

Government. The British Government shall take the steps necessary to transfer to such Provisional Government the powers and machinery requisite to discharge its duties, provided every member of the Provisional Government shall signify in writing his or her acceptance of this instrument. This arrangement shall not continue in force longer than one year.

Article 18: This instrument shall be submitted forthwith for approval by the British Parliament and by the Irish signatories to a meeting of the members elected to sit in the House of Commons in Southern Ireland and if approved it shall be ratified by the necessary legislation.

The treaty was signed by Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Birkenhead, Mr. Churchill, Sir L. Worthington Evans, Sir Hamar Greenwood, Sir Gordon Hewagt, Mr. Arthur Griffith, Mr. Michael Collins, Mr. R. C. Barton, and Mr. Gavan Duffy.

## Iosagan

(Translated from the Irish of P. H. Pearse, by Rev. A. T. Fitzgerald, O.F.M.)

Old Mathias was sitting by his door. Anybody going the road would think that it was an image of stone or marble that was in it—that of a corpse—for he wouldn't believe that a living man could stay so motionless, so quiet. He had his head bent and he was listening. It's many a musical sound was to be heard by anyone who would heed it. Old Mathias heard the moaning of the waves on the rocks and the murmuring of the brook over the stones. He heard the cry of the heron from the beach and the lowing of the cows from the booley and the merry laughter of the children from the green. Yet to none of these was he listening so intently—sweet though they all were to him—but to the clear liquid voice of the Mass-bell coming to him with the wind in the stillness of the morning.

The people had all gone to Mass. Old Mathias had seen them go by him, one by one or in groups. The little lads were running and jumping. The girls were engaged in lively chatter. The women conversing in subdued tones. The men were silent. Like that they went the road every Sunday. Like that old Mathias would sit in his chair looking at them till they went out of sight.

They went by him this particular morning as usual. The old man kept looking at them till the last batch had cleared the churchyard-rose, till there was nothing to be seen but a long straight road stretching out white, till there was not a soul left in the village but an odd old bed-ridden person, the children playing on the green, and himself sitting at his door.

Old Mathias used not to go to the chapel. He had not heard the "sweet Mass" for three score years and more. He was a young stripling, swift and strong, the last time he blessed himself in the presence of the people, and now he was a withered, wasted old man, his hair grey, wrinkles on his forehead, and his shoulders stooped. He had never bent a knee before God during all those three score years; never offered up a prayer to his Creator; never given thanks to his Saviour. A man apart was old Mathias.

Nobody knew why he did not go to Mass. People said he did not believe there was a God at all. Others said he had done some awful sin in the beginning of his life, and when the priest wouldn't give him absolution in confession a fit of anger came on him and he swore that while he lived he would never have anything to do with priest or chapel again. Some others said—but this only in a whisper at the fireside, when the old people would be conversing among themselves, after the children had gone to bed—that he had sold his soul to a certain Big Man whom he had met one day on the top of Knockadhav, and that this One wouldn't suffer him to attend Mass.

I don't know whether these reports were true or false, but what I do know is that in the memory of the oldest person in the village old Mathias had never been seen at the Mass of God. Cuman O'Nee, an old man who had

\* "Iosagan," pronounced "Eesagaun," is a title of endearment and means little Jesus. It is the diminutive of Iosa (Eesa), as the German Jesulein and the Italian Gesulino.

died a couple of years before that at the age of ninety, said that he himself saw him there when he was a lad.

Let it not be thought that old Mathias was a bad man. He was as decent and guileless and good-hearted a man as you'd meet in a day's walk. You'd never hear anything but the good word from his mouth. He wasn't given to drink, nor was he fond of company or gold or gear. He was poor, but it's often he shared with those who were poorer than himself. He had sympathy for the sickly, and mercy for the unfortunate. Other men had both regard and esteem for him. Women and children and even animals loved him, and he them, and everything that was lovable and clean-hearted.

Old Mathias would rather be conversing with women than with men. But he'd rather be conversing with little boys and girls than with either a man or a woman. He used to say that women have more understanding than men and children more understanding than either. It's in the company of little folk he'd pass the most of his spare time. He'd sit down with them in a corner of the house telling them stories or getting stories out of them. It's wonderful the stories he had. He had the adventures of the Grey Garron the nicest in the world. He was the only old person in the village that had the story of the Kite and the Wren right. Isn't it himself would put fear into the children when he'd imitate the fu fa feasog of the two-headed giant, and 'tis he would knock peals of laughter out of them telling them the Adventure of the Piper in the Snail's Castle. And the songs he had! He could lull a sick child to sleep with his

Shoncen sho and sleep, my pet.

The fairy host is walking the glen.

Or he could put the full of the house of children in stitches of laughter with his

Hy diddle dum, the cat and his mother O

That went off to Galway astride on a drake O!

And isn't it himself had the funny old rhymes, and the hard puzzles, and the lovely riddles. And as for games—where was the person, man, woman, or child, that could keep up Lurabog, Larabog, or the Buidhean Balbh with him?

In the fine weather it's on the hillside or walking the bog you'd see old Mathias and his little comrades—he explaining to them how the ants and the wise woodlice lived, or making up stories about the hedgehog and the red squirrel. Another time it's boating they'd be, the old man with one oar and some little boy with another, and maybe a little girl steering. It's often the people who would be at work near the shore would hear the joyous shouts of the children wafted to them from the mouth of the bay, or perhaps the voice of old Mathias, and he singing an air—

Oro my curragheen, O!

And oro my boateen—

or something else like that.

Some of the mothers began to fear now and then, and they'd say to each other that it wasn't right for them to be letting the children pass so much time with old Mathias, "a man that cared nothing for priest or Mass." On one occasion a woman of them confided these thoughts to Father John. And it's what the priest said—

"Don't mind the poor children," says he. "They couldn't be in better company."

"But I'm told that he doesn't believe in God, Father."

"It's many the saint is in heaven to-day that didn't believe in God at one time of his life. And whisper. If old Mathias has no love for God—a thing that you or I don't know—it's wonderful the love he has for the purest and most beautiful thing created by God—the bright, shining soul of a child. Our Saviour Himself had the same love for them, and so had the highest saints in Heaven. How do we know that it won't be children who will draw old Mathias to the knee of Our Saviour yet?"

And 'twas left at that.

On this Sunday the old man stayed listening until the bell for Mass stopped ringing. When it had finished he gave a sigh like a person who would be tired and lonely, and he faced up to a group of children who were playing for themselves on the patch of grass—the green, old Math-