

**THE END OF
A CHAPTER**

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The end of a chapter by Shane Leslie

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SHANE LESLIE

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BY
SHANE LESLIE

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PREFACE

It was while invalided in hospital during the Great War that I began to record notes and souvenirs of the times and institutions under which I had lived, realising that I had witnessed the suicide of the civilisation called Christian and the travail of a new era to which no gods have been as yet rash enough to give their name, and remembering that, with my friends and contemporaries, I shared the fortunes and misfortunes of being born at the end of a chapter in history.

To the memory of those of them who have died before the next chapter has begun I dedicate this book, and especially to that of my brother, Captain Norman Leslie, whom I buried at Armentières in France, between the guns of two armies.

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CHAPTER I

LINKS WITH THE PAST

PEOPLE who are old enough to write memoirs have usually lost their memory. Fresh memories have few memoirs. I have had to fall back upon the unpublished memoirs of others, having been born only half way through the eighties. I was brought up at Glaslough, in the county of Monaghan, in Ireland, on the townland of Castle Lesly—such space upon God's earth as previous Leslies had been able to hold by purchase, forfeiture, or force of arms against "The MacKenna of Truagh." The Irish branch of the Leslies was founded by Bishop John Leslie, who kept his diocese of the Isles creditably clear of Cromwellians during the Civil War. In Ireland, as Bishop of Raphoe, he built a fort instead of a palace, and was known

as "The Fighting Bishop." Before battle he used to invoke divine neutrality on the plea that "though we are sinners, the enemy are not saints." He lived to be a centenarian, and at the Restoration rode from Chester to London, a distance of one hundred and eighty miles, to welcome the King. He was then in his ninetieth year. From this grim stuff sprang a race of theologian squires with an addiction to lost causes. They supported the Stuarts and voted against the Union. One fled into exile rather than acknowledge William of Orange, and another refused a bribe rather than betray the Irish Parliament. It was a Leslie who took out a patent for the lost island of Atlantis or Brazil, which was last seen floating down Galway Bay. The family were perhaps lucky to have so much real land to restore to the original owners under the Land Purchase Acts.

A grandson of "The Fighting Bishop" was Charles Leslie. He and the Duke of Wellington's father married sisters. Charles's grandson is my grandfather, Sir John Leslie, who could claim last year, in the centenary of Waterloo, to be a surviving cousin of the victor. To make the link with the past I asked him to sign my application to go to the Great War.

Before I went, I spent some hours delving in