

***MARTIN ROSS,  
E. OE. SOMERVILLE***



***IN MR. KNOX'S  
COUNTRY***

**Martin Ross, E. Oe. Somerville**

# **In Mr. Knox's Country**

**Enriched edition.**

*Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Evan Fairchild*

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# Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Synopsis](#)

[Historical Context](#)

[\*\*In Mr. Knox's Country.\*\*](#)

[Analysis](#)

[Reflection](#)

[Memorable Quotes](#)

[Notes](#)

# Introduction

[Table of Contents](#)

At once a comedy of manners and an anatomy of authority, *In Mr. Knox's Country* traces a Resident Magistrate's uneasy apprenticeship in a district where unwritten custom, sporting loyalties, and quicksilver wit frequently outpace the letter of the law, suggesting that justice, belonging, and even success depend less on edict than on listening, improvisation, and respect for the intricate, often invisible bonds of place that a charismatic local figure—Mr. Knox—embodies, contests, and mobilizes, so that every case and caper becomes a test of whether rule can be humanized without surrendering its core, and whether laughter can clarify what judgment alone obscures.

Somerville and Ross's *In Mr. Knox's Country* is a work of comic fiction set in the Irish countryside, part of the authors' celebrated sequence about a Resident Magistrate navigating local life. First published in the early twentieth century, it belongs to a tradition of social and sporting satire that uses episodic storytelling to illuminate character and community. The setting is distinctly rural, with townlands, fairs, and fields shaping both plot and perspective. Within this landscape, the authors explore the uneasy meeting of official governance and vernacular custom, framing their tales around the frictions and seductions of a district long identified with Mr. Knox.

Narrated by the Resident Magistrate himself, the book offers a first-person vantage on a jurisdiction where Mr.

Knox's influence is felt in the field, the stable yard, and the courthouse corridor alike. The voice is crisp, amused, and observant, pairing economic description with an ear for cadence and an eye for movement. Episodes revolve around legal puzzles, country pursuits, and the practical ethics of getting things done. The result is a reading experience that moves with the pace of a good run across open ground: quick turns, clean obstacles, and a finish that leaves wit sharpened rather than certainty imposed.

Mr. Knox's country is also a social web, and the stories guide readers through its shifting alliances among landowners, smallholders, traders, clergy, and officials. Sporting occasions, horse deals, and civic hearings are less backdrops than engines, propelling encounters where charm and calculation entwine. The magistrate's learning curve is gentle but exacting: each success depends on understanding who speaks for whom and under what unspoken terms. The humor is generous yet edged, prizing resourcefulness while registering the costs of misreading a place. Without pressing toward melodrama, the book balances brightness with bite, letting consequence sit just beneath the exhilarating surface.

In this setting, the authors probe themes that extend beyond anecdote: the tension between statute and custom, the difference between authority and consent, and the uneasy ethics of representation when one world adjudicates another. Hospitality and rivalry, pride and obligation, and the choreography of class all come into play, often refracted through the rituals of the sporting field. The book asks how communities maintain coherence under distant rule, and

how official roles are reshaped by local knowledge. Its comedy is not escapist; it is diagnostic, showing how laughter can expose blind spots and create space for more workable settlements.

For contemporary readers, the book's most durable insight may be its clear sense that misunderstandings are inevitable but negotiable, provided the parties keep listening. In an age preoccupied with bureaucratic scale and cultural difference, these tales model an ethics of attention: the patience to learn how a place organizes itself and the humility to adapt one's brief accordingly. They also offer a reminder that humor can be a civic instrument, not a distraction. The Resident Magistrate's education in Mr. Knox's country resembles many modern apprenticeships in leadership, policy, and community work, where durable solutions arise through relationship rather than decree.

As part of the Irish R.M. sequence, *In Mr. Knox's Country* can be read on its own while enriching the larger arc of encounters between a magistrate and the society he serves. Its enduring pleasures lie in the precision of its scenes, the steadiness of its narrative poise, and the way it affirms human ingenuity without romanticizing disorder. To enter Mr. Knox's district is to witness a subtle negotiation between order and life as lived. That negotiation still appears wherever institutions meet communities, which is why this book's grace, pace, and clear eyes continue to reward attentive, good-humored readers.

# Synopsis

## [Table of Contents](#)

In *Mr. Knox's Country* is a collaborative volume by E. Oe. Somerville and Martin Ross, the third volume in the Irish R.M. series. Through the first-person of Major Sinclair Yeates, a Resident Magistrate, the book returns to a west-of-Ireland district where official duty, field sport, and neighborly entanglements intersect. The title signals the sway of Flurry Knox, a canny young squire and horseman whose influence shapes much that happens. The authors assemble discrete but connected episodes whose humor arises from cultural cross-purposes and practical ingenuity. Without relying on a single overarching plot, the collection advances character relationships and deepens the portrait of place.

The opening movements situate Yeates between courthouse and countryside, showing how formal authority is continually moderated by local knowledge. Visits to big houses and farm kitchens alike initiate him into the unwritten rules of Mr. Knox's country, where the squire's word, a groom's hint, or a neighbor's favor can redirect outcomes more surely than statute. Philippa, his capable wife, provides a counterweight to his official seriousness, while Knox's genial opportunism draws Yeates into ventures that test judgment and nerve. The stage is set for a series of encounters in which civility, wit, and shrewd bargaining prove as consequential as evidence.

Cases brought before the Resident Magistrate supply recurring frameworks for conflict. Petty theft, trespass, and

minor affrays expand into elaborate tales as witnesses embroider facts and alliances surface in surprising ways. Constables, clerks, and litigants perform their parts with varying degrees of candor, and Yeates must discern substance beneath performance. The law's letter often meets the spirit of communal compromise, prompting solutions that appease pride as much as they enforce order. These proceedings foreground the book's central tension: the fit between imported systems and pragmatic, place-bound habits, and the possibility that fairness may require flexibility rather than rigid display of power.

Equally central are the field-sport adventures that give the volume its pace and color. Hunts that begin with crisp formalities evolve into cross-country scrambles through bogs, boreens, and stone-walled pastures, where horse sense outruns etiquette. Knox's eye for a bargain and a blood horse sparks wagers, rescues, and near-disasters, while Yeates's earnest competence is tested by country that punishes hesitation. The stories use the physical demands of riding and the delicate economies of horse-dealing to explore trust, reputation, and the thin line between audacity and folly. Animals emerge as characters with temperaments that mirror, and sometimes outmatch, their human companions.

Domestic and social scenes widen the canvas beyond courts and covert-sides. Dinners at decaying mansions, charity bazaars, and seasonal fairs reveal networks of kinship and rivalry, where hospitality coexists with a piercing memory for favors owed. Philippa's household management, complicated by servants with independent

priorities, underscores the negotiation underlying everyday order. Clergy, shopkeepers, and sportsmen move through these gatherings with good humor and guarded self-interest. The authors' eye for comic detail is affectionate rather than cruel, presenting a society improvised from scarcity and pride, in which gossip serves as both currency and governance, and where survival often depends on nimble courtesy.

Somerville and Ross rely on a narrative voice that marries precise observation to understated irony. Dialogue carries much of the storytelling, catching rhythms of speech without condescension, while descriptions of weather and light turn the countryside into an active presence. Episodes typically hinge on misapprehensions that blossom into elaborate muddles before settling into provisional resolutions. Beneath the comedy lies awareness of a changing world, sensed in strained estates, precarious tenancies, and the fraying of inherited authority. Yet the book avoids programmatic statement, preferring incident and character to argue its case: adaptability, not rigidity, wins respect in a community that values tact.

As the culmination of the Irish R.M. sequence, *In Mr. Knox's Country* refines themes that had made its predecessors notable: the limits of officialdom, the allure of country sport, and the resourcefulness of people navigating both. Without pressing toward a single climax, it achieves coherence through recurring relationships and an ever-clearer map of obligations, debts, and loyalties. The result is a portrait of a place that feels lived-in rather than staged, comic yet watchful. Its enduring resonance lies in the

balance it strikes between satire and sympathy, authority and common sense, offering a lively, humane record of a distinctive corner of Irish life.

# Historical Context

## [Table of Contents](#)

In *Mr. Knox's Country* (1915) by the Anglo-Irish collaborators E. Oe. Somerville (Edith Somerville) and Martin Ross (Violet Martin) extends their Irish R.M. cycle into the rural southwest of Ireland, a landscape modeled on West Cork. The stories orbit the small town of "Skebawn", echoing Skibbereen, and the hunting-and-magistracy world of the Protestant Ascendancy. Appearing during the First World War and the year of Martin Ross's death, the volume crystallizes material composed across the late Victorian and Edwardian decades. Its setting interweaves big houses, market towns, and small farms, and its institutions such as petty sessions, parish life, and hunt clubs frame negotiations between officialdom and local custom.

Central to the milieu is the Resident Magistrate system, a cornerstone of British administration in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland. Resident Magistrates, often retired army officers, were appointed under Dublin Castle to supervise petty sessions alongside local justices. They handled minor criminal cases, licensing, and disputes, mediating between statute and community practice. Their presence symbolized state authority in predominantly rural counties, interacting with the Royal Irish Constabulary and Crown solicitors. The Irish R.M. narratives draw comic energy from this interface, depicting how formal legal procedure could be redirected by local knowledge, collective

memory, and the practical compromises that kept small communities functioning.

The social backdrop includes the aftermath of the Land War (1879-1882) and successive Land Acts that restructured rural ownership. The 1881 Act instituted fair-rent principles; later measures, culminating in the Wyndham Act of 1903, funded wide-scale tenant purchase of holdings from landlords. By the 1910s, owner-occupier farms had become common in much of the south and west, softening though not erasing earlier patterns of eviction and rent conflict. Somerville and Ross's country houses and demesnes thus appear amid altered economics, where hunting hospitality, credit, and neighborly reciprocity supplement shrinking estate incomes. The stories' alliances across class depend on this evolving settlement between former landlords and smallholders.

Law and order in the period relied on a web of courts and police distinct to Ireland. The Royal Irish Constabulary, a centralized, armed force, enforced public order and assisted magistrates, while assizes and quarter sessions heard more serious cases. Petty sessions, held in market towns, dealt with by-laws, licensing, minor theft, and breaches of the peace. These institutions, overseen from Dublin Castle, standardized procedures across counties yet had to accommodate local rhythms of fairs, markets, and agricultural seasons. Somerville and Ross repeatedly stage encounters where official paperwork, warrants, and regulations must be interpreted through the practicalities of rural life.

Country sport is a primary social institution in the book's world. Foxhunting and related field sports knit together landlords, professionals, and farmers through reciprocal favors such as land access, veterinary help, transport, and seasonal labor. Edith Somerville's authority in this sphere was direct: she served as Master of Foxhounds of the West Carbery Hunt in the early twentieth century and illustrated the hunting life in prose and image. In West Cork and neighboring districts, hunts acted as winter calendars, drawing riders, car men, and foot followers. The choreography of meets, covert-side gossip, and cap fees structures the stories' comedies of manners and cross-class cooperation.

The cultural climate also included the Irish Literary Revival and the Gaelic League's language movement (founded 1893), which promoted Irish-language study, folklore, and regional traditions. Somerville and Ross were not revivalists in program, yet they wrote contemporaneously with W. B. Yeats and Lady Gregory, and drew on the same well of rural character and idiom. Their prose records Hiberno-English speech, shaped by bilingual communities in Munster, along with Anglican, Catholic, and dissenting sensibilities living side by side. As women authors from the Ascendancy, they navigated gendered expectations of propriety while producing popular fiction that reached British and Irish magazine and book audiences.

Political tensions intensified in the years before publication. The Third Home Rule Bill passed in 1914 but was suspended upon the outbreak of the First World War; rival volunteer militias formed in 1912-1914 in Ulster and

the south. West Cork, largely agrarian, felt these currents alongside continuing emigration to Britain and North America and the shift to dairying and cattle raising for export. While *In Mr. Knox's Country* seldom foregrounds high politics, its emphasis on local authority, patronage, and neighborhood negotiation reflects a society managing uncertainty. The wartime publication date further marks it as a snapshot of pre-1914 rural routines.

Taken together, the stories mirror and critique their era by juxtaposing imperial bureaucracy with vernacular competence. Somerville and Ross satirize the foibles of the Ascendancy: extravagant sport, precarious finances, social insularity, while honoring rural pragmatism and skill. Their depictions of magistrates, police, priests, and graziers show how law, religion, and economics overlapped in everyday governance. Without dwelling on impending revolution, the book preserves textures of speech, hospitality, and horsecraft from a world already contracting under land transfer and war. *In Mr. Knox's Country* thus functions as a historically grounded comedy of manners that records, and gently questions, a fading social order.

# **IN MR. KNOX'S COUNTRY**

## **Main Table of Contents**

[Cover](#)

[Titlepage](#)

[Text](#)

**"If ever you see hounds pointing this  
way, don't spare spurs to get  
to the cliff before them!" . . . . .  
. . . . . *Frontispiece***

Kitty the Shakes

"I heard scald-crow laughter behind me in the shawls"

"Lyney's a tough dog!"

"Walkin' Aisy"

James

Miss Cooney O'Rattigan

Miss Larkie McRory

IN MR. KNOX'S COUNTRY

I

THE AUSSOLAS MARTIN CAT

Flurry Knox and I had driven some fourteen miles to a tryst with one David Courtney, of Fanaghy. But, at the appointed cross-roads, David Courtney was not. It was a gleaming morning in mid-May, when everything was young and tense and thin and fit to run for its life, like a Derby horse. Above us was such of the spacious bare country as we had not already climbed, with nothing on it taller than a thorn-bush from one end of it to the other. The hill-top blazed with yellow furze, and great silver balls of cloud looked over its edge. Nearly as white were the little white-

washed houses that were tucked in and out of the grey rocks on the hill-side.

"It's up there somewhere he lives," said Flurry, turning his cart across the road; "which'll you do, hold the horse or go look for him?"

I said I would go to look for him. I mounted the hill by a wandering bohireen[2] resembling nothing so much as a series of bony elbows; a white-washed cottage presently confronted me, clinging, like a sea-anemone, to a rock. I knocked at the closed door, I tapped at a window held up by a great, speckled foreign shell, but without success. Climbing another elbow, I repeated the process at two successive houses, but without avail. All was as deserted as Pompeii, and, as at Pompeii, the live rock in the road was worn smooth by feet and scarred with wheel tracks.

An open doorway faced me; I stooped beneath its lintel and asked of seeming vacancy if there were "anyone inside." There was no reply. I advanced into a clean kitchen, with a well-swept earthen floor, and was suddenly aware of a human presence very close to me.

A youngish woman, with a heavy mop of dark hair, and brown eyes staring at the opposite wall, was sitting at the end of a settle behind the door. Every bit of her was trembling. She looked past me as if I did not exist. Feeling uncertain as to whether she or I were mad, I put to her my question as to where David Courtney lived, without much expectation of receiving an answer.

Still shaking from head to foot, and without turning her eyes, she replied:

"A small piece to the north. The house on the bare rock."

The situation showed no symptom of expansion; I faltered thanks to her profile and returned to Flurry.

The house of David Courtney produced David Courtney's large and handsome wife, who told us that Himself was gone to a funeral, and all that was in the village was gone to it, but there was a couple of the boys below in the bog.

"What have they done with those cubs?" asked Flurry.

Mrs. Courtney shot at him a dark-blue side-glance, indulgent and amused, and, advancing to the edge of her rock terrace, made a trumpet of her hands and projected a long call down the valley.

"Mikeen! Con! Come hither!"

From a brown patch in the green below came a far-away response, and we presently saw two tall lads coming towards us, running up the hill as smoothly and easily as a couple of hounds. Their legs were bare and stained with bog-mould, they were young and light and radiant as the May weather.

I did not withhold my opinion of them from their proprietor.

"Why, then, I have six more as good as them!" replied Mrs. Courtney, her hands on her hips.

We took the horse from the shafts and pushed him, deeply suspicious, into a darksome lair, in one corner of which glimmered a pale object, either pig or calf. When this was done we followed Mikeen and Con up through blossoming furze and blue-grey rock to the ridge of the hill, and there came face to face with the vast blue dazzle of the Atlantic, with a long line of cliffs standing it off, in snowy

lather, as far as eye could follow them into the easterly haze.

"That's the cliff over-right you now," said one of the boys, pointing downwards, with a hand dark with bog-stuff, to a grey and green wedge thrust out into the blue. "It's there where she have her den. She have a pat' down for herself in it—it's hardly a bird could walk it—the five pups was following her, and two o' them rolled down into the strand, and our dogs held them. Ourselves was below in the cove gathering seaweed."

"Make a note of it now, Major," said Flurry, "and if ever you see hounds pointing this way, don't spare spurs to get to the cliff before them!"

"Why don't you get them out and blow up the place?"

"Is it get them out of that hole!" said one of the boys. "If all the foxes in Europe was inside in it you couldn't get them out!"

"We mightn't want them either," said Flurry, his eye ranging the face of the cliff, and assimilating its uncompromising negations.

"Then there's plenty that would!" returned Mikeen, looking at us with an eye as blue and bright as the sea. "There was a man east here that cot a fox and her five young ones in the one night, and he got three half-crowns for every lad o' them!"

"He'd be turned out of hell for doing that," said Flurry, very severely.

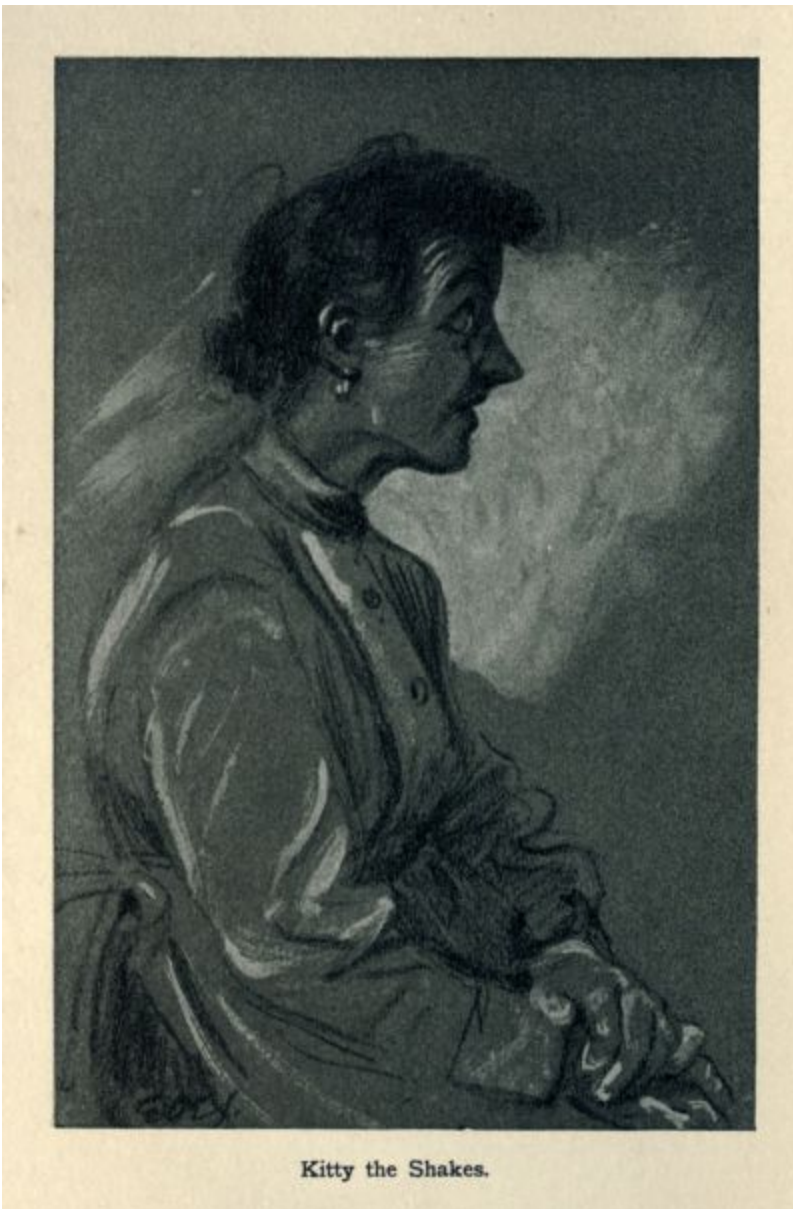
We went back to the cottage on the rock, and the matter entered upon its more serious phase. I took no part in the negotiations, and employed myself in converse with Mrs.

Courtney, who—it may not be out of place to recall—informed me, amongst other domestic details, that the farm wouldn't carry all the children she had, and that nowadays, when the ger'ls would be going to America, it's white nightdresses and flannelette nightdresses she should give them; and further, that she thought, if she lived to be as old as a goat, she'd never see them so tasty.

On the way home I asked Flurry what he was going to do with the two cubs, now immured in a market basket under the seat of the dog-cart.

Flurry was ambiguous and impenetrable; there were certain matters in which Flurry trusted nobody, knowing the darkness of his own heart and the inelasticity of other people's points of view.

"That woman, you know, that told you the way," he remarked, with palpable irrelevance, "'Kitty the Shakes[1],' they call her—they say she mightn't speak to anyone once in three months, and she shakes that way then. It's a pity that was the house you went into first."



## **Kitty the Shakes.**

"Why so?" said I.

"That's the why!" said Flurry [\[2q\]](#).

It was during the week following this expedition that Philippa and I stayed for a few days at Aussolas, where Flurry and Mrs. Flurry were now more or less permanently in

residence. The position of guest in old Mrs. Knox's house was one often fraught with more than the normal anxieties proper to guests. Her mood was like the weather, a matter incalculable and beyond control; it governed the day, and was the *leit motif* in the affairs of the household. I hope that it may be given to me to live until my mood also is as a dark tower full of armed men.

On the evening of our arrival my wife, whose perception of danger is comparable only to that of the wild elephant, warned me that Mrs. Knox was rheumatic, and that I was on no account to condole with her. Later on the position revealed itself. Mrs. Knox's Dublin doctor had ordered her to Buxton with as little delay as possible; furthermore, she was to proceed to Brighton for the summer, possibly for the winter also. She had put Aussolas on a house agent's books, "out of spite," Flurry said sourly; "I suppose she thinks I'd pop the silver, or sell the feather beds."

It was a tribute to Mrs. Knox's character that her grandson treated her as a combatant in his own class, and did not for an instant consider himself bound to allow her weight for either age or sex.

At dinner that night Mrs. Knox was as favourable to me as usual; yet it was pointed out to me by Mrs. Flurry that she was wearing two shawls instead of one, always an indication to be noted as a portent of storm. At bridge she played a very sharp-edged game, in grimness scarcely mitigated by two well-brought-off revokes on the part of Philippa, who was playing with Flurry; a gross and unprincipled piece of chivalry on my wife's part that was justly resented by Mr. Knox.

Next morning the lady of the house was invisible, and Mullins, her maid, was heard to lament to an unknown sympathiser on the back stairs that the devil in the wild woods wouldn't content her.

In the grove at Aussolas, on a height behind the castle, romantically named Mount Ida, there is a half-circle of laurels that screens, with pleasing severity, an ancient bench and table of stone. The spot commands a fair and far prospect of Aussolas Lake, and, nearer at hand, it permitted a useful outlook upon the kitchen garden and its affairs. When old Mrs. Knox first led me thither to admire the view, she mentioned that it was a place to which she often repaired when the cook was on her trail with enquiries as to what the servants were to have for dinner.

Since our expedition to Fanaghy the glory of the weather had remained unshaken, and each day there was a shade of added warmth in the sunshine and a more caressing quality in the wind. Flurry and I went to Petty Sessions[4] in the morning, and returned to find that Mrs. Knox was still in her room, and that our respective wives were awaiting us with a tea-basket in the classic shades of Mount Ida. Mrs. Knox had that mysterious quality of attraction given to some persons, and some dogs, of forming a social vortex into which lesser beings inevitably swim; yet I cannot deny that her absence induced a sneaking sensation of holiday. Had she been there, for example, Mrs. Flurry would scarcely have indicated, with a free gesture, the luxuriance of the asparagus beds in the kitchen garden below, nor promised to have a bundle of it cut for us before we went home; still less would she and Philippa have smoked cigarettes, a

practice considered by Mrs. Knox to be, in women, several degrees worse than drinking.

To us there, through the green light of young beech leaves and the upstriking azure glare of myriads of bluebells, came the solid presence of John Kane. It would be hard to define John Kane's exact status at Aussolas; Flurry had once said that, whether it was the house, or the garden, or the stables, whatever it'd be that you wanted to do, John Kane'd be in it before you to hinder you; but that had been in a moment of excusable irritation, when John Kane had put a padlock on the oat loft, and had given the key to Mrs. Knox.

John Kane now ascended to us, and came to a standstill, with his soft black hat in his hands; it was dusty, so were his boots, and the pockets of his coat bulked large. Among the green drifts and flakes of the pale young beech leaves his bushy beard looked as red as a squirrel's tail.

"I have the commands here, Master Flurry," he began, "and it's to yourself I'd sooner give them. As for them ger'rls that's inside in the kitchen, they have every pup in the place in a thrain at the back door, and, if your tobacco went asthray, it's me that would be blemt."

"The commands"—*i.e.* some small parcels—were laid on the stone table, minor pockets yielded an assortment of small moneys that were each in turn counted and placed in heaps by their consort parcels.

"And as for the bottle, the misthress wrote down for me," said John Kane, his eye rounding up his audience like a sheep-dog, "I got me 'nough with the same bottle. But sure them's the stupidest people in Hennessy's! 'Twas to

Hennesy himself I gave the mistress's paper, and he was there looking at it for a while. 'What have she in it?' says he to me. 'How would I know,' says I, 'me that have no learning?' He got the spy-glass to it then, and 'twas shortly till all was in the shop was gethered in it looking at it. 'Twould take an expairt to read it!' says one fella——"

"True for him!" said Flurry.

"—— 'She have written it in Latin!' says Hennesy. 'Faith she's able to write it that way, or anny other way for yee!' says I. 'Well, I'll tell ye now what ye'll do,' says Hennesy. 'There's a boy in the Medical Hall, and he's able to read all languages. Show it to him,' says he. I showed it then to the boy in the Medical Hall. Sure, the very minute he looked at it —'Elliman's Embrocation[3],' says he." John Kane waved his hand slightly to one side; his gestures had throughout been supple and restrained. "Sure them's the stupidest people in Hennesy's!"

My sympathies were with the house of Hennesy; I, too, had encountered Mrs. Knox's handwriting, and realised the high imaginative and deductive qualities needed in its interpreter. No individual word was decipherable, but, with a bold reader, groups could be made to conform to a scheme based on probabilities.

"You can tell the mistress what they were saying at Hennesy's about her," said Flurry.

"I will, your honour," replied John, accepting the turn in the conversation as easily as a skilful motorist changes gear. "I suppose you'll have a job for me at Tory Lodge when I get the sack from the mistress?"

# Notes

## [Table of Contents](#)

**1** A nickname used in the story for a local woman; the text explains she is said to shake intermittently and to speak rarely, so the name identifies her by that trembling mannerism.

**2** An anglicized form of the Irish word bóithrín, meaning a narrow country lane or little rural road commonly found in Irish countryside.

**3** A commercial liniment mentioned in the shop scene; historically, Elliman's Embrocation was a topical medicinal lotion sold in Britain and Ireland from the 19th century for aches and rheumatic pains.

**4** A local magistrates' court that historically sat to hear minor civil and criminal matters in Ireland and the UK; Petty Sessions were common in rural districts in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

**5** An Irish term (here applied to the shopkeeper Goggin) for a small-scale, often unscrupulous moneylender or shopkeeper who lends or trades on the poor; used pejoratively in 19th–20th-century Irish contexts.

**6** A room name in the house that refers to King James II (reigned 1685–1688); older houses sometimes label rooms after monarchs or historical eras, signalling an association with a particular period or style.

**7** A cutter is a small, single-masted sailing vessel; '40-ton' refers to its register tonnage (a measure of

size/capacity), so this denotes a moderately sized pleasure yacht of the period.

**8** An old spelling/variant of 'dinghy,' meaning a small open boat carried by a larger vessel, used for shuttling people or stores between ship and shore.

**9** A term used in late 19th-early 20th century Ireland for economically poor, overpopulated rural areas; it also names government inquiries and relief measures (e.g., the Congested Districts Board) dealing with such districts.

**10** A professional cook employed to prepare meals; in the context of a wealthy owner's yacht or house it indicates a trained kitchen head responsible for formal provisioning and cooking.

**11** A sou'-wester is a waterproof oilskin hat with a wide sloping brim, traditionally worn by sailors and fishermen to protect against wind and rain.

**12** A solitaire-style card game combining elements of poker hand rankings with the single-player 'patience' (solitaire) format; the name indicates a domestic pastime rather than a casino game.

**13** An informal name given in the story to the small group of naval craft associated with Sub-Lieutenant Ronald Cunningham; 'flotilla' denotes a small formation of boats, often torpedo- or patrol-type vessels.

**14** The small town in the story; a fictional rural Irish village used by the author as the setting for local events such as the races.

**15** A historical local magistrates' court in Britain and Ireland that dealt with minor criminal and civil matters; such