined to be his primatial See" the gentle and winning Benen; Benen or Benignus whose very name he had himself chosen to portray his favourite follower's personal meekness and saintliness, as well as the mildness of his ruling.

Nor was this by any means a chance selection. Benen was his most pious, most prudent cleric. He was "his great missionary Bishop"; and no doubt it was the high destiny apparently for long ages foreshadowed by Providence for this exceptionally favoured district that prompted the Apostle to place this strong but gentle ruler over it. For Patrick never failed to strive and faithfully interpret the will of Providence.

Besides he had yet to traverse the parts of Ireland still Pagan. He well knew that these remaining missionary journeys were brimful of danger, and that a martyr's death might any time overtake him. Such an end would, in his own estimation, have been the crown to his life. He would have gladly welcomed it. Such in other lands was the usual termination to Apostolic labours. But Benen was to be his successor. So he had long ago predicted; so he had always intended. The site of the primatial See then having been at least provisionally settled upon, and himself called away from it, not unnaturally the disciple, on whose shoulders his own mantle was destined to fall, was selected to rule over it. Thus should anything befall him, the headship and, consequently, the unity of the Irish Church were provided for and secure.

Whether Saint Benen died before Saint Patrick or not is a matter that is not quite beyond dispute. But it is unquestioned that to him was committed by our National Apostle the care of the Church just established in North Leitrim; that there he lived and ruled

and taught for twenty years; and that at last, in 457, he left it at Saint Patrick's own bidding and rejoined him at Armagh.

It is worthy of note that Benen was of a bardic family. He was Saint Patrick's psalm-singer, and had the special duty assigned him of training Patrick's church choirs. It is claimed by many that the love of church music planted by him in this corner of Connacht, and most carefully cultivated, we may be sure, during his score of years' stay there, has not yet died out, but lives on vigorously after all these years unto the present day. In few churches of similar size at all events will you hear, we venture to say, finer choirs or better rendered music.

Indeed it may be safely assumed that Benen's influence, passing like the rest of his teaching beyond choirs and churches, may have had something not inconsiderable to do with the love of this art that has at all times distinguished this portion of Connacht. Nowhere in Ireland used Carolan, the bard, in his journeys be better received than in County Leitrim. He was welcomed as a royal guest in cottage and hall. Among the Leitrim peasants there are still floating about, even yet we are convinced, unrecorded,* many of the countless airs which that extraordinary genius composed, and scattered about as prodigally as a spendthrift millionaire throws his guineas. Bunting was well aware of this. In 1802 he sent a Patrick Lynch on a special mission to Connacht both to try and recover some of them and to take down as well the words and music of all unpublished songs. The first place he obtained any was near "Dromahare." At no other place had he equal success. As we gather from his letters which appeared in 1911 he came with an introduction to a Mr. William Bartley who lived near a "place called Killargy." From Mr. Bartley he obtained six songs, "some of the best of Carolan's" he calls them, and about sixteen more he noted down at a neighbouring inn at which he put up. They are all, we presume, printed in Bunting's celebrated volumes of "Ancient Melodies."

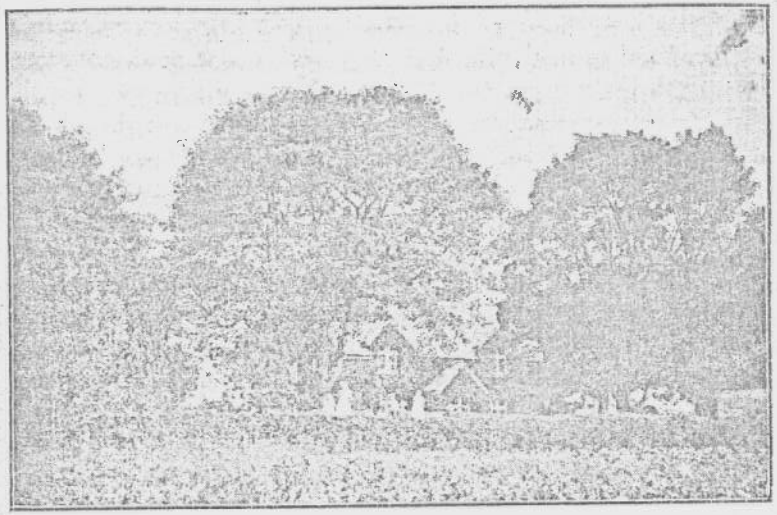
Carolan died in 1738 after playing as his last performance on the harp "a wild and touching 'Farewell to Music.'" At that time when harpers had become few, Leitrim had three or four of the most famous, viz.—Charles Fanning, the two Charles Bereens or Byrnes—uncle and nephew—and Jerome Duigenan.

The first named, Charles Fanning, was the best performer in

* In Dublin a few years ago the writer obtained an unpublished, beautiful, swinging march of Carolan's from a member of the Dublin Pipers' Club. The gentleman had taken it down from a Leitrim labourer in Cork. At almost every *Feis* some of these tunes are turning up. But many of them must now, we fear, be irrevocably lost.

Ireland. He took premier honours not only at the three celebrated Granard Balls held in 1781, '82 and '83, but at the much more famous assembly of harpers brought together in Belfast in 1792—"the last flicker of the lamp," as Bunting describes it, "that once shed its lustre over Christendom." A rival of Fanning's on these occasions was Arthur O'Neill. Yet O'Neill honourably writes of him in his "Memoirs" that "Fanning deservedly always got the first prize."

In the same "Memoirs" (O'Neill's), this wandering Tyrone minstrel, the last of all his race, tells how "uncommonly well" he,



THE PAROCHIAL HOUSE, DROMAHAIR.

himself, used to be treated in the county during his peregrinations, especially at Andrew O'Rourke's of Creevy, Toby Peyton's of Laheen, Tom McGovern's of Port-na-laddin, and Con O'Donnell's of Larkfield, near Dromahair.

These hospitable homes were the blind harper's stages in County Leitrim. He usually, when he visited them, stayed for weeks and weeks. His welcome never wore out. He always had his seat "well above the salt," if not immediately at his host's right hand, no matter who were present; and we may be sure that his attendant, who was entrusted with his harp and guided his footsteps and looked after his master's horse as well as his own, carried his head high and insisted, as proper underlings are known to do, on having a corresponding place of honour in the servants' hall, before the lackeys of Deans or Canons, Esquires or Earls, or of any and all such

comparatively small fry that happened to come to dinner or banquet as formally invited guests. Indeed, to quote the Tyrone harper's famous answer to Lord Kenmare, it did not matter much where he had his chair, for "wherever an O'Neill sits is the head of the table." He tells the story himself in these "Memoirs" of his, and it is not undeserving of repetition.

Lord Kenmare, of Kerry, he says, one Christmas "took it into his head" to give a grand Milesian entertainment. This was about the year 1746, the year of the battle of Culloden. Harper O'Neill happened to be then journeying professionally through Cork, and was staying at the time with the famous Murty Oge O'Sullivan, who had just returned from the battle. As an O'Neill he was of course among the invited guests. He was indeed a true O'Neill though, like the O'Rourkes of the same time and most of the other princes and chieftains who had remained true to the old land, he was encumbered with very little of the world's gear. He was blind and groped to a vacant place at the foot of the table. "While dinner was going on," he quaintly writes, "I was hob-nobbed by nearly every gentleman present." Very near a hundred of the O's and Mac's had taken their seats. "When Lord Kenmare hobnobbed me, he was pleased to say:"

"'O'Neill, you should be at the head of the table, as your ancestors were the original Milesians of this Kingdom.'"

"'My Lord,' I replied, 'it's no matter where an O'Neill sits; wherever he sits should be considered the head of the table.'"

The apt reply was fully appreciated and uproariously honoured.

On that, he adds, if King David himself came down to Lord Kenmare's hall and played his best tunes for that set of gentlemen, they would have made him stop until they had drunk the health of all the O'Neills that ever were born or ever will be born.

Irishmen never miss the point of a good repartee or fail to enjoy it. It is wine and honey to them.

It was for Toby Peyton, of Leitrim, that Carolan, some forty years before this, composed his famous "Planxty Peyton." "This gentleman," as O'Neill writes of him, "had a fine unencumbered estate, and, exclusive of the expenses of groceries and spices [?], he spent the remainder of his income in encouraging national diversions, particularly the harp and other wired instruments. He lived to the age of one hundred and four years, and at the time he was one hundred he would mount his horse as dexterous as a man of twenty, and be in the first at the death of a fox or hare." So long and so vigorously may live all who support our national music and encourage our national pastimes!

It is interesting to know that a near relative of this Maecenas of harpers and generous patron of art and national sports, and a man, moreover, who through the MacRannals or Reynolds, of Lough Scur, was also of one of the very oldest Leitrim Celtic families, the Rev. Mr. Peyton, was a few years ago Protestant curate of Dromahair under the courteous and scholarly Dean Coulter, the present incumbent. Mr. Peyton was quite the reverse of being particularly partial to "spices." He was a thorough gentleman, simple, unaffected and kindly, liked and respected by everybody.

O'Neill in his "Memoirs*" also tells a story about one of the four Leitrim harpers whose names we have given above, Jerome Duigenan. It is rather long, but as it will well bring out both their prowess and their character we shall venture to recall it. Duigenan, it should be observed, was not blind like most of his brethren. He was an excellent Latin and Greek scholar and in manners and address a perfect gentleman; besides being so good a judge, as Harper O'Neill testifies, "a charming performer on the instrument." Nor is his scholarship to be wondered at. He belonged to the same hereditary house of chroniclers that had already given one of its members, Michael Duigenan, to assist in writing that immortal national work, the "Annals of the Four Masters."

About the year 1778, so O'Neill writes, there came to Dublin an English nobleman accompanied by his Welsh harper, the like of whom in his patron's estimation had never been heard within "the four walls of Ireland." He had brought him over, it would appear, to astonish the natives. The Welshman tried his martial airs and he tried his soft and soothing ones, he played *staccato* and he played *legato*. He was highly appreciated, it is true, but the nobleman was rather amazed to see that the natives after all were not so very much astonished.

"And have you, really now, ever heard so sweet a singer?" he enquired of Colonel Jones, who at one of the displays, sat beside him. Colonel Jones, by the way, hailed from Drumshambo, a town in Leitrim about two hours' run from Dromahair on a good bicycle. He was at the time the representative of the county in the Irish Parliament, and was then up in Dublin attending its sessions.†

"Well, yes," replied the Colonel. "Indeed I have; and that a man who never wore either linen or woollen." No doubt he here

* Published in the "Annals of the Irish Harpers," a charming volume issued within the past couple of years.

† Theophilus Jones, of Headford, was one of the two members for County Leitrim from 1776 till 1783, and again from 1790 till the Union. He voted for the Union and was rewarded by being appointed collector of Dublin. His name appears in Barrington's "Black List." At the election succeeding

made allusion to the gorgeous apparel in which the Welshman was arrayed.

"I'll bet you a hundred guineas," said the nobleman, "you can't produce a man as good as my harper."

"Agreed," said the Colonel.

The Colonel lost no time but sent for Jeremy Duigenan to Drumshambo. "Make no delay, Jer., but come at once," he wrote, "and be sure and bring your harp and your suit of cauthic with you. Hurry up." The cauthic, we should say, was an ancient garb made of beaten rushes with a cloak or plaid of the same material.

Jeremy came at top speed from the capital of the Lough Allen district. On his arrival the memorable contest took place. The Members of Parliament were all present; and conclusions between the Irish and Welsh champions were tried, of all places in the world, in the Irish House of Commons—No. You are mistaken. The House did not suspend legislating to hear them, nor adjourn as the English House of Commons of our own times does for Derby Day. You think too quickly. They were much more sensible men, those Irish M.P.'s, great and all though their love of music. The contest took place in the Irish House of Parliament, indeed, but before business began.

Well, the Welshman in full bardic costume played, and he played brilliantly. He was applauded to the echo.

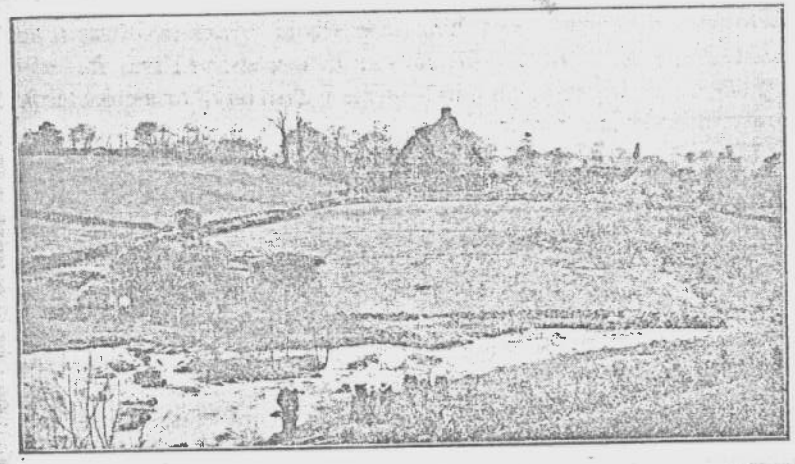
Then the Leitrim harper stepped out on the floor of the House. He was in full dress, too, arrayed in the rather comical cauthic. He looked for all the world as if a Dromahair "straw-boy"—we have often caught a glimpse of them—had attired himself with extra care and in full regalia to join the "weddingeers" in broad daylight on their way from the church instead of waiting, as is usual, for the midnight dance and the clouds of the night at the bride's home; and he had as many tassels dangling from his white rush-pit sugar-loaf cap as there are hopping on all the window curtains in Drumlease parish. Duigenan was a tall, handsome fellow and the cauthic became him to perfection. The garb may not have been too artistic. But then *habitus non facit monachum*: it is not the dress that makes the violinist, nor the broad-cloth suit the gentleman.

Then he struck up his harp. He played "Plearaca na Ruarach," or "O'Rourke's Noble Feast"; and it just suited the humour in

the Union (1802) he was defeated, and not one of the family ever again sat for the country.

In the Leitrim records he is styled the Right Hon. Theophilus Jones. As to his being a Colonel, well in those times in Ireland, as at the present day in the United States, every third man you met was a Captain, or Colonel, or at least a Professor.

which he found his audience. Then he rattled off "Planxty Peyton"; and the young members had to be held in their seats or they'd dash out on the floor—the floor of the House of Commons!—to dance jigs. Lastly, touching deeper chords, he gave them another of the Breffni airs in which he had his heart, "Limerick's Lamentation"; and silence intense, punctuated by an odd suppressed sob, and then by many, reigned over the House. Even the hard-headed Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was commonly reputed to have a piece of mill-stone for a heart, sank his head in his hands, and in the end shed tears like a child into a white pocket-handkerchief; so vividly were the wrongs and sorrows of Sarsfield's exiled heroes recalled to him by the strains, wild and weird, of



CREEVELEA ABBEY AND THE OLD ABBEY MILL ON THE BONET.

Duigenan's speaking harp. Moreover, it is recorded as a fact that not one of the Opposition said afterwards that it was only acting he was.

Jeremy stopped. Then wasn't there a tornado? The old rafters of Irish oak rang and rang again with such cheers as were heard there never before and but once again when, on the 15th January, 1800, Grattan delivered his famous speech against the Union. The House unanimously acclaimed him the victor. The members in their enthusiasm rained not bouquets—that's English—but guineas, golden guineas, down on him, the English nobleman himself being the very first to start the downpour.

Jeremy thought himself that day as rich as a Rothschild, or as the Bank of Ireland, which has usurped the same place and stands there at present.

Jeremy Duigenan had a royal time in Dublin after that. But when some weeks later he landed back in Drumshambo, he had not much more home with him than his suit of cauthic. He was like all the harpers. Poor fellows! they were men linked with a thousand virtues and one failing. To mention it were a crime. As musicians, however, taking them all in all we shall never hear their like again.

"Love, pity, rapture, all the world of soul
Dwelt in their touch and owned their bland control;
Then first in glory, as in worth, they moved,
By nations honoured, and by monarchs loved."

A violin is not bad. In the hands of a Darley or a Crichton or a Collins it is good and very good—no mistake about it. But an old-time Irish harper was himself a whole orchestra of stringed instruments; all touched by master hands, swayed and directed by one music-worshipping mind—perfect harmony, unapproachable grace, melody and power.

The genius and superiority of the Irish harpers were unquestioned over the British Isles. They were in olden times the recognised instructors of the Welsh bards and the reformers of Welsh instrumental music. Up to the days of Fanning and the Bereens, Ireland was the recognised school for Scottish harpers. Music was highly prized by its people generally; and, as Polydore Virgil and other chroniclers attest, they were in the art *peritissimi*. Even that arch-calumniator, Giraldus Cambrensis, who threw mud at anything and everything that savoured of Ireland—and there's many a Giraldus still, aye, even amongst the Irish-born—found some good in Nazareth. He had, seven centuries ago, a good word for the harpers. We don't thank him. Indeed, we are just on the verge of gross profanity, strongly tempted to mention in a common if vulgar phrase the unmentionable person who has the best right to thank him. But let that pass.

"They are incomparably more skilful," Giraldus at all events writes, "than any other nation I have ever seen. . . . They enter into a movement and conclude it in so delicate a manner, and tinkle the little strings so sportively under the deeper tones of the bass strings—that the perfection of their art appears in the concealment of art."

"Wherever the Irish missionaries found a home," states the late Cardinal Moran, "they were sure to introduce a passion for poetry and the music of the harp, as at the monastery of St. Gall (Switzerland) where the use of that instrument continued long to be taught by Irish masters."

Small wonder that, alone of European nations, alone of all nations in the world, a harp is emblazoned on, let its colour be as it will, what is pointed out as our national flag. On the English Royal Standard of the present day England is represented by three figures which you are courteously to take to be three lions. They are what they call in heraldry lions *passant*; each with a paw raised as if to grab something, and tail as long as the thong and cracker of a Dublin jarvey's whip, dexterously a-swishing over their backs and a-flicking, in rivalling stages of success, a fly or something off their itching left ears. Scotland is represented by a lion also, but one which does not make quite so much demand on your credulity or your indulgence. He is not *passant* but *rampant*, i.e., he is standing erect on one hind leg—an extra clever beast. His tail, a prize one too, has had, you would think, both a buffalo's and a little dog's tail grafted on to it simultaneously, and, moreover, it would seem to have healed up badly; it is lashing about in its full dimensions in a similar useful employment. But Ireland is represented by none of these heraldic gorgons. Her emblem is unmistakably the graceful, silent, meaningful harp.

The pretty Misses at our charity concerts who discourse sweet music from beautiful, sheeny, golden instruments of that name—well, they look very pretty in their white satin shoes. Nobody could dispraise or disparage them. We may venture, however, to whisper—beyond earshot, though, of their mothers and their sisters and their cousins and their maiden aunts, who adorn the front seats arrayed in their very best and something extra, like our Leitrim "Weddingeers"—that they have hardly, well hardly, the touch of the vanished hand of a Fanning or of a Charley Byrne. Nor is it to be expected. The delicacy and the power were acquired only in a long and arduous life-time sacrificed unreservedly and whole-heartedly to the art, not in half-an-hour-a-week's a-tinkling and a-talking in the "Conservatoire" of a select boarding-school. They are not up to much, poor things! But they are applauded for themselves and for the national instrument they make lisp and chatter; just as they would be clapped and encored and "areeshed" were they merely to cross the stage with an unfurled green flag. Deep down, too, in the heart of every Irish audience is the hungering to hear again the strains of the instrument that is so intimately associated with Erin's honour and Erin's pride; the hungering and longing so well and gracefully expressed by the poet:—

"O wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray,
O wake once more! . . . Enchantress wake again!"

But let us remember, please, that those pretty Misses in the white satin shoes give but the feeblest echoing of the wizard notes of the harpers of the olden school. At the Granard Balls of 1781 or 1782 or at the Belfast Harpers' Festival of 1792 their playing would have sounded very crude and amateurish indeed; they would have been, we greatly fear, as angels playing poorly on cracked tin whistles.

We should have stated that the two first tunes played by Duigenan in Dublin are airs of Carolan's composed in Leitrim for Leitrim men. "Limerick's Lamentation" is the creation of Myles O'Reilly of Cavan. The Scotch stole it, as they did even "The Campbells are Coming" and a host of others, and in Scotland it is now known and best known as "Lochaber No More." It is a most pathetic air. It used to be played by the Highland regiments when embarking for over the seas; but it is, we understand, on such occasions now forbidden. It was too significant. The men were depressed too much by it, and would not be themselves again for days.

We should also add that the anecdote about Duigenan is all right; perfectly reliable. Mrs. Green in her work on "Irish Nationality" refers to it and tells how Duigenan "came tall and handsome" from Leitrim to the contest. We have taken it fact for fact from the "Annals of the Irish Harpers," and have merely inserted here and there a few grace notes and semi-demi-quavers. All honour to the gentle lady, Mrs. E. Milligan Fox, who has written these "Annals" and rescued from oblivion the story of the last of our wandering minstrels and the memory of their kind patrons. They had known better times in Ireland, poor fellows! but they had fallen on evil days and evil tongues. They are now alas! no more:

"Mute, mute the harp—and lost the magic art,
Which roused to rapture each Milesian heart,
In cold and rust the lifeless strings decay
And all their soul of song has died away;
Fallen the bard, his glory prostrate lies,
Crushed in the wreck of years no more to rise."

But who will venture to say that Benen's gentle influence and the love of music that for the better part of a generation he fostered in the county had not something ultimately to do with the kingly welcome that was invariably before them, the "uncommonly good treatment" they always received, and the high estimation in which to the end they were held in the houses of Leitrim?

JOSEPH MEEHAN.

A Fight for Freedom

The Story of Peter Mayr: Landlord of the Mahr

Translated from the German of Peter Rosegger by Mary Dougherty.

CHAPTER VII

"IT IS A MATTER FOR CONGRATULATION AND I GET TWOPENCE"

SEVERAL Bavarian officers were sitting in front of the Mahr Inn drinking wine. There were farmers inside, so the air was too bad for the gentlemen, and they had had their table carried out under the chestnuts. They were fully armed; and in addition to elegant swords they carried pistols. The landlord was inside with his countrymen, saying that this autumn's vintage in the Tyrol would be good. The vines everywhere were bearing well.

"God grant it!" replied the peasants, for they knew well what the landlord meant.

He was called out. The officers wished to speak to him. Peter went out, touched his cap, and asked: "What can I do for you, gentlemen?"

"Landlord, a business transaction might be arranged," said one of the men.

"I have no objection," replied Peter.

"You have a couple of large rooms and passable liquor. Next Saturday we want to give an Officer's Ball in this house."

"Next Saturday—in my house—an Officer's Ball?" repeated the landlord. The suggestion was so novel, he could hardly grasp its meaning.

"See to the food and drink for seventy to eighty guests. We will order the music. The guests will arrive at seven in the evening."

Then, said Peter: "A ball on Saturday? Gentlemen, that will not do at all. Since this house was built no dance has been held in it on a Saturday. We Catholic Christians keep this day in honour of the Virgin. Too, it is a fast-day."

"That need not trouble you," said the officer curtly. "If you order the things, we will be responsible for everything else."