

TUMBLING IN THE HAY

A NOVEL BY

Oliver St. John Gogarty

*The lark, that tirra-lirra chants,
With heigh! with heigh! the thrush and the jay,
Are summer songs for me and my aunts,
While we lie tumbling in the hay.*

SHAKESPEARE

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TUMBLING IN THE HAY

by Oliver St. John Gogarty

IN FORM the latest Gogarty book is an autobiographical novel, dealing mainly with medical student days at Trinity College, Dublin. But it is hard to pin Oliver Gogarty down to any stock literary form. As *I Was Going Down Sackville Street* was technically a book of reminiscence. But it was so crammed with gusty humor and wayward charm that many critics welcomed it as a form of life rather than literature, and stamped it *Gogartian*.

So, too, with *Tumbling in the Hay*. It obeys few laws of the novel. The center of focus is forever shifting and darting. One is inclined to say that the real hero is "dear, dirty Dublin" itself, with its theaters and brothels and saloons, its stately Georgian houses and terrible slums, and especially its Hay Hotel—a rowdy hostelry so-called because one of its windows was stuffed with hay for weary cab-horses. The young "medical" took active part in this teeming Dublin life of thirty years ago.

And what a life it was! There were bicycle races to be run on the smooth turf of Stephen's Green, and Olympian quantities of stout to be consumed, and bawdy limericks to be tossed off. There were the routine of hospital life, the mastering of the technique of the dissecting room, the episodic agony of examinations. With the sure touch of a master writer, it all comes to life.

Certain scenes stand out with special brilliance. The farcical session in the Dublin Court of law when the authentic Gogarty wit flashes at its satirical best, for one. The uproarious scene in the time-honored establishment of Mrs. Mack, for another. But underlying the Falstaffian foolery of the book is a warm tolerance, a mellow worldliness. It is alive with shrewd comment on many subjects—on men and medicine and manners and the world in general. It is in short, *Gogartian*. And that is all that needs be said.

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