

## The Gate of the Dancing Feet

**I**T was good to see O'Hean again. Everybody admitted that. There wasn't a man in the entire club that didn't love the open-handed, big-hearted Irishman. But when O'Hean came back from India, where he went, as he said, to "hunt cats and cholera," things seemed changed. O'Hean wasn't the same man; somehow his mellow, ringing laugh was gone, and—well, he drank. I don't want you to think, when I say that O'Hean drank, that the rest of the members of the club do not drink to a greater or less degree, but what I mean when I say a man drinks, is when he takes a decanter to one side of the room and sits and sips and sips—well, O'Hean drank.

It was half past nine on a Wednesday night. I remember the day and the time, and I think I always will remember them. There was no one in the smoking-room but O'Hean and I. I sat drowsing over my favorite author, mentally cursing myself for not accepting an invitation to go to the opera. Closing my book with a half-smothered sigh, I started for the door.

"Billy," called O'Hean, "come over here and have a drink." I walked toward the table where he sat, and as I came nearer a feeling of disgust came over me. There he sat, his head dishevelled, his collar soiled and the stains of liquor on his white shirt-front. It was not O'Hean's dress that startled me, however, but his eyes. They were not the clear laughing eyes I had known so well, but shifty, blood-shot eyes.

"Come on, O'Hean," said I, "Let's go up to your room. Cut out the booze for tonight."

O'Hean smiled grimly and slowly filled his glass. He also filled one for me.

"Billy," said he, and he weighed each word that followed carefully, "I am not drunk, but I can't move."

"Oh, that's all right, O'Hean," said I, "Of course, I know it's hard to move, but you know, old chap—"