The Purcell Papers, Volume 3

Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu

Table of Contents

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JIM SULIVAN'S ADVENTURES IN THE GREAT SNOW.

Being a Ninth Extract from the Legacy of the late Francis Purcell, P.P. of Drumcoolagh.

Jim Sulivan was a dacent, honest boy as you'd find in the seven parishes, an' he was a beautiful singer, an' an illegant dancer intirely, an' a mighty plisant boy in himself; but he had the divil's bad luck, for he married for love, an 'av coorse he niver had an asy minute afther.

Nell Gorman was the girl he fancied, an' a beautiful slip of a girl she was, jist twinty to the minute when he married her. She was as round an' as complate in all her shapes as a firkin, you'd think, an' her two cheeks was as fat an' as red, it id open your heart to look at them.

But beauty is not the thing all through, an' as beautiful as she was she had the divil's tongue, an' the divil's timper, an' the divil's behaviour all out; an' it was impossible for him to be in the house with her for while you'd count tin without havin' an argymint, an' as sure as she riz an argymint with him she'd hit him a wipe iv a skillet or whatever lay next to her hand.

Well, this wasn't at all plasin' to Jim Sulivan you may be sure, an' there was scarce a week that his head wasn't plasthered up, or his back bint double, or his nose swelled as big as a pittaty, with the vilence iv her timper, an' his heart was scalded everlastin'ly with her tongue; so he had no pace or quietness in body or soul at all at all, with the way she was goin' an.

Well, your honour, one cowld snowin' evenin' he kim in afther his day's work regulatin' the men in the farm, an' he sat down very quite by the fire, for he had a scrimmidge with her in the mornin', an' all he wanted was an air iv the fire in pace; so divil a word he said but dhrew a stool an' sat down close to the fire. Well, as soon as the woman saw him,

'Move aff,' says she, 'an' don't be inthrudin' an the fire,' says she.

Well, he kept never mindin', an' didn't let an' to hear a word she was sayin', so she kim over an' she had a spoon in her hand, an' she took jist the smallest taste in life iv the boilin' wather out iv the pot, an' she dhropped it down an his shins, an' with that he let a roar you'd think the roof id fly aff iv the house.

'Hould your tongue, you barbarrian,' says she; 'you'll waken the child,' says she.

'An' if I done right,' says he, for the spoonful of boilin' wather riz him entirely, 'I'd take yourself,' says he, 'an' I'd stuff you into the pot an the fire, an' boil you.' says he, 'into castor oil,' says he.

'That's purty behavour,' says she; 'it's fine usage you're givin' me, isn't it?' says she, gettin' wickeder every minute; 'but before I'm boiled,' says she, 'thry how you like THAT,' says she; an', sure enough, before he had time to put up his guard, she hot him a rale terrible clink iv the iron spoon acrass the jaw.

'Hould me, some iv ye, or I'll murdher her,' says he.

'Will you?' says she, an' with that she hot him another tin times as good as the first.

'By jabers,' says he, slappin' himself behind, 'that's the last salute you'll ever give me,' says he; 'so take my last blessin',' says he, 'you ungovernable baste!' says he−−an' with that he pulled an his hat an' walked out iv the door.

Well, she never minded a word he said, for he used to say the same thing all as one every time she dhrew blood; an' she had no expectation at all but he'd come back by the time supper id be ready; but faix the story didn't go quite so simple this time, for while he was walkin', lonesome enough, down the borheen, with his heart almost broke with the pain, for his shins an' his jaw was mighty troublesome, av course, with the thratement he got, who did he see but Mick Hanlon, his uncle's sarvint by, ridin' down, quite an asy, an the ould black horse, with a halter as long as himself.

'Is that Mr. Soolivan?' says the by. says he, as soon as he saw him a good bit aff.

'To be sure it is, ye spalpeen, you,' says Jim, roarin' out; 'what do you want wid me this time a−day?' says he.

'Don't you know me?' says the gossoon, 'it's Mick Hanlon that's in it,' says he.

'Oh, blur an agers, thin, it's welcome you are, Micky asthore,' says Jim; 'how is all wid the man an' the woman beyant?' says he.

'Oh!' says Micky, 'bad enough,' says he; 'the ould man's jist aff, an' if you don't hurry like shot,' says he, 'he'll be in glory before you get there,' says he.

'It's jokin' ye are,' says Jim, sorrowful enough, for he was mighty partial to his uncle intirely.

'Oh, not in the smallest taste,' says Micky; 'the breath was jist out iv him,' says he, 'when I left the farm. "An'," says he, "take the ould black horse," says he, "for he's shure−footed for the road," says he, "an' bring, Jim Soolivan here," says he, "for I think I'd die asy af I could see him onst,' says he.'

'Well,' says Jim, 'will I have time,' says he, 'to go back to the house, for it would be a consolation,' says he, 'to tell the bad news to the woman?' says he.

'It's too late you are already,' says Micky, 'so come up behind me, for God's sake,' says he, 'an' don't waste time;' an' with that he brought the horse up beside the ditch, an' Jim Soolivan mounted up behind Micky, an' they rode off; an' tin good miles it was iv a road, an' at the other side iv Keeper intirely; an' it was snowin' so fast that the ould baste could hardly go an at all at all, an' the two bys an his back was jist like a snowball all as one, an' almost fruz an' smothered at the same time, your honour; an' they wor both mighty sorrowful intirely, an' their toes almost dhroppin' aff wid the could.

And when Jim got to the farm his uncle was gettin' an illegantly, an' he was sittin' up sthrong an' warm in the bed, an' im− provin' every minute, an' no signs av dyin' an him at all at all; so he had all his throuble for nothin'.

But this wasn't all, for the snow kem so thick that it was impassible to get along the roads at all at all; an' faix, instead iv gettin' betther, next mornin' it was only tin times worse; so Jim had jist to take it asy, an' stay wid his uncle antil such times as the snow id melt.

Well, your honour, the evenin' Jim Soolivan wint away, whin the dark was closin' in, Nell Gorman, his wife, beginned to get mighty anasy in herself whin she didn't see him comin' back at all; an' she was gettin' more an' more frightful in herself every minute till the dark kem an, an' divil a taste iv her husband was coming at all at all.

'Oh!' says she, 'there's no use in pur− tendin', I know he's kilt himself; he has committed infantycide an himself,' says she, 'like a dissipated bliggard as he always was,' says she, 'God rest his soul. Oh, thin, isn't it me an' not you, Jim Soolivan, that's the unforthunate woman,' says she, 'for ain't I cryin' here, an' isn't he in heaven, the bliggard,' says she. 'Oh, voh, voh, it's not at home comfortable with your wife an' family that you are, Jim Soolivan,' says she, 'but in the other world, you aumathaun, in glory wid the saints I hope,' says she. 'It's I that's the unforthunate famale,' says she, 'an' not yourself, Jim Soolivan,' says she.

An' this way she kep' an till mornin', cryin' and lamintin; an' wid the first light she called up all the sarvint bys, an' she tould them to go out an' to sarch every inch iv ground to find the corpse, 'for I'm sure,' says she, 'it's not to go hide himself he would,' says she.

Well, they went as well as they could, rummagin' through the snow, antil, at last, what should they come to, sure enough, but the corpse of a poor thravelling man, that fell over the quarry the night before by rason of the snow and some liquor he had, maybe; but, at any rate, he was as dead as a herrin', an' his face was knocked all to pieces jist like an over−boiled pitaty, glory be to God; an' divil a taste iv a nose or a chin, or a hill or a hollow from one end av his face to the other but was all as flat as a pancake. An' he was about Jim Soolivan's size, an' dhressed out exactly the same, wid a ridin' coat an' new corderhoys; so they carried him home, an' they were all as sure as daylight it was Jim Soolivan himself, an' they were wondhering he'd do sich a dirty turn as to go kill himself for spite.

Well, your honour, they waked him as well as they could, with what neighbours they could git togither, but by rason iv the snow, there wasn't enough gothered to make much divarsion; however it was a plisint wake enough, an' the churchyard an' the priest bein' convanient, as soon as the youngsthers had their bit iv fun and divarsion out iv the corpse, they burried it without a great dale iv throuble; an' about three days afther the berrin, ould Jim Mallowney, from th'other side iv the little hill, her own cousin by the mother's side−−he had a snug bit iv a farm an' a house close by, by the same token−−kem walkin' in to see how she was in her health, an' he dhrew a chair, an' he sot down an' beginned to convarse her about one thing an' another, antil he got her quite an' asy into middlin' good humour, an' as soon as he seen it was time:

'I'm wondherin', says he, 'Nell Gorman, sich a handsome, likely girl, id be thinkin' iv nothin' but lamintin' an' the likes,' says he, 'an' lingerin' away her days without any consolation, or gettin' a husband,' says he.

'Oh,' says she, 'isn't it only three days since I burried the poor man,' says she, 'an' isn't it rather soon to be talkin iv marryin' agin?'

'Divil a taste,' says he, 'three days is jist the time to a minute for cryin' afther a husband, an' there's no occasion in life to be keepin' it up,' says he; 'an' besides all that,' says he, 'Shrovetide is almost over, an' if you don't be sturrin' yourself an' lookin' about you, you'll be late,' says he, 'for this year at any rate, an' that's twelve months

lost; an' who's to look afther the farm all that time,' says he, 'an' to keep the men to their work?' says he.

'It's thrue for you, Jim Mallowney,' says she, 'but I'm afeard the neighbours will be all talkin' about it,' says she.

'Divil's cure to the word,' says he.

'An' who would you advise?' says she.

'Young Andy Curtis is the boy,' says he.

'He's a likely boy in himself,' says she.

'An' as handy a gossoon as is out,' says he.

'Well, thin, Jim Mallowney,' says she, 'here's my hand, an' you may be talkin' to Andy Curtis, an' if he's willin' I'm agreeble−−is that enough?' says she.

So with that he made off with himself straight to Andy Curtis; an' before three days more was past, the weddin' kem an, an' Nell Gorman an' Andy Curtis was married as complate as possible; an' if the wake was plisint the weddin' was tin times as agreeble, an' all the neighbours that could make their way to it was there, an' there was three fiddlers an' lots iv pipers, an' ould Connor Shamus[1] the piper himself was in it−−by the same token it was the last weddin' he ever played music at, for the next mornin', whin he was goin' home, bein' mighty hearty an' plisint in himself, he was smothered in the snow, undher the ould castle; an' by my sowl he was a sore loss to the bys an' girls twenty miles round, for he was the illigantest piper, barrin' the liquor alone, that ever worked a bellas.

[1] Literally, Cornelius James−−the last name employed as a patronymic. Connor is commonly used. Corney, pronounced Kurny, is just as much used in the South, as the short name for Cornelius.

Well, a week passed over smart enough, an' Nell an' her new husband was mighty well continted with one another, for it was too soon for her to begin to regulate him the way she used with poor Jim Soolivan, so they wor comfortable enough; but this was too good to last, for the thaw kem an, an' you may be sure Jim Soolivan didn't lose a minute's time as soon as the heavy dhrift iv snow was melted enough between him and home to let him pass, for he didn't hear a word iv news from home sinst he lift it, by rason that no one, good nor bad, could thravel at all, with the way the snow was dhrifted.

So one night, when Nell Gorman an' her new husband, Andy Curtis, was snug an' warm in bed, an' fast asleep, an' everything quite, who should come to the door, sure enough, but Jim Soolivan himself, an' he beginned flakin' the door wid a big blackthorn stick he had, an' roarin' out like the divil to open the door, for he had a dhrop taken.

'What the divil's the matther?' says Andy Curtis, wakenin' out iv his sleep.

'Who's batin' the door?' says Nell; 'what's all the noise for?' says she.

'Who's in it?' says Andy.

'It's me,' says Jim.

'Who are you?' says Andy; 'what's your name?'

'Jim Soolivan,' says he.

'By jabers, you lie,' says Andy.

'Wait till I get at you,' says Jim, hittin' the door a lick iv the wattle you'd hear half a mile off.

'It's him, sure enough,' says Nell; 'I know his speech; it's his wandherin' sowl that can't get rest, the crass o' Christ betune us an' harm.'

'Let me in,' says Jim, 'or I'll dhrive the door in a top iv yis.'

'Jim Soolivan−−Jim Soolivan,' says Nell, sittin' up in the bed, an' gropin' for a quart bottle iv holy wather she used to hang by the back iv the bed, 'don't come in, darlin' −−there's holy wather here,' says she; 'but tell me from where you are is there anything that's throublin' your poor sinful sowl?' says she. 'An' tell me how many masses 'ill make you asy, an' by this crass, I'll buy you as many as you want,' says she.

'I don't know what the divil you mane,' says Jim.

'Go back,' says she, 'go back to glory, for God's sake,' says she.

'Divil's cure to the bit iv me 'ill go back to glory, or anywhere else,' says he, 'this blessed night; so open the door at onst' an' let me in,' says he.

'The Lord forbid,' says she.

'By jabers, you'd betther,' says he, 'or it 'ill be the worse for you,' says he; an' wid that he fell to wallopin' the

door till he was fairly tired, an' Andy an' his wife crassin' themselves an' sayin' their prayers for the bare life all the time.

'Jim Soolivan,' says she, as soon as he was done, 'go back, for God's sake, an' don't be freakenin' me an' your poor fatherless childhren,' says she.

'Why, you bosthoon, you,' says Jim, 'won't you let your husband in,' says he, 'to his own house?' says he.

'You WOR my husband, sure enough,' says she, 'but it's well you know, Jim Soolivan, you're not my husband NOW,' says she.

'You're as dhrunk as can be consaved, says Jim.

'Go back, in God's name, pacibly to your grave,' says Nell.

'By my sowl, it's to my grave you'll sind me, sure enough,' says he, 'you hard− hearted bain', for I'm jist aff wid the cowld,' says he.

'Jim Sulivan,' says she, 'it's in your dacent coffin you should be, you unforthunate sperit,' says she; 'what is it's annoyin' your sowl, in the wide world, at all?' says she; 'hadn't you everything complate?' says she, 'the oil, an' the wake, an' the berrin'?' says she.

'Och, by the hoky,' says Jim, 'it's too long I'm makin' a fool iv mysilf, gostherin' wid you outside iv my own door,' says he, 'for it's plain to be seen,' says he, 'you don't know what your're sayin', an' no one ELSE knows what you mane, you unforthunate fool,' says he; 'so, onst for all, open the door quietly,' says he, 'or, by my sowkins, I'll not lave a splinther together,' says he.

Well, whin Nell an' Andy seen he was getting vexed, they beginned to bawl out their prayers, with the fright, as if the life was lavin' them; an' the more he bate the door, the louder they prayed, until at last Jim was fairly tired out.

'Bad luck to you,' says he; 'for a rale divil av a woman,' says he. I 'can't get any advantage av you, any way; but wait till I get hould iv you, that's all,' says he. An' he turned aff from the door, an' wint round to the cow−house, an' settled himself as well as he could, in the sthraw; an' he was tired enough wid the thravellin' he had in the day−time, an' a good dale bothered with what liquor he had taken; so he was purty sure of sleepin' wherever he thrun himself.

But, by my sowl, it wasn't the same way with the man an' the woman in the house−− for divil a wink iv sleep, good or bad, could they get at all, wid the fright iv the sperit, as they supposed; an' with the first light they sint a little gossoon, as fast as he could wag, straight off, like a shot, to the priest, an' to desire him, for the love o' God, to come to them an the minute, an' to bring, if it was plasin' to his raverence, all the little things he had for sayin' mass, an' savin' sowls, an' banishin' sperits, an' freakenin' the divil, an' the likes iv that. An' it wasn't long till his raverence kem down, sure enough, on the ould grey mare, wid the little mass−boy behind him, an' the prayer−books an' Bibles, an' all the other mystarious articles that was wantin', along wid him; an' as soon as he kem in, 'God save all here,' says he.

'God save ye, kindly, your raverence,' says they.

'An' what's gone wrong wid ye?' says he; 'ye must be very bad,' says he,' entirely, to disturb my devotions,' says he, 'this way, jist at breakfast−time,' says he.

'By my sowkins,' says Nell, 'it's bad enough we are, your raverence,' says she, 'for it's poor Jim's sperit,' says she; 'God rest his sowl, wherever it is,' says she, 'that was wandherin' up an' down, opossite the door all night,' says she, 'in the way it was no use at all, thryin' to get a wink iv sleep,' says she.

'It's to lay it, you want me, I suppose,' says the priest.

'If your raverence 'id do that same, it 'id be plasin' to us,' says Andy.

'It'll be rather expinsive,' says the priest.

'We'll not differ about the price, your raverence,' says Andy.

'Did the sperit stop long?' says the priest.

'Most part iv the night,' says Nell, 'the Lord be merciful to us all!' says she.

'That'll make it more costly than I thought,' says he. 'An' did it make much noise?' says he.

'By my sowl, it's it that did,' says Andy; 'leatherin' the door wid sticks and stones,' says he, 'antil I fairly thought every minute,' says he, 'the ould boords id smash, an' the sperit id be in an top iv us−−God bless us,' says he.

'Phiew!' says the priest; 'it'll cost a power iv money.'

'Well, your raverence,' says Andy, 'take whatever you like,' says he; 'only make sure it won't annoy us any more,' says he.

'Oh! by my sowkins,' says the priest, 'it'll be the quarest ghost in the siven parishes,' says he, 'if it has the courage to come back,' says he, 'afther what I'll do this mornin', plase God,' says he; 'so we'll say twelve pounds; an' God knows it's chape enough,' says he, 'considherin' all the sarcumstances,' says he.

Well, there wasn't a second word to the bargain; so they paid him the money down, an' he sot the table doun like an althar, before the door, an' he settled it out vid all the things he had wid him; an' he lit a bit iv a holy candle, an' he scathered his holy wather right an' left; an' he took up a big book, an' he wint an readin' for half an hour, good; an' whin he kem to the end, he tuck hould iv his little bell, and he beginned to ring it for the bare life; an', by my sowl, he rung it so well, that he wakened Jim Sulivan in the cow− house, where he was sleepin', an' up he jumped, widout a minute's delay, an' med right for the house, where all the family, an' the priest, an' the little mass−boy was assimbled, layin' the ghost; an' as soon as his raverence seen him comin' in at the door, wid the fair fright, he flung the bell at his head, an' hot him sich a lick iv it in the forehead, that he sthretched him on the floor; but fain; he didn't wait to ax any questions, but he cut round the table as if the divil was afther him, an' out at the door, an' didn't stop even as much as to mount an his mare, but leathered away down the borheen as fast as his legs could carry him, though the mud was up to his knees, savin' your presence.

Well, by the time Jim kem to himself, the family persaved the mistake, an' Andy wint home, lavin' Nell to make the explanation. An' as soon as Jim heerd it all, he said he was quite contint to lave her to Andy, entirely; but the priest would not hear iv it; an' he jist med him marry his wife over again, an' a merry weddin' it was, an' a fine collection for his raverence. An' Andy was there along wid the rest, an' the priest put a small pinnance upon him, for bein' in too great a hurry to marry a widdy.

An' bad luck to the word he'd allow anyone to say an the business, ever after, at all, at all; so, av coorse, no one offinded his raverence, by spakin' iv the twelve pounds he got for layin' the sperit.

An' the neighbours wor all mighty well plased, to be sure, for gettin' all the divarsion of a wake, an' two weddin's for nothin'

A CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF A TYRONE FAMILY

Being a Tenth Extract from the Legacy of the late Francis Purcell, P.P. of Drumcoolagh.

INTRODUCTION.

In the following narrative, I have endeavoured to give as nearly as possible the ipsissima verba of the valued friend from whom I received it, conscious that any aberration from HER mode of telling the tale of her own life would at once impair its accuracy and its effect.

Would that, with her words, I could also bring before you her animated gesture, her expressive countenance, the solemn and thrilling air and accent with which she related the dark passages in her strange story; and, above all, that I could communicate the impressive consciousness that the narrator had seen with her own eyes, and personally acted in the scenes which she described; these accompaniments, taken with the additional circumstance that she who told the tale was one far too deeply and sadly impressed with religious principle to misrepresent or fabricate what she repeated as fact, gave to the tale a depth of interest which the events recorded could hardly, themselves, have produced.

I became acquainted with the lady from whose lips I heard this narrative nearly twenty years since, and the story struck my fancy so much that I committed it to paper while it was still fresh in my mind; and should its perusal afford you entertainment for a listless half hour, my labour shall not have been bestowed in vain.

I find that I have taken the story down as she told it, in the first person, and perhaps this is as it should be.

She began as follows:

My maiden name was Richardson,[1] the designation of a family of some distinction in the county of Tyrone. I was the younger of two daughters, and we were the only children. There was a difference in our ages of nearly six years, so that I did not, in my childhood, enjoy that close companionship which sisterhood, in other circumstances, necessarily involves; and while I was still a child, my sister was married.

[1] I have carefully altered the names as they appear in the original MSS., for the reader will see that some of the circumstances recorded are not of a kind to reflect honour upon those involved in them; and as many are still living, in every way honoured and honourable, who stand in close relation to the principal actors in this drama, the reader will see the necessity of the course which we have adopted.

The person upon whom she bestowed her hand was a Mr. Carew, a gentleman of property and consideration in the north of England.

I remember well the eventful day of the wedding; the thronging carriages, the noisy menials, the loud laughter, the merry faces, and the gay dresses. Such sights were then new to me, and harmonised ill with the sorrowful feelings with which I regarded the event which was to separate me, as it turned out, for ever from a sister whose tenderness alone had hitherto more than supplied all that I wanted in my mother's affection.

The day soon arrived which was to remove the happy couple from Ashtown House. The carriage stood at the hall− door, and my poor sister kissed me again and again, telling me that I should see her soon.

The carriage drove away, and I gazed after it until my eyes filled with tears, and, returning slowly to my chamber, I wept more bitterly and, so to speak, more desolately, than ever I had done before.

My father had never seemed to love or to take an interest in me. He had desired a son, and I think he never thoroughly forgave me my unfortunate sex.

My having come into the world at all as his child he regarded as a kind of fraudulent intrusion, and as his antipathy to me had its origin in an imperfection of mine, too radical for removal, I never even hoped to stand high in his good graces.

My mother was, I dare say, as fond of me as she was of anyone; but she was a woman of a masculine and a worldly cast of mind. She had no tenderness or sympathy for the weaknesses, or even for the affections, of woman's nature and her demeanour towards me was peremptory, and often even harsh.

It is not to be supposed, then, that I found in the society of my parents much to supply the loss of my sister. About a year after her marriage, we received letters from Mr. Carew, containing accounts of my sister's health, which, though not actually alarming, were calculated to make us seriously uneasy. The symptoms most dwelt upon were loss of appetite and cough.

The letters concluded by intimating that he would avail himself of my father and mother's repeated invitation to spend some time at Ashtown, particularly as the physician who had been consulted as to my sister's health had strongly advised a removal to her native air.

There were added repeated assurances that nothing serious was apprehended, as it was supposed that a deranged state of the liver was the only source of the symptoms which at first had seemed to intimate consumption.

In accordance with this announcement, my sister and Mr. Carew arrived in Dublin, where one of my father's carriages awaited them, in readiness to start upon whatever day or hour they might choose for their departure

It was arranged that Mr. Carew was, as soon as the day upon which they were to leave Dublin was definitely fixed, to write to my father, who intended that the two last stages should be performed by his own horses, upon whose speed and safety far more reliance might be placed than upon those of the ordinary post−horses, which were at that time, almost without exception, of the very worst order. The journey, one of about ninety miles, was to be divided; the larger portion being reserved for the second day.

On Sunday a letter reached us, stating that the party would leave Dublin on Monday, and, in due course, reach Ashtown upon Tuesday evening.

Tuesday came the evening closed in, and yet no carriage; darkness came on, and still no sign of our expected visitors.

Hour after hour passed away, and it was now past twelve; the night was remarkably calm, scarce a breath stirring, so that any sound, such as that produced by the rapid movement of a vehicle, would have been audible at a considerable distance. For some such sound I was feverishly listening.

It was, however, my father's rule to close the house at nightfall, and the window− shutters being fastened, I was unable to reconnoitre the avenue as I would have wished. It was nearly one o'clock, and we began almost to despair of seeing them upon that night, when I thought I distinguished the sound of wheels, but so remote and faint as to make me at first very uncertain. The noise approached; it became louder and clearer; it stopped for a moment.

I now heard the shrill screaming of the rusty iron, as the avenue−gate revolved on its hinges; again came the sound of wheels in rapid motion.

'It is they,' said I, starting up; 'the carriage is in the avenue.'

We all stood for a few moments breathlessly listening. On thundered the vehicle with the speed of a whirlwind; crack went the whip, and clatter went the wheels, as it rattled over the uneven pavement of the court. A general and furious barking from all the dogs about the house, hailed its arrival.

We hurried to the hall in time to hear the steps let down with the sharp clanging noise peculiar to the operation, and the hum of voices exerted in the bustle of arrival. The hall−door was now thrown open, and we all stepped forth to greet our visitors.

The court was perfectly empty; the moon was shining broadly and brightly upon all around; nothing was to be seen but the tall trees with their long spectral shadows, now wet with the dews of midnight.

We stood gazing from right to left, as if suddenly awakened from a dream; the dogs walked suspiciously, growling and snuffing about the court, and by totally and suddenly ceasing their former loud barking, expressing the predominance of fear.

We stared one upon another in perplexity and dismay, and I think I never beheld more pale faces assembled. By my father's direction, we looked about to find anything which might indicate or account for the noise which we had heard; but no such thing was to be seen−−even the mire which lay upon the avenue was undisturbed. We returned to the house, more panic−struck than I can describe.

On the next day, we learned by a messenger, who had ridden hard the greater part of the night, that my sister was dead. On Sunday evening, she had retired to bed rather unwell, and, on Monday, her indisposition declared itself unequivocally to be malignant fever. She became hourly worse and, on Tuesday night, a little after midnight, she expired.[2]

[2] The residuary legatee of the late Frances Purcell, who has the honour of selecting such of his lamented old friend's manuscripts as may appear fit for publication, in order that the lore which they contain may reach the world before scepticism and utility have robbed our species of the precious gift of credulity, and scornfully kicked before them, or trampled into annihilation those harmless fragments of picturesque superstition which it is our

object to preserve, has been subjected to the charge of dealing too largely in the marvellous; and it has been half insinuated that such is his love for diablerie, that he is content to wander a mile out of his way, in order to meet a fiend or a goblin, and thus to sacrifice all regard for truth and accuracy to the idle hope of affrighting the imagination, and thus pandering to the bad taste of his reader. He begs leave, then, to take this opportunity of asserting his perfect innocence of all the crimes laid to his charge, and to assure his reader that he never PANDERED TO HIS BAD TASTE, nor went one inch out of his way to introduce witch, fairy, devil, ghost, or any other of the grim fraternity of the redoubted Raw−head−and−bloody−bones. His province, touching these tales, has been attended with no difficulty and little responsibility; indeed, he is accountable for nothing more than an alteration in the names of persons mentioned therein, when such a step seemed necessary, and for an occasional note, whenever he conceived it possible, innocently, to edge in a word. These tales have been WRITTEN DOWN, as the heading of each announces, by the Rev. Francis Purcell, P.P., of Drumcoolagh; and in all the instances, which are many, in which the present writer has had an opportunity of comparing the manuscript of his departed friend with the actual traditions which are current amongst the families whose fortunes they pretend to illustrate, he has uniformly found that whatever of supernatural occurred in the story, so far from having been exaggerated by him, had been rather softened down, and, wherever it could be attempted, accounted for.

I mention this circumstance, because it was one upon which a thousand wild and fantastical reports were founded, though one would have thought that the truth scarcely required to be improved upon; and again, because it produced a strong and lasting effect upon my spirits, and indeed, I am inclined to think, upon my character.

I was, for several years after this occurrence, long after the violence of my grief subsided, so wretchedly low−spirited and nervous, that I could scarcely be said to live; and during this time, habits of indecision, arising out of a listless acquiescence in the will of others, a fear of encountering even the slightest opposition, and a disposition to shrink from what are commonly called amusements, grew upon me so strongly, that I have scarcely even yet altogether overcome them.

We saw nothing more of Mr. Carew. He returned to England as soon as the melancholy rites attendant upon the event which I have just mentioned were performed; and not being altogether inconsolable, he married again within two years; after which, owing to the remoteness of our relative situations, and other circumstances, we gradually lost sight of him.

I was now an only child; and, as my elder sister had died without issue, it was evident that, in the ordinary course of things, my father's property, which was altogether in his power, would go to me; and the consequence was, that before I was fourteen, Ashtown House was besieged by a host of suitors. However, whether it was that I was too young, or that none of the aspirants to my hand stood sufficiently high in rank or wealth, I was suffered by both parents to do exactly as I pleased; and well was it for me, as I afterwards found, that fortune, or rather Providence, had so ordained it, that I had not suffered my affections to become in any degree engaged, for my mother would never have suffered any SILLY FANCY of mine, as she was in the habit of styling an attachment, to stand in the way of her ambitious views−− views which she was determined to carry into effect, in defiance of every obstacle, and in order to accomplish which she would not have hesitated to sacrifice anything so unreasonable and contemptible as a girlish passion.

When I reached the age of sixteen, my mother's plans began to develop them− selves; and, at her suggestion, we moved to Dublin to sojourn for the winter, in order that no time might be lost in disposing of me to the best advantage.

I had been too long accustomed to consider myself as of no importance whatever, to believe for a moment that I was in reality the cause of all the bustle and preparation which surrounded me, and being thus relieved from the pain which a consciousness of my real situation would have inflicted, I journeyed towards the capital with a feeling of total indifference.

My father's wealth and connection had established him in the best society, and, consequently, upon our arrival in the metropolis we commanded whatever enjoyment or advantages its gaieties afforded.

The tumult and novelty of the scenes in which I was involved did not fail con− siderably to amuse me, and my mind gradually recovered its tone, which was naturally cheerful.

It was almost immediately known and reported that I was an heiress, and of course my attractions were pretty

generally acknowledged.

Among the many gentlemen whom it was my fortune to please, one, ere long, established himself in my mother's good graces, to the exclusion of all less important aspirants. However, I had not understood or even remarked his attentions, nor in the slightest degree suspected his or my mother's plans respecting me, when I was made aware of them rather abruptly by my mother herself.

We had attended a splendid ball, given by Lord M−−−−, at his residence in Stephen's Green, and I was, with the assist− ance of my waiting−maid, employed in rapidly divesting myself of the rich ornaments which, in profuseness and value, could scarcely have found their equals in any private family in Ireland.

I had thrown myself into a lounging− chair beside the fire, listless and exhausted, after the fatigues of the evening, when I was aroused from the reverie into which I had fallen by the sound of footsteps approaching my chamber, and my mother entered.

'Fanny, my dear,' said she, in her softest tone, 'I wish to say a word or two with you before I go to rest. You are not fatigued, love, I hope?'

'No, no, madam, I thank you,' said I, rising at the same time from my seat, with the formal respect so little practised now.

'Sit down, my dear,' said she, placing herself upon a chair beside me; 'I must chat with you for a quarter of an hour or so. Saunders' (to the maid) 'you may leave the room; do not close the room−door, but shut that of the lobby.'

This precaution against curious ears having been taken as directed, my mother proceeded.

'You have observed, I should suppose, my dearest Fanny−−indeed, you MUST have observed Lord Glenfallen's marked attentions to you?'

'I assure you, madam−−−−' I began.

'Well, well, that is all right,' interrupted my mother; 'of course you must be modest upon the matter; but listen to me for a few moments, my love, and I will prove to your satisfaction that your modesty is quite unnecessary in this case. You have done better than we could have hoped, at least so very soon. Lord Glenfallen is in love with you. I give you joy of your conquest;' and saying this, my mother kissed my forehead.

'In love with me!' I exclaimed, in unfeigned astonishment.

'Yes, in love with you,' repeated my mother; 'devotedly, distractedly in love with you. Why, my dear, what is there wonderful in it? Look in the glass, and look at these,' she continued, pointing with a smile to the jewels which I had just removed from my person, and which now lay a glittering heap upon the table.

'May there not,' said I, hesitating between confusion and real alarm−−'is it not possible that some mistake may be at the bottom of all this?'

'Mistake, dearest! none,' said my mother. 'None; none in the world. Judge for yourself; read this, my love.' And she placed in my hand a letter, addressed to herself, the seal of which was broken. I read it through with no small surprise. After some very fine complimentary flourishes upon my beauty and perfections, as also upon the antiquity and high reputation of our family, it went on to make a formal proposal of marriage, to be communicated or not to me at present, as my mother should deem expedient; and the letter wound up by a request that the writer might be permitted, upon our return to Ashtown House, which was soon to take place, as the spring was now tolerably advanced, to visit us for a few days, in case his suit was approved.

'Well, well, my dear,' said my mother, impatiently; 'do you know who Lord Glenfallen is?'

'I do, madam,' said I rather timidly, for I dreaded an altercation with my mother.

'Well, dear, and what frightens you?' continued she. 'Are you afraid of a title? What has he done to alarm you? he is neither old nor ugly.'

I was silent, though I might have said, 'He is neither young nor handsome.'

'My dear Fanny,' continued my mother, 'in sober seriousness you have been most fortunate in engaging the affections of a nobleman such as Lord Glenfallen, young and wealthy, with first−rate−−yes, acknowledged FIRST−RATE abilities, and of a family whose influence is not exceeded by that of any in Ireland. Of course you see the offer in the same light that I do−−indeed I think you MUST.'

This was uttered in no very dubious tone. I was so much astonished by the suddenness of the whole communication that I literally did not know what to say.

'You are not in love?' said my mother, turning sharply, and fixing her dark eyes upon me with severe scrutiny.

'No, madam,' said I, promptly; horrified, as what young lady would not have been, at such a query.

'I'm glad to hear it,' said my mother, drily. 'Once, nearly twenty years ago, a friend of mine consulted me as to how he should deal with a daughter who had made what they call a love−match−−beggared herself, and disgraced her family; and I said, without hesitation, take no care for her, but cast her off. Such punishment I awarded for an offence committed against the reputation of a family not my own; and what I advised respecting the child of another, with full as small compunction I would DO with mine. I cannot conceive anything more unreasonable or intolerable than that the fortune and the character of a family should be marred by the idle caprices of a girl.'

She spoke this with great severity, and paused as if she expected some observation from me.

I, however, said nothing.

'But I need not explain to you, my dear Fanny,' she continued, 'my views upon this subject; you have always known them well, and I have never yet had reason to believe you likely, voluntarily, to offend me, or to abuse or neglect any of those advantages which reason and duty tell you should be improved. Come hither, my dear; kiss me, and do not look so frightened. Well, now, about this letter, you need not answer it yet; of course you must be allowed time to make up your mind. In the meantime I will write to his lordship to give him my permission to visit us at Ashtown. Good− night, my love.'

And thus ended one of the most disagreeable, not to say astounding, conversations I had ever had. It would not be easy to describe exactly what were my feelings towards Lord Glenfallen;−− whatever might have been my mother's suspicions, my heart was perfectly disengaged−−and hitherto, although I had not been made in the slightest degree acquainted with his real views, I had liked him very much, as an agreeable, well− informed man, whom I was always glad to meet in society. He had served in the navy in early life, and the polish which his manners received in his after intercourse with courts and cities had not served to obliterate that frankness of manner which belongs proverbially to the sailor.

Whether this apparent candour went deeper than the outward bearing, I was yet to learn. However, there was no doubt that, as far as I had seen of Lord Glenfallen, he was, though perhaps not so young as might have been desired in a lover, a singularly pleasing man; and whatever feeling unfavourable to him had found its way into my mind, arose altogether from the dread, not an unreasonable one, that constraint might be practised upon my inclinations. I reflected, however, that Lord Glenfallen was a wealthy man, and one highly thought of; and although I could never expect to love him in the romantic sense of the term, yet I had no doubt but that, all things considered, I might be more happy with him than I could hope to be at home.

When next I met him it was with no small embarrassment, his tact and good breeding, however, soon reassured me, and effectually prevented my awkwardness being remarked upon. And I had the satisfaction of leaving Dublin for the country with the full conviction that nobody, not even those most intimate with me, even suspected the fact of Lord Glenfallen's having made me a formal proposal.

This was to me a very serious subject of self−gratulation, for, besides my instinctive dread of becoming the topic of the speculations of gossip, I felt that if the situation which I occupied in relation to him were made publicly known, I should stand committed in a manner which would scarcely leave me the power of retraction.

The period at which Lord Glenfallen had arranged to visit Ashtown House was now fast approaching, and it became my mother's wish to form me thoroughly to her will, and to obtain my consent to the proposed marriage before his arrival, so that all things might proceed smoothly, without apparent opposition or objection upon my part. Whatever objections, therefore, I had entertained were to be subdued; whatever disposition to resistance I had exhibited or had been supposed to feel, were to be completely eradicated before he made his appearance; and my mother addressed herself to the task with a decision and energy against which even the barriers, which her imagination had created, could hardly have stood.

If she had, however, expected any determined opposition from me, she was agree− ably disappointed. My heart was perfectly free, and all my feelings of liking and preference were in favour of Lord Glenfallen; and I well knew that in case I refused to dispose of myself as I was desired, my mother had alike the power and the will to render my existence as utterly miserable as even the most ill− assorted marriage could possibly have done.

You will remember, my good friend, that I was very young and very completely under the control of my parents, both of whom, my mother particularly, were unscrupulously determined in matters of this kind, and willing, when voluntary obedience on the part of those within their power was withheld, to compel a forced acquiescence by an unsparing use of all the engines of the most stern and rigorous domestic discipline.

All these combined, not unnaturally, induced me to resolve upon yielding at once, and without useless opposition, to what appeared almost to be my fate.

The appointed time was come, and my now accepted suitor arrived; he was in high spirits, and, if possible, more entertaining than ever.

I was not, however, quite in the mood to enjoy his sprightliness; but whatever I wanted in gaiety was amply made up in the triumphant and gracious good−humour of my mother, whose smiles of benevolence and exultation were showered around as bountifully as the summer sunshine.

I will not weary you with unnecessary prolixity. Let it suffice to say, that I was married to Lord Glenfallen with all the attendant pomp and circumstance of wealth, rank, and grandeur. According to the usage of the times, now humanely reformed, the ceremony was made, until long past midnight, the season of wild, uproarious, and promiscuous feasting and revelry.

Of all this I have a painfully vivid recollection, and particularly of the little annoyances inflicted upon me by the dull and coarse jokes of the wits and wags who abound in all such places, and upon all such occasions.

I was not sorry when, after a few days, Lord Glenfallen's carriage appeared at the door to convey us both from Ashtown; for any change would have been a relief from the irksomeness of ceremonial and formality which the visits received in honour of my newly−acquired titles hourly entailed upon me.

It was arranged that we were to proceed to Cahergillagh, one of the Glenfallen estates, lying, however, in a southern county, so that, owing to the difficulty of the roads at the time, a tedious journey of three days intervened.

I set forth with my noble companion, followed by the regrets of some, and by the envy of many; though God knows I little deserved the latter. The three days of travel were now almost spent, when, passing the brow of a wild heathy hill, the domain of Cahergillagh opened suddenly upon our view.

It formed a striking and a beautiful scene. A lake of considerable extent stretching away towards the west, and reflecting from its broad, smooth waters, the rich glow of the setting sun, was overhung by steep hills, covered by a rich mantle of velvet sward, broken here and there by the grey front of some old rock, and exhibiting on their shelving sides, their slopes and hollows, every variety of light and shade; a thick wood of dwarf oak, birch, and hazel skirted these hills, and clothed the shores of the lake, running out in rich luxuriance upon every promontory, and spreading upward considerably upon the side of the hills.

'There lies the enchanted castle,' said Lord Glenfallen, pointing towards a considerable level space intervening between two of the picturesque hills, which rose dimly around the lake.

This little plain was chiefly occupied by the same low, wild wood which covered the other parts of the domain; but towards the centre a mass of taller and statelier forest trees stood darkly grouped together, and among them stood an ancient square tower, with many buildings of a humbler character, forming together the manor−house, or, as it was more usually called, the Court of Cahergillagh.

As we approached the level upon which the mansion stood, the winding road gave us many glimpses of the time−worn castle and its surrounding buildings; and seen as it was through the long vistas of the fine old trees, and with the rich glow of evening upon it, I have seldom beheld an object more picturesquely striking.

I was glad to perceive, too, that here and there the blue curling smoke ascended from stacks of chimneys now hidden by the rich, dark ivy which, in a great measure, covered the building. Other indications of comfort made themselves manifest as we approached; and indeed, though the place was evidently one of considerable antiquity, it had nothing whatever of the gloom of decay about it.

'You must not, my love,' said Lord Glenfallen, 'imagine this place worse than it is. I have no taste for antiquity−−at least I should not choose a house to reside in because it is old. Indeed I do not recollect that I was even so romantic as to overcome my aversion to rats and rheumatism, those faithful attendants upon your noble relics of feudalism; and I much prefer a snug, modern, unmysterious bedroom, with well− aired sheets, to the waving tapestry, mildewed cushions, and all the other interesting appliances of romance. However, though I cannot promise you all the discomfort generally belonging to an old castle, you will find legends and ghostly lore enough to claim your respect; and if old Martha be still to the fore, as I trust she is, you will soon have a supernatural and appropriate anecdote for every closet and corner of the mansion; but here we are−−so, without more ado, welcome to Cahergillagh!'

We now entered the hall of the castle, and while the domestics were employed in conveying our trunks and

other luggage which we had brought with us for immediate use to the apartments which Lord Glenfallen had selected for himself and me, I went with him into a spacious sitting−room, wainscoted with finely polished black oak, and hung round with the portraits of various worthies of the Glenfallen family.

This room looked out upon an extensive level covered with the softest green sward, and irregularly bounded by the wild wood I have before mentioned, through the leafy arcade formed by whose boughs and trunks the level beams of the setting sun were pouring. In the distance a group of dairy− maids were plying their task, which they accompanied throughout with snatches of Irish songs which, mellowed by the distance, floated not unpleasingly to the ear; and beside them sat or lay, with all the grave importance of conscious protection, six or seven large dogs of various kinds. Farther in the distance, and through the cloisters of the arching wood, two or three ragged urchins were employed in driving such stray kine as had wandered farther than the rest to join their fellows.

As I looked upon this scene which I have described, a feeling of tranquillity and happiness came upon me, which I have never experienced in so strong a degree; and so strange to me was the sensation that my eyes filled with tears.

Lord Glenfallen mistook the cause of my emotion, and taking me kindly and tenderly by the hand, he said:

'Do not suppose, my love, that it is my intention to SETTLE here. Whenever you desire to leave this, you have only to let me know your wish, and it shall be complied with; so I must entreat of you not to suffer any circumstances which I can control to give you one moment's uneasiness. But here is old Martha; you must be introduced to her, one of the heirlooms of our family.'

A hale, good−humoured, erect old woman was Martha, and an agreeable contrast to the grim, decrepid hag which my fancy had conjured up, as the depository of all the horrible tales in which I doubted not this old place was most fruitful.

She welcomed me and her master with a profusion of gratulations, alternately kissing our hands and apologising for the liberty, until at length Lord Glenfallen put an end to this somewhat fatiguing ceremonial by requesting her to conduct me to my chamber if it were prepared for my reception.

I followed Martha up an old−fashioned oak staircase into a long, dim passage, at the end of which lay the door which communicated with the apartments which had been selected for our use; here the old woman stopped, and respectfully requested me to proceed.

I accordingly opened the door, and was about to enter, when something like a mass of black tapestry, as it appeared, disturbed by my sudden approach, fell from above the door, so as completely to screen the aperture; the startling unexpectedness of the occurrence, and the rustling noise which the drapery made in its descent, caused me involuntarily to step two or three paces backwards. I turned, smiling and half− ashamed, to the old servant, and said:

'You see what a coward I am.'

The woman looked puzzled, and, without saying any more, I was about to draw aside the curtain and enter the room, when, upon turning to do so, I was surprised to find that nothing whatever interposed to obstruct the passage.

I went into the room, followed by the servant−woman, and was amazed to find that it, like the one below, was wainscoted, and that nothing like drapery was to be found near the door.

'Where is it?' said I; 'what has become of it?'

'What does your ladyship wish to know?' said the old woman.

'Where is the black curtain that fell across the door, when I attempted first to come to my chamber?' answered I.

'The cross of Christ about us!' said the old woman, turning suddenly pale.

'What is the matter, my good friend?' said I; 'you seem frightened.'

'Oh no, no, your ladyship,' said the old woman, endeavouring to conceal her agitation; but in vain, for tottering towards a chair, she sank into it, looking so deadly pale and horror−struck that I thought every moment she would faint.

'Merciful God, keep us from harm and danger!' muttered she at length.

'What can have terrified you so?' said I, beginning to fear that she had seen something more than had met my eye. 'You appear ill, my poor woman!'

'Nothing, nothing, my lady,' said she, rising. 'I beg your ladyship's pardon for making so bold. May the great

God defend us from misfortune!'

'Martha,' said I, 'something HAS frightened you very much, and I insist on knowing what it is; your keeping me in the dark upon the subject will make me much more uneasy than anything you could tell me. I desire you, therefore, to let me know what agitates you; I command you to tell me.'

'Your ladyship said you saw a black curtain falling across the door when you were coming into the room,' said the old woman.

'I did,' said I; 'but though the whole thing appears somewhat strange, I cannot see anything in the matter to agitate you so excessively.'

'It's for no good you saw that, my lady,' said the crone; 'something terrible is coming. It's a sign, my lady−−a sign that never fails.'

'Explain, explain what you mean, my good woman,' said I, in spite of myself, catching more than I could account for, of her superstitious terror.

'Whenever something−−something BAD is going to happen to the Glenfallen family, some one that belongs to them sees a black handkerchief or curtain just waved or falling before their faces. I saw it myself,' continued she, lowering her voice, 'when I was only a little girl, and I'll never forget it. I often heard of it before, though I never saw it till then, nor since, praised be God. But I was going into Lady Jane's room to waken her in the morning; and sure enough when I got first to the bed and began to draw the curtain, something dark was waved across the division, but only for a moment; and when I saw rightly into the bed, there was she lying cold and dead, God be merciful to me! So, my lady, there is small blame to me to be daunted when any one of the family sees it; for it's many's the story I heard of it, though I saw it but once.'

I was not of a superstitious turn of mind, yet I could not resist a feeling of awe very nearly allied to the fear which my companion had so unreservedly expressed; and when you consider my situation, the loneliness, antiquity, and gloom of the place, you will allow that the weakness was not without excuse.

In spite of old Martha's boding predictions, however, time flowed on in an unruffled course. One little incident however, though trifling in itself, I must relate, as it serves to make what follows more intelligible.

Upon the day after my arrival, Lord Glenfallen of course desired to make me acquainted with the house and domain; and accordingly we set forth upon our ramble. When returning, he became for some time silent and moody, a state so unusual with him as considerably to excite my surprise.

I endeavoured by observations and questions to arouse him−−but in vain. At length, as we approached the house, he said, as if speaking to himself:

' 'Twere madness−−madness−−madness,' repeating the words bitterly−−'sure and speedy ruin.'

There was here a long pause; and at length, turning sharply towards me, in a tone very unlike that in which he had hitherto addressed me, he said:

'Do you think it possible that a woman can keep a secret?'

'I am sure,' said I, 'that women are very much belied upon the score of talkativeness, and that I may answer your question with the same directness with which you put it−−I reply that I DO think a woman can keep a secret.'

'But I do not,' said he, drily.

We walked on in silence for a time. I was much astonished at his unwonted abruptness−−I had almost said rudeness.

After a considerable pause he seemed to recollect himself, and with an effort resuming his sprightly manner, he said:

'Well, well, the next thing to keeping a secret well is, not to desire to possess one−−talkativeness and curiosity generally go together. Now I shall make test of you, in the first place, respecting the latter of these qualities. I shall be your BLUEBEARD −−tush, why do I trifle thus? Listen to me, my dear Fanny; I speak now in solemn earnest. What I desire is intimately, inseparably, connected with your happiness and honour as well as my own; and your compliance with my request will not be difficult. It will impose upon you a very trifling restraint during your sojourn here, which certain events which have occurred since our arrival have determined me shall not be a long one. You must promise me, upon your sacred honour, that you will visit ONLY that part of the castle which can be reached from the front entrance, leaving the back entrance and the part of the building commanded immediately by it to the menials, as also the small garden whose high wall you see yonder; and never at any time seek to pry or peep into them, nor to open the door which communicates from the front part of the house through

the corridor with the back. I do not urge this in jest or in caprice, but from a solemn conviction that danger and misery will be the certain consequences of your not observing what I prescribe. I cannot explain myself further at present. Promise me, then, these things, as you hope for peace here, and for mercy hereafter.'

I did make the promise as desired, and he appeared relieved; his manner recovered all its gaiety and elasticity: but the recollection of the strange scene which I have just described dwelt painfully upon my mind.

More than a month passed away without any occurrence worth recording; but I was not destined to leave Cahergillagh without further adventure. One day, intending to enjoy the pleasant sunshine in a ramble through the woods, I ran up to my room to procure my bonnet and shawl. Upon entering the chamber, I was surprised and somewhat startled to find it occupied. Beside the fireplace, and nearly opposite the door, seated in a large, old−fashioned elbow−chair, was placed the figure of a lady. She appeared to be nearer fifty than forty, and was dressed suitably to her age, in a handsome suit of flowered silk; she had a profusion of trinkets and jewellery about her person, and many rings upon her fingers. But although very rich, her dress was not gaudy or in ill taste. But what was remarkable in the lady was, that although her features were handsome, and upon the whole pleasing, the pupil of each eye was dimmed with the whiteness of cataract, and she was evidently stone−blind. I was for some seconds so surprised at this unaccountable apparition, that I could not find words to address her.

'Madam,' said I, 'there must be some mistake here−−this is my bed−chamber.'

'Marry come up,' said the lady, sharply; 'YOUR chamber! Where is Lord Glenfallen?'

'He is below, madam,' replied I; 'and I am convinced he will be not a little surprised to find you here.'

'I do not think he will,' said she; 'with your good leave, talk of what you know something about. Tell him I want him. Why does the minx dilly−dally so?'

In spite of the awe which this grim lady inspired, there was something in her air of confident superiority which, when I considered our relative situations, was not a little irritating.

'Do you know, madam, to whom you speak?' said I.

'I neither know nor care,' said she; 'but I presume that you are some one about the house, so again I desire you, if you wish to continue here, to bring your master hither forthwith.'

'I must tell you, madam,' said I, 'that I am Lady Glenfallen.'

'What's that?' said the stranger, rapidly.

'I say, madam,' I repeated, approaching her that I might be more distinctly heard, 'that I am Lady Glenfallen.'

'It's a lie, you trull!' cried she, in an accent which made me start, and at the same time, springing forward, she seized me in her grasp, and shook me violently, repeating, 'It's a lie−−it's a lie!' with a rapidity and vehemence which swelled every vein of her face. The violence of her action, and the fury which convulsed her face, effectually terrified me, and dis− engaging myself from her grasp, I screamed as loud as I could for help. The blind woman continued to pour out a torrent of abuse upon me, foaming at the mouth with rage, and impotently shaking her clenched fists towards me.

I heard Lord Glenfallen's step upon the stairs, and I instantly ran out; as I passed him I perceived that he was deadly pale, and just caught the words: 'I hope that demon has not hurt you?'

I made some answer, I forget what, and he entered the chamber, the door of which he locked upon the inside. What passed within I know not; but I heard the voices of the two speakers raised in loud and angry altercation.

I thought I heard the shrill accents of the woman repeat the words, 'Let her look to herself;' but I could not be quite sure. This short sentence, however, was, to my alarmed imagination, pregnant with fearful meaning.

The storm at length subsided, though not until after a conference of more than two long hours. Lord Glenfallen then returned, pale and agitated.

'That unfortunate woman,' said he, 'is out of her mind. I daresay she treated you to some of her ravings; but you need not dread any further interruption from her: I have brought her so far to reason. She did not hurt you, I trust.'

'No, no,' said I; 'but she terrified me beyond measure.'

'Well,' said he, 'she is likely to behave better for the future; and I dare swear that neither you nor she would desire, after what has passed, to meet again.'

This occurrence, so startling and un− pleasant, so involved in mystery, and giving rise to so many painful surmises, afforded me no very agreeable food for rumination.

All attempts on my part to arrive at the truth were baffled; Lord Glenfallen evaded all my inquiries, and at

length peremptorily forbid any further allusion to the matter. I was thus obliged to rest satisfied with what I had actually seen, and to trust to time to resolve the perplexities in which the whole transaction had involved me.

Lord Glenfallen's temper and spirits gradually underwent a complete and most painful change; he became silent and abstracted, his manner to me was abrupt and often harsh, some grievous anxiety seemed ever present to his mind; and under its influence his spirits sunk and his temper became soured.

I soon perceived that his gaiety was rather that which the stir and excitement of society produce, than the result of a healthy habit of mind; every day confirmed me in the opinion, that the considerate good−nature which I had so much admired in him was little more than a mere manner; and to my infinite grief and surprise, the gay, kind, open−hearted nobleman who had for months followed and flattered me, was rapidly assuming the form of a gloomy, morose, and singularly selfish man. This was a bitter discovery, and I strove to conceal it from myself as long as I could; but the truth was not to be denied, and I was forced to believe that Lord Glenfallen no longer loved me, and that he was at little pains to conceal the alteration in his sentiments.

One morning after breakfast, Lord Glen− fallen had been for some time walking silently up and down the room, buried in his moody reflections, when pausing suddenly, and turning towards me, he exclaimed:

'I have it−−I have it! We must go abroad, and stay there too; and if that does not answer, why−−why, we must try some more effectual expedient. Lady Glenfallen, I have become involved in heavy embarrassments. A wife, you know, must share the fortunes of her husband, for better for worse; but I will waive my right if you prefer remaining here−−here at Cahergillagh. For I would not have you seen elsewhere without the state to which your rank entitles you; besides, it would break your poor mother's heart,' he added, with sneering gravity. 'So make up your mind−− Cahergillagh or France. I will start if possible in a week, so determine between this and then.'

He left the room, and in a few moments I saw him ride past the window, followed by a mounted servant. He had directed a domestic to inform me that he should not be back until the next day.

I was in very great doubt as to what course of conduct I should pursue, as to accompanying him in the continental tour so suddenly determined upon. I felt that it would be a hazard too great to encounter; for at Cahergillagh I had always the consciousness to sustain me, that if his temper at any time led him into violent or unwarrantable treatment of me, I had a remedy within reach, in the protection and support of my own family, from all useful and effective communication with whom, if once in France, I should be entirely debarred.

As to remaining at Cahergillagh in solitude, and, for aught I knew, exposed to hidden dangers, it appeared to me scarcely less objectionable than the former proposition; and yet I feared that with one or other I must comply, unless I was prepared to come to an actual breach with Lord Glenfallen. Full of these unpleasing doubts and perplexities, I retired to rest.

I was wakened, after having slept uneasily for some hours, by some person shaking me rudely by the shoulder; a small lamp burned in my room, and by its light, to my horror and amazement, I discovered that my visitant was the self−same blind old lady who had so terrified me a few weeks before.

I started up in the bed, with a view to ring the bell, and alarm the domestics; but she instantly anticipated me by saying:

'Do not be frightened, silly girl! If I had wished to harm you I could have done it while you were sleeping; I need not have wakened you. Listen to me, now, attentively and fearlessly, for what I have to say interests you to the full as much as it does me. Tell me here, in the presence of God, did Lord Glenfallen marry you−−ACTUALLY MARRY you? Speak the truth, woman.'

'As surely as I live and speak,' I replied, 'did Lord Glenfallen marry me, in presence of more than a hundred witnesses.'

'Well,' continued she, 'he should have told you THEN, before you married him, that he had a wife living, which wife I am. I feel you tremble−−tush! do not be frightened. I do not mean to harm you. Mark me now−−you are NOT his wife. When I make my story known you will be so neither in the eye of God nor of man. You must leave this house upon to−morrow. Let the world know that your husband has another wife living; go you into retirement, and leave him to justice, which will surely overtake him. If you remain in this house after to−morrow you will reap the bitter fruits of your sin.'

So saying, she quitted the room, leaving me very little disposed to sleep.

Here was food for my very worst and most terrible suspicions; still there was not enough to remove all doubt. I had no proof of the truth of this woman's statement.

Taken by itself, there was nothing to induce me to attach weight to it; but when I viewed it in connection with the extraordinary mystery of some of Lord Glen− fallen's proceedings, his strange anxiety to exclude me from certain portions of the mansion, doubtless lest I should encounter this person−−the strong influence, nay, command which she possessed over him, a circumstance clearly established by the very fact of her residing in the very place where, of all others, he should least have desired to find her−−her thus acting, and continuing to act in direct contradiction to his wishes; when, I say, I viewed her disclosure in connection with all these circumstances, I could not help feeling that there was at least a fearful verisimilitude in the allegations which she had made.

Still I was not satisfied, nor nearly so. Young minds have a reluctance almost insurmountable to believing, upon anything short of unquestionable proof, the existence of premeditated guilt in anyone whom they have ever trusted; and in support of this feeling I was assured that if the assertion of Lord Glenfallen, which nothing in this woman's manner had led me to disbelieve, were true, namely that her mind was unsound, the whole fabric of my doubts and fears must fall to the ground.

I determined to state to Lord Glenfallen freely and accurately the substance of the communication which I had just heard, and in his words and looks to seek for its proof or refutation. Full of these thoughts, I remained wakeful and excited all night, every moment fancying that I heard the step or saw the figure of my recent visitor, towards whom I felt a species of horror and dread which I can hardly describe.

There was something in her face, though her features had evidently been handsome, and were not, at first sight, unpleasing, which, upon a nearer inspection, seemed to indicate the habitual prevalence and indulgence of evil passions, and a power of expressing mere animal anger, with an intenseness that I have seldom seen equalled, and to which an almost unearthly effect was given by the convulsive quivering of the sightless eyes.

You may easily suppose that it was no very pleasing reflection to me to consider that, whenever caprice might induce her to return, I was within the reach of this violent and, for aught I knew, insane woman, who had, upon that very night, spoken to me in a tone of menace, of which her mere words, divested of the manner and look with which she uttered them, can convey but a faint idea.

Will you believe me when I tell you that I was actually afraid to leave my bed in order to secure the door, lest I should again encounter the dreadful object lurking in some corner or peeping from behind the window−curtains, so very a child was I in my fears.

The morning came, and with it Lord Glenfallen. I knew not, and indeed I cared not, where he might have been; my thoughts were wholly engrossed by the terrible fears and suspicions which my last night's conference had suggested to me. He was, as usual, gloomy and abstracted, and I feared in no very fitting mood to hear what I had to say with patience, whether the charges were true or false.

I was, however, determined not to suffer the opportunity to pass, or Lord Glenfallen to leave the room, until, at all hazards, I had unburdened my mind.

'My lord,' said I, after a long silence, summoning up all my firmness−−'my lord, I wish to say a few words to you upon a matter of very great importance, of very deep concernment to you and to me.'

I fixed my eyes upon him to discern, if possible, whether the announcement caused him any uneasiness; but no symptom of any such feeling was perceptible.

'Well, my dear,' said he, 'this is no doubt a very grave preface, and portends, I have no doubt, something extraordinary. Pray let us have it without more ado.'

He took a chair, and seated himself nearly opposite to me.

'My lord,' said I, 'I have seen the person who alarmed me so much a short time since, the blind lady, again, upon last night.' His face, upon which my eyes were fixed, turned pale; he hesitated for a moment, and then said:

'And did you, pray, madam, so totally forget or spurn my express command, as to enter that portion of the house from which your promise, I might say your oath, excluded you?−−answer me that!' he added fiercely.

'My lord,' said I, 'I have neither forgotten your COMMANDS, since such they were, nor disobeyed them. I was, last night, wakened from my sleep, as I lay in my own chamber, and accosted by the person whom I have mentioned. How she found access to the room I cannot pretend to say.'

'Ha! this must be looked to,' said he, half reflectively; 'and pray,' added he, quickly, while in turn he fixed his eyes upon me, 'what did this person say? since some comment upon her communication forms, no doubt, the sequel to your preface.'

'Your lordship is not mistaken,' said I; 'her statement was so extraordinary that I could not think of

withholding it from you. She told me, my lord, that you had a wife living at the time you married me, and that she was that wife.'

Lord Glenfallen became ashy pale, almost livid; he made two or three efforts to clear his voice to speak, but in vain, and turning suddenly from me, he walked to the window. The horror and dismay which, in the olden time, overwhelmed the woman of Endor when her spells unexpectedly conjured the dead into her presence, were but types of what I felt when thus presented with what appeared to be almost unequivocal evidence of the guilt whose existence I had before so strongly doubted.

There was a silence of some moments, during which it were hard to conjecture whether I or my companion suffered most.

Lord Glenfallen soon recovered his self− command; he returned to the table, again sat down and said:

'What you have told me has so astonished me, has unfolded such a tissue of motiveless guilt, and in a quarter from which I had so little reason to look for ingratitude or treachery, that your announcement almost deprived me of speech; the person in question, however, has one excuse, her mind is, as I told you before, unsettled. You should have remembered that, and hesitated to receive as unexceptionable evidence against the honour of your husband, the ravings of a lunatic. I now tell you that this is the last time I shall speak to you upon this subject, and, in the presence of the God who is to judge me, and as I hope for mercy in the day of judgment, I swear that the charge thus brought against me is utterly false, unfounded, and ridiculous; I defy the world in any point to taint my honour; and, as I have never taken the opinion of madmen touching your character or morals, I think it but fair to require that you will evince a like tenderness for me; and now, once for all, never again dare to repeat to me your insulting suspicions, or the clumsy and infamous calumnies of fools. I shall instantly let the worthy lady who contrived this somewhat original device, understand fully my opinion upon the matter. Good morning;' and with these words he left me again in doubt, and involved in all horrors of the most agonising suspense.

I had reason to think that Lord Glenfallen wreaked his vengeance upon the author of the strange story which I had heard, with a violence which was not satisfied with mere words, for old Martha, with whom I was a great favourite, while attending me in my room, told me that she feared her master had ill−used the poor blind Dutch woman, for that she had heard her scream as if the very life were leaving her, but added a request that I should not speak of what she had told me to any one, particularly to the master.

'How do you know that she is a Dutch woman?' inquired I, anxious to learn anything whatever that might throw a light upon the history of this person, who seemed to have resolved to mix herself up in my fortunes.

'Why, my lady,' answered Martha, 'the master often calls her the Dutch hag, and other names you would not like to hear, and I am sure she is neither English nor Irish; for, whenever they talk together, they speak some queer foreign lingo, and fast enough, I'll be bound. But I ought not to talk about her at all; it might be as much as my place is worth to mention her−−only you saw her first yourself, so there can be no great harm in speaking of her now.'

'How long has this lady been here?' continued I.

'She came early on the morning after your ladyship's arrival,' answered she; 'but do not ask me any more, for the master would think nothing of turning me out of doors for daring to speak of her at all, much less to you, my lady.'

I did not like to press the poor woman further, for her reluctance to speak on this topic was evident and strong.

You will readily believe that upon the very slight grounds which my information afforded, contradicted as it was by the solemn oath of my husband, and derived from what was, at best, a very questionable source, I could not take any very decisive measure whatever; and as to the menace of the strange woman who had thus unaccountably twice intruded herself into my chamber, although, at the moment, it occasioned me some uneasiness, it was not, even in my eyes, sufficiently formidable to induce my departure from Cahergillagh.

A few nights after the scene which I have just mentioned, Lord Glenfallen having, as usual, early retired to his study, I was left alone in the parlour to amuse myself as best I might.

It was not strange that my thoughts should often recur to the agitating scenes in which I had recently taken a part.

The subject of my reflections, the solitude, the silence, and the lateness of the hour, as also the depression of spirits to which I had of late been a constant prey, tended to produce that nervous excitement which places us wholly at the mercy of the imagination.

In order to calm my spirits I was endeavouring to direct my thoughts into some more pleasing channel, when I heard, or thought I heard, uttered, within a few yards of me, in an odd, half−sneering tone, the words,

'There is blood upon your ladyship's throat.'

So vivid was the impression that I started to my feet, and involuntarily placed my hand upon my neck.

I looked around the room for the speaker, but in vain.

I went then to the room−door, which I opened, and peered into the passage, nearly faint with horror lest some leering, shapeless thing should greet me upon the threshold.

When I had gazed long enough to assure myself that no strange object was within sight, 'I have been too much of a rake lately; I am racking out my nerves,' said I, speaking aloud, with a view to reassure myself.

I rang the bell, and, attended by old Martha, I retired to settle for the night.

While the servant was−−as was her custom−−arranging the lamp which I have already stated always burned during the night in my chamber, I was employed in undressing, and, in doing so, I had recourse to a large looking−glass which occupied a considerable portion of the wall in which it was fixed, rising from the ground to a height of about six feet−−this mirror filled the space of a large panel in the wainscoting opposite the foot of the bed.

I had hardly been before it for the lapse of a minute when something like a black pall was slowly waved between me and it.

'Oh, God! there it is,' I exclaimed, wildly. 'I have seen it again, Martha−− the black cloth.'

'God be merciful to us, then!' answered she, tremulously crossing herself. 'Some misfortune is over us.'

'No, no, Martha,' said I, almost instantly recovering my collectedness; for, although of a nervous temperament, I had never been superstitious. 'I do not believe in omens. You know I saw, or fancied I saw, this thing before, and nothing followed.'

'The Dutch lady came the next morning,' replied she.

'But surely her coming scarcely deserved such a dreadful warning,' I replied.

'She is a strange woman, my lady,' said Martha; 'and she is not GONE yet−−mark my words.'

'Well, well, Martha,' said I, 'I have not wit enough to change your opinions, nor inclination to alter mine; so I will talk no more of the matter. Good−night,' and so I was left to my reflections.

After lying for about an hour awake, I at length fell into a kind of doze; but my imagination was still busy, for I was startled from this unrefreshing sleep by fancying that I heard a voice close to my face exclaim as before:

'There is blood upon your ladyship's throat.'

The words were instantly followed by a loud burst of laughter.

Quaking with horror, I awakened, and heard my husband enter the room. Even this was it relief.

Scared as I was, however, by the tricks which my imagination had played me, I preferred remaining silent, and pretending to sleep, to attempting to engage my husband in conversation, for I well knew that his mood was such, that his words would not, in all probability, convey anything that had not better be unsaid and unheard.

Lord Glenfallen went into his dressing− room, which lay upon the right−hand side of the bed. The door lying open, I could see him by himself, at full length upon a sofa, and, in about half an hour, I became aware, by his deep and regularly drawn respiration, that he was fast asleep.

When slumber refuses to visit one, there is something peculiarly irritating, not to the temper, but to the nerves, in the consciousness that some one is in your immediate presence, actually enjoying the boon which you are seeking in vain; at least, I have always found it so, and never more than upon the present occasion.

A thousand annoying imaginations harassed and excited me; every object which I looked upon, though ever so familiar, seemed to have acquired a strange phantom− like character, the varying shadows thrown by the flickering of the lamplight, seemed shaping themselves into grotesque and unearthly forms, and whenever my eyes wandered to the sleeping figure of my husband, his features appeared to undergo the strangest and most demoniacal contortions.

Hour after hour was told by the old clock, and each succeeding one found me, if possible, less inclined to sleep than its predecessor.

It was now considerably past three; my eyes, in their involuntary wanderings, happened to alight upon the large mirror which was, as I have said, fixed in the wall opposite the foot of the bed. A view of it was commanded from where I lay, through the curtains. As I gazed fixedly upon it, I thought I perceived the broad sheet of glass

shifting its position in relation to the bed; I riveted my eyes upon it with intense scrutiny; it was no deception, the mirror, as if acting of its own impulse, moved slowly aside, and disclosed a dark aperture in the wall, nearly as large as an ordinary door; a figure evidently stood in this, but the light was too dim to define it accurately.

It stepped cautiously into the chamber, and with so little noise, that had I not actually seen it, I do not think I should have been aware of its presence. It was arrayed in a kind of woollen night−dress, and a white handkerchief or cloth was bound tightly about the head; I had no difficulty, spite of the strangeness of the attire, in recognising the blind woman whom I so much dreaded.

She stooped down, bringing her head nearly to the ground, and in that attitude she remained motionless for some moments, no doubt in order to ascertain if any suspicious sound were stirring.

She was apparently satisfied by her observations, for she immediately recommenced her silent progress towards a ponderous mahogany dressing−table of my husband's. When she had reached it, she paused again, and appeared to listen attentively for some minutes; she then noiselessly opened one of the drawers, from which, having groped for some time, she took something, which I soon perceived to be a case of razors. She opened it, and tried the edge of each of the two instruments upon the skin of her hand; she quickly selected one, which she fixed firmly in her grasp. She now stooped down as before, and having listened for a time, she, with the hand that was disengaged, groped her way into the dressing−room where Lord Glenfallen lay fast asleep.

I was fixed as if in the tremendous spell of a nightmare. I could not stir even a finger; I could not lift my voice; I could not even breathe; and though I expected every moment to see the sleeping man murdered, I could not even close my eyes to shut out the horrible spectacle, which I had not the power to avert.

I saw the woman approach the sleeping figure, she laid the unoccupied hand lightly along his clothes, and having thus ascertained his identity, she, after a brief interval, turned back and again entered my chamber; here she bent down again to listen.

I had now not a doubt but that the razor was intended for my throat; yet the terrific fascination which had locked all my powers so long, still continued to bind me fast.

I felt that my life depended upon the slightest ordinary exertion, and yet I could not stir one joint from the position in which I lay, nor even make noise enough to waken Lord Glenfallen.

The murderous woman now, with long, silent steps, approached the bed; my very heart seemed turning to ice; her left hand, that which was disengaged, was upon the pillow; she gradually slid it forward towards my head, and in an instant, with the speed of lightning, it was clutched in my hair, while, with the other hand, she dashed the razor at my throat.

A slight inaccuracy saved me from instant death; the blow fell short, the point of the razor grazing my throat. In a moment, I know not how, I found myself at the other side of the bed, uttering shriek after shriek; the wretch was, however, determined if possible to murder me.

Scrambling along by the curtains, she rushed round the bed towards me; I seized the handle of the door to make my escape. It was, however, fastened. At all events, I could not open it. From the mere instinct of recoiling terror, I shrunk back into a corner. She was now within a yard of me. Her hand was upon my face.

I closed my eyes fast, expecting never to open them again, when a blow, inflicted from behind by a strong arm, stretched the monster senseless at my feet. At the same moment the door opened, and several domestics, alarmed by my cries, entered the apartment.

I do not recollect what followed, for I fainted. One swoon succeeded another, so long and death−like, that my life was considered very doubtful.

At about ten o'clock, however, I sunk into a deep and refreshing sleep, from which I was awakened at about two, that I might swear my deposition before a magistrate, who attended for that purpose.

I accordingly did so, as did also Lord Glenfallen, and the woman was fully committed to stand her trial at the ensuing assizes.

I shall never forget the scene which the examination of the blind woman and of the other parties afforded.

She was brought into the room in the custody of two servants. She wore a kind of flannel wrapper which had not been changed since the night before. It was torn and soiled, and here and there smeared with blood, which had flowed in large quantities from a wound in her head. The white handkerchief had fallen off in the scuffle, and her grizzled hair fell in masses about her wild and deadly pale countenance.

She appeared perfectly composed, however, and the only regret she expressed throughout, was at not having

succeeded in her attempt, the object of which she did not pretend to conceal.

On being asked her name, she called herself the Countess Glenfallen, and refused to give any other title.

'The woman's name is Flora Van− Kemp,' said Lord Glenfallen.

'It WAS, it WAS, you perjured traitor and cheat!' screamed the woman; and then there followed a volley of words in some foreign language. 'Is there a magistrate here?' she resumed; 'I am Lord Glenfallen's wife−−I'll prove it−− write down my words. I am willing to be hanged or burned, so HE meets his deserts. I did try to kill that doll of his; but it was he who put it into my head to do it−−two wives were too many; I was to murder her, or she was to hang me; listen to all I have to say.'

Here Lord Glenfallen interrupted.

'I think, sir,' said he, addressing the magistrate, 'that we had better proceed to business; this unhappy woman's furious recriminations but waste our time. If she refuses to answer your questions, you had better, I presume, take my depositions.'

'And are you going to swear away my life, you black−perjured murderer?' shrieked the woman. 'Sir, sir, sir, you must hear me,' she continued, addressing the magistrate; 'I can convict him−−he bid me murder that girl, and then, when I failed, he came behind me, and struck me down, and now he wants to swear away my life. Take down all I say.'

'If it is your intention,' said the magistrate, 'to confess the crime with which you stand charged, you may, upon producing sufficient evidence, criminate whom you please.'

'Evidence!−−I have no evidence but myself,' said the woman. 'I will swear it all−−write down my testimony−−write it down, I say−−we shall hang side by side, my brave lord−−all your own handy−work, my gentle husband.'

This was followed by a low, insolent, and sneering laugh, which, from one in her situation, was sufficiently horrible.

'I will not at present hear anything,' replied he, 'but distinct answers to the questions which I shall put to you upon this matter.'

'Then you shall hear nothing,' replied she sullenly, and no inducement or intimidation could bring her to speak again.

Lord Glenfallen's deposition and mine were then given, as also those of the servants who had entered the room at the moment of my rescue.

The magistrate then intimated that she was committed, and must proceed directly to gaol, whither she was brought in a carriage; of Lord Glenfallen's, for his lordship was naturally by no means in− different to the effect which her vehement accusations against himself might produce, if uttered before every chance hearer whom she might meet with between Cahergillagh and the place of confinement whither she was despatched.

During the time which intervened between the committal and the trial of the prisoner, Lord Glenfallen seemed to suffer agonies of mind which baffle all description; he hardly ever slept, and when he did, his slumbers seemed but the instruments of new tortures, and his waking hours were, if possible, exceeded in intensity of terrors by the dreams which disturbed his sleep.

Lord Glenfallen rested, if to lie in the mere attitude of repose were to do so, in his dressing−room, and thus I had an opportunity of witnessing, far oftener than I wished it, the fearful workings of his mind. His agony often broke out into such fearful paroxysms that delirium and total loss of reason appeared to be impending. He frequently spoke of flying from the country, and bringing with him all the witnesses of the appalling scene upon which the prosecution was founded; then, again, he would fiercely lament that the blow which he had inflicted had not ended all.

The assizes arrived, however, and upon the day appointed Lord Glenfallen and I attended in order to give our evidence.

The cause was called on, and the prisoner appeared at the bar.

Great curiosity and interest were felt respecting the trial, so that the court was crowded to excess.

The prisoner, however, without appearing to take the trouble of listening to the indictment, pleaded guilty, and no repre− sentations on the part of the court availed to induce her to retract her plea.

After much time had been wasted in a fruitless attempt to prevail upon her to reconsider her words, the court proceeded, according to the usual form, to pass sentence.

This having been done, the prisoner was about to be removed, when she said, in a low, distinct voice:

'A word−−a word, my lord!−−Is Lord Glenfallen here in the court?'

On being told that he was, she raised her voice to a tone of loud menace, and continued:

'Hardress, Earl of Glenfallen, I accuse you here in this court of justice of two crimes,−−first, that you married a second wife, while the first was living; and again, that you prompted me to the murder, for attempting which I am to die. Secure him−−chain him−−bring him here.'

There was a laugh through the court at these words, which were naturally treated by the judge as a violent extemporary recrimination, and the woman was desired to be silent.

'You won't take him, then?' she said; 'you won't try him? You'll let him go free?'

It was intimated by the court that he would certainly be allowed 'to go free,' and she was ordered again to be removed.

Before, however, the mandate was executed, she threw her arms wildly into the air, and uttered one piercing shriek so full of preternatural rage and despair, that it might fitly have ushered a soul into those realms where hope can come no more.

The sound still rang in my ears, months after the voice that had uttered it was for ever silent.

The wretched woman was executed in accordance with the sentence which had been pronounced.

For some time after this event, Lord Glenfallen appeared, if possible, to suffer more than he had done before, and altogether his language, which often amounted to half confessions of the guilt imputed to him, and all the circumstances connected with the late occurrences, formed a mass of evidence so convincing that I wrote to my father, detailing the grounds of my fears, and imploring him to come to Cahergillagh without delay, in order to remove me from my husband's control, previously to taking legal steps for a final separation.

Circumstanced as I was, my existence was little short of intolerable, for, besides the fearful suspicions which attached to my husband, I plainly perceived that if Lord Glenfallen were not relieved, and that speedily, insanity must supervene. I therefore expected my father's arrival, or at least a letter to announce it, with indescribable impatience.

About a week after the execution had taken place, Lord Glenfallen one morning met me with an unusually sprightly air.

'Fanny,' said he, 'I have it now for the first time in my power to explain to your satisfaction everything which has hitherto appeared suspicious or mysterious in my conduct. After breakfast come with me to my study, and I shall, I hope, make all things clear.'

This invitation afforded me more real pleasure than I had experienced for months. Something had certainly occurred to tranquillize my husband's mind in no ordinary degree, and I thought it by no means impossible that he would, in the proposed interview, prove himself the most injured and innocent of men.

Full of this hope, I repaired to his study at the appointed hour. He was writing busily when I entered the room, and just raising his eyes, he requested me to be seated.

I took a chair as he desired, and remained silently awaiting his leisure, while he finished, folded, directed, and sealed his letter. Laying it then upon the table with the address downward, he said,

'My dearest Fanny, I know I must have appeared very strange to you and very unkind−−often even cruel. Before the end of this week I will show you the necessity of my conduct−−how impossible it was that I should have seemed otherwise. I am conscious that many acts of mine must have inevitably given rise to painful suspicions−−suspicions which, indeed, upon one occasion, you very properly communicated to me. I have got two letters from a quarter which commands respect, containing information as to the course by which I may be enabled to prove the negative of all the crimes which even the most credulous suspicion could lay to my charge. I expected a third by this morning's post, containing documents which will set the matter for ever at rest, but owing, no doubt, to some neglect, or, perhaps, to some difficulty in collecting the papers, some inevitable delay, it has not come to hand this morning, according to my expectation. I was finishing one to the very same quarter when you came in, and if a sound rousing be worth anything, I think I shall have a special messenger before two days have passed. I have been anxiously considering with myself, as to whether I had better imperfectly clear up your doubts by submitting to your inspection the two letters which I have already received, or wait till I can triumphantly vindicate myself by the production of the documents which I have already mentioned, and I have, I think, not unnaturally decided upon the latter course. However, there is a person in the next room whose testimony is not

without its value excuse me for one moment.'

So saying, he arose and went to the door of a closet which opened from the study; this he unlocked, and half opening the door, he said, 'It is only I,' and then slipped into the room and carefully closed and locked the door behind him.

I immediately heard his voice in animated conversation. My curiosity upon the subject of the letter was naturally great, so, smothering any little scruples which I might have felt, I resolved to look at the address of the letter which lay, as my husband had left it, with its face upon the table. I accordingly drew it over to me and turned up the direction.

For two or three moments I could scarce believe my eyes, but there could be no mistake−−in large characters were traced the words, 'To the Archangel Gabriel in Heaven.'

I had scarcely returned the letter to its original position, and in some degree recovered the shock which this unequivocal proof of insanity produced, when the closet door was unlocked, and Lord Glenfallen re−entered the study, carefully closing and locking the door again upon the outside.

'Whom have you there?' inquired I, making a strong effort to appear calm.

'Perhaps,' said he, musingly, 'you might have some objection to seeing her, at least for a time.'

'Who is it?' repeated I.

'Why,' said he, 'I see no use in hiding it−−the blind Dutchwoman. I have been with her the whole morning. She is very anxious to get out of that closet; but you know she is odd, she is scarcely to be trusted.'

A heavy gust of wind shook the door at this moment with a sound as if something more substantial were pushing against it.

'Ha, ha, ha!−−do you hear her?' said he, with an obstreperous burst of laughter.

The wind died away in a long howl, and Lord Glenfallen, suddenly checking his merriment, shrugged his shoulders, and muttered:

'Poor devil, she has been hardly used.'

'We had better not tease her at present with questions,' said I, in as unconcerned a tone as I could assume, although I felt every moment as if I should faint.

'Humph! may be so,' said he. 'Well, come back in an hour or two, or when you please, and you will find us here.'

He again unlocked the door, and entered with the same precautions which he had adopted before, locking the door upon the inside; and as I hurried from the room, I heard his voice again exerted as if in eager parley.

I can hardly describe my emotions; my hopes had been raised to the highest, and now, in an instant, all was gone−−the dreadful consummation was accomplished−− the fearful retribution had fallen upon the guilty man−−the mind was destroyed−−the power to repent was gone.

The agony of the hours which followed what I would still call my AWFUL interview with Lord Glenfallen, I cannot describe; my solitude was, however, broken in upon by Martha, who came to inform me of the arrival of a gentleman, who expected me in the parlour.

I accordingly descended, and, to my great joy, found my father seated by the fire.

This expedition upon his part was easily accounted for: my communications had touched the honour of the family. I speedily informed him of the dreadful malady which had fallen upon the wretched man.

My father suggested the necessity of placing some person to watch him, to prevent his injuring himself or others.

I rang the bell, and desired that one Edward Cooke, an attached servant of the family, should be sent to me.

I told him distinctly and briefly the nature of the service required of him, and, attended by him, my father and I proceeded at once to the study. The door of the inner room was still closed, and everything in the outer chamber remained in the same order in which I had left it.

We then advanced to the closet−door, at which we knocked, but without receiving any answer.

We next tried to open the door, but in vain−−it was locked upon the inside. We knocked more loudly, but in vain.

Seriously alarmed, I desired the servant to force the door, which was, after several violent efforts, accomplished, and we entered the closet.

Lord Glenfallen was lying on his face upon a sofa.

'Hush!' said I, 'he is asleep.' We paused for a moment.

'He is too still for that,' said my father.

We all of us felt a strong reluctance to approach the figure.

'Edward,' said I, 'try whether your master sleeps.'

The servant approached the sofa where Lord Glenfallen lay. He leant his ear towards the head of the recumbent figure, to ascertain whether the sound of breathing was audible. He turned towards us, and said:

'My lady, you had better not wait here; I am sure he is dead!'

'Let me see the face,' said I, terribly agitated; 'you MAY be mistaken.'

The man then, in obedience to my command, turned the body round, and, gracious God! what a sight met my view. He was, indeed, perfectly dead.

The whole breast of the shirt, with its lace frill, was drenched with gore, as was the couch underneath the spot where he lay.

The head hung back, as it seemed, almost severed from the body by a frightful gash, which yawned across the throat. The instrument which had inflicted it was found under his body.

All, then, was over; I was never to learn the history in whose termination I had been so deeply and so tragically involved.

The severe discipline which my mind had undergone was not bestowed in vain. I directed my thoughts and my hopes to that place where there is no more sin, nor danger, nor sorrow.

Thus ends a brief tale whose prominent incidents many will recognise as having marked the history of a distinguished family; and though it refers to a somewhat distant date, we shall be found not to have taken, upon that account, any liberties with the facts, but in our statement of all the incidents to have rigorously and faithfully adhered to the truth.

AN ADVENTURE OF HARDRESS FITZGERALD, A ROYALIST CAPTAIN.

Being an Eleventh Extract from the Legacy of the late Francis Purcell, P.P. of Drumcoolagh.

The following brief narrative contains a faithful account of one of the many strange incidents which chequered the life of Hardress Fitzgerald−−one of the now−forgotten heroes who flourished during the most stirring and, though the most disastrous, by no means the least glorious period of our eventful history.

He was a captain of horse in the army of James, and shared the fortunes of his master, enduring privations, encountering dangers, and submitting to vicissitudes the most galling and ruinous, with a fortitude and a heroism which would, if coupled with his other virtues have rendered the unhappy monarch whom he served, the most illustrious among unfortunate princes.

I have always preferred, where I could do so with any approach to accuracy, to give such relations as the one which I am about to submit to you, in the first person, and in the words of the original narrator, believing that such a form of recitation not only gives freshness to the tale, but in this particular instance, by bringing before me and steadily fixing in my mind's eye the veteran royalist who himself related the occurrence which I am about to record, furnishes an additional stimulant to my memory, and a proportionate check upon my imagination.

As nearly as I can recollect then, his statement was as follows:

After the fatal battle of the Boyne, I came up in disguise to Dublin, as did many in a like situation, regarding the capital as furnishing at once a good central position of observation, and as secure a lurking−place as I cared to find.

I would not suffer myself to believe that the cause of my royal master was so desperate as it really was; and while I lay in my lodgings, which consisted of the garret of a small dark house, standing in the lane which runs close by Audoen's Arch, I busied myself with continual projects for the raising of the country, and the re−collecting of the fragments of the defeated army−−plans, you will allow, sufficiently magnificent for a poor devil who dared scarce show his face abroad in the daylight.

I believe, however, that I had not much reason to fear for my personal safety, for men's minds in the city were greatly occupied with public events, and private amusements and debaucheries, which were, about that time, carried to an excess which our country never knew before, by reason of the raking together from all quarters of the empire, and indeed from most parts of Holland, the most dissolute and des− perate adventurers who cared to play at hazard for their lives; and thus there seemed to be but little scrutiny into the characters of those who sought concealment.

I heard much at different times of the intentions of King James and his party, but nothing with certainty.

Some said that the king still lay in Ireland; others, that he had crossed over to Scotland, to encourage the Highlanders, who, with Dundee at their head, had been stirring in his behoof; others, again, said that he had taken ship for France, leaving his followers to shift for themselves, and regarding his kingdom as wholly lost, which last was the true version, as I afterwards learned.

Although I had been very active in the wars in Ireland, and had done many deeds of necessary but dire severity, which have often since troubled me much to think upon, yet I doubted not but that I might easily obtain protection for my person and property from the Prince of Orange, if I sought it by the ordinary submissions; but besides that my conscience and my affections resisted such time−serving concessions, I was resolved in my own mind that the cause of the royalist party was by no means desperate, and I looked to keep myself unimpeded by any pledge or promise given to the usurping Dutchman, that I might freely and honourably take a share in any struggle which might yet remain to be made for the right.

I therefore lay quiet, going forth from my lodgings but little, and that chiefly under cover of the dusk, and conversing hardly at all, except with those whom I well knew.

I had like once to have paid dearly for relaxing this caution; for going into a tavern one evening near the Tholsel, I had the confidence to throw off my hat, and sit there with my face quite exposed, when a fellow coming in with some troopers, they fell a−boozing, and being somewhat warmed, they began to drink 'Confusion to popery,' and the like, and to compel the peaceable persons who happened to sit there, to join them in so doing.

Though I was rather hot−blooded, I was resolved to say nothing to attract notice; but, at the same time, if

urged to pledge the toasts which they were compelling others to drink, to resist doing so.

With the intent to withdraw myself quietly from the place, I paid my reckoning, and putting on my hat, was going into the street, when the countryman who had come in with the soldiers called out:

'Stop that popish tom−cat!'

And running across the room, he got to the door before me, and, shutting it, placed his back against it, to prevent my going out.

Though with much difficulty, I kept an appearance of quietness, and turning to the fellow, who, from his accent, I judged to be northern, and whose face I knew−− though, to this day, I cannot say where I had seen him before−−I observed very calmly:

'Sir, I came in here with no other design than to refresh myself, without offending any man. I have paid my reckoning, and now desire to go forth. If there is anything within reason that I can do to satisfy you, and to prevent trouble and delay to myself, name your terms, and if they be but fair, I will frankly comply with them.'

He quickly replied:

'You are Hardress Fitzgerald, the bloody popish captain, that hanged the twelve men at Derry.'

I felt that I was in some danger, but being a strong man, and used to perils of all kinds, it was not easy to disconcert me.

I looked then steadily at the fellow, and, in a voice of much confidence, I said:

'I am neither a Papist, a Royalist, nor a Fitzgerald, but an honester Protestant, mayhap, than many who make louder professions.'

'Then drink the honest man's toast,' said he. 'Damnation to the pope, and confusion to skulking Jimmy and his runaway crew.'

'Yourself shall hear me,' said I, taking the largest pewter pot that lay within my reach. 'Tapster, fill this with ale; I grieve to say I can afford nothing better.'

I took the vessel of liquor in my hand, and walking up to him, I first made a bow to the troopers who sat laughing at the sprightliness of their facetious friend, and then another to himself, when saying, 'G−− damn yourself and your cause!' I flung the ale straight into his face; and before he had time to recover himself, I struck him with my whole force and weight with the pewter pot upon the head, so strong a blow, that he fell, for aught I know, dead upon the floor, and nothing but the handle of the vessel remained in my hand.

I opened the door, but one of the dragoons drew his sabre, and ran at me to avenge his companion. With my hand I put aside the blade of the sword, narrowly escaping what he had intended for me, the point actually tearing open my vest. Without allowing him time to repeat his thrust, I struck him in the face with my clenched fist so sound a blow that he rolled back into the room with the force of a tennis ball.

It was well for me that the rest were half drunk, and the evening dark; for otherwise my folly would infallibly have cost me my life. As it was, I reached my garret in safety, with a resolution to frequent taverns no more until better times.

My little patience and money were well− nigh exhausted, when, after much doubt and uncertainty, and many conflicting reports, I was assured that the flower of the Royalist army, under the Duke of Berwick and General Boisleau, occupied the city of Limerick, with a determination to hold that fortress against the prince's forces; and that a French fleet of great power, and well freighted with arms, ammunition, and men, was riding in the Shannon, under the walls of the town. But this last report was, like many others then circulated, untrue; there being, indeed, a promise and expectation of such assistance, but no arrival of it till too late.

The army of the Prince of Orange was said to be rapidly approaching the town, in order to commence the siege.

On hearing this, and being made as certain as the vagueness and unsatisfactory nature of my information, which came not from any authentic source, would permit; at least, being sure of the main point, which all allowed−−namely, that Limerick was held for the king−−and being also naturally fond of enterprise, and impatient of idleness, I took the resolution to travel thither, and, if possible, to throw myself into the city, in order to lend what assistance I might to my former companions in arms, well knowing that any man of strong constitution and of some experience might easily make himself useful to a garrison in their straitened situation.

When I had taken this resolution, I was not long in putting it into execution; and, as the first step in the matter, I turned half of the money which remained with me, in all about seventeen pounds, into small wares and

merchandise such as travelling traders used to deal in; and the rest, excepting some shillings which I carried home for my immediate expenses, I sewed carefully in the lining of my breeches waistband, hoping that the sale of my commodities might easily supply me with subsistence upon the road.

I left Dublin upon a Friday morning in the month of September, with a tolerably heavy pack upon my back.

I was a strong man and a good walker, and one day with another travelled easily at the rate of twenty miles in each day, much time being lost in the towns of any note on the way, where, to avoid suspicion, I was obliged to make some stay, as if to sell my wares.

I did not travel directly to Limerick, but turned far into Tipperary, going near to the borders of Cork.

Upon the sixth day after my departure from Dublin I learned, CERTAINLY, from some fellows who were returning from trafficking with the soldiers, that the army of the prince was actually encamped before Limerick, upon the south side of the Shannon.

In order, then, to enter the city without interruption, I must needs cross the river, and I was much in doubt whether to do so by boat from Kerry, which I might have easily done, into the Earl of Clare's land, and thus into the beleaguered city, or to take what seemed the easier way, one, however, about which I had certain misgivings −−which, by the way, afterwards turned out to be just enough. This way was to cross the Shannon at O'Brien's Bridge, or at Killaloe, into the county of Clare.

I feared, however, that both these passes were guarded by the prince's forces, and resolved, if such were the case, not to essay to cross, for I was not fitted to sustain a scrutiny, having about me, though pretty safely secured, my commission from King James−−which, though a dangerous companion, I would not have parted from but with my life.

I settled, then, in my own mind, that if the bridges were guarded I would walk as far as Portumna, where I might cross, though at a considerable sacrifice of time; and, having determined upon this course, I turned directly towards Killaloe.

I reached the foot of the mountain, or rather high hill, called Keeper−−which had been pointed out to me as a landmark−− lying directly between me and Killaloe, in the evening, and, having ascended some way, the darkness and fog overtook me.

The evening was very chilly, and myself weary, hungry, and much in need of sleep, so that I preferred seeking to cross the hill, though at some risk, to remaining upon it throughout the night. Stumbling over rocks and sinking into bog−mire, as the nature of the ground varied, I slowly and laboriously plodded on, making very little way in proportion to the toil it cost me.

After half an hour's slow walking, or rather rambling, for, owing to the dark, I very soon lost my direction, I at last heard the sound of running water, and with some little trouble reached the edge of a brook, which ran in the bottom of a deep gully. This I knew would furnish a sure guide to the low grounds, where I might promise myself that I should speedily meet with some house or cabin where I might find shelter for the night.

The stream which I followed flowed at the bottom of a rough and swampy glen, very steep and making many abrupt turns, and so dark, owing more to the fog than to the want of the moon (for, though not high, I believe it had risen at the time), that I continually fell over fragments of rock and stumbled up to my middle into the rivulet, which I sought to follow.

In this way, drenched, weary, and with my patience almost exhausted, I was toiling onward, when, turning a sharp angle in the winding glen, I found myself within some twenty yards of a group of wild−looking men, gathered in various attitudes round a glowing turf fire.

I was so surprised at this rencontre that I stopped short, and for a time was in doubt whether to turn back or to accost them.

A minute's thought satisfied me that I ought to make up to the fellows, and trust to their good faith for whatever assistance they could give me.

I determined, then, to do this, having great faith in the impulses of my mind, which, whenever I have been in jeopardy, as in my life I often have, always prompted me aright.

The strong red light of the fire showed me plainly enough that the group consisted, not of soldiers, but of Irish kernes, or countrymen, most of them wrapped in heavy mantles, and with no other covering for their heads than that afforded by their long, rough hair.

There was nothing about them which I could see to intimate whether their object were peaceful or warlike; but

I afterwards found that they had weapons enough, though of their own rude fashion.

There were in all about twenty persons assembled around the fire, some sitting upon such blocks of stone as happened to lie in the way; others stretched at their length upon the ground.

'God save you, boys!' said I, advancing towards the party.

The men who had been talking and laughing together instantly paused, and two of them−−tall and powerful fellows−− snatched up each a weapon, something like a short halberd with a massive iron head, an instrument which they called among themselves a rapp, and with two or three long strides they came up with me, and laying hold upon my arms, drew me, not, you may easily believe, making much resistance, towards the fire.

When I reached the place where the figures were seated, the two men still held me firmly, and some others threw some handfuls of dry fuel upon the red embers, which, blazing up, cast a strong light upon me.

When they had satisfied themselves as to my appearance, they began to question me very closely as to my purpose in being upon the hill at such an unseasonable hour, asking me what was my occupation, where I had been, and whither I was going.

These questions were put to me in English by an old half−military looking man, who translated into that language the suggestions which his companions for the most part threw out in Irish.

I did not choose to commit myself to these fellows by telling them my real character and purpose, and therefore I represented myself as a poor travelling chapman who had been at Cork, and was seeking his way to Killaloe, in order to cross over into Clare and thence to the city of Galway.

My account did not seem fully to satisfy the men.

I heard one fellow say in Irish, which language I understood, 'Maybe he is a spy.'

They then whispered together for a time, and the little man who was their spokesman came over to me and said:

'Do you know what we do with spies? we knock their brains out, my friend.'

He then turned back to them with whom he had been whispering, and talked in a low tone again with them for a considerable time.

I now felt very uncomfortable, not knowing what these savages−−for they appeared nothing better−−might design against me.

Twice or thrice I had serious thoughts of breaking from them, but the two guards who were placed upon me held me fast by the arms; and even had I succeeded in shaking them off, I should soon have been overtaken, encumbered as I was with a heavy pack, and wholly ignorant of the lie of the ground; or else, if I were so exceedingly lucky as to escape out of their hands, I still had the chance of falling into those of some other party of the same kind.

I therefore patiently awaited the issue of their deliberations, which I made no doubt affected me nearly.

I turned to the men who held me, and one after the other asked them, in their own language, 'Why they held me?' adding, 'I am but a poor pedlar, as you see. I have neither money nor money's worth, for the sake of which you should do me hurt. You may have my pack and all that it contains, if you desire it−−but do not injure me.'

To all this they gave no answer, but savagely desired me to hold my tongue.

I accordingly remained silent, determined, if the worst came, to declare to the whole party, who, I doubted not, were friendly, as were all the Irish peasantry in the south, to the Royal cause, my real character and design; and if this avowal failed me, I was resolved to make a desperate effort to escape, or at least to give my life at the dearest price I could.

I was not kept long in suspense, for the little veteran who had spoken to me at first came over, and desiring the two men to bring me after him, led the way along a broken path, which wound by the side of the steep glen.

I was obliged willy nilly to go with them, and, half−dragging and half−carrying me, they brought me by the path, which now became very steep, for some hundred yards without stopping, when suddenly coming to a stand, I found myself close before the door of some house or hut, I could not see which, through the planks of which a strong light was streaming.

At this door my conductor stopped, and tapping gently at it, it was opened by a stout fellow, with buff−coat and jack−boots, and pistols stuck in his belt, as also a long cavalry sword by his side.

He spoke with my guide, and to my no small satisfaction, in French, which convinced me that he was one of the soldiers whom Louis had sent to support our king, and who were said to have arrived in Limerick, though, as I

observed above, not with truth.

I was much assured by this circumstance, and made no doubt but that I had fallen in with one of those marauding parties of native Irish, who, placing themselves under the guidance of men of courage and experience, had done much brave and essential service to the cause of the king.

The soldier entered an inner door in the apartment, which opening disclosed a rude, dreary, and dilapidated room, with a low plank ceiling, much discoloured by the smoke which hung suspended in heavy masses, descending within a few feet of the ground, and completely obscuring the upper regions of the chamber.

A large fire of turf and heath was burning under a kind of rude chimney, shaped like a large funnel, but by no means discharging the functions for which it was intended. Into this inauspicious apartment was I conducted by my strange companions. In the next room I heard voices employed, as it seemed, in brief questioning and answer; and in a minute the soldier re− entered the room, and having said, 'Votre prisonnier−−le general veut le voir,' he led the way into the inner room, which in point of comfort and cleanliness was not a whit better than the first.

Seated at a clumsy plank table, placed about the middle of the floor, was a powerfully built man, of almost colossal stature−− his military accoutrements, cuirass and rich regimental clothes, soiled, deranged, and spattered with recent hard travel; the flowing wig, surmounted by the cocked hat and plume, still rested upon his head. On the table lay his sword−belt with its appendage, and a pair of long holster pistols, some papers, and pen and ink; also a stone jug, and the fragments of a hasty meal. His attitude betokened the languor of fatigue. His left hand was buried beyond the lace ruffle in the breast of his cassock, and the elbow of his right rested upon the table, so as to support his head. From his mouth protruded a tobacco−pipe, which as I entered he slowly withdrew.

A single glance at the honest, good− humoured, comely face of the soldier satisfied me of his identity, and removing my hat from my head I said, 'God save General Sarsfield!'

The general nodded

'I am a prisoner here under strange circumstances,' I continued 'I appear before you in a strange disguise. You do not recognise Captain Hardress Fitzgerald!'

'Eh, how's this?' said he, approaching me with the light.

'I am that Hardress Fitzgerald,' I repeated, 'who served under you at the Boyne, and upon the day of the action had the honour to protect your person at the expense of his own.' At the same time I turned aside the hair which covered the scar which you well know upon my forehead, and which was then much more remarkable than it is now.

The general on seeing this at once recognised me, and embracing me cordially, made me sit down, and while I unstrapped my pack, a tedious job, my fingers being nearly numbed with cold, sent the men forth to procure me some provision.

The general's horse was stabled in a corner of the chamber where we sat, and his war−saddle lay upon the floor. At the far end of the room was a second door, which stood half open; a bogwood fire burned on a hearth somewhat less rude than the one which I had first seen, but still very little better appointed with a chimney, for thick wreaths of smoke were eddying, with every fitful gust, about the room. Close by the fire was strewed a bed of heath, intended, I supposed, for the stalwart limbs of the general.

'Hardress Fitzgerald,' said he, fixing his eyes gravely upon me, while he slowly removed the tobacco−pipe from his mouth, 'I remember you, strong, bold and cunning in your warlike trade; the more desperate an enterprise, the more ready for it, you. I would gladly engage you, for I know you trustworthy, to perform a piece of duty requiring, it may be, no extraordinary quality to fulfil; and yet perhaps, as accidents may happen, demanding every attribute of daring and dexterity which belongs to you.'

Here he paused for some moments.

I own I felt somewhat flattered by the terms in which he spoke of me, knowing him to be but little given to compliments; and not having any plan in my head, farther than the rendering what service I might to the cause of the king, caring very little as to the road in which my duty might lie, I frankly replied:

'Sir, I hope, if opportunity offers, I shall prove to deserve the honourable terms in which you are pleased to speak of me. In a righteous cause I fear not wounds or death; and in discharging my duty to my God and my king, I am ready for any hazard or any fate. Name the service you require, and if it lies within the compass of my wit or power, I will fully and faithfully perform it. Have I said enough?'

'That is well, very well, my friend; you speak well, and manfully,' replied the general. 'I want you to convey to

the hands of General Boisleau, now in the city of Limerick, a small written packet; there is some danger, mark me, of your falling in with some outpost or straggling party of the prince's army. If you are taken unawares by any of the enemy you must dispose of the packet inside your person, rather than let it fall into their hands−−that is, you must eat it. And if they go to question you with thumb− screws, or the like, answer nothing; let them knock your brains out first.' In illustration, I suppose, of the latter alternative, he knocked the ashes out of his pipe upon the table as he uttered it.

'The packet,' he continued, 'you shall have to−morrow morning. Meantime comfort yourself with food, and afterwards with sleep; you will want, mayhap, all your strength and wits on the morrow.'

I applied myself forthwith to the homely fare which they had provided, and I confess that I never made a meal so heartily to my satisfaction.

It was a beautiful, clear, autumn morning, and the bright beams of the early sun were slanting over the brown heath which clothed the sides of the mountain, and glittering in the thousand bright drops which the melting hoar−frost had left behind it, and the white mists were lying like broad lakes in the valleys, when, with my pedlar's pack upon my back, and General Sarsfield's precious despatch in my bosom, I set forth, refreshed and courageous.

As I descended the hill, my heart expanded and my spirits rose under the influences which surrounded me. The keen, clear, bracing air of the morning, the bright, slanting sunshine, the merry songs of the small birds, and the distant sounds of awakening labour that floated up from the plains, all conspired to stir my heart within me, and more like a mad−cap boy, broken loose from school, than a man of sober years upon a mission of doubt and danger, I trod lightly on, whistling and singing alternately for very joy.

As I approached the object of my early march, I fell in with a countryman, eager, as are most of his kind, for news.

I gave him what little I had collected, and professing great zeal for the king, which, indeed, I always cherished, I won upon his confidence so far, that he became much more communicative than the peasantry in those quarters are generally wont to be to strangers.

From him I learned that there was a company of dragoons in William's service, quartered at Willaloe; but he could not tell whether the passage of the bridge was stopped by them or not. With a resolution, at all events, to make the attempt to cross, I approached the town. When I came within sight of the river, I quickly perceived that it was so swollen with the recent rains, as, indeed, the countryman had told me, that the fords were wholly impassable.

I stopped then, upon a slight eminence overlooking the village, with a view to reconnoitre and to arrange my plans in case of interruption. While thus engaged, the wind blowing gently from the west, in which quarter Limerick lay, I distinctly heard the explosion of the cannon, which played from and against the city, though at a distance of eleven miles at the least.

I never yet heard the music that had for me half the attractions of that sullen sound, and as I noted again and again the distant thunder that proclaimed the perils, and the valour, and the faithfulness of my brethren, my heart swelled with pride, and the tears rose to my eyes; and lifting up my hands to heaven, I prayed to God that I might be spared to take a part in the righteous quarrel that was there so bravely maintained.

I felt, indeed, at this moment a longing, more intense than I have the power to describe, to be at once with my brave companions in arms, and so inwardly excited and stirred up as if I had been actually within five minutes' march of the field of battle.

It was now almost noon, and I had walked hard since morning across a difficult and broken country, so that I was a little fatigued, and in no small degree hungry. As I approached the hamlet, I was glad to see in the window of a poor hovel several large cakes of meal displayed, as if to induce purchasers to enter.

I was right in regarding this exhi− bition as an intimation that entertainment might be procured within, for upon entering and inquiring, I was speedily invited by the poor woman, who, it appeared, kept this humble house of refreshment, to lay down my pack and seat myself by a ponderous table, upon which she promised to serve me with a dinner fit for a king; and indeed, to my mind, she amply fulfilled her engagement, supplying me abundantly with eggs, bacon, and wheaten cakes, which I discussed with a zeal which almost surprised myself.

Having disposed of the solid part of my entertainment, I was proceeding to regale myself with a brimming measure of strong waters, when my attention was arrested by the sound of horses' hoofs in brisk motion upon the

broken road, and evidently approaching the hovel in which I was at that moment seated.

The ominous clank of sword scabbards and the jingle of brass accoutrements announced, unequivocally, that the horsemen were of the military profession.

'The red−coats will stop here undoubtedly,' said the old woman, observing, I suppose, the anxiety of my countenance; 'they never pass us without coming in for half an hour to drink or smoke. If you desire to avoid them, I can hide you safely; but don't lose a moment. They will be here before you can count a hundred.'

I thanked the good woman for her hospitable zeal; but I felt a repugnance to concealing myself as she suggested, which was enhanced by the consciousness that if by any accident I were de− tected while lurking in the room, my situation would of itself inevitably lead to suspicions, and probably to discovery.

I therefore declined her offer, and awaited in suspense the entrance of the soldiers.

I had time before they made their appearance to move my seat hurriedly from the table to the hearth, where, under the shade of the large chimney, I might observe the coming visitors with less chance of being myself remarked upon.

As my hostess had anticipated, the horsemen drew up at the door of the hut, and five dragoons entered the dark chamber where I awaited them.

Leaving their horses at the entrance, with much noise and clatter they proceeded to seat themselves and call for liquor.

Three of these fellows were Dutchmen, and, indeed, all belonged, as I afterwards found, to a Dutch regiment, which had been recruited with Irish and English, as also partly officered from the same nations.

Being supplied with pipes and drink they soon became merry; and not suffering their smoking to interfere with their conversation, they talked loud and quickly, for the most part in a sort of barbarous language, neither Dutch nor English, but compounded of both.

They were so occupied with their own jocularity that I had very great hopes of escaping observation altogether, and remained quietly seated in a corner of the chimney, leaning back upon my seat as if asleep.

My taciturnity and quiescence, however, did not avail me, for one of these fellows coming over to the hearth to light his pipe, perceived me, and looking me very hard in the face, he said:

'What countryman are you, brother, that you sit with a covered head in the room with the prince's soldiers?'

At the same time he tossed my hat off my head into the fire. I was not fool enough, though somewhat hot−blooded, to suffer the insolence of this fellow to involve me in a broil so dangerous to my person and ruinous to my schemes as a riot with these soldiers must prove. I therefore, quietly taking up my hat and shaking the ashes out of it, observed:

'Sir, I crave your pardon if I have offended you. I am a stranger in these quarters, and a poor, ignorant, humble man, desiring only to drive my little trade in peace, so far as that may be done in these troublous times.'

'And what may your trade be?' said the same fellow.

'I am a travelling merchant,' I replied; 'and sell my wares as cheap as any trader in the country.'

'Let us see them forthwith,' said he; 'mayhap I or my comrades may want something which you can supply. Where is thy chest, friend? Thou shalt have ready money' (winking at his companions), 'ready money, and good weight, and sound metal; none of your rascally pinchbeck. Eh, my lads? Bring forth the goods, and let us see.'

Thus urged, I should have betrayed myself had I hesitated to do as required; and anxious, upon any terms, to quiet these turbulent men of war, I unbuckled my pack and exhibited its contents upon the table before them.

'A pair of lace ruffles, by the Lord!' said one, unceremoniously seizing upon the articles he named.

'A phial of perfume,' continued another, tumbling over the farrago which I had submitted to them, 'wash−balls, combs, stationery, slippers, small knives, tobacco; by −−−−, this merchant is a prize! Mark me, honest fellow, the man who wrongs thee shall suffer−−'fore Gad he shall; thou shalt be fairly dealt with' (this he said while in the act of pocketing a small silver tobacco−box, the most valuable article in the lot). 'You shall come with me to head−quarters; the captain will deal with you, and never haggle about the price. I promise thee his good will, and thou wilt consider me accordingly. You'll find him a profitable customer−−he has money without end, and throws it about like a gentleman. If so be as I tell thee, I shall expect, and my comrades here, a piece or two in the way of a compliment−−but of this anon. Come, then, with us; buckle on thy pack quickly, friend.'

There was no use in my declaring my willingness to deal with themselves in preference to their master; it was clear that they had resolved that I should, in the most expeditious and advantageous way, turn my goods into

money, that they might excise upon me to the amount of their wishes.

The worthy who had taken a lead in these arrangements, and who by his stripes I perceived to be a corporal, having insisted on my taking a dram with him to cement our newly−formed friendship, for which, however, he requested me to pay, made me mount behind one of his comrades; and the party, of which I thus formed an unwilling member, moved at a slow trot towards the quarters of the troop.

They reined up their horses at the head of the long bridge, which at this village spans the broad waters of the Shannon connecting the opposite counties of Tipperary and Clare.

A small tower, built originally, no doubt, to protect and to defend this pass, occupied the near extremity of the bridge, and in its rear, but connected with it, stood several straggling buildings rather dilapidated.

A dismounted trooper kept guard at the door, and my conductor having, dismounted, as also the corporal, the latter inquired:

'Is the captain in his quarters?'

'He is,' replied the sentinel.

And without more ado my companion shoved me into the entrance of the small dark tower, and opening a door at the extremity of the narrow chamber into which we had passed from the street, we entered a second room in which were seated some half−dozen officers of various ranks and ages, engaged in drinking, and smoking, and play.

I glanced rapidly from man to man, and was nearly satisfied by my inspection, when one of the gentlemen whose back had been turned towards the place where I stood, suddenly changed his position and looked towards me.

As soon as I saw his face my heart sank within me, and I knew that my life or death was balanced, as it were, upon a razor's edge.

The name of this man whose unexpected appearance thus affected me was Hugh Oliver, and good and strong reason had I to dread him, for so bitterly did he hate me, that to this moment I do verily believe he would have compassed my death if it lay in his power to do so, even at the hazard of his own life and soul, for I had been−−though God knows with many sore strugglings and at the stern call of public duty−−the judge and condemner of his brother; and though the military law, which I was called upon to administer, would permit no other course or sentence than the bloody one which I was compelled to pursue, yet even to this hour the recollection of that deed is heavy at my breast.

As soon as I saw this man I felt that my safety depended upon the accident of his not recognising me through the disguise which I had assumed, an accident against which were many chances, for he well knew my person and appearance.

It was too late now to destroy General Sarsfield's instructions; any attempt to do so would ensure detection. All then depended upon a cast of the die.

When the first moment of dismay and heart−sickening agitation had passed, it seemed to me as if my mind acquired a collectedness and clearness more complete and intense than I had ever experienced before.

I instantly perceived that he did not know me, for turning from me to the soldier with all air of indifference, he said,

'Is this a prisoner or a deserter? What have you brought him here for, sirra?'

'Your wisdom will regard him as you see fit, may it please you,' said the corporal. 'The man is a travelling merchant, and, overtaking him upon the road, close by old Dame MacDonagh's cot, I thought I might as well make a sort of prisoner of him that your honour might use him as it might appear most convenient; he has many commododies which are not unworthy of price in this wilderness, and some which you may condescend to make use of yourself. May he exhibit the goods he has for sale, an't please you?'

'Ay, let us see them,' said he.

'Unbuckle your pack,' exclaimed the corporal, with the same tone of command with which, at the head of his guard, he would have said 'Recover your arms.' 'Unbuckle your pack, fellow, and show your goods to the captain−−here, where you are.'

The conclusion of his directions was suggested by my endeavouring to move round in order to get my back towards the windows, hoping, by keeping my face in the shade, to escape detection.

In this manoeuvre, however, I was foiled by the imperiousness of the soldier; and inwardly cursing his

ill−timed interference, I proceeded to present my merchandise to the loving contemplation of the officers who thronged around me, with a strong light from an opposite window full upon my face.

As I continued to traffic with these gentlemen, I observed with no small anxiety the eyes of Captain Oliver frequently fixed upon me with a kind of dubious inquiring gaze.

'I think, my honest fellow,' he said at last, 'that I have seen you somewhere before this. Have you often dealt with the military?'

'I have traded, sir,' said I, 'with the soldiery many a time, and always been honourably treated. Will your worship please to buy a pair of lace ruffles?−−very cheap, your worship.'

'Why do you wear your hair so much over your face, sir?' said Oliver, without noticing my suggestion. 'I promise you, I think no good of thee; throw back your hair, and let me see thee plainly. Hold up your face, and look straight at me; throw back your hair, sir.'

I felt that all chance of escape was at an end; and stepping forward as near as the table would allow me to him, I raised my head, threw back my hair, and fixed my eyes sternly and boldly upon his face.

I saw that he knew me instantly, for his countenance turned as pale as ashes with surprise and hatred. He started up, placing his hand instinctively upon his sword−hilt, and glaring at me with a look so deadly, that I thought every moment he would strike his sword into my heart. He said in a kind of whisper: 'Hardress Fitzgerald?'

'Yes;' said I, boldly, for the excitement of the scene had effectually stirred my blood, 'Hardress Fitzgerald is before you. I know you well, Captain Oliver. I know how you hate me. I know how you thirst for my blood; but in a good cause, and in the hands of God, I defy you.'

'You are a desperate villain, sir,' said Captain Oliver; 'a rebel and a murderer! Holloa, there! guard, seize him!'

As the soldiers entered, I threw my eyes hastily round the room, and observing a glowing fire upon the hearth, I suddenly drew General Sarsfield's packet from my bosom, and casting it upon the embers, planted my foot upon it.

'Secure the papers!' shouted the captain; and almost instantly I was laid prostrate and senseless upon the floor, by a blow from the butt of a carbine.

I cannot say how long I continued in a state of torpor; but at length, having slowly recovered my senses, I found myself lying firmly handcuffed upon the floor of a small chamber, through a narrow loop− hole in one of whose walls the evening sun was shining. I was chilled with cold and damp, and drenched in blood, which had flowed in large quantities from the wound on my head. By a strong effort I shook off the sick drowsiness which still hung upon me, and, weak and giddy, I rose with pain and difficulty to my feet.

The chamber, or rather cell, in which I stood was about eight feet square, and of a height very disproportioned to its other dimensions; its altitude from the floor to the ceiling being not less than twelve or fourteen feet. A narrow slit placed high in the wall admitted a scanty light, but sufficient to assure me that my prison contained nothing to render the sojourn of its tenant a whit less comfortless than my worst enemy could have wished.

My first impulse was naturally to examine the security of the door, the loop−hole which I have mentioned being too high and too narrow to afford a chance of escape. I listened attentively to ascer− tain if possible whether or not a guard had been placed upon the outside.

Not a sound was to be heard. I now placed my shoulder to the door, and sought with all my combined strength and weight to force it open. It, however, resisted all my efforts, and thus baffled in my appeal to mere animal power, exhausted and disheartened, I threw myself on the ground.

It was not in my nature, however, long to submit to the apathy of despair, and in a few minutes I was on my feet again.

With patient scrutiny I endeavoured to ascertain the nature of the fastenings which secured the door.

The planks, fortunately, having been nailed together fresh, had shrunk considerably, so as to leave wide chinks between each and its neighbour.

By means of these apertures I saw that my dungeon was secured, not by a lock, as I had feared, but by a strong wooden bar, running horizontally across the door, about midway upon the outside.

'Now,' thought I, 'if I can but slip my fingers through the opening of the planks, I can easily remove the bar, and then−−−−'

My attempts, however, were all frustrated by the manner in which my hands were fastened together, each

embarrassing the other, and rendering my efforts so hopelessly clumsy, that I was obliged to give them over in despair.

I turned with a sigh from my last hope, and began to pace my narrow prison floor, when my eye suddenly encountered an old rusty nail or holdfast sticking in the wall.

All the gold of Plutus would not have been so welcome as that rusty piece of iron.

I instantly wrung it from the wall, and inserting the point between the planks of the door into the bolt, and working it backwards and forwards, I had at length the unspeakable satisfaction to perceive that the beam was actually yielding to my efforts, and gradually sliding into its berth in the wall.

I have often been engaged in struggles where great bodily strength was required, and every thew and sinew in the system taxed to the uttermost; but, strange as it may appear, I never was so completely exhausted and overcome by any labour as by this comparatively trifling task.

Again and again was I obliged to desist, until my cramped finger−joints recovered their power; but at length my perseverance was rewarded, for, little by little, I succeeded in removing the bolt so far as to allow the door to open sufficiently to permit me to pass.

With some squeezing I succeeded in forcing my way into a small passage, upon which my prison−door opened.

This led into a chamber somewhat more spacious than my cell, but still containing no furniture, and affording no means of escape to one so crippled with bonds as I was.

At the far extremity of this room was a door which stood ajar, and, stealthily passing through it, I found myself in a room containing nothing but a few raw hides, which rendered the atmosphere nearly intolerable.

Here I checked myself, for I heard voices in busy conversation in the next room.

I stole softly to the door which separated the chamber in which I stood from that from which the voices proceeded.

A moment served to convince me that any attempt upon it would be worse than fruitless, for it was secured upon the outside by a strong lock, besides two bars, all which I was enabled to ascertain by means of the same defect in the joining of the planks which I have mentioned as belonging to the inner door.

I had approached this door very softly, so that, my proximity being wholly unsuspected by the speakers within, the conversation continued without interruption.

Planting myself close to the door, I applied my eye to one of the chinks which separated the boards, and thus obtained a full view of the chamber and its occupants.

It was the very apartment into which I had been first conducted. The outer door, which faced the one at which I stood, was closed, and at a small table were seated the only tenants of the room−−two officers, one of whom was Captain Oliver. The latter was reading a paper, which I made no doubt was the document with which I had been entrusted.

'The fellow deserves it, no doubt' said the junior officer. 'But, me− thinks, considering our orders from head−quarters, you deal somewhat too hastily.'

'Nephew, nephew,' said Captain Oliver, 'you mistake the tenor of our orders. We were directed to conciliate the peasantry by fair and gentle treatment, but not to suffer spies and traitors to escape. This packet is of some value, though not, in all its parts, intelligible to me. The bearer has made his way hither under a disguise, which, along with the other circumstances of his appearance here, is sufficient to convict him as a spy.'

There was a pause here, and after a few minutes the younger officer said:

'Spy is a hard term, no doubt, uncle; but it is possible−−nay, likely, that this poor devil sought merely to carry the parcel with which he was charged in safety to its destination. Pshaw! he is sufficiently punished if you duck him, for ten minutes or so, between the bridge and the mill−dam.'

'Young man,' said Oliver, somewhat sternly, 'do not obtrude your advice where it is not called for; this man, for whom you plead, murdered your own father!'

I could not see how this announcement affected the person to whom it was addressed, for his back was towards me; but I conjectured, easily, that my last poor chance was gone, for a long silence ensued. Captain Oliver at length resumed:

'I know the villain well. I know him capable of any crime; but, by −−−−, his last card is played, and the game is up. He shall not see the moon rise to−night.'

There was here another pause.

Oliver rose, and going to the outer door, called:

'Hewson! Hewson!'

A grim−looking corporal entered.

'Hewson, have your guard ready at eight o'clock, with their carbines clean, and a round of ball−cartridge each. Keep them sober; and, further, plant two upright posts at the near end of the bridge, with a cross one at top, in the manner of a gibbet. See to these matters, Hewson: I shall be with you speedily.'

The corporal made his salutations, and retired.

Oliver deliberately folded up the papers with which I had been commissioned, and placing them in the pocket of his vest, he said:

'Cunning, cunning Master Hardress Fitzgerald hath made a false step; the old fox is in the toils. Hardress Fitzgerald, Hardress Fitzgerald, I will blot you out.'

He repeated these words several times, at the same time rubbing his finger strongly upon the table, as if he sought to erase a stain:

'I WILL BLOT YOU OUT!'

There was a kind of glee in his manner and expression which chilled my very heart.

'You shall be first shot like a dog, and then hanged like a dog: shot to−night, and hung to−morrow; hung at the bridge− head−−hung, until your bones drop asunder!'

It is impossible to describe the exultation with which he seemed to dwell upon, and to particularise the fate which he intended for me.

I observed, however, that his face was deadly pale, and felt assured that his conscience and inward convictions were struggling against his cruel resolve. Without further comment the two officers left the room, I suppose to oversee the preparations which were being made for the deed of which I was to be the victim.

A chill, sick horror crept over me as they retired, and I felt, for the moment, upon the brink of swooning. This feeling, however, speedily gave place to a sensation still more terrible. A state of excitement so intense and tremendous as to border upon literal madness, supervened; my brain reeled and throbbed as if it would burst; thoughts the wildest and the most hideous flashed through my mind with a spontaneous rapidity that scared my very soul; while, all the time, I felt a strange and frightful impulse to burst into uncontrolled laughter.

Gradually this fearful paroxysm passed away. I kneeled and prayed fervently, and felt comforted and assured; but still I could not view the slow approaches of certain death without an agitation little short of agony.

I have stood in battle many a time when the chances of escape were fearfully small. I have confronted foemen in the deadly breach. I have marched, with a constant heart, against the cannon's mouth. Again and again has the beast which I bestrode been shot under me; again and again have I seen the comrades who walked beside me in an instant laid for ever in the dust; again and again have I been in the thick of battle, and of its mortal dangers, and never felt my heart shake, or a single nerve tremble: but now, helpless, manacled, imprisoned, doomed, forced to watch the approaches of an inevitable fate−−to wait, silent and moveless, while death as it were crept towards me, human nature was taxed to the uttermost to bear the horrible situation.

I returned again to the closet in which I had found myself upon recovering from the swoon.

The evening sunshine and twilight was fast melting into darkness, when I heard the outer door, that which communicated with the guard−room in which the officers had been amusing themselves, opened and locked again upon the inside.

A measured step then approached, and the door of the wretched cell in which I lay being rudely pushed open, a soldier entered, who carried something in his hand; but, owing to the obscurity of the place, I could not see what.

'Art thou awake, fellow?' said he, in a gruff voice. 'Stir thyself; get upon thy legs.'

His orders were enforced by no very gentle application of his military boot.

'Friend,' said I, rising with difficulty, 'you need not insult a dying man. You have been sent hither to conduct me to death. Lead on! My trust is in God, that He will forgive me my sins, and receive my soul, redeemed by the blood of His Son.'

There here intervened a pause of some length, at the end of which the soldier said, in the same gruff voice, but in a lower key:

'Look ye, comrade, it will be your own fault if you die this night. On one condition I promise to get you out of this hobble with a whole skin; but if you go to any of your d––––d gammon, by G––, before two hours are passed, you will have as many holes in your carcase as a target.'

'Name your conditions,' said I, 'and if they consist with honour, I will never balk at the offer.'

'Here they are: you are to be shot to−night, by Captain Oliver's orders. The carbines are cleaned for the job, and the cartridges served out to the men. By G––, I tell you the truth!'

Of this I needed not much persuasion, and intimated to the man my conviction that he spoke the truth.

'Well, then,' he continued, 'now for the means of avoiding this ugly business. Captain Oliver rides this night to head−quarters, with the papers which you carried. Before he starts he will pay you a visit, to fish what he can out of you with all the fine promises he can make. Humour him a little, and when you find an opportunity, stab him in the throat above the cuirass.'

'A feasible plan, surely,' said I, raising my shackled hands, 'for a man thus completely crippled and without a weapon.'

'I will manage all that presently for you,' said the soldier. 'When you have thus dealt with him, take his cloak and hat, and so forth, and put them on; the papers you will find in the pocket of his vest, in a red leather case. Walk boldly out. I am appointed to ride with Captain Oliver, and you will find me holding his horse and my own by the door. Mount quickly, and I will do the same, and then we will ride for our lives across the bridge. You will find the holster− pistols loaded in case of pursuit; and, with the devil's help, we shall reach Limerick without a hair hurt. My only condition is, that when you strike Oliver, you strike home, and again and again, until he is FINISHED; and I trust to your honour to remember me when we reach the town.'

I cannot say whether I resolved right or wrong, but I thought my situation, and the conduct of Captain Oliver, warranted me in acceding to the conditions propounded by my visitant, and with alacrity I told him so, and desired him to give me the power, as he had promised to do, of executing them.

With speed and promptitude he drew a small key from his pocket, and in an instant the manacles were removed from my hands.

How my heart bounded within me as my wrists were released from the iron gripe of the shackles! The first step toward freedom was made––my self− reliance returned, and I felt assured of success.

'Now for the weapon,' said I.

'I fear me, you will find it rather clumsy,' said he; 'but if well handled, it will do as well as the best Toledo. It is the only thing I could get, but I sharpened it myself; it has an edge like a skean.'

He placed in my hand the steel head of a halberd. Grasping it firmly, I found that it made by no means a bad weapon in point of convenience; for it felt in the hand like a heavy dagger, the portion which formed the blade or point being crossed nearly at the lower extremity by a small bar of metal, at one side shaped into the form of an axe, and at the other into that of a hook. These two transverse appendages being muffled by the folds of my cravat, which I removed for the purpose, formed a perfect guard or hilt, and the lower extremity formed like a tube, in which the pike−handle had been inserted, afforded ample space for the grasp of my hand; the point had been made as sharp as a needle, and the metal he assured me was good.

Thus equipped he left me, having observed, 'The captain sent me to bring you to your senses, and give you some water that he might find you proper for his visit. Here is the pitcher; I think I have revived you sufficiently for the captain's purpose.'

With a low savage laugh he left me to my reflections.

Having examined and adjusted the weapon, I carefully bound the ends of the cravat, with which I had secured the cross part of the spear−head, firmly round my wrist, so that in case of a struggle it might not easily be forced from my hand; and having made these precautionary dispositions, I sat down upon the ground with my back against the wall, and my hands together under my coat, awaiting my visitor.

The time wore slowly on; the dusk became dimmer and dimmer, until it nearly bordered on total darkness.

'How's this?' said I, inwardly; 'Captain Oliver, you said I should not see the moon rise to−night. Methinks you are somewhat tardy in fulfilling your prophecy.'

As I made this reflection, a noise at the outer door announced the entrance of a visitant. I knew that the decisive moment was come, and letting my head sink upon my breast, and assuring myself that my hands were concealed, I waited, in the at− titude of deep dejection, the approach of my foe and betrayer.

As I had expected, Captain Oliver entered the room where I lay. He was equipped for instant duty, as far as the imperfect twilight would allow me to see; the long sword clanked upon the floor as he made his way through the lobbies which led to my place of confinement; his ample military cloak hung upon his arm; his cocked hat was upon his head, and in all points he was prepared for the road.

This tallied exactly with what my strange informant had told me.

I felt my heart swell and my breath come thick as the awful moment which was to witness the death−struggle of one or other of us approached.

Captain Oliver stood within a yard or two of the place where I sat, or rather lay; and folding his arms, he remained silent for a minute or two, as if arranging in his mind how he should address me.

'Hardress Fitzgerald,' he began at length, 'are you awake? Stand up, if you desire to hear of matters nearly touching your life or death. Get up, I say.'

I arose doggedly, and affecting the awkward movements of one whose hands were bound,

'Well,' said I, 'what would you of me? Is it not enough that I am thus imprisoned without a cause, and about, as I suspect, to suffer a most unjust and violent sentence, but must I also be disturbed during the few moments left me for reflection and repentance by the presence of my persecutor? What do you want of me?'

'As to your punishment, sir,' said he, 'your own deserts have no doubt sug− gested the likelihood of it to your mind; but I now am with you to let you know that whatever mitigation of your sentence you may look for, must be earned by your compliance with my orders. You must frankly and fully explain the contents of the packet which you endeavoured this day to destroy; and further, you must tell all that you know of the designs of the popish rebels.'

'And if I do this I am to expect a mitigation of my punishment−−is it not so?'

Oliver bowed.

'And what IS this mitigation to be? On the honour of a soldier, what is it to be?' inquired I.

'When you have made the disclosure required,' he replied, 'you shall hear. 'Tis then time to talk of indulgences.'

'Methinks it would then be too late,' answered I. 'But a chance is a chance, and a drowning man will catch at a straw. You are an honourable man, Captain Oliver. I must depend, I suppose, on your good faith. Well, sir, before I make the desired communication I have one question more to put. What is to befall me in case that I, remembering the honour of a soldier and a gentleman, reject your infamous terms, scorn your mitigations, and defy your utmost power?'

'In that case,' replied he, coolly, 'before half an hour you shall be a corpse.'

'Then God have mercy on your soul!' said I; and springing forward, I dashed the weapon which I held at his throat.

I missed my aim, but struck him full in the mouth with such force that most of his front teeth were dislodged, and the point of the spear−head passed out under his jaw, at the ear.

My onset was so sudden and unexpected that he reeled back to the wall, and did not recover his equilibrium in time to prevent my dealing a second blow, which I did with my whole force. The point unfortunately struck the cuirass, near the neck, and glancing aside it inflicted but a flesh wound, tearing the skin and tendons along the throat.

He now grappled with me, strange to say, without uttering any cry of alarm; being a very powerful man, and if anything rather heavier and more strongly built than I, he succeeded in drawing me with him to the ground. We fell together with a heavy crash, tugging and straining in what we were both conscious was a mortal struggle. At length I succeeded in getting over him, and struck him twice more in the face; still he struggled with an energy which nothing but the tremendous stake at issue could have sustained.

I succeeded again in inflicting several more wounds upon him, any one of which might have been mortal. While thus contending he clutched his hands about my throat, so firmly that I felt the blood swelling the veins of my temples and face almost to bursting. Again and again I struck the weapon deep into his face and throat, but life seemed to adhere in him with an almost INSECT tenacity.

My sight now nearly failed, my senses almost forsook me; I felt upon the point of suffocation when, with one desperate effort, I struck him another and a last blow in the face. The weapon which I wielded had lighted upon the eye, and the point penetrated the brain; the body quivered under me, the deadly grasp relaxed, and Oliver lay

upon the ground a corpse!

As I arose and shook the weapon and the bloody cloth from my hand, the moon which he had foretold I should never see rise, shone bright and broad into the room, and disclosed, with ghastly distinctness, the mangled features of the dead soldier; the mouth, full of clotting blood and broken teeth, lay open; the eye, close by whose lid the fatal wound had been inflicted, was not, as might have been expected, bathed in blood, but had started forth nearly from the socket, and gave to the face, by its fearful unlikeness to the other glazing orb, a leer more hideous and unearthly than fancy ever saw. The wig, with all its rich curls, had fallen with the hat to the floor, leaving the shorn head exposed, and in many places marked by the recent struggle; the rich lace cravat was drenched in blood, and the gay uniform in many places soiled with the same.

It is hard to say, with what feelings I looked upon the unsightly and revolting mass which had so lately been a living and a comely man. I had not any time, however, to spare for reflection; the deed was done−−the responsibility was upon me, and all was registered in the book of that God who judges rightly.

With eager haste I removed from the body such of the military accoutrements as were necessary for the purpose of my disguise. I buckled on the sword, drew off the military boots, and donned them myself, placed the brigadier wig and cocked hat upon my head, threw on the cloak, drew it up about my face, and proceeded, with the papers which I found as the soldier had foretold me, and the key of the outer lobby, to the door of the guard−room; this I opened, and with a firm and rapid tread walked through the officers, who rose as I entered, and passed without question or interruption to the street−door. Here I was met by the grim− looking corporal, Hewson, who, saluting me, said:

'How soon, captain, shall the file be drawn out and the prisoner despatched?'

'In half an hour,' I replied, without raising my voice.

The man again saluted, and in two steps I reached the soldier who held the two horses, as he had intimated.

'Is all right?' said he, eagerly.

'Ay,' said I, 'which horse am I to mount?'

He satisfied me upon this point, and I threw myself into the saddle; the soldier mounted his horse, and dashing the spurs into the flanks of the animal which I bestrode, we thundered along the narrow bridge. At the far extremity a sentinel, as we approached, called out, 'Who goes there? stand, and give the word!' Heedless of the interruption, with my heart bounding with excitement, I dashed on, as did also the soldier who accompanied me.

'Stand, or I fire! give the word!' cried the sentry.

'God save the king, and to hell with the prince!' shouted I, flinging the cocked hat in his face as I galloped by.

The response was the sharp report of a carbine, accompanied by the whiz of a bullet, which passed directly between me and my comrade, now riding beside me.

'Hurrah!' I shouted; 'try it again, my boy.'

And away we went at a gallop, which bid fair to distance anything like pursuit.

Never was spur more needed, however, for soon the clatter of horses' hoofs, in full speed, crossing the bridge, came sharp and clear through the stillness of the night.

Away we went, with our pursuers close behind; one mile was passed, another nearly completed. The moon now shone forth, and, turning in the saddle, I looked back upon the road we had passed.

One trooper had headed the rest, and was within a hundred yards of us.

I saw the fellow throw himself from his horse upon the ground.

I knew his object, and said to my comrade:

'Lower your body−−lie flat over the saddle; the fellow is going to fire.'

I had hardly spoken when the report of a carbine startled the echoes, and the ball, striking the hind leg of my companion's horse, the poor animal fell headlong upon the road, throwing his rider head−foremost over the saddle.

My first impulse was to stop and share whatever fate might await my comrade; but my second and wiser one was to spur on, and save myself and my despatch.

I rode on at a gallop, turning to observe my comrade's fate. I saw his pursuer, having remounted, ride rapidly up to him, and, on reaching the spot where the man and horse lay, rein in and dismount.

He was hardly upon the ground, when my companion shot him dead with one of the holster−pistols which he had drawn from the pipe; and, leaping nimbly over a ditch at the side of the road, he was soon lost among the

ditches and thorn− bushes which covered that part of the country.

Another mile being passed, I had the satisfaction to perceive that the pursuit was given over, and in an hour more I crossed Thomond Bridge, and slept that night in the fortress of Limerick, having delivered the packet, the result of whose safe arrival was the destruction of William's great train of artillery, then upon its way to the besiegers.

Years after this adventure, I met in France a young officer, who I found had served in Captain Oliver's regiment; and he explained what I had never before understood−− the motives of the man who had wrought my deliverance. Strange to say, he was the foster−brother of Oliver, whom he thus devoted to death, but in revenge for the most grievous wrong which one man can inflict upon another!

'THE QUARE GANDER'

Being a Twelfth Extract from the Legacy of the late Francis Purcell, P.P. of Drumcoolagh.

As I rode at a slow walk, one soft autumn evening, from the once noted and noticeable town of Emly, now a squalid village, towards the no less remarkable town of Tipperary, I fell into a meditative mood.

My eye wandered over a glorious landscape; a broad sea of corn−fields, that might have gladdened even a golden age, was waving before me; groups of little cabins, with their poplars, osiers, and light mountain ashes, clustered shelteringly around them, were scattered over the plain; the thin blue smoke arose floating through their boughs in the still evening air. And far away with all their broad lights and shades, softened with the haze of approaching twilight, stood the bold wild Galties.

As I gazed on this scene, whose richness was deepened by the melancholy glow of the setting sun, the tears rose to my eyes, and I said:

'Alas, my country! what a mournful beauty is thine. Dressed in loveliness and laughter, there is mortal decay at thy heart: sorrow, sin, and shame have mingled thy cup of misery. Strange rulers have bruised thee, and laughed thee to scorn, and they have made all thy sweetness bitter. Thy shames and sins are the austere fruits of thy miseries, and thy miseries have been poured out upon thee by foreign hands. Alas, my stricken country! clothed with this most pity−moving smile, with this most unutterably mournful loveliness, thou sore−grieved, thou desperately−beloved! Is there for thee, my country, a resurrection?'

I know not how long I might have continued to rhapsodize in this strain, had not my wandering thoughts been suddenly recalled to my own immediate neighbourhood by the monotonous clatter of a horse's hoofs upon the road, evidently moving, at that peculiar pace which is neither a walk nor a trot, and yet partakes of both, so much in vogue among the southern farmers.

In a moment my pursuer was up with me, and checking his steed into a walk he saluted me with much respect. The cavalier was a light−built fellow, with good−humoured sun−burnt features, a shrewd and lively black eye, and a head covered with a crop of close curly black hair, and surmounted with a turf−coloured caubeen, in the pack− thread band of which was stuck a short pipe, which had evidently seen much service.

My companion was a dealer in all kinds of local lore, and soon took occasion to let me see that he was so.

After two or three short stories, in which the scandalous and supernatural were happily blended, we happened to arrive at a narrow road or bohreen leading to a snug−looking farm−house.

'That's a comfortable bit iv a farm,' observed my comrade, pointing towards the dwelling with his thumb; 'a shnug spot, and belongs to the Mooneys this long time. 'Tis a noted place for what happened wid the famous gandher there in former times.'

'And what was that?' inquired I.

'What was it happened wid the gandher!' ejaculated my companion in a tone of indignant surprise; 'the gandher iv Ballymacrucker, the gandher! Your raverance must be a stranger in these parts. Sure every fool knows all about the gandher, and Terence Mooney, that was, rest his sowl. Begorra, 'tis surprisin' to me how in the world you didn't hear iv the gandher; and may be it's funnin me ye are, your raverance.'

I assured him to the contrary, and conjured him to narrate to me the facts, an unacquaintance with which was sufficient it appeared to stamp me as an ignoramus of the first magnitude.

It did not require much entreaty to induce my communicative friend to relate the circumstance, in nearly the following words:

'Terence Mooney was an honest boy and well to do; an' he rinted the biggest farm on this side iv the Galties; an' bein' mighty cute an' a sevare worker, it was small wonder he turned a good penny every harvest. But unluckily he was blessed with an ilegant large family iv daughters, an' iv coorse his heart was allamost bruck, striving to make up fortunes for the whole of them. An' there wasn't a conthrivance iv any soart or description for makin' money out iv the farm, but he was up to.

'Well, among the other ways he had iv gettin' up in the world, he always kep a power iv turkeys, and all soarts iv poul− trey; an' he was out iv all rason partial to geese−−an' small blame to him for that same−−for twice't a year you can pluck them as bare as my hand−−an' get a fine price for the feathers, an' plenty of rale sizable

eggs−−an' when they are too ould to lay any more, you can kill them, an' sell them to the gintlemen for goslings, d'ye see, let alone that a goose is the most manly bird that is out.

'Well, it happened in the coorse iv time that one ould gandher tuck a wondherful likin' to Terence, an' divil a place he could go serenadin' about the farm, or lookin' afther the men, but the gandher id be at his heels, an' rubbin' himself agin his legs, an' lookin' up in his face jist like any other Christian id do; an' begorra, the likes iv it was never seen−−Terence Mooney an' the gandher wor so great.

'An' at last the bird was so engagin' that Terence would not allow it to be plucked any more, an' kep it from that time out for love an' affection−−just all as one like one iv his childer.

'But happiness in perfection never lasts long, an' the neighbours begin'd to suspect the nathur an' intentions iv the gandher, an' some iv them said it was the divil, an' more iv them that it was a fairy.

'Well, Terence could not but hear something of what was sayin', an' you may be sure he was not altogether asy in his mind about it, an' from one day to another he was gettin' more ancomfortable in himself, until he detarmined to sind for Jer Garvan, the fairy docthor in Garryowen, an' it's he was the ilegant hand at the business, an' divil a sperit id say a crass word to him, no more nor a priest. An' moreover he was very great wid ould Terence Mooney−− this man's father that' was.

'So without more about it he was sint for, an' sure enough the divil a long he was about it, for he kem back that very evenin' along wid the boy that was sint for him, an' as soon as he was there, an' tuck his supper, an' was done talkin' for a while, he begined of coorse to look into the gandher.

'Well, he turned it this away an' that away, to the right an' to the left, an' straight−ways an' upside−down, an' when he was tired handlin' it, says he to Terence Mooney:

' "Terence," says he, "you must remove the bird into the next room," says he, "an' put a petticoat," says he, "or anny other convaynience round his head," says he.

' "An' why so?" says Terence.

' "Becase," says Jer, says he.

' "Becase what?" says Terence.

' "Becase," says Jer, "if it isn't done you'll never be asy again," says he, "or pusilanimous in your mind," says he; "so ax no more questions, but do my biddin'," says he.

' "Well," says Terence, "have your own way," says he.

'An' wid that he tuck the ould gandher, an' giv' it to one iv the gossoons.

' "An' take care," says he, "don't smother the crathur," says he.

'Well, as soon as the bird was gone, says Jer Garvan says he:

' "Do you know what that ould gandher IS, Terence Mooney?"

' "Divil a taste," says Terence.

' "Well then," says Jer, "the gandher is your own father," says he.

' "It's jokin' you are," says Terence, turnin' mighty pale; "how can an ould gandher be my father?" says he.

' "I'm not funnin' you at all," says Jer; "it's thrue what I tell you, it's your father's wandhrin' sowl," says he, "that's naturally tuck pissession iv the ould gandher's body," says he. "I know him many ways, and I wondher," says he, "you do not know the cock iv his eye yourself," says he.

' "Oh blur an' ages!" says Terence, "what the divil will I ever do at all at all," says he; "it's all over wid me, for I plucked him twelve times at the laste," says he.

' "That can't be helped now," says Jer; "it was a sevare act surely," says he, "but it's too late to lamint for it now," says he; "the only way to prevint what's past," says he, "is to put a stop to it before it happens," says he.

' "Thrue for you," says Terence, "but how the divil did you come to the knowledge iv my father's sowl," says he, "bein' in the owld gandher," says he.

' "If I tould you," says Jer, "you would not undherstand me," says he, "without book−larnin' an' gasthronomy," says he; "so ax me no questions," says he, "an' I'll tell you no lies. But blieve me in this much," says he, "it's your father that's in it," says he; "an' if I don't make him spake to−morrow mornin'," says he, "I'll give you lave to call me a fool," says he.

' "Say no more," says Terence, "that settles the business," says he; "an' oh! blur and ages is it not a quare thing," says he, "for a dacent respictable man," says he, "to be walkin' about the coun− thry in the shape iv an ould gandher," says he; "and oh, murdher, murdher! is not it often I plucked him," says he, "an' tundher and ouns might

not I have ate him," says he; and wid that he fell into a could parspiration, savin' your prisince, an was on the pint iv faintin' wid the bare notions iv it.

'Well, whin he was come to himself agin, says Jerry to him quite an' asy:

' "'Terence," says he, "don't be aggravatin' yourself," says he; "for I have a plan composed that 'ill make him spake out," says he, "an' tell what it is in the world he's wantin'," says he; "an' mind an' don't be comin' in wid your gosther, an' to say agin anything I tell you," says he, "but jist purtind, as soon as the bird is brought back," says he, "how that we're goin' to sind him to−morrow mornin' to market," says he. "An' if he don't spake to−night," says he, "or gother himself out iv the place," says he, "put him into the hamper airly, and sind him in the cart," says he, "straight to Tipperary, to be sould for ating," says he, "along wid the two gossoons," says he, "an' my name isn't Jer Garvan," says he, "if he doesn't spake out before he's half−way," says he. "An' mind," says he, "as soon as iver he says the first word," says he, "that very minute bring him aff to Father Crotty," says he; "an' if his raverince doesn't make him ratire," says he, "like the rest iv his parishioners, glory be to God," says he, "into the siclusion iv the flames iv purgathory," says he, "there's no vartue in my charums," says he.

'Well, wid that the ould gandher was let into the room agin, an' they all bigined to talk iv sindin' him the nixt mornin' to be sould for roastin' in Tipperary, jist as if it was a thing andoubtingly settled. But divil a notice the gandher tuck, no more nor if they wor spaking iv the Lord−Liftinant; an' Terence desired the boys to get ready the kish for the poulthry, an' to "settle it out wid hay soft an' shnug," says he, "for it's the last jauntin' the poor ould gandher 'ill get in this world," says he.

'Well, as the night was gettin' late, Terence was growin' mighty sorrowful an' down−hearted in himself entirely wid the notions iv what was goin' to happen. An' as soon as the wife an' the crathurs war fairly in bed, he brought out some illigint potteen, an' himself an' Jer Garvan sot down to it; an' begorra, the more anasy Terence got, the more he dhrank, and himself and Jer Garvan finished a quart betune them. It wasn't an imparial though, an' more's the pity, for them wasn't anvinted antil short since; but divil a much matther it signifies any longer if a pint could hould two quarts, let alone what it does, sinst Father Mathew−−the Lord purloin his raverence −−begin'd to give the pledge, an' wid the blessin' iv timperance to deginerate Ireland.

'An' begorra, I have the medle myself; an' it's proud I am iv that same, for abstamiousness is a fine thing, although it's mighty dhry.

'Well, whin Terence finished his pint, he thought he might as well stop; "for enough is as good as a faste," says he; "an' I pity the vagabond," says he, "that is not able to conthroul his licquor," says he, "an' to keep constantly inside iv a pint measure," said he; an' wid that he wished Jer Garvan a good−night, an' walked out iv the room.

'But he wint out the wrong door, bein' a thrifle hearty in himself, an' not rightly knowin' whether he was standin' on his head or his heels, or both iv them at the same time, an' in place iv gettin' into bed, where did he thrun himself but into the poulthry hamper, that the boys had settled out ready for the gandher in the mornin'. An' sure enough he sunk down soft an' complate through the hay to the bottom; an' wid the turnin' and roulin' about in the night, the divil a bit iv him but was covered up as shnug as a lumper in a pittaty furrow before mornin'.

'So wid the first light, up gets the two boys, that war to take the sperit, as they consaved, to Tipperary; an' they cotched the ould gandher, an' put him in the hamper, and clapped a good wisp iv hay an' the top iv him, and tied it down sthrong wid a bit iv a coard, and med the sign iv the crass over him, in dhread iv any harum, an' put the hamper up an the car, wontherin' all the while what in the world was makin' the ould burd so surprisin' heavy.

'Well, they wint along quite anasy towards Tipperary, wishin' every minute that some iv the neighbours bound the same way id happen to fall in with them, for they didn't half like the notions iv havin' no company but the bewitched gandher, an' small blame to them for that same.

'But although they wor shaking in their skhins in dhread iv the ould bird beginnin' to convarse them every minute, they did not let an' to one another, bud kep singin' an' whistlin' like mad, to keep the dread out iv their hearts.

'Well, afther they war on the road betther nor half an hour, they kem to the bad bit close by Father Crotty's, an' there was one divil of a rut three feet deep at the laste; an' the car got sich a wondherful chuck goin' through it, that it wakened Terence widin in the basket.

' "Bad luck to ye," says he, "my bones is bruck wid yer thricks; what the divil are ye doin' wid me?"

' "Did ye hear anything quare, Thady?" says the boy that was next to the car, turnin' as white as the top iv a

musharoon; "did ye hear anything quare soundin' out iv the hamper?" says he.

' "No, nor you,' says Thady, turnin' as pale as himself, "it's the ould gandher that's gruntin' wid the shakin' he's gettin'," says he.

' "Where the divil have ye put me into," says Terence inside, "bad luck to your sowls," says he, "let me out, or I'll be smothered this minute," says he.

' "There's no use in purtending," says the boy, "the gandher's spakin', glory be to God," says he.

' "Let me out, you murdherers," says Terence.

' "In the name iv the blessed Vargin," says Thady, "an' iv all the holy saints, hould yer tongue, you unnatheral gandher," says he.

' "Who's that, that dar to call me nick− names?" says Terence inside, roaring wid the fair passion, "let me out, you blasphamious infiddles," says he, "or by this crass I'll stretch ye," says he.

' "In the name iv all the blessed saints in heaven," says Thady, "who the divil are ye?"

' "Who the divil would I be, but Terence Mooney," says he. "It's myself that's in it, you unmerciful bliggards," says he, "let me out, or by the holy, I'll get out in spite iv yes," says he, "an' by jaburs, I'll wallop yes in arnest," says he.

' "It's ould Terence, sure enough," says Thady, "isn't it cute the fairy docthor found him out," says he.

' "I'm an the pint iv snuffication," says Terence, "let me out, I tell you, an' wait till I get at ye," says he, "for begorra, the divil a bone in your body but I'll powdher,' says he.

'An' wid that, he biginned kickin' and flingin' inside in the hamper, and dhrivin his legs agin the sides iv it, that it was a wonder he did not knock it to pieces.

'Well, as soon as the boys seen that, they skelped the ould horse into a gallop as hard as he could peg towards the priest's house, through the ruts, an' over the stones; an' you'd see the hamper fairly flyin' three feet up in the air with the joultin'; glory be to God.

'So it was small wondher, by the time they got to his Raverince's door, the breath was fairly knocked out of poor Terence, so that he was lyin' speechless in the bottom iv the hamper.

'Well, whin his Raverince kem down, they up an' they tould him all that happened, an' how they put the gandher into the hamper, an' how he beginned to spake, an' how he confissed that he was ould Terence Mooney; an' they axed his honour to advise them how to get rid iv the spirit for good an' all.

'So says his Raverince, says he:

' "I'll take my booke," says he, "an' I'll read some rale sthrong holy bits out iv it," says he, "an' do you get a rope and put it round the hamper," says he, "an' let it swing over the runnin' wather at the bridge," says he, "an' it's no matther if I don't make the spirit come out iv it," says he.

'Well, wid that, the priest got his horse, and tuck his booke in undher his arum, an' the boys follied his Raverince, ladin' the horse down to the bridge, an' divil a word out iv Terence all the way, for he seen it was no use spakin', an' he was afeard if he med any noise they might thrait him to another gallop an finish him intirely.

'Well, as soon as they war all come to the bridge, the boys tuck the rope they had with them, an' med it fast to the top iv the hamper an' swung it fairly over the bridge, lettin' it hang in the air about twelve feet out iv the wather.

'An' his Raverince rode down to the bank of the river, close by, an' beginned to read mighty loud and bould intirely.

'An' when he was goin' on about five minutes, all at onst the bottom iv the hamper kem out, an' down wint Terence, falling splash dash into the water, an' the ould gandher a−top iv him. Down they both went to the bottom, wid a souse you'd hear half a mile off.

'An' before they had time to rise agin, his Raverince, wid the fair astonishment, giv his horse one dig iv the spurs, an' before he knew where he was, in he went, horse an' all, a−top iv them, an' down to the bottom.

'Up they all kem agin together, gaspin' and puffin', an' off down wid the current wid them, like shot in under the arch iv the bridge till they kem to the shallow wather.

'The ould gandher was the first out, and the priest and Terence kem next, pantin' an' blowin' an' more than half dhrounded, an' his Raverince was so freckened wid the droundin' he got, and wid the sight iv the sperit, as he consaved, that he wasn't the better of it for a month.

'An' as soon as Terence could spake, he swore he'd have the life of the two gossoons; but Father Crotty would

not give him his will. An' as soon as he was got quiter, they all endivoured to explain it; but Terence consaved he went raly to bed the night before, and his wife said the same to shilter him from the suspicion for havin' th' dthrop taken. An' his Raverince said it was a mysthery, an' swore if he cotched anyone laughin' at the accident, he'd lay the horsewhip across their shouldhers.

'An' Terence grew fonder an' fonder iv the gandher every day, until at last he died in a wondherful old age, lavin' the gandher afther him an' a large family iv childher.

'An' to this day the farm is rinted by one iv Terence Mooney's lenial and legitimate postariors.'

BILLY MALOWNEY'S TASTE OF LOVE AND GLORY.

Let the reader fancy a soft summer evening, the fresh dews falling on bush and flower. The sun has just gone down, and the thrilling vespers of thrushes and blackbirds ring with a wild joy through the saddened air; the west is piled with fantastic clouds, and clothed in tints of crimson and amber, melting away into a wan green, and so eastward into the deepest blue, through which soon the stars will begin to peep.

Let him fancy himself seated upon the low mossy wall of an ancient churchyard, where hundreds of grey stones rise above the sward, under the fantastic branches of two or three half−withered ash−trees, spreading their arms in everlasting love and sorrow over the dead.

The narrow road upon which I and my companion await the tax−cart that is to carry me and my basket, with its rich fruitage of speckled trout, away, lies at his feet, and far below spreads an undulating plain, rising westward again into soft hills, and traversed (every here and there visibly) by a winding stream which, even through the mists of evening, catches and returns the funereal glories of the skies.

As the eye traces its wayward wanderings, it loses them for a moment in the heaving verdure of white−thorns and ash, from among which floats from some dozen rude chimneys, mostly unseen, the transparent blue film of turf smoke. There we know, although we cannot see it, the steep old bridge of Carrickadrum spans the river; and stretching away far to the right the valley of Lisnamoe: its steeps and hollows, its straggling hedges, its fair−green, its tall scattered trees, and old grey tower, are disappearing fast among the discoloured tints and haze of evening.

Those landmarks, as we sit listlessly expecting the arrival of our modest conveyance, suggest to our companion−−a bare− legged Celtic brother of the gentle craft, somewhat at the wrong side of forty, with a turf−coloured caubeen, patched frieze, a clear brown complexion, dark−grey eyes, and a right pleasant dash of roguery in his features−−the tale, which, if the reader pleases, he is welcome to hear along with me just as it falls from the lips of our humble comrade.

His words I can give, but your own fancy must supply the advantages of an intelligent, expressive countenance, and, what is perhaps harder still, the harmony of his glorious brogue, that, like the melodies of our own dear country, will leave a burden of mirth or of sorrow with nearly equal propriety, tickling the diaphragm as easily as it plays with the heart− strings, and is in itself a national music that, I trust, may never, never−−scouted and despised though it be−−never cease, like the lost tones of our harp, to be heard in the fields of my country, in welcome or endearment, in fun or in sorrow, stirring the hearts of Irish men and Irish women.

My friend of the caubeen and naked shanks, then, commenced, and continued his relation, as nearly as possible, in the following words:

Av coorse ye often heerd talk of Billy Malowney, that lived by the bridge of Carrickadrum. 'Leum−a−rinka' was the name they put on him, he was sich a beautiful dancer. An' faix, it's he was the rale sportin' boy, every way−−killing the hares, and gaffing the salmons, an' fightin' the men, an' funnin' the women, and coortin' the girls; an' be the same token, there was not a colleen inside iv his jurisdiction but was breakin' her heart wid the fair love iv him.

Well, this was all pleasant enough, to be sure, while it lasted; but inhuman beings is born to misfortune, an' Bill's divarshin was not to last always. A young boy can't be continially coortin' and kissin' the girls (an' more's the pity) without exposin' himself to the most eminent parril; an' so signs all' what should happen Billy Malowney himself, but to fall in love at last wid little Molly Donovan, in Coolnamoe.

I never could ondherstand why in the world it was Bill fell in love wid HER, above all the girls in the country. She was not within four stone weight iv being as fat as Peg Brallaghan; and as for redness in the face, she could not hould a candle to Judy Flaherty. (Poor Judy! she was my sweetheart, the darlin', an' coorted me constant, ever antil she married a boy of the Butlers; an' it's twenty years now since she was buried under the ould white−thorn in Garbally. But that's no matther!)

Well, at any rate, Molly Donovan tuck his fancy, an' that's everything! She had smooth brown hair−−as smooth as silk−an' a pair iv soft coaxin' eyes−−an' the whitest little teeth you ever seen; an', bedad, she was every taste as much in love wid himself as he was.

Well, now, he was raly stupid wid love: there was not a bit of fun left in him. He was good for nothin' an airth bud sittin' under bushes, smokin' tobacky, and sighin' till you'd wonder how in the world he got wind for it all.

An', bedad, he was an illigant scholar, moreover; an', so signs, it's many's the song he made about her; an' if you'd be walkin' in the evening, a mile away from Carrickadrum, begorra you'd hear him singing out like a bull, all across the country, in her praises.

Well, ye may be sure, ould Tim Donovan and the wife was not a bit too well plased to see Bill Malowney coortin' their daughter Molly; for, do ye mind, she was the only child they had, and her fortune was thirty− five pounds, two cows, and five illigant pigs, three iron pots and a skillet, an' a trifle iv poultry in hand; and no one knew how much besides, whenever the Lord id be plased to call the ould people out of the way into glory!

So, it was not likely ould Tim Donovan id be fallin' in love wid poor Bill Malowney as aisy as the girls did; for, barrin' his beauty, an' his gun, an' his dhudheen, an' his janius, the divil a taste of property iv any sort or description he had in the wide world!

Well, as bad as that was, Billy would not give in that her father and mother had the smallest taste iv a right to intherfare, good or bad.

'An' you're welcome to rayfuse me,' says he, 'whin I ax your lave,' says he; 'an' I'll ax your lave,' says he, 'whenever I want to coort yourselves,' says he; 'but it's your daughter I'm coortin' at the present,' says he, 'an that's all I'll say,' says he; 'for I'd as soon take a doase of salts as be discoursin' ye,' says he.

So it was a rale blazin' battle betune himself and the ould people; an', begorra, there was no soart iv blaguardin' that did not pass betune them; an' they put a solemn injection on Molly again seein' him or meetin' him for the future.

But it was all iv no use. You might as well be pursuadin' the birds agin flying, or sthrivin' to coax the stars out iv the sky into your hat, as be talking common sinse to them that's fairly bothered and burstin' wid love. There's nothin' like it. The toothache an' cholic together id compose you betther for an argyment than itself. It leaves you fit for nothin' bud nansinse.

It's stronger than whisky, for one good drop iv it will make you drunk for one year, and sick, begorra, for a dozen.

It's stronger than the say, for it'll carry you round the world an' never let you sink, in sunshine or storm; an,' begorra, it's stronger than Death himself, for it is not afeard iv him, bedad, but dares him in every shape.

But lovers has quarrels sometimes, and, begorra, when they do, you'd a'most imagine they hated one another like man and wife. An' so, signs an, Billy Malowney and Molly Donovan fell out one evening at ould Tom Dundon's wake; an' whatever came betune them, she made no more about it but just draws her cloak round her, and away wid herself and the sarvant−girl home again, as if there was not a corpse, or a fiddle, or a taste of divarsion in it.

Well, Bill Malowney follied her down the boreen, to try could he deludher her back again; but, if she was bitther before, she gave it to him in airnest when she got him alone to herself, and to that degree that he wished her safe home, short and sulky enough, an' walked back again, as mad as the devil himself, to the wake, to pay a respect to poor Tom Dundon.

Well, my dear, it was aisy seen there was something wrong avid Billy Malowney, for he paid no attintion the rest of the evening to any soart of divarsion but the whisky alone; an' every glass he'd drink it's what he'd be wishing the divil had the women, an' the worst iv bad luck to all soarts iv courting, until, at last, wid the goodness iv the sperits, an' the badness iv his temper, an' the constant flusthration iv cursin', he grew all as one as you might say almost, saving your presince, bastely drunk!

Well, who should he fall in wid, in that childish condition, as he was deploying along the road almost as straight as the letter S, an' cursin' the girls, an' roarin' for more whisky, but the recruiting−sargent iv the Welsh Confusileers.

So, cute enough, the sargent begins to convarse him, an' it was not long until he had him sitting in Murphy's public−house, wid an elegant dandy iv punch before him, an' the king's money safe an' snug in the lowest wrinkle of his breeches−pocket.

So away wid him, and the dhrums and fifes playing, an' a dozen more unforthunate bliggards just listed along with him, an' he shakin' hands wid the sargent, and swearin' agin the women every minute, until, be the time he kem to himself, begorra, he was a good ten miles on the road to Dublin, an' Molly and all behind him.

It id be no good tellin' you iv the letters he wrote to her from the barracks there, nor how she was breaking her heart to go and see him just wanst before he'd go; but the father an' mother would not allow iv it be no manes.

An' so in less time than you'd be thinkin' about it, the colonel had him polished off into it rale elegant soger, wid his gun exercise, and his bagnet exercise, and his small sword, and broad sword, and pistol and dagger, an' all the rest, an' then away wid him on boord a man−a−war to furrin parts, to fight for King George agin Bonyparty, that was great in them times.

Well, it was very soon in everyone's mouth how Billy Malowney was batin' all before him, astonishin' the ginerals, an frightenin' the inimy to that degree, there was not a Frinchman dare say parley voo outside of the rounds iv his camp.

You may be sure Molly was proud iv that same, though she never spoke a word about it; until at last the news kem home that Billy Malowney was surrounded an' murdered by the Frinch army, under Napoleon Bonyparty himself. The news was brought by Jack Brynn Dhas, the peddlar, that said he met the corporal iv the regiment on the quay iv Limerick, an' how he brought him into a public−house and thrated him to a naggin, and got all the news about poor Billy Malowney out iv him while they war dhrinkin' it; an' a sorrowful story it was.

The way it happened, accordin' as the corporal tould him, was jist how the Jook iv Wellington detarmined to fight a rale tarin' battle wid the Frinch, and Bonyparty at the same time was aiqually detarmined to fight the divil's own scrimmidge wid the British foorces.

Well, as soon as the business was pretty near ready at both sides, Bonyparty and the general next undher himself gets up behind a bush, to look at their inimies through spy− glasses, and thry would they know any iv them at the distance.

'Bedadad!' says the gineral, afther a divil iv a long spy, 'I'd bet half a pint,' says he, 'that's Bill Malowney himself,' says he, 'down there,' says he.

'Och!' says Bonypart, 'do you tell me so?' says he−−'I'm fairly heart−scalded with that same Billy Malowney,' says he; 'an' I think if I was wanst shut iv him I'd bate the rest iv them aisy,' says he.

'I'm thinking so myself,' says the gineral, says he; 'but he's a tough bye,' says he.

'Tough!' says Bonypart, 'he's the divil,' says he.

'Begorra, I'd be better plased.' says the gineral, says he, 'to take himself than the Duke iv Willinton,' says he, 'an' Sir Edward Blakeney into the bargain,' says he.

'The Duke of Wellinton and Gineral Blakeney,' says Bonypart, 'is great for planning, no doubt,' says he; 'but Billy Malowney's the boy for ACTION,' says he−− 'an' action's everything, just now,' says he.

So wid that Bonypart pushes up his cocked hat, and begins scratching his head, and thinning and considherin' for the bare life, and at last says he to the gineral:

'Gineral Commandher iv all the Foorces,' says he, 'I've hot it,' says he: 'ordher out the forlorn hope,' says he, 'an' give them as much powdher, both glazed and blasting,' says he, 'an' as much bullets do ye mind, an' swan−dhrops an' chain−shot,' says he, 'an' all soorts iv waipons an' combustables as they can carry; an' let them surround Bill Malowney,' says he, 'an' if they can get any soort iv an advantage,' says he, 'let them knock him to smithereens,' says he, 'an' then take him presner,' says he; 'an' tell all the bandmen iv the Frinch army,' says he, 'to play up "Garryowen," to keep up their sperits,' says he, 'all the time they're advancin'. An' you may promise them anything you like in my name,' says he; for, by my sowl, I don't think its many iv them 'ill come back to throuble us,' says he, winkin' at him.

So away with the gineral, an' he ordhers out the forlorn hope, all' tells the band to play, an' everything else, just as Bonypart desired him. An' sure enough, whin Billy Malowney heerd the music where he was standin' taking a blast of the dhudheen to compose his mind for murdherin' the Frinchmen as usual, being mighty partial to that tune intirely, he cocks his ear a one side, an' down he stoops to listen to the music; but, begorra, who should be in his rare all the time but a Frinch grannideer behind a bush, and seeing him stooped in a convanient forum, bedad he let flies at him sthraight, and fired him right forward between the legs an' the small iv the back, glory be to God! with what they call (saving your presence) a bum−shell.

Well, Bill Malowney let one roar out iv him, an' away he rowled over the field iv battle like a slitther (as Bonypart and the Duke iv Wellington, that was watching the manoeuvres from a distance, both consayved) into glory.

An' sure enough the Frinch was overjoyed beyant all bounds, an' small blame to them−−an' the Duke of

Wellington, I'm toult, was never all out the same man sinst.

At any rate, the news kem home how Billy Malowney was murdhered by the Frinch in furrin parts.

Well, all this time, you may be sure, there was no want iv boys comin' to coort purty Molly Donovan; but one way ar another, she always kept puttin' them off constant. An' though her father and mother was nathurally anxious to get rid of her respickably, they did not like to marry her off in spite iv her teeth.

An' this way, promising one while and puttin' it off another, she conthrived to get on from one Shrove to another, until near seven years was over and gone from the time when Billy Malowney listed for furrin sarvice.

It was nigh hand a year from the time whin the news iv Leum−a−rinka bein' killed by the Frinch came home, an' in place iv forgettin' him, as the saisins wint over, it's what Molly was growin' paler and more lonesome every day, antil the neighbours thought she was fallin' into a decline; and this is the way it was with her whin the fair of Lisnamoe kem round.

It was a beautiful evenin', just at the time iv the reapin' iv the oats, and the sun was shinin' through the red clouds far away over the hills iv Cahirmore.

Her father an' mother, an' the boys an' girls, was all away down in the fair, and Molly Sittin' all alone on the step of the stile, listening to the foolish little birds whistlin' among the leaves−−and the sound of the mountain−river flowin' through the stones an' bushes−−an' the crows flyin' home high overhead to the woods iv Glinvarlogh−−an' down in the glen, far away, she could see the fair−green iv Lisnamoe in the mist, an' sunshine among the grey rocks and threes−−an' the cows an' the horses, an' the blue frieze, an' the red cloaks, an' the tents, an' the smoke, an' the ould round tower−−all as soft an' as sorrowful as a dhrame iv ould times.

An' while she was looking this way, an' thinking iv Leum−a−rinka−−poor Bill iv the dance, that was sleepin' in his lonesome glory in the fields iv Spain−−she began to sing the song he used to like so well in the ould times−−

'Shule, shule, shale a−roon;'

an' when she ended the verse, what do you think but she heard a manly voice just at the other side iv the hedge, singing the last words over again!

Well she knew it; her heart flutthered up like a little bird that id be wounded, and then dhropped still in her breast. It was himself. In a minute he was through the hedge and standing before her.

'Leum!' says she.

'Mavourneen cuishla machree!' says he; and without another word they were locked in one another's arms.

Well, it id only be nansinse for me thryin' an' tell ye all the foolish things they said, and how they looked in one another's faces, an' laughed, an' cried, an' laughed again; and how, when they came to themselves, and she was able at last to believe it was raly Billy himself that was there, actially holdin' her hand, and lookin' in her eyes the same way as ever, barrin' he was browner and boulder, an' did not, maybe, look quite as merry in himself as he used to do in former times−−an' fondher for all, an' more lovin' than ever −−how he tould her all about the wars wid the Frinchmen−−an' how he was wounded, and left for dead in the field iv battle, bein' shot through the breast, and how he was discharged, an' got a pinsion iv a full shillin' a day−−and how he was come back to liv the rest iv his days in the sweet glen iv Lisnamoe, an' (if only SHE'D consint) to marry herself in spite iv them all.

Well, ye may aisily think they had plinty to talk about, afther seven years without once seein' one another; and so signs on, the time flew by as swift an' as pleasant as a bird on the wing, an' the sun wint down, an' the moon shone sweet an' soft instead, an' they two never knew a ha'porth about it, but kept talkin' an' whisperin', an' whisperin' an' talkin'; for it's wondherful how often a tinder−hearted girl will bear to hear a purty boy tellin' her the same story constant over an' over; ontil at last, sure enough, they heerd the ould man himself comin' up the boreen, singin' the 'Colleen Rue'−−a thing he never done barrin' whin he had a dhrop in; an' the misthress walkin' in front iv him, an' two illigant Kerry cows he just bought in the fair, an' the sarvint boys dhriving them behind.

'Oh, blessed hour!' says Molly, 'here's my father.'

'I'll spake to him this minute,' says Bill.

'Oh, not for the world,' says she; 'he's singin' the "Colleen Rue," ' says she, 'and no one dar raison with him,' says she.

'An' where 'll I go, thin?' says he, 'for they're into the haggard an top iv us,' says he, 'an' they'll see me iv I lep through the hedge,' says he.

'Thry the pig−sty,' says she, 'mavourneen,' says she, 'in the name iv God,' says she.

'Well, darlint,' says he, 'for your sake,' says he, 'I'll condescend to them animals,' says he.

An' wid that he makes a dart to get in; bud, begorra, it was too late−−the pigs was all gone home, and the pig−sty was as full as the Burr coach wid six inside.

'Och! blur−an'−agers,' says he, 'there is not room for a suckin'−pig,' says he, 'let alone a Christian,' says he.

'Well, run into the house, Billy,' says she, 'this minute,' says she, 'an' hide yourself antil they're quiet,' says she, 'an' thin you can steal out,' says she, 'anknownst to them all,' says she.

'I'll do your biddin', says he, 'Molly asthore,' says he.

'Run in thin,' says she, 'an' I'll go an' meet them,' says she.

So wid that away wid her, and in wint Billy, an' where 'id he hide himself bud in a little closet that was off iv the room where the ould man and woman slep'. So he closed the doore, and sot down in an ould chair he found there convanient.

Well, he was not well in it when all the rest iv them comes into the kitchen, an' ould Tim Donovan singin' the 'Colleen Rue' for the bare life, an' the rest iv them sthrivin' to humour him, and doin' exactly everything he bid them, because they seen he was foolish be the manes iv the liquor.

Well, to be sure all this kep' them long enough, you may be sure, from goin' to bed, so that Billy could get no manner iv an advantage to get out iv the house, and so he sted sittin' in the dark closet in state, cursin' the 'Colleen Rue,' and wondherin' to the divil whin they'd get the ould man into his bed. An', as if that was not delay enough, who should come in to stop for the night but Father O'Flaherty, of Cahirmore, that was buyin' a horse at the fair! An' av course, there was a bed to be med down for his raverence, an' some other attintions; an' a long discoorse himself an' ould Mrs. Donovan had about the slaughter iv Billy Malowney, an' how he was buried on the field iv battle; an' his raverence hoped he got a dacent funeral, an' all the other convaniences iv religion. An' so you may suppose it was pretty late in the night before all iv them got to their beds.

Well, Tim Donovan could not settle to sleep at all at all, an' so he kep' discoorsin' the wife about the new cows he bought, an' the stripphers he sould, an' so an for better than an hour, ontil from one thing to another he kem to talk about the pigs, an' the poulthry; and at last, having nothing betther to discoorse about, he begun at his daughter Molly, an' all the heartscald she was to him be raison iv refusin' the men. An' at last says he:

'I onderstand,' says he, 'very well how it is,' says he. 'It's how she was in love,' says he, 'wid that bliggard, Billy Malowney,' says he, 'bad luck to him!' says he; for by this time he was coming to his raison.

'Ah!' says the wife, says she, 'Tim darlint, don't be cursin' them that's dead an' buried,' says she.

'An' why would not I,' says he, 'if they desarve it?' says he.

'Whisht,' says she, 'an' listen to that,' says she. 'In the name of the Blessed Vargin,' says she, 'what IS it?' says she.

An' sure enough what was it but Bill Malowney that was dhroppin' asleep in the closet, an' snorin' like a church organ.

'Is it a pig,' says he, 'or is it a Christian?'

'Arra! listen to the tune iv it,' says she; 'sure a pig never done the like is that,' says she.

'Whatever it is,' says he, 'it's in the room wid us,' says he. 'The Lord be marciful to us!' says he.

'I tould you not to be cursin',' says she; 'bad luck to you,' says she, 'for an ommadhaun!' for she was a very religious woman in herself.

'Sure, he's buried in Spain,' says he; 'an' it is not for one little innocent expression,' says he, 'he'd be comin' all that a way to annoy the house,' says he.

Well, while they war talkin', Bill turns in the way he was sleepin' into an aisier imposture; and as soon as he stopped snorin' ould Tim Donovan's courage riz agin, and says he:

'I'll go to the kitchen,' says he, 'an' light a rish,' says he.

An' with that away wid him, an' the wife kep' workin' the beads all the time, an' before he kem back Bill was snorin' as loud as ever.

'Oh! bloody wars−−I mane the blessed saints about us!−−that deadly sound,' says he; 'it's going on as lively as ever,' says he.

'I'm as wake as a rag,' says his wife, says she, 'wid the fair anasiness,' says she. 'It's out iv the little closet it's comin,' says she.

'Say your prayers,' says he, 'an' hould your tongue,' says he, 'while I discoorse it,' says he. 'An' who are ye,'

says he, 'in the name iv of all the holy saints?' says he, givin' the door a dab iv a crusheen that wakened Bill inside. 'I ax,' says he, 'who are you?' says he.

Well, Bill did not rightly remember where in the world he was, but he pushed open the door, an' says he:

'Billy Malowney's my name,' says he, 'an' I'll thank ye to tell me a betther,' says he.

Well, whin Tim Donovan heard that, an' actially seen that it was Bill himself that was in it, he had not strength enough to let a bawl out iv him, but he dhropt the candle out iv his hand, an' down wid himself on his back in the dark.

Well, the wife let a screech you'd hear at the mill iv Killraghlin, an'−−

'Oh,' says she, 'the spirit has him, body an' bones!' says she. 'Oh, holy St. Bridget−−oh, Mother iv Marcy−−oh, Father O'Flaherty!' says she, screechin' murdher from out iv her bed.

Well, Bill Malowney was not a minute remimberin' himself, an' so out wid him quite an' aisy, an' through the kitchen; bud in place iv the door iv the house, it's what he kem to the door iv Father O'Flaherty's little room, where he was jist wakenin' wid the noise iv the screechin' an' battherin'; an' bedad, Bill makes no more about it, but he jumps, wid one boult, clever an' clane into his raverance's bed.

'What do ye mane, you uncivilised bliggard?' says his raverance. 'Is that a venerable way,' says he, 'to approach your clargy?' says he.

'Hould your tongue,' says Bill, 'an' I'll do ye no harum,' says he.

'Who are you, ye scoundhrel iv the world?' says his raverance.

'Whisht!' says he? 'I'm Billy Malowney,' says he.

'You lie!' says his raverance for he was frightened beyont all bearin'−−an' he makes but one jump out iv the bed at the wrong side, where there was only jist a little place in the wall for a press, an' his raverance could not as much as turn in it for the wealth iv kingdoms. 'You lie,' says he; 'but for feared it's the truth you're tellin',' says he, 'here's at ye in the name iv all the blessed saints together!' says he.

An' wid that, my dear, he blazes away at him wid a Latin prayer iv the strongest description, an', as he said himself afterwards, that was iv a nature that id dhrive the divil himself up the chimley like a puff iv tobacky smoke, wid his tail betune his legs.

'Arra, what are ye sthrivin' to say,' says Bill; says he, 'if ye don't hould your tongue,' says he, 'wid your parly voo;' says he, 'it's what I'll put my thumb on your windpipe,' says he, 'an' Billy Malowney never wint back iv his word yet,' says he.

'Thundher−an−owns,' says his raverance, says he−−seein' the Latin took no infect on him, at all at all an' screechin' that you'd think he'd rise the thatch up iv the house wid the fair fright−−'and thundher and blazes, boys, will none iv yes come here wid a candle, but lave your clargy to be choked by a spirit in the dark?' says he.

Well, be this time the sarvint boys and the rest iv them wor up an' half dressed, an' in they all run, one on top iv another, wid pitchforks and spades, thinkin' it was only what his raverence slep' a dhrame iv the like, by means of the punch he was afther takin' just before he rowl'd himself into the bed. But, begorra, whin they seen it was raly Bill Malowney himself that was in it, it was only who'd be foremost out agin, tumblin' backways, one over another, and his raverence roarin' an' cursin' them like mad for not waitin' for him.

Well, my dear, it was betther than half an hour before Billy Malowney could explain to them all how it raly was himself, for begorra they were all iv them persuadin' him that he was a spirit to that degree it's a wondher he did not give in to it, if it was only to put a stop to the argiment.

Well, his raverence tould the ould people then, there was no use in sthrivin' agin the will iv Providence an' the vagaries iv love united; an' whin they kem to undherstand to a sartinty how Billy had a shillin' a day for the rest iv his days, begorra they took rather a likin' to him, and considhered at wanst how he must have riz out of all his nansinse entirely, or his gracious Majesty id never have condescinded to show him his countenance that way every day of his life, on a silver shillin'.

An' so, begorra, they never stopt till it was all settled−−an' there was not sich a weddin' as that in the counthry sinst. It's more than forty years ago, an' though I was no more nor a gossoon myself, I remimber it like yestherday. Molly never looked so purty before, an' Billy Malowney was plisant beyont all hearin,' to that degree that half the girls in it was fairly tarin' mad−−only they would not let on−−they had not him to themselves in place iv her. An' begorra I'd be afeared to tell ye, because you would not believe me, since that blessid man Father Mathew put an end to all soorts of sociality, the Lord reward him, how many gallons iv pottieen whisky was dhrank upon that

most solemn and tindher occasion.

Pat Hanlon, the piper, had a faver out iv it; an' Neddy Shawn Heigue, mountin' his horse the wrong way, broke his collar− bone, by the manes iv fallin' over his tail while he was feelin' for his head; an' Payther Brian, the horse−docther, I am tould, was never quite right in the head ever afther; an' ould Tim Donovan was singin' the 'Colleen Rue' night and day for a full week; an' begorra the weddin' was only the foundation iv fun, and the beginning iv divarsion, for there was not a year for ten years afther, an' more, but brought round a christenin' as regular as the sasins revarted.