

The Station; The Party Fight And Funeral; The Lough Derg Pilgrim eBook

The Station; The Party Fight And Funeral; The Lough Derg Pilgrim by William Carleton

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Page 1

THE STATION.

Our readers are to suppose the Reverend Philemy M'Guirk, parish priest of Tir-neer, to be standing upon the altar of the chapel, facing the congregation, after having gone through the canon of the Mass; and having nothing more of the service to perform, than the usual prayers with which he closes the ceremony.

"Take notice, that the Stations for the following week will be held as follows:—

"On Monday, in Jack Gallagher's of Corraghnammoddagh. Are you there, Jack?"

"To the fore, yer Reverence."

"Why, then, Jack, there's something ominous—something auspicious—to happen, or we wouldn't have you here; for it's very seldom that you make part or parcel of this *present* congregation; seldom are you here, Jack, it must be confessed: however, you know the old classical proverb, or if you don't, I do, which will just answer as well—*Non semper ridet Apollo*—it's not every day *Manus* kills a bullock; so, as you are here, be prepared for us on Monday."

"Never fear, yer Reverence, never fear; I think you ought to know that the grazin' at Corraghnammoddagh's not bad."

"To do you justice, Jack, the mutton was always good with you, only if you would get it better killed it would be an improvement. Get Tom McCusker to kill it, and then it'll have the right smack."

"Very well, yer Rev'rence, I'll do it."

"On Tuesday, in Peter Murtagh's of the Crooked Commons. Are you there, Peter?"

"Here, yer Reverence."

"Indeed, Peter, I might know you are here; and I wish that a great many of my flock would take example by you: if they did, I wouldn't be so far behind in getting in my *dues*. Well, Peter, I suppose you know that this is Michaelmas?"*

* Michaelmas is here jocularly alluded to as that period of the year when geese are fattest.

"So fat, yer Reverence, that they're not able to wag; but, any way, Katty has them marked for you—two fine young crathurs, only this year's fowl, and the ducks isn't a taste behind them—she crammin' them this month past."



“I believe you, Peter, and I would take your word for more than the condition of the geese. Remember me to Katty, Peter.”

“*On Wednesday, in Parrah More Slevin’s of Mullaghfadh. Are you there, Parrah More?*”—No answer. “Parrah More Sle-vin?”—Silence. “Parrah More Slevin, of Mullaghfadh?”—No reply. “Dan Fagan?”

“Present, sir.”

“Do you know what keeps that reprobate from mass?”

“I bleeve he’s takin’ advantage, sir, of the frost, to get in his praties to-day, in respect of the bad footin’, sir, for the horses in the bog when there’s not a frost. Any how, betune that and a bit of a sore head that he got, yer Reverence, on Thursday last in takin’ part wid the O’Scallaghans agin the Bradys, I bleeve he had to stay away to-day.”



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“On the Sabbath day, too, without my leave! Well, tell him from me, that I’ll make an example of him to the whole parish, if he doesn’t attend mass better. Will the Bradys and the O’Scallaghans never be done with their quarrelling? I protest, if they don’t live like Christians, I’ll read them out from the altar. Will you tell Parrah More that I’ll hold a station in his house on next Wednesday?”

“I will, sir; I will, yer Reverence.”

“*On Thursday, in Phaddhy Sheemus Phaddhy’s of the Esker.* Are you there, Phaddhy?”

“Wid the help of God, I’m here, sir.”

“Well, Phaddhy, how is yer son Briney, that’s at the Latin? I hope he’s coming on well at it.”

“Why, sir, he’s not more nor a year and a half at it yet, and he’s got more books amost nor he can carry; he’ll break me buying books for him.”

“Well, that’s a good sign, Phaddhy; but why don’t you bring him to me till I examine him?”

“Why, never a one of me can get him to come, sir, he’s so much afeard of yer Reverence.”

“Well, Phaddhy, we were once modest and bashful ourselves, and I’m glad to hear that he’s afraid of his clargy; but let him be prepared for me on Thursday, and maybe I’ll let him know something he never heard before; I’ll open his eyes for him.”

“Do you hear that, Briney?” said the father, aside to the son, who knelt at his knee; “you must give up yer hurling and idling now, you see. Thank yer Reverence; thank you, docthor.”

“*On Friday, in Barny O’Darby’s, alias Barny Butters.* Are you there, Barny?”

“All that’s left of me is here, sir.”

“Well, Barny, how is the butter trade this season?”

“It’s a little on the rise, now, sir: in a month or so I’m expecting it will be brisk enough. Boney, sir, is doing that much for us anyway.”

“Ay, and, Barny, he’ll do more than that for us: God prosper him at all events; I only hope the time’s coming, Barny, when every one will be able to eat his own butter, and his own beef, too.”



“God send it, sir.”

“Well, Barny, I didn’t hear from your brother Ned these two or three months; what has become of him?”

“Ah, yer Reverence, Pentland done him up.”

“What! the gauger?”

“He did, the thief; but maybe he’ll sup sorrow for it, afore he’s much oulder.”

“And who do you think informed, Barny?”

“Oh, I only wish we knew that, sir.”

“I wish I knew it, and if I thought any miscreant here would become an informer, I’d make an example of him. Well, Barny, on Friday next: but I suppose Ned has a drop still—eh, Barny?”

“Why, sir, we’ll be apt to have something stronger nor wather, anyhow.”

“Very well, Barny; your family was always a dacent and spirited family, I’ll say that for them; but, tell me, Barny, did you begin to dam the river yet? * I think the trouts and eels are running by this time.”

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* It is usual among the peasantry to form, about Michaelmas, small artificial cascades, called dams, under which they place long, deep, wicker creels, shaped like inverted cones, for the purpose of securing the fish that are now on their return to the large rivers, after having deposited their spawn in the higher and remoter streams. It is surprising what a number of fish, particularly of eels, are caught in this manner—sometimes from one barrel to three in the course of a single night!

“The creels are made, yer Reverence, though we did not set them yet; but on Tuesday night, sir, wid the help o’ God, we’ll be ready.”

“You can corn the trouts, Barny, and the eels too; but should you catch nothing, go to Pat Hartigan, Captain Sloethorn’s gamekeeper, and, if you tell him it’s for me, he’ll drag you a batch out of the fish-pond.”

“Ah! then, you’re Reverence, it’s himself that’ll do that wid a heart an’ a half.”

Such was the conversation which took place between the Reverend Philemy M’Guirk, and those of his parishioners in whose houses he had appointed to hold a series of Stations, for the week ensuing the Sunday laid in this our account of that hitherto undescribed portion of the Romish discipline.

Now, the reader is to understand, that a station in this sense differs from a station made to any peculiar spot remarkable for local sanctity. There, a station means the performance of a pilgrimage to a certain place, under peculiar circumstances, and the going through a stated number of prayers and other penitential ceremonies, for the purpose of wiping out sin in this life, or of relieving the soul of some relation from the pains of purgatory in the other; here, it simply means the coming of the parish priest and his curate to some house in the town-land, on a day publicly announced from the altar for that purpose, on the preceding Sabbath.

This is done to give those who live within the district in which the station is held an opportunity of coming to their duty, as frequenting the ordinance of confession is emphatically called. Those who attend confession in this manner once a year, are considered merely to have done their duty; it is expected, however, that they should approach the tribunal,* as it is termed, at least twice during that period, that is, at the two great festivals of Christmas and Easter. The observance or omission of this rite among Roman Catholics, establishes, in a great degeee, the nature of individual character. The man who, frequents his duty will seldom be pronounced a bad man, let his conduct and principles be what they may in other respects; and he who neglects it, is looked upon, by those who attend it, as in a state little short of reprobation.

* That is, of confession—so going to confession is termed by the priests.



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When the “giving out” of the stations was over, and a few more jests were broken by his Reverence, to which the congregation paid the tribute of a general and uproarious laugh, he turned round, and resumed the performance of the mass, whilst his “flock” began to finger their beads with faces as grave as if nothing of the kind had occurred. When mass was finished, and the holy water sprinkled upon the people, out of a tub carried by the mass-server through the chapel for that purpose, the priest gave them a Latin benediction, and they dispersed.

Now, of the five individuals in whose houses the “stations” were appointed to be held, we will select *Phaddhy Sheemus Phaddhy* for our purpose; and this we do, because it was the first time in which a station was ever kept in his house, and consequently Phaddhy and his wife had to undergo the initiatory ceremony of entertaining Father *Philemy* and his curate, the Reverend *Con M’Coul*, at dinner.

Phaddhy Sheemus Phaddhy had been, until a short time before the period in question, a very poor man; but a little previous to that event, a brother of his, who had no children, died very rich—that is, for a farmer—and left him his property, or, at least, the greater part of it. While Phaddhy was poor, it was surprising what little notice he excited from his Reverence; in fact, I have heard him acknowledge, that during all the days of his poverty, he never got a nod of recognition or kindness from Father Philemy, although he sometimes did, he said, from Father Con, his curate, who honored him on two occasions so far as to challenge him to a bout at throwing the shoulder-stone, and once to a leaping match, at both of which exercises Father Con, but for the superior power of Phaddhy, had been unrivalled.

“It was an unlucky day to him,” says Phaddy, “that he went to challenge me, at all at all; for I was the only man that ever bate him, and he wasn’t able to hould up his head in the parish for many a day after.”

As soon, however, as Phaddhy became a man of substance, one would almost think that there had been a secret relationship between his good fortune and Father Philemy’s memory; for, on their first meeting, after Phaddhy’s getting the property, the latter shook him most cordially by the hand—a proof that, had not his recollection been as much improved as Phaddhy’s circumstances, he could by no means have remembered him; but this is a failing in the memory of many, as well as in that of Father Philemy. Phaddhy, however, *was no Donnell*, to use his own expression, and saw as far into a deal board as another man.

“And so, Phaddy,” said the priest, “how are all your family?—six you have, I think?”

“Four, your Rev’rence, only four,” said Phaddy, winking at Tim Dillon, his neighbor, who happened to be present—“three boys an’ one girl.”



“Bless my soul, and so it is indeed, Phaddy, and I ought to know it; an how is your wife Sarah?—I mean, I hope Mrs. Sheemus Phaddhy is well: by the by, is that old complaint of hers gone yet?—a pain in the stomach, I think it was, that used to trouble her; I hope in God, Phaddhy, she’s getting over it, poor thing. Indeed, I remember telling her, last Easter, when she came to her duty, to eat oaten bread and butter with water-grass every morning fasting, it cured myself of the same complaint.”



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“Why, thin, I’m very much obliged to your Rev’rence for purscribin’ for her,” replied Phaddhy; “for, sure enough, she has neither pain nor ache, at the present time, for the best rason in the world, docthor, that she’ll be dead jist seven years, if God spares your Rev’rence an’ myself till to-morrow fortnight, about five o’clock in the mornin’.”

This was more than Father Philemy could stand with a good conscience, so after getting himself out of the dilemma as well as he could, he shook Phaddhy again very cordially by the hand, saying, “Well, good-bye, Phaddliy, and God be good to poor Sarah’s soul—I now remember her funeral, sure enough, and a dacent one it was, for indeed she was a woman that had everybody’s good word—and, between you and me, she made a happy death, that’s as far as we can judge here; for, after all, there may be danger, Phaddy, there may be danger, you understand—however, it’s your own business, and your duty, too, to think of that; but I believe you’re not the man that would be apt to forget her.”

“Phaddhy, ye thief o’ the world,” said Jim Dillon, when Father Philemy was gone, there’s no comin’ up to ye; how could you make sich a fool of his Rev’rence, as to tell im that Katty was dead, and that you had only four childher, an’ you has eleven o’ them, an’ the wife in good health?”

“Why, jist, Tim,” replied Phaddhy, with his usual shrewdness, “to tache his Reverence himself to practise truth a little; if he didn’t know that I got the stockin’ of guineas and the Linaskey farm by my brother Barney’s death, do ye think that he’d notish me at all at all?—not himself, avick; an’ maybe he won’t be afther comin’ round to me for a sack of my best oats,* instead of the bushel I used to give him, and houldin’ a couple of stations wid me every year.”

* The priest accompanied by a couple of servants each with a horse and sack, collects from such of his parishioners as can afford it, a quantity of oats, varying with the circumstances of the donor. This collection—called *Questing*—is voluntary on the part of his parishioners who may refuse it if they wish; very few are found however, hardy enough to risk the obloquy of declining to contribute, and the consequence is that the custom operates with as much force as if it were legal and compulsory.

“But won’t he go mad when he hears you tould him nothing but lies?”

“Not now, Tim,” answered Phaddhy—“not now; thank God,—I’m not a poor man, an’ he’ll keep his temper. I’ll warrant you the horsewhip won’t be up now, although, afore this, I wouldn’t say but it might—though the poorest day I ever was, ’id’s myself that wouldn’t let priest or friar lay a horsewhip to my back, an’ that you know, Tim.”

Phaddhy’s sagacity, however, was correct; for, a short time after this conversation, Father Philemy, when collecting his oats, gave him a call, laughed heartily at the sham account of Katty’s death, examined young Briney in his Latin, who was called after his

uncle, pronounced him very cute, and likely to become a great scholar—promised his interest with the bishop to get him into Maynooth, and left the family, after having shaken hands with, and stroked down the heads of all the children.



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When Phaddhy, on the Sunday in question, heard the public notice given of the Station about to be held in his house, notwithstanding his correct knowledge of Father Philemy's character, on which he looked with a competent portion of contempt, he felt a warmth of pride about his heart, that arose from the honor of having a station, and of entertaining the clergy, in their official capacity, under his own roof, and at his own expense—that gave him, he thought, a personal consequence, which even the “stockin' of guineas” and the Linaskey farm were unable, of themselves, to confer upon him. He did enjoy, 'tis true, a very fair portion of happiness on succeeding to his brother's property; but this would be a triumph over the envious and ill-natured remarks which several of his neighbors and distant relations had taken the liberty of indulging in against him, on the occasion of his good fortune. He left the chapel, therefore, in good spirits, whilst Briney, on the contrary, hung a lip of more melancholy pendency than usual, in dread apprehension of the examination that he expected to be inflicted on him by his Reverence at the station.

Before I introduce the conversation which took place between Phaddhy and Briney, as they went home, on the subject of this literary ordeal, I must observe, that there is a custom, hereditary in some Irish families, of calling fathers by their Christian names, instead of by the usual appellation of “father.” This usage was observed, not only by Phaddhy and his son, but by all the Phaddys of that family, generally. Their surname was Doran, but in consequence of the great numbers in that part of the country who bore the same name, it was necessary as of old, to distinguish the several branches of it by the Christian names of their fathers and grandfathers, and sometimes this distinction went as far back as the great-grandfather. For instance—Phaddhy Sheemus Phaddhy, meant Phaddhy, the son of Sheemus, the son of Phaddhy; and his son, Briney, was called, Brian Phaddy Sheemus Phaddy, or, *anglice*, Bernard the son of Patrick, the son of James, the son of Patrick. But the custom of children calling fathers, in a viva voce manner, by their Christian names, was independent of the other more general usage of the patronymic.

“Well, Briney,” said Phaddy, as the father and son returned home, cheek by jowl from the chapel, “I suppose Father Philemy will go very deep in the Latin wid ye on Thursday; do ye think ye'll be able to answer him?”

“Why, Phaddhy,” replied Briney, “how could I be able to answer a clargy?—doesn't he know all the languages, and I'm only in the *Fibulae AEsiopii* yet.”

“Is that Latin or Greek, Briney?”

“It's Latin, Phaddhy.”

“And what's the translation of that?”

“It signifies the Fables of AEsiopius.”



“Bliss my sowl! and Briney, did ye consther that out of yer own head?”

“Hogh! that’s little of it. If ye war to hear me consther *Gallus Gallinaceus*, a dunghill cock?”



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“And, Briney, are ye in Greek at all yet?”

“No, Phaddhy, I’ll not be in Greek till I’m in Virgil and Horace, and thin I’ll be near finished.”

“And how long will it be till that, Briney?”

“Why, Phaddhy, you know I’m only a year and a half at the Latin, and in two years more I’ll be in the Greek.”

“Do ye think will ye ever be as larned as! Father Philemy, Briney?”

“Don’t ye, know whin I’m a clargy I will but I’m only a *lignum sacerdotis* yet, Phaddhy.”

“What’s *ligdum saucerdoatis*, Briney?”

“A block of a priest, Phaddhy.”

“Now, Briney, I suppose Father Philemy knows everything.”

“Ay, to be sure he does; all the languages’ that’s spoken through the world, Phaddhy.”

“And must all the priests know them, Briney?—how many are they?”

“Seven—sartainly, every priest must know them, or how could they lay the divil, if he’d, spake to them in a tongue they couldn’t understand, Phaddhy?”

“Ah, I declare, Briney, I see it now; only for that, poor Father Philip, the heavens be his bed, wouldn’t be able to lay ould Warnock, that haunted Squire Sloethorn’s stables.”

“Is that when the two horses was stole, Phaddhy?”

“The very time, Briney; but God be thanked, Father Philip settled him to the day of judgment.”

“And where did he put him, Phaddhy?”

“Why, he wanted to be put anundher the hearth-stone; but Father Philip made him walk away with himself into a thumb-bottle, and tied a stone to it, and then sent him to where he got a cooling, the thief, at the bottom of the lough behind the house.”

“Well, I’ll tell you what I’m thinking I’ll be apt to do, Phaddhy, when I’m a clargy.”

“And what is that, Briney?”



“Why, I’ll—but, Phaddhy, don’t be talking of this, bekase, if it should come to be known, I might get my brains knocked out by some of the heretics.”

“Never fear, Briney, there’s no danger of that—but what is it?”

“Why, I’ll translate all the Protestants into asses, and then we’ll get our hands red of them altogether.”

“Well, that flogs for cuteness, and it’s a wondher the clargy* doesn’t do it, and them has the power; for ’twould give us pace entirely. But, Briney, will you speak in Latin to Father Philemy on Thursday?”

* I have no hesitation in asserting that the bulk of the uneducated peasantry really believe that the priests have this power.

“To tell you the thruth, Phaddhy, I would rather he wouldn’t examine me this bout, at all at all.”

“Ay, but you know we couldn’t go agin him, Briney, bekase he promised to get you into the college. Will you speak some Latin, now till I hear you?”

“Hem!—*Verbum personaley cohairit cum nomnatibo numbera at persona at numquam sera yeast at bonis moras voia.*”

“Bless my heart!—and, Briney, where’s that taken from?”



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“From Syntax, Phaddhy.”

“And who was Syntax—do you know, Briney?”

“He was a Roman, Phaddhy, bekase there’s a Latin prayer in the beginning of the book.”

“Ay, was he—a priest, I’ll warrant him. Well, Briney, do you mind yer Latin, and get on wid yer larnin’, and when you grow up you’ll have a pair of boots, and a horse of your own (and a good broadcloth black coat, too) to ride on, every bit as good as Father Philemy’s, and may be betther nor Father Con’s.”

From this point, which usually wound up these colloquies between the father and son, the conversation generally diverged into the more spacious fields of science; so that by the time they reached home, Briney had probably given the father a learned dissertation upon the elevation of the clouds above the earth, and told him within how many thousand miles they approached it, at their nearest point of approximation.

“Katty,” said Phaddhy, when he got home, “we’re to have a station here on Thursday next: ’twas given out from the altar to-day by Father Philemy.”

“Oh, wurrah, wurrah!” exclaimed Katty, overwhelmed at the consciousness of her own incapacity to get up a dinner in sufficient style for such guests—“wurrah, wurrah! Phaddhy, ahagur, what on the livin’ earth will we do at all at all! Why, we’ll never be able to manage it.”

“Arrah, why, woman; what do they want but their skinful to eat and dhrink, and I’m sure we’re able to allow them that, any way?”

“Arrah, bad manners to me, but you’re enough to vex a saint—’their skinful to eat and dhrink!’—you common crathur you, to speak that way of the clargy, as if it was ourselves or the laborers you war spaking of.”

“Ay, and aren’t we every bit as good as they are, if you go to that?—haven’t we sows to be saved as well as themselves?”

“‘As good as they are!’—as good as the clargy!! *Manum a yea agus a wurrah!**—listen to what he says! Phaddhy, take care of yourself, you’ve got rich, now; but for all that, take care of yourself. You had betther not bring the priest’s ill-will, or his bad heart upon us. You know they never thruv that had it; and maybe it’s a short time your riches might stay wid you, or maybe it’s a short time you might stay wid them: at any rate, God forgive you, and I hope he will, for making use of sich unsanctified words to your lawful clargy.”

* My soul to God and the Virgin.



“Well, but what do you intend to do?—or, what do you think of getting for them?” inquired Phaddy.

“Indeed, it’s very little matter what I get for them, or what I’ll do either—sorrow one of myself cares almost: for a man in his senses, that ought to know better, to make use of such low language about the blessed and holy crathurs, that hasn’t a stain of sin about them, no more than the child unborn!”

“So you think.”

“So I think! aye, and it would be better for you that you thought so, too; but ye don’t know what’s before ye yet, Phaddy—and now take warnin’ in time, and mend your life.”

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“Why what do you see wrong in my life? Am I a drunkard? am I lazy? did ever I neglect my business? was I ever bad to you or to the childher? didn’t I always give yez yer fill to ate, and kept yez as well clad as yer neighbors that was richer? Don’t I go to my knees, too, every night and morning?”

“That’s true enough, but what signifies it all? When did ye cross a priest’s foot to go to your duty? Not for the last five years, Phaddhy—not since poor Torly (God be good to him) died of the mazles, and that’ll be five years, a fortnight before Christmas.”

“And what are you the betther of all yer confessions? Did they ever mend yer temper, avourneen? no, indeed, Katty, but you’re ten times worse tempered coming back from the priest than before you go to him.”

“Oh! Phaddhy! Phaddhy! God look down upon you this day, or any man that’s in yer hardened state—I see there’s no use in spaking to you, for you’ll still be the ould cut.”

“Ay, will I; so you may as well give up talking about it Arrah, woman!” said. Phaddhy, raising his voice, “who does it ever make betther—show me a man now in all the neighborhood, that’s a pin-point the holier of it? Isn’t there Jemmy Shields, that goes to *his duty* wanst a month, malivogues his wife and family this minute, and then claps them to a Rosary the next; but the ould boy’s a thrifle to him of a fast day, afther coming from the priest. Betune ourselves, Katty, you’re not much behind him.”

Katty made no reply to him, but turned up her eyes, and crossed herself, at the wickedness of her unmanageable husband. “Well, Briney,” said she, turning abruptly to the son, “don’t take pattern by that man, if you expect to do any good; let him be a warning to you to mind yer duty, and respect yer clargy—and prepare yerself, now that I think of it, to go to Father Philemy or Father Con on Thursday: but don’t be said or led by that man, for I’m sure I dunna how he intends to face the Man above when he laves this world—and to keep from his duty, and to spake of his clargy as he does!”

There are few men without their weak sides. Phaddhy, although the priests were never very much his favorites, was determined to give what he himself called a *let-out* on this occasion, simply to show his ill-natured neighbors that, notwithstanding their unfriendly remarks, he knew “what it was to be dacent,” as well as his betters; and Katty seconded him in his resolution, from her profound veneration for the clargy. Every preparation was accordingly entered into, and every plan adopted that could possibly be twisted into a capability of contributing to the entertainment of Fathers Philemy and Con.



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One of those large, round, stercoraceous nosegays that, like many other wholesome plants, make up by odor what is wanting in floral beauty, and which lay rather too contagious as Phaddhy expressed it, to the door of his house, was transplanted by about half a dozen laborers, and as many barrows, in the course of a day or two, to a bed some yards distant from the spot of its first growth; because, without any reference whatever to the nasal sense, it was considered that it might be rather an eye-sore to their Reverences, on approaching the door. Several concave inequalities, which constant attrition had worn in the earthen floor of the kitchen, were filled up with blue clay, brought on a cart from the bank of a neighboring river, for the purpose. The dresser, chairs, tables, l pots, and pans, all underwent a rigor of discipline, as if some remarkable event was about to occur; nothing less, it must be supposed than a complete, domestic revolution, and a new state of things. Phaddhy himself cut two or three large furze bushes, and, sticking them on the end of a pitchfork, attempted to sweep down the chimney. For this purpose he mounted on the back of a chair, that he might be able to reach the top with more ease; but, in order that his footing might be firm, he made one of the servant-men sit upon the chair, to keep it steady during the operation. Unfortunately, however, it so happened that this man was needed to assist in removing a meal-chest to another part of the house; this was under Katty's superintendence, who, seeing the fellow sit rather more at his ease than she thought the hurry and importance of the occasion permitted, called him, with a little of her usual sharpness and energy, to assist in removing the chest. For some reason or other, which it is not necessary to mention here, the fellow bounced from his seat, in obedience to the shrill tones of Katty, and the next moment Phaddhy (who was in a state of abstraction in the chimney, and totally unconscious of what was going forward below) made a descent decidedly contrary to the nature of that which most aspirants would be inclined to relish. A severe stun, however, was the most serious injury he received on his own part, and several round oaths, with a good drubbing, fell to the servant; but unluckily he left the furze bush behind him in the highest and narrowest part of the chimney; and were it not that an active fellow succeeded in dragging it up from the outside of the roof, the chimney ran considerable risk, as Katy said, of being choked.

But along with the lustration which every fixture within the house was obliged to undergo, it was necessary that all the youngsters should get new clothes; and for this purpose, Jemmy Lynch, the tailor, with his two journeymen and three apprentices, were sent for in all haste, that he might fit Phaddhy and each of his six sons, in suits, from a piece of home-made frieze, which Katty did not intend to break up till "towards Christmas."



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A station is no common event, and accordingly the web was cut up, and the tailor left a wedding-suit, half-made, belonging to Edy Dolan, a thin old bachelor, who took it into his head to try his hand at becoming a husband ere he'd die. As soon as Jemmy and his train arrived, a door was taken off the hinges, and laid on the floor, for himself to sit upon, and a new drugget quilt was spread beside it, for his journeymen and apprentices. With nimble fingers they plied the needle and thread, and when night came, a turf was got, into which was stuck a piece of rod, pointed at one end and split at the other; the "the white candle," slipped into a shaving of the fringe that was placed in the cleft end of the stick, was then lit, whilst many a pleasant story, told by Jemmy, who had been once in Dublin for six weeks, delighted the circle of lookers-on that sat around them.

At length the day previous to the important one arrived. Hitherto, all hands had contributed to make every thing in and about the house look "dacent"—scouring, washing, sweeping, pairing, and repairing, had been all disposed of. The boys got their hair cut to the quick with the tailor's scissors; and such of the girls as were not full grown, not only that which grew on the upper part of the head taken off, by a cut somewhat resembling the clerical tonsure, so that they looked extremely wild and unsettled with their straight locks projecting over their ears; every thing, therefore, of the less important arrangements had been gone through—the weighty and momentous concern was as yet unsettled.

This was the feast; and alas! never was the want of experience more strongly felt than here. Katty was a bad cook, even to a proverb; and bore so indifferent a character in the country for cleanliness, that very few would undertake to eat her butter. Indeed, she was called Katty Sallagh (* Dirty Katy) on this account: however, this prejudice, whether ill or weil founded, was wearing fast away, since Phaddhy had succeeded to the stocking of guineas, and the Lisnaskey farm. It might be, indeed, that her former poverty helped her neighbors to see this blemish more clearly: but the world is so seldom in the habit of judging people's qualities or failings through this uncharitable medium, that the supposition is rather doubtful. Be this as it may, the arrangements for the breakfast and dinner must be made. There was plenty of bacon, and abundance of cabbages—eggs, ad infinitum—oaten and wheaten bread in piles—turkeys, geese, pullets, as fat as aldermen—cream as rich as Croesus—and three gallons of poteen, one sparkle of which, as Father Philemy said in the course of the evening, would lay the hairs on St. Francis himself in his most self-negative mood, if he saw it. So far so good: everything excellent and abundant in its way. Still the higher and more refined items—the *deliciae epidarum*—must be added. White bread, and tea, and sugar, were yet to be got; and lump-sugar for the punch; and a tea-pot and cups and saucers to be borrowed; all which was accordingly done.

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Well, suppose everything disposed for tomorrow's feast;—suppose Phaddhy himself to have butchered the fowl, because Katty, who was not able to bear the sight of blood, had not the heart to kill “the crathurs” and imagine to yourself one of the servant men taking his red-hot tongs out of the fire, and squeezing a large lump of hog's lard, placed in a grisset, or *Kam*, on the hearth, to grease all their brogues; then see in your mind's eye those two fine, fresh-looking girls, slyly take their old rusty fork out of the fire, and going to a bit of three-corned looking-glass, pasted into a board, or, perhaps, to a pail of water, there to curl up their rich-flowing locks, that had hitherto never known a curl but such, as nature gave them.

On one side of the hob sit two striplings, “thryin' wan another in their catechiz,” that they may be able to answer, with some credit, to-morrow. On the other hob sits Briney, hard at his syntax, with the *Fibulae AEsiopii*, as he called it, placed open at a particular passage, on the seat under him, with a hope that, when Philemy will examine him, the book may open at his favorite fable of “*Gallus Gallinaceus*—a dung-hill cock.” Phaddhy himself is obliged to fast this day, there being one day of his penance yet unperformed, since the last time he was at his duty; which was, as aforesaid, about five years: and Katty, now that everything is cleaned up and ready, kneels down in a corner to go over her beads, rocking herself in a placid silence that is only broken by an occasional malediction against the servants, or the cat, when it attempts the abduction of one of the dead fowl.

The next morning the family were up before the sun, who rubbed his eyes, and swore that he must have overslept himself, on seeing such a merry column of smoke dancing over Phaddhy's chimney. A large wooden dish was placed upon the threshold of the kitchen door, filled with water, in which, with a trencher of oatmeal for soap,* they successively scrubbed their faces and hands to some purpose. In a short time afterwards, Phaddhy and the sons were cased, stiff and awkward, in their new suits, with the tops of their fingers just peeping over the sleeve cuffs. The horses in the stable were turned out to the fields, being obliged to make room for their betters, that were soon expected under the reverend bodies of Father Philemy and his curate; whilst about half a bushel of oats was left in the manger, to regale them on their arrival. Little Richard Maguire was sent down to the five-acres, with the pigs, on purpose to keep them from about the house, they not being supposed fit company at a set-dinner. A roaring turf fire, which blazed two yards up the chimney, had been put down; on this was placed a large pot, filled with water for the tea, because they had no kettle.

* Fact—Oatmeal is in general substituted for soap, by those who cannot afford to buy the latter.



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By this time the morning was tolerably advanced, and the neighbors were beginning to arrive in twos and threes, to wipe out old scores. Katty had sent several of the gorsoons “to see if they could see any sight of the clergy,” but hitherto their Reverences were invisible. At length, after several fruitless embassies of this description, Father Con was seen jogging along on his easygoing hack, engaged in the perusal of his Office, previous to his commencing the duties of the day. As soon as his approach was announced, a chair was immediately placed for him in a room off the kitchen—the parlor, such as it was, having been reserved for Father Phileniy himself, as the place of greater honor. This was an arrangement, however, which went against the grain of Phaddhy, who, had he got his will, would have established Father Con in the most comfortable apartment of the house: but that old vagabond, human nature, is the same under all circumstances—or, as Katty would have (in her own phraseology) expressed it, “still the ould cut;” for even there the influence of rank and elevation was sufficient to throw merit into the shade; and the parlor-seat was allotted to Father Philemy, merely for being Parish Priest, although it was well known that he could not “tare off”^{*} mass in half the time that Father Con could, nor throw a sledge, or shoulder-stone within a perch of him, nor scarcely clear a street-channel, whilst the latter could jump one-and-twenty feet at a running leap. But these are rubs which men of merit must occasionally bear; and, when exposed to them, they must only rest satisfied in the consciousness of their own deserts.

* The people look upon that priest as the best and most learned who can perform the ceremony of the mass in the shortest period of time. They call it as above “tareing off”. The quickest description of mass, however, is the “hunting mass,” so termed from the speed at which the priest goes over it—that is, “at the rate of a hunt.”

From the moment that Father Con became visible, the conversation of those who were collected in Phaddhy’s dropped gradually, as he approached the house, into a silence which was only broken by an occasional short observation, made by one or two of those who were in habits of the greatest familiarity with the priest; but when they heard the noise of his horse’s feet near the door, the silence became general and uninterrupted.

There can scarcely be a greater contrast in anything than that presented by the beginning of a station-day and its close. In the morning, the faces of those who are about to confess present an expression in which terror, awe, guilt, and veneration may be easily traced; but in the evening all is mirth and jollity. Before confession every man’s memory is employed in running over the catalogue of crimes, as they are to be found in the prayer-books, under the ten commandments, the seven deadly sins, the Commandments of the Church, the four sins that cry to heaven for vengeance, and the seven sins against the Holy Ghost.



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When Father Con arrived, Phaddhy and Katty were instantly at the door to welcome him.

“Musha, cead millia failtha ghud (A hundred thousand welcomes to you.) to our house, Father Con, avourneen!”* says Katty, dropping him a low curtsy, and spreading her new, brown, quilted petticoat as far out on each side of her as it would go—*“musha, an’ it’s you that’s welcome from my heart out.”*

“I thank you,” said honest Con, who, as he knew not her name, did not pretend to know it.

“Well, Father Con,” said Phaddhy, this is, the first time you have ever come to us this way; but, plase God, it won’t be the last, I hope.”

“I hope not, Phaddhy,” said Father Con, who, notwithstanding his simplicity of character, loved a good dinner in the very core of his heart, “I hope not, indeed, Phaddhy.” He then threw his eye about the premises, to see what point he might set his temper to during the remainder of the day; for it is right to inform our readers that a priest’s temper, at a station, generally rises or falls according to the prospect of his cheer.

Here, however, a little vista, or pantry, jutting out from the kitchen, and left ostentatiously open, presented him with a view which made his very nose curl with kindness. What it contained we do not pretend to say, not having seen it ourselves; we judge, therefore, only by its effects upon his physiognomy.

“Why, Phaddhy,” he says, “this is a very fine house you’ve got over you;” throwing his eye again towards a wooden buttress which supported one of the rafters that was broken.

“Why then, your Reverence, it would not be a bad one,” Phaddhy replied, “if it had a new roof and new side-walls; and I intend to get both next summer, if God spares me till then.”

“Then, upon my word, if it had new side-walls, a new roof, and new gavels, too,” replied Father Con, “it would look certainly a great deal the better for it;—and do you intend to get them next summer, Paddy?”

“If God spares me, sir.”

“Are all these fine gorsoons yours, Phaddhy?”

“Why, so Katty says, your Reverence,” replied Phaddhy, with a good-natured laugh.

“Haven’t you got one of them for the church, Phaddhy?”



“Yes, your Reverence, there’s one of them that I hope will live to have the robes upon him. Come over, Briney, and speak to Father Con. He’s not very far in his Latin yet, sir, but his master tells me that he hasn’t the likes of him in the school for brightness—Briney, will you come over, I say; come over, sarrah, and spake to the gintleman, and him wants to shake hands wid you—come up, man, what are you afeard of?—sure Father Con’s not going to examine you now.”

“No, no, Briney,” said Father Con, “I’m not about to examine you at present.”

“He’s a little dashed, yer Reverence, be-kase he thought you war going to put him through some of his Latin,” said the father, bringing him up like a culprit to Father Con, who shook hands with him, and, after a few questions as to the books he read, and his progress, dismissed him.

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“But, Father Con, wid submission,” said Katty, “where’s Father Philemy from us?—sure, we expected him along wid you, and he wouldn’t go to disappoint us?”

“Oh, you needn’t fear that, Katty,” replied Father Con; “he’ll be here presently—before breakfast, I’ll engage for him at any rate; but he had a touch of the headache this morning, and wasn’t able to rise so early as I was.”

During this conversation a little crowd had collected about the door of the room in which he was to hear the confessions, each struggling and fighting to get the first turn; but here, as in the more important concerns of this world, the weakest went to the wall. He now went into the room, and taking Katty herself first, the door was closed upon them, and he gave her absolution; and thus he continued to confess and absolve them, one by one, until breakfast.

Whenever a station occurs in Ireland, a crowd of mendicants and other strolling impostors seldom fail to attend it; on this occasion, at least, they did not. The day, though frosty, was fine; and the door was surrounded by a train of this description, including both sexes, some sitting on stones, some on stools, with their blankets rolled up under them; and others, more ostensibly devout, on their knees, hard at prayer; which, lest their piety might escape notice, our readers may be assured, they did not offer up in silence. On one side you might observe a sturdy fellow, with a pair of tattered urchins secured to his back by a sheet or blanket pinned across his breast with a long iron skewer, their heads just visible at his shoulders, munching a thick piece of wheaten bread, and the father on his knees, with a huge wooden cross in hand, repeating *padareens*, and occasionally throwing a jolly eye towards the door, or through the window, opposite which he knelt, into the kitchen, as often as any peculiar stir or commotion led him to suppose that breakfast, the loadstar of his devotion, was about to be produced.

Scattered about the door were knots of these, men and women, occasionally chatting together; and when the subject of their conversation happened to be exhausted, resuming their beads, until some new topic would occur, and so on alternately.

The interior of the kitchen where the neighbors were assembled, presented an appearance somewhat more decorous. Andy Lalor, the mass-server, in whom the priest had the greatest confidence, stood in a corner examining, in their catechism, those who intended to confess; and, if they were able to stand the test, he gave them a bit of twisted brown paper as a ticket, and they were received at the tribunal.



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The first question the priest uniformly puts to the penitent is, "Can you repeat the Confiteor?" If the latter answers in the affirmative, he goes on until he comes to the words, mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa, when he stops, it being improper to repeat the remainder until after he has confessed; but, if he is ignorant of the "Confiteor," the priest repeats it for him! and he commences the rehearsal of his offences, specifically as they occurred; and not only does he reveal his individual crimes, but his very thoughts and intentions. By this regulation our readers may easily perceive, that the penitent is completely at the mercy of the priest—that all family feuds, quarrels, and secrets are laid open to his eye—that the ruling; passions of men's lives are held up before him, the weaknesses and propensities of nature—all the unguarded avenues of the human heart and character are brought within his positive knowledge, and that, too, as they exist in the young and the old, the married and the single, the male and the female.

It was curious to remark the ludicrous expression of temporary sanctity which was apparent on the countenances of many young men and maidens who were remarkable in the neighborhood for attending dances and wakes, but who, on the present occasion, were sobered down to a gravity which sat very awkwardly upon them; particularly in the eyes of those who knew the lightness and drollery of their characters. This, however, was observable only before confession; for, as soon as, "the priest's blessed hand had been over them," their gloom and anxiety passed away, and the thoughtless buoyancy of their natural disposition resumed its influence over their minds. A good-humored nod, or a sly wink, from a young man to his female acquaintance, would now be indulged in; or, perhaps a small joke would escape, which seldom failed to produce a subdued laugh from such as had confessed, or an impatient rebuke from those who had not.

"Tim!" one would exclaim, "arn't ye ashamed or afeared to get an that way, and his Reverence undher the wan roof wid ye?"

"Tim, you had better dhrop your joking," a second would observe, "and not be putting us through other, (* confusing us) when we have our offenses to remimber; you have got your job over, and now you have nothing to trouble you."

"Indeed, it's fine behavior," a third would say, "and you afther coming from the priest's knee; and what more, didn't resave (* Communicate) yet; but wait till Father Con appears, and, I'll warrant, you'll be as grave as another, for all you're so stout now."

The conversation would then pass to the merits of Father Philemy and Father Con, as Confessors.

"Well," one would observe—"for my part, I'd rather go to Father Philemy, fifty times over, than wanst to Father Con, bekase he never axes questions; but whatever you like to tell him, he hears it, and forgives you at wanst."

“And so sign’s an it,” observed another; “he could confess more in a day that Father Con could in a week.”



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“But for all that,” observed Andy Lalor, “it’s still best to go to the man that puts the questions, you persave, and that won’t let the turning of a straw escape him. Whin myself goes to Father Philemy, somehow or other, I totally disremember more nor wan half of what I intinded to tell him, but Father Con misses nothing, for he axes it.”

When the last observation was finished, Father Con, finding that the usual hour for breakfast had arrived, came into the kitchen, to prepare for the celebration of mass. For this purpose, a table was cleared, and just in the nick of time arrived old Moll Brian, the vestment woman, or itinerant sacristan, whose usual occupation was to carry the priests’ robes and other apparatus, from station to station. In a short time, Father Con was surpliced and robed; Andy Lalor, whose face was charged with commensurate importance during the ceremony, sarved Mass, and answered the priest stoutly in Latin although he had not the advantage of understanding that sacerdotal language. Those who had confessed, now communicated; after which, each of them took a draught, of water out of a small jug, which was handed round from one to another. The ceremony then closed, and those who had partaken of the sacrament, with the exception of such as were detained for breakfast, after filling their bottles with holy water, went home with a light heart. A little before the mass had been finished, Father Philemy arrived; but, as Phaddy and Katty were then preparing to resave they could not at that moment give him a formal reception. As soon, however, as communion was over, the *cead millia failtha* was repeated with the usual warmth, by both, and by all their immediate friends. Breakfast was now laid in Katty’s best style, and with an originality of arrangement that scorned all precedent. Two tables were placed, one after another, in the kitchen; for the other rooms were not sufficiently large to accommodate the company. Father Philemy filled the seat of honor at the head of the table, with his back to an immense fire. On his right hand sat Father Con; on his left, Phaddhy himself, “to keep the-clargy company;” and, in due succession after them, their friends and neighbors, each taking precedence according to the most scrupulous notions of respectability. Beside Father Con sat “Pettier Malone,” a “young collegian,” who had been sent home from Maynooth to try his native air, for the recovery of his health, which was declining. He arrived only a few minutes after Father Philemy, and was a welcome reinforcement to Phaddhy, in the arduous task of sustaining the conversation with suitable credit.

With respect to the breakfast, I can only say, that it was superabundant—that the tea was as black as bog water—that there were hen, turkey, and geese eggs—plates of toast soaked, crust and crumb, in butter; and lest there might be a deficiency, one of the daughters sat on a stool at the fire, with her open hand, by way of a fire screen, across her red, half-scorched brows, toasting another plateful, and, to crown all, on each corner of the table was a bottle of whiskey. At the lower board sat the youngsters, under the surveillance of Katty’s sister, who presided in that quarter. When they were commencing breakfast, “Father Philemy,” said Katty, “won’t yer Rev’rence bless the mate (* food) if ye plase?”



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"If I don't do it myself," said Father Philemy, who was just after sweeping the top off a turkey egg, "I'll get them that will. Come," said he to the collegian, "give us grace, Peter; you'll never learn younger."

This, however, was an unexpected blow to Peter, who knew that an English grace would be incompatible with his "college feeding," yet was unprovided with any in Latin—The eyes of the company were now fixed upon him, and he blushed like scarlet on finding himself in a predicament so awkward and embarrassing. "*Aliquid, Petre, alliquid; 'de profundis—si habes nihil aliud,*" said Father Philemy, feeling for his embarrassment, and giving him a hint. This was not lost, for Peter began, and gave them the *De profundis*—a Latin psalm, which Roman Catholics repeat for the relief of the souls in, purgatory. They forgot, however, that there was a person in company who considered himself as having an equal claim to the repetition of at least the one-half of it; and accordingly, when Peter got up and repeated the first verse, Andy Lalor got also on his legs, and repeated the response.* This staggered Peter a little, who hesitated, as uncertain how to act.

* This prayer is generally repeated by two persons, who recite each a verse alternately.

"*Perge, Petre, perge,*" said Father Philemy, looking rather wistfully at his egg—"perge, stultus est et asinus quoque." Peter and Andy proceeded until it was finished, when they resumed their seats.

The conversation during breakfast was as sprightly, as full of fun and humor as such breakfasts usually are. The priest, Phaddhy, and the young collegian, had a topic of their own, whilst the rest were engaged in a kind of by play, until the meal was finished.

"Father Philemy," said Phaddhy, in his capacity of host, "before we begin we'll all take a drop of what's in the bottle, if it's not displasing to yer Reverence; and, sure, I know, 'tis the same that doesn't come wrong at a station, any how."

This, *more majorum*, was complied with; and the glass, as usual, went round the table, beginning with their Reverences. Hitherto, Father Philemy had not had time to bestow any attention on the state of Kitty's larder, as he was in the habit of doing, with a view to ascertain the several items contained therein for dinner. But as soon as the breakfast-things were removed, and the coast clear, he took a peep into the pantry, and, after throwing his eye over its contents, sat down at the fire, making Phaddhy take a seat beside him, for the especial purpose of sounding him as to the practicability of effecting a certain design, which was then snugly latent in his Reverence's fancy. The fact was, that on taking the survey of the premises aforesaid, he discovered that, although there was abundance of fowl, and fish, and bacon, and hung-beef—yet, by some unaccountable and disastrous omission, there



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was neither fresh mutton nor fresh beef. The priest, it must be confessed, was a man of considerable fortitude, but this was a blow for which he was scarcely prepared, particularly as a boiled leg of mutton was one of his fifteen favorite joints at dinner. He accordingly took two or three pinches of snuff in rapid succession, and a seat at the fire, as I have said, placing Phaddhy, unconscious of his design, immediately beside him.

Now, the reader knows that Phaddhy was a man possessing a considerable portion of dry, sarcastic humor, along with that natural, quickness of penetration and shrewdness for which most of the Irish peasantry are in a very peculiar degree remarkable; add to this that Father Philemy, in consequence of his contemptuous bearing to him before he came in for his brother's property, stood not very high in his estimation. The priest knew this, and consequently felt that the point in question would require to be managed, on his part, with suitable address.

"Phaddhy," says his Reverence, "sit down here till we chat a little, before I commence the duties of the day. I'm happy to, see that you have such a fine thriving family: how many sons and daughters have you?"

"Six sons, yer Reverence," replied. Phaddhy, "and five daughters: indeed, sir, they're as well to be seen as their neighbors, considhering all things. Poor crathurs, they get fair play* now, thank Grod, compared to what they used to get—God rest their poor uncle's sowl for that! Only for him, your Reverence, there would be very few inquiring this or any other day about them."

* By this is meant good food and clothing.

"Did he die as rich as they said, Phaddhy?" inquired his Reverence.

"Hut, sir," replied Phaddhy, determined to take what he afterwards called a rise out of the priest; "they knew little about it—as rich as they said, sir! no, but three times as rich, itself: but, any how, he was the man that could make the money."

"I'm very happy to hear it, Phaddhy, on, your account, and that of your children. God be good to him—*requiescat animus ejus in pace, per omnia secula seculorum*, Amen!—he liked a drop in his time, Phaddhy, as well as ourselves, eh?"

"Amen, amen—the heavens be his bed!—he-did, poor man! but he had it at first cost, your Reverence, for he run it all himself in the mountains: he could afford to take it."

"Yes, Phaddhy, the heavens be his bed, I pray; no Christmas or Easter ever passed but he was sure to send me the little keg of stuff that never saw water; but, Phaddhy, there's one thing that concerns me about him, in regard of his love of drink—I'm afraid it's a throuble to him where he is at present; and I was sorry to find that, although he died full



of money, he didn't think it worth his while to leave even the price of a mass to be said for the benefit of his own soul."

"Why, sure you know, Father Philemy, that he wasn't what they call a dhrinking man: once a quarther, or so, he sartinly did take a jorum; and except at these times, he was very sober. But God look upon us, yer Reverence—or upon myself, anyway; for if he's to suffer for his doings that way, I'm afeard we'll have a troublesome reck'ning of it."



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“Hem, a-hem!—Phaddhy,” replied the priest, “he has raised you and your children from poverty, at all events, and you ought to consider that. If there is anything in your power to contribute to the relief of his soul, you have a strong duty upon you to do it; and a number of masses, offered up devoutly, would—”

“Why, he did, sir, raise both myself and my childre from poverty,” said Phaddhy, not willing to let that point go farther—“that I’ll always own to; and I hope in God that whatever little trouble might be upon him for the dhrup of dhrink, will be wiped off by this kindness to us.”

“He hadn’t even a Month’s mind!”*

* A Mouth’s Mind is the repetition of one or more masses, at the expiration of a month after death, for the repose of a departed soul. There are generally more than the usual number of priests on such occasions: each of whom receives a sum of money, varying according to the wealth of the survivors—sometimes five shillings, and sometimes five guineas.

“And it’s not but I spoke to him about both, yer Eeverence.”

“And what did he say, Phaddy?”

“‘Phaddy,’ said he, ‘I have been giving Father M’Guirk, one way or another, between whiskey, oats, and dues, a great deal of money every year; and now, afther I’m dead,’ says he, ‘isn’t it an ungrateful thing of him not to offer up one mass for my sowl, except I leave him payment for it?’”

“Did he say that, Phaddhy?”

“I’m giving you his very words, yer Reverence.”

“Phaddhy, I deny it; it’s a big lie—he could not make much use of such words, and he going to face death. I say you could not listen to them; the hair would stand on your head if he did; but God forgive him—that’s the worst I wish him. Didn’t the hair stand on your head, Phaddhy, to hear him?”

“Why, then, to tell yer Reverence God’s truth, I can’t say it did.”

“You can’t say it did! and if I was in your coat, I would be ashamed to say it did not. I was always troubled about the way the fellow died, but I hadn’t the slightest notion: that he went off such a reprobate. I fought his battle and yours hard enough yesterday; but I knew less about him than I do now.”

“And what, wid submission, did you fight our battles about, yer Reverence?” inquired Phaddhy.



“Yesterday evening, in Parrah More Slevin’s, they had him a miser, and yourself they set down as very little better.”

“Then I don’t think I desarved that from Parrah More, anyhow, Father Philemy; I think I can show myself as dacent as Parrah More or any of his faction.”

“It was not Parrah More himself, nor his family, that said anything about you, Phaddhy,” said the priest, “but others that were present. You must know that we were all to be starved here to-day.”

“Oh! ho!” exclaimed Phaddhy, who was hit most palpably upon the weakest side—the very sorest spot about him, “they think bekase this is the first station that ever was held in my house, that you won’t be thrated as you ought; but they’ll be disappointed; and I hope, for so far, that yer Reverence and yer friends had no rason to complain.”



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“Not in the least, Phaddhy, considering that it was a first station; and if the dinner goes as well off as the breakfast, they’ll be biting their nails: but I should not wish myself that they would have it in their power to sneer or throw any slur over you about it.—Go along, Dolan,” exclaimed his Reverence to a countryman who came in from the street, where those stood who were for confession, to see if he had gone to his room—“Go along, you vagrant, don’t you see I’m not gone to the tribunal yet?—But it’s no matter about that, Phaddhy, it’s of other things you ought to think: when were you at your duty?”

“This morning, sir,” replied the other—“but I’d have them to understand, that had the presumption to use my name in any such manner, that I know when and where to be dacent with any mother’s son of Parrah More’s faction; and that I’ll be afther whispering to them some of these fine mornings, plase goodness.”

“Well, well, Phaddhy, don’t put yourself in a passion about it, particularly so soon after having been at confession—it’s not right—I told them myself, that we’d have a leg of mutton and a bottle of wine at all events for it was what they had; but that’s not worth talking about—when were you with the priest before Phaddhy?”

“If I wasn’t able, it would be another thing, but as long as I’m able, I’ll let them know that I’ve the spirit”—said Phaddhy, smarting under the implication of niggardliness—“when was I at confession before, Father Philemy? Why, then, dear forgive me, not these five years;—and I’d surely be the first of the family that would show a mane spirit, or a want of hospitality.”

“A leg of mutton is a good dish, and a bottle of wine is fit for the first man in the land!” observed his Reverence; “five years!—why, is it possible you stayed away so long, Phaddhy! how could you expect to prosper with five years’ burden of sin upon your conscience—what would it cost you—?”

“Indeed, myselfs no judge, your Reverence, as to that; but, cost what it will, I’ll get both.”

“I say, Phaddhy, what trouble would it cost you to come to your duty twice a year at the very least; and, indeed, I would advise you to become a monthly communicant. Parrah More was speaking of it as to himself, and you ought to go—”

“And I will go and bring Parrah More here to his dinner, this very day, if it was only to let him see with his own eyes—”

“You ought to go once a month, if it was only to set an example to your children, and to show the neighbors how a man of substance and respectability, and the head of a family, ought to carry himself.”

“Where is the best wine got, your Reverence?”



“Alick M’Loughlin, my nephew, I believe, keeps the best wine and spirits in Ballyslantha. —You ought also, Phaddy, to get a scapular, and become a scapularian; I wish your brother had thought of that, and he wouldn’t have died in so hardened a state, nor neglected to make a provision for the benefit of his soul, as he did.”



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“Lave the rest to me, yer Reverence, I’ll get it; Mr. M’Loughlin will give me the right sort, if he has it betune him and death.”

“M’Laughlin! what are you talking about?”

“Why, what is your Reverence talking about?”

“The scapular,” said the priest.

“But I mane the wine and the mutton,” says Phaddhy.

“And is that the way you treat me, you reprobate you?” replied his Reverence in a passion: “is that the kind of attention you’re paying me, and I, advising you, all this time, for the good of your soul? Phaddhy, I tell you, you’re enough to vex me to the core—five years!—only once at confession in five years! What do I care about your mutton and your wine!—you may get dozens of them if you wish; or, may be, it would be more like a Christian to never mind getting them, and let the neighbors laugh away. It would teach you humility, you hardened creature, and God knows you want it; for my part, I’m speaking to you about other things; but that’s the way with the most of you—mention any spiritual subject that concerns your soul, and you turn a deaf ear to it—here, Dolan, come in to your duty. In the meantime, you may as well tell Katty not to boil the mutton too much; it’s on your knees you ought to be at your rosary, or the seven penitential psalms, any way.”

“Thrue for you, sir,” says Phaddhy; “but as to going wanst a month, I’m afeard, your Rev’rence, if it would shorten my timper as it does Katty’s, that we’d be bad company for one another; she comes home from confession, newly set, like a razor, every bit as sharp; and I’m sure that I’m within the truth when I say there’s no bearing her.”

“That’s because you’ve no relish for anything spiritual yourself, you nager you,” replied his Reverence, “or you wouldn’t see her temper in that light—but, now that I think of it, where did you get that stuff we had at breakfast?”

“Ay, that’s the sacret; but I knew your Rev’rence would like it; did Parrah More aiquil it? No, nor one of his faction couldn’t lay his finger on such a dhrop.”

“I wish you could get me a few gallons of it,” said the priest; “but let us drop that; I say, Phaddhy, you’re too worldly and too careless about your duty.”

“Well, Father Philemy, there’s a good time coming; I’ll mend yet.”

“You want it, Phaddhy.”

“Would three gallons do, sir?”



“I would rather you would make it five, Phaddhy; but go to your rosary.”

“It’s the penitential psalms, first, sir,” said Phaddhy, “and the rosary at night. I’ll try, anyhow; and if I can make off five for you, I will.”

“Thank you, Phaddhy; but I would recommend you to say the rosary before night.”

“I believe yer Reverence is right,” replied Phaddhy, looking somewhat slyly in the priest’s face; “I think it’s best to make sure of it now, in regard that in the evening, your Reverence—do you persave?”



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“Yes,” said his Reverence, “you’re in a better frame of mind at present, Phaddhy, being fresh from confession.”

So saying, his Reverence—for whom Phaddhy, with all his shrewdness in general, was not a match—went into his room, that he might send home about four dozen of honest, good-humored, thoughtless, jovial, swearing, drinking, fighting Hibernians, free from every possible stain of sin and wickedness!

“Are you all ready now?” said the priest to a crowd of country people who were standing about the kitchen door, pressing to get the “first turn” at the tribunal, which on this occasion consisted of a good oaken chair, with his Reverence upon it.

“Why do you crush forward in that manner, you ill-bred spalpeens? Can’t you stand back, and behave yourselves like common Christians?—back with you! or, if you make me get my whip, I’ll soon clear you from about the dacent man’s door. Hagarty, why do you crush them two girls there, you great Turk, you? Look at the vagabonds! Where’s my whip,” said he, running in, and coming out in a fury, when he commenced cutting about him, until they dispersed in all directions. He then returned into the house; and, after calling in about two dozen, began to catechize them as follows, still holding the whip in his hand, whilst many of those individuals, who at a party quarrel or faction fight, in fair or market, were incapable of the slightest terror, now stood trembling before him, absolutely pale and breathless with fear.

“Come, Kelly,” said he to one of them, “are you fully prepared for the two blessed sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, that you are about to receive? Can you read, sir?”

“Can I read, is id?—my brother Barney can, yor Rev’rence,” replied Kelly, sensible, amid all the disadvantages around him, of the degradation of his ignorance.

“What’s that to me, sir?” said the priest, “what your brother Barney can do—can you not read yourself?”

“I can not, your Reverence,” said Kelly, in a tone of regret.

“I hope you have your Christian Doctrine, at all events,” said the priest. “Go on with the Confiteor.”

Kelly went on—“Confeetur Dimnipotenmti batchy Mary semplar virginy, batchy Mickletoe Archy Angelo, batchy Johnny Bartisty, sanctris postlis—Petrum hit Paulum omnium sanctris, et tabby pasture, quay a pixavit minus coglety ashy hony verbum et offer him smaxy quilia smaxy quilta—sniaxy maxin in quilia.”*

* Let not our readers suppose that the above version in the mouth of a totally illiterate peasant is overcharged; for we have the advantage of remembering how we ourselves

used to hear it pronounced in our early days. We will back the version in the text against Edward Irving's new language—for any money.— Original note.

“Very well, Kelly, right enough, all except the pronouncing, which wouldn't pass muster in Maynooth, however. How many kinds of commandments are there?”



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“Two, sir.”

“What are they?”

“God’s and the Church’s.”

“Repeat God’s share of them.”

He then repeated the first commandment according to his catechism.

“Very good, Kelly, very good. Well now, repeat the commandments of the Church.”

“First—Sundays and holidays, Mass thou shalt sartinly hear;

“Second—All holidays sanctificate throughout all the whole year.

“Third—Lent, Ember days, and Virgins, thou shalt be sartain to fast;

“Fourth—Fridays and Saturdays flesh thou shalt not, good, bad or indifferent, taste.

“Fifth—In Lent and Advent, nuptial fastes gallantly forbear.

“Sixth—Confess your sins, at laste once dacently and soberly every year.

“Seventh—Resave your God at confission about great Easter-day;

“Eighth—And to his Church and his own frolicsome clargy neglect not tides (tithes) to pay.”

“Well,” said his Eeverence, “now, to great point is, do you understand them?”

“Wid the help of God, I hope so, your Rev’reence; and I have also the three thriptological vartues.”

“Theological, sirrah!”

“Theojollyological vartues; the four sins that cry to heaven for vingeance; the five carnal vartues—prudence, justice, timplation, and solitude; (* Temperance and fortitude) the seven deadly sins; the eight grey attitudes—”

“Grey attitudes! Oh, the Boeotian!” exclaimed his Eeverence, “listen to the way in which he’s playing havoc among them. Stop, sir,” for Kelly was going on at full speed—“Stop, sir. I tell you it’s not gray attitudes, but bay attitudes—doesn’t every one know the eight beatitudes?”



“The eight bay attitudes; the nine ways of being guilty of another’s sins; the ten commandments; the twelve fruits of a Christian; the fourteen stations of the cross; the fifteen mysteries of the passion—”

“Kelly,” said his Eeverence, interrupting him, and heralding, the joke, for so it was intended, with a hearty chuckle, “you’re getting fast out of your teens, ma bouchal?” and this was of course, honored with a merry peal; extorted as much by an effort of softening the rigor of examination, as by the traditionary duty which entails upon the Irish laity the necessity of laughing at a priest’s jokes, without any reference at all to their quality. Nor was his Reverence’s own voice the first to subside into that gravity which became the solemnity of the occasion; or even whilst he continued the interrogatories, his eye was laughing at the conceit with which it was evident the inner man was not competent to grapple. “Well, Kelly, I can’t say but you’ve answered very well, as far as the repealing of them goes; but do you perfectly understand all the commandments of the church?”

“I do, sir,” replied Kelly, whose confidence kept pace with his Reverence’s good-humor.

“Well, what is meant by the fifth?”



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“The fifth, sir?” said the other, rather confounded—“I must begin agin, sir, and go on till I come to it.”

“Well,” said the priest, “never mind that; but tell us what the eighth means?”

Kelly stared at him a second time, but was not able to advance “First—Sundays and holidays, mass thou shalt hear;” but before he had proceeded to the second, a person who stood at his elbow began to whisper to him the proper reply, and in the act of so doing received a lash of the whip across the ear for his pains.

“You blackguard, you!” exclaimed Father Philemy, “take that—how dare you attempt to prompt any person that I’m examining?”

Those who stood around Kelly now fell back to a safe distance, and all was silence, terror, and trepidation once more.

“Come, Kelly, go on—the eighth?”

Kelly was still silent.

“Why, you ninny you, didn’t you repeat it just now. ‘Eighth—And to his church neglect not tithes to pay.’ Now that I have put the words in your mouth, what does it mean?”

Kelly having thus got the cue, replied, in the words of the Catechism, “To pay *tides* to the lawful *pasterns* of the church, sir.”

“Pasterns!—oh, you ass you! *Pasterns!* you poor; base, contemptible, crawling reptile, as if we trampled you under our hooves—oh, you scruff of the earth! Stop, I say—it’s pastors.”

“Pastures of the church.”

“And, tell me, do you fulfil that commandment?”

“I do, sir.”

“It’s a lie, sir,” replied the priest, brandishing the whip over his head, whilst Kelly instinctively threw up his guard to protect himself from the blow. “It’s a lie, sir,” repeated his Eeverence; “you don’t fulfil it. What is the church?”

“The church is the congregation of the faithful that purfiss the true faith, and are obadient to the Pope.”

“And who do you pay tithes to?”



“To the parson, sir.”

“And, you poor varmint you, is he obadient to the Pope?”

Kelly only smiled at the want of comprehension which prevented him from seeing the thing according to the view which his Reverence took of it.

“Well, now,” continued Father Philemy, “who are the lawful pastors of God’s church?”

“You are, sir: and all our own priests.”

“And who ought you to pay your tithes to?”

“To you, sir, in coorse; sure I always knew that, your Rev’rence.”

“And what’s the reason, then, you don’t pay them to me, instead of the parson?”

This was a puzzler to Kelly, who only knew his own side of the question. “You have me there, sir,” he replied, with a grin.

“Because,” said his Reverence, “the Protestants, for the present, have, the law of the land on their side, and power over you to compel the payment of tithes to themselves; but we have right, justice, and the law of God on ours; and, if every thing was in its proper place, it is not to the parsons, but to us, that you would pay them.”



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“Well, well, sir,” replied Kelly, who now experienced a community of feeling upon the subject with his Reverence, that instantly threw him into a familiarity of manner which he thought the point between them justified—“who knows, sir?” said he with a knowing smile, “there’s a good time coming, yer Rev’rence.”

“Ay,” said Father Philemy, “wait till we get once into the Big* House, and if we don’t turn the scales—if the Established Church doesn’t go down, why, it won’t be our fault. Now, Kelly, all’s right but the money—have you brought your dues?”

* Parliament. This was written before the passing of the Emancipation Bill.

“Here it is, sir,” said Kelly, handing him his dues for the last year.

It is to be observed here, that, according as the penitents went to be examined, or to kneel down to confess, a certain sum was exacted from each, which varied according to the arrears that might have been due to the priest. Indeed, it is not unusual for the host and hostess, on these occasions, to be refused a participation in the sacrament, until they pay this money, notwithstanding the considerable expense they are put to in entertaining not only the clergy, but a certain number of their own friends and relations.

“Well, stand aside, I’ll hear you first; and now, come up here, you young gentleman, that laughed so heartily a while ago at my joke—ha, ha, ha!—come up here, child.”

A lad now approached him, whose face, on a first view, had something simple and thoughtless in it, but in which, on a closer inspection, might be traced a lurking, sarcastic humor, of which his Reverence never dreamt.

“You’re for confession, of course?” said the priest.

“*Of coorse*,” said the lad, echoing him, and laying a stress upon the word, which did not much elevate the meaning of the compliance in general with the rite in question.

“Oh!” exclaimed the priest, recognizing him when he approached—“you are Dan Fagan’s son, and designed for the church yourself; you are a good Latinist, for I remember examining you in Erasmus about two years ago—*Quomodo se habet corpus tuum, charum lignum sacerdotis*”

“*Valde, Domine*,” replied the lad, “*Quomodo se habet anima tua, charum exemplar sacerdotage, et fulcrum robustissimum Ecclesiae sacrosancte?*”

“Very good, Harry,” replied his Reverence, laughing—“stand aside; I’ll hear you after Kelly.”



He then called up a man with a long melancholy face, which he noticed before to have been proof against his joke, and after making two or three additional and fruitless experiments upon his gravity, he commenced a cross fire of peevish interrogatories, which would have excluded him from the “tribunal” on that occasion, were it not that the man was remarkably well prepared, and answered the priest’s questions very pertinently.

This over, he repaired to his room, where the work of absolution commenced; and, as there was a considerable number to be rendered sinless before the hour of dinner, he contrived to unsin them with an alacrity that was really surprising.



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Immediately after the conversation already detailed between his Reverence and Phaddhy, the latter sought Katty, that he might communicate to her the unlucky oversight which they had committed, in neglecting to provide fresh meat and wine. “We’ll be disgraced forever,” said Phaddhy, “without either a bit of mutton or a bottle of wine for the gentlemen, and that big thief Parrah More Slevin had both.”

“And I hope,” replied Katty, “that you’re not so mane as to let any of that faction outdo you in dacency, the nagerly set? It was enough for them to bate us in the law-shoot about the horse, and not to have the laugh agin at us about this.”

“Well, that same law-shoot is not over with them yet,” said Phaddhy; “wait till the spring fair comes, and if I don’t have a faction gathered that’ll sweep them out of the town, why my name’s not Phaddhy! But where is Matt till we sind him off?”

“Arrah, Phaddhy,” said Katty, “wasn’t it friendly of Father Philemy to give us the hard word about the wine and mutton?”

“Very friendly,” retorted Phaddhy, who, after all, appeared to have suspected the priest —“very friendly, indeed, when it’s to put a good joint before himself, and a bottle of wine in his jacket. No, no, Katty! it’s not altogether for the sake of Father Philemy, but I wouldn’t have the neighbors say that I was near and undacent; and above all tilings, I wouldn’t be worse nor the Slevins—for the same set would keep it up agin us long enough.”

Our readers will admire the tact with which Father Philemy worked upon the rival feeling between the factions; but, independently of this, there is a generous hospitality in an Irish peasant which would urge him to any stratagem, were it even the disposal of his only cow, sooner than incur the imputation of a narrow, or, as he himself terms it, “undacent” or “nagerly” spirit.

In the course of a short time, Phaddhy dispatched two messengers, one for the wine, and another for the mutton; and, that they might not have cause for any unnecessary delay, he gave them the two reverend gentlemen’s horses, ordering them to spare neither whip nor spur until they returned. This was an agreeable command to the messengers, who, as soon as they found themselves mounted, made a bet of a “trate,” to be paid on arriving in the town to which they were sent, to him who should first reach a little stream that crossed the road at the entrance of it, called the “Pound burn.” But I must not forget to state, that they not only were mounted on the priest’s horses, but took their great-coats, as the day had changed, and threatened to rain. Accordingly, on getting out upon the main road, they set off, whip and spur, at full speed, jostling one another, and cutting each other’s horses as if they had been intoxicated; and the fact is, that, owing to the liberal distribution of the bottle that morning, they were not far from it.

[Illustration: PAGE 756— They set off, whip and spur, at full speed]



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“Bliss us!” exclaimed the country people, as they passed, “what on airth can be the matther with Father Philemy and Father Con, that they’re abusing wan another at sich a rate!”

“Oh!” exclaimed another, “it’s apt to be a sick call, and they’re thrying, maybe, to be there before the body grows cowl’d.”

“Ay, it may be,” a third conjectured, “it’s to old Magennis, that’s on the point of death, and going to lave all his money behind him.”

But their astonishment was not a whit lessened, when, in about an hour afterwards, they perceived them both return; the person who represented Father Con having an overgrown leg of mutton slung behind his back like an Irish harp, reckless of its friction against his Reverence’s coat, which it had completely saturated with grease; and the duplicate of Father Philemy with a sack over his shoulder, in the bottom of which was half a dozen of Mr. M’Laughlin’s best port.

Phaddhy, in the meantime, being determined to mortify his rival Parrah More by a superior display of hospitality, waited upon that parsonage, and exacted a promise from him to come down and partake of the dinner—a promise which the other was not slack in fulfilling. Phaddhy’s heart was now on the point of taking its rest, when it occurred to him that there yet remained one circumstance in which he might utterly eclipse his rival, and that was to ask Captain Wilson, his landlord, to meet their Reverences at dinner. He accordingly went over to him, for he only lived a few fields distant, having first communicated the thing privately to Katty, and requested that, as their Reverences that day held a station in his house, and would dine there, he would have the kindness to dine along with them. To this the Captain, who was intimate with both the clergymen, gave a ready compliance, and Phaddhy returned home in high spirits.

In the meantime, the two priests were busy in the work of absolution; the hour of three had arrived, and they had many to shrive; but, in the course of a short time, a reverend auxiliary made his appearance, accompanied by one of Father Philemy’s nephews, who was then about to enter Maynooth. This clerical gentleman had been appointed to a parish; but, owing to some circumstances which were known only in the distant part of the diocese where he had resided, he was deprived of it, and had, at the period I am writing of, no appointment in the church, though he was in full orders. If I mistake not, he incurred his bishop’s displeasure by being too warm an advocate for Domestic Nomination,* a piece of discipline, the re-establishment of which was then attempted by the junior clergymen of the diocese wherein the scene of this station is laid. Be this as it may, he came in time to assist the gentlemen in absolving those penitents (as we must call them so) who still remained unconfessed.

* Domestic Nomination was the right claimed by a portion of the Irish clergy to appoint their own bishops, independently of the Pope.



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During all this time Katty was in the plenitude of her authority, and her sense of importance manifested itself in a manner that was by no means softened by having been that morning at her duty. Her tones were not so shrill, nor so loud as they would have been, had not their Reverences been within hearing; but what was wanting in loudness, was displayed in a firm and decided energy, that vented, itself frequently in the course of the day upon the backs and heads of her sons, daughters, and servants, as they crossed her path in the impatience and bustle of her employment. It was truly ludicrous to see her, on encountering one of them in these fretful moments, give him a drive head-foremost against the wall, exclaiming, as she shook her fist at him, "Ho, you may bless your stars, that they're under the roof, or it wouldn't go so asy wid you; for if goodness hasn't said it, you'll make me lose my sowl this blessed and holy day: but this is still the case—the very time I go to my duty, the devil (between us and harm) is sure to throw fifty temptations acrass me, and to help him, you must come in my way—but wait till tomorrow, and if I, don't pay you for this, I'm not here."

That a station is an expensive ordinance to the peasant who is honored by having one held in his house, no one who knows the characteristic hospitality of the Irish people can doubt. I have reason, however, to know that, within the last few years, stations in every sense have been very much improved, where they have not been abolished altogether. The priests now are not permitted to dine in the houses of their parishioners, by which a heavy tax has been removed from the people.

About four o'clock the penitents were at length all despatched; and those who were to be detained for dinner, many of whom had not eaten anything until then, in consequence of the necessity of receiving the Eucharist fasting, were taken aside to taste some of Phaddhy's poteen. At length the hour of dinner arrived, and along with it the redoubtable Parra More Slevin, Captain Wilson, and another nephew of Father Philemy's, who had come to know what detained his brother who had conducted the auxiliary priest to Phaddhy's. It is surprising on these occasions, to think how many uncles, nephews, and cousins, to the forty-Second degree, find it needful to follow their Reverences on messages of various kinds; and it is equally surprising to observe with what exactness they drop in during the hour of dinner. Of course, any blood-relation or friend of the priests must be received with cordiality; and consequently they do not return without solid proofs of the good-natured hospitality of poor Paddy, who feels no greater pleasure than in showing his "dacency" to any one belonging to his Reverence.



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I dare say it would be difficult to find a more motley and diversified company than sat down to the ungarnished fare which Katty laid before them. There were first Fathers Philemy, Con, and the Auxiliary from the far part of the diocese; next followed Captain Wilson, Peter Malone, and Father Philemy's two nephews; after these came Phaddhy himself, Parrah More Slevin, with about two dozen more of the most remarkable and uncouth personages that could sit down to table. There were besides about a dozen of females, most of whom by this time, owing to Katty's private kindness, were in a placid state of feeling. Father Philemy *ex officio*, filled the chair—he was a small man with cherub cheeks as red as roses, black twinkling eyes, and double chin; was of the fat-headed genus, and, if phrenologists be correct, must have given indications of early piety, for he was bald before his time, and had the organ of veneration standing visible on his crown; his hair from having once been black, had become an iron gray, and hung down behind his ears, resting on the collar of his coat according to the old school, to which, I must remark, he belonged, having been educated on the Continent. His coat had large double breasts, the lappels of which hung down loosely on each side, being the prototype of his waistcoat, whose double breasts fell downwards in the same manner—his black small-clothes had silver buckles at the knees, and the gaiters, which did not reach up so far, discovered a pair of white lamb's-wool stockings, somewhat retreating from their original color.

Father Con was a tall, muscular, able-bodied young man, with an immensely broad pair of shoulders, of which he was vain; his black hair was cropped close, except a thin portion of it which was trimmed quite evenly across his eyebrows; he was rather bow-limbed, and when walking looked upwards, holding out his elbows from his body, and letting the lower parts of his arms fall down, so that he went as if he carried a keg under each; his coat, though not well made, was of the best glossy broadcloth—and his long clerical boots went up about his knees like a dragoon's; there was an awkward stiffness about him, in very good keeping with a dark melancholy cast of countenance, in which, however, a man might discover an air of simplicity not to be found in the visage of his superior Father Philemy.

The latter gentleman filled the chair, as I said, and carved the goose; on his right sat Captain Wilson; on his left, the auxiliary—next to them Father Con, the nephews, Peter Malone, *et cetera*. To enumerate the items of the dinner is unnecessary, as our readers have a pretty accurate notion of them from what we have already said. We can only observe, that when Phaddhy saw it laid, and all the wheels of the system fairly set agoing, he looked at Parrah More with an air of triumph which he could not conceal. It is also unnecessary for us to give the conversation in full; nor, indeed, would we attempt giving any portion of it, except for the purpose of showing the spirit in which a religious ceremony such as it is, is too frequently closed.



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The talk in the beginning was altogether confined to the clergymen and Mr. Wilson, including a few diffident contributions from "Peter Malone" and the "two nephews."

"Mr. M'Guirk," observed Captain Wilson, after the conversation had taken several turns, "I'm sure that in the course of your professional duties, sir, you must have had occasion to make many observations upon human nature, from the circumstance of seeing it in every condition and state of feeling possible; from the baptism of the infant, until the aged man receives the last rites of your church, and the soothing consolation of religion from your hand."

"Not a doubt of it, Phaddhy," said Father Philemy to Phaddhy, whom he had been addressing at the time, "not a doubt of it; and I'll do everything in my power to get him *in** too, and I am told he is bright."

* That is—into Maynooth college—the great object of ambition to the son of an Irish peasant or rather to his parent.

"Uncle," said one of the nephews, "this gentleman is speaking to you."

"And why not?" continued his Eeverence, who was so closely engaged with Phaddhy, that he did not even hear the nephew's appeal—"a bishop—and why not? Has he not as good a chance of being a bishop as any of them? though, God knows, it is not always merit that gets a bishopric in any church, or I myself might—But let that pass." said he, fixing his eyes on the bottle. "Father Philemy," said Father Con, "Captain Wilson was addressing himself to you in a most especial manner."

"Oh! Captain, I beg ten thousand pardons, I was engaged talking with Phaddhy here about his son, who is a young shaving of our cloth, sir, he is intended for the Mission*—Phaddhy, I will either examine him myself, or make Father Con examine him by-and-by.—Well, Captain?" The Captain now repeated what he had said.

* The Church of Rome existing in any heretical country—that is, where she herself is not the State church—is considered a missionary establishment; and taking orders in her is termed "Going upon the Mission." Even Ireland is looked upon as *in partibus infidelium*, because Protestantism is established by law—hence the phrase above.

"Very true, Captain, and we do see it in as many shapes as ever—Con, what do you call him?—put on him."

"Proteus," subjoined Con, who was famous at the classics.

Father Philemy nodded for the assistance, and continued—"but as for human nature, Captain, give it to me at a good rousing christening; or what is better again, at a jovial wedding between two of my own parishioners—say this pretty fair-haired daughter of



Phaddhy Shemus Phaddhy's here, and long Ned Slevin, Parrah More's son there—eh Phaddhy, will it be a match?—what do you say, Parrah More? Upon my veracity I must bring that about.”

“Why, then, yer Reverence,” replied Phaddhy, who was now a little softened, and forgot his enmity against Parrah More for the present, “unlikelier things might happen.”



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“It won’t be my fault,” said Parrah More, “if my son Ned has no objection.”

“He object!” replied Father Philemy, “if I take it in hands, let me see who’ll dare to object; doesn’t the Scripture say it? and sure we can’t go against the Scripture.”

“By the by,” said Captain Wilson, who was a dry humorist, “I am happy to be able to infer from what you say, Father Philemy, that you are not, as the clergymen of your church are supposed to be, inimical to the Bible.”

“Me an enemy to the Bible! no such thing, sir; but, Captain, begging your pardon we will have nothing more about the bible; you see we are met here, as friends and good fellows, to enjoy ourselves after the severity of our spiritual duties, and we must relax a little; we can’t always carry long faces like Methodist parsons—come, Parrah More, let the Bible take a nap, and give us a song.”

His Reverence was now seconded in his motion by the most of all present, and Parrah More accordingly gave them a song. After a few songs more, the conversation went on as before.

“Now, Parrah More,” said Phaddhy, “you must try my wine; I hope it’s as good as what you gave his Reverence yesterday.” The words, however, had scarcely passed his lips, when Father Philemy burst out into a fit of laughter, clapping and rubbing his hands in a manner the most irresistible. “Oh, Phaddhy, Phaddhy!” shouted his Reverence, laughing heartily, “I done you for once—I done you, my man, cute as you thought yourself: why, you nager you, did you think to put us off with punch, and you have a stocking of hard guineas hid in a hole in the wall?”

“What does yer Rev’rence mane,” said Phaddhy; “for myself can make no understanding out of it, at all at all?”

To this his Reverence only replied by another laugh.

“I gave his Reverence no wine,” said Parrah More, in reply to Phaddhy’s question.

“What!” said Phaddhy, “none yesterday, at the station held with you?”

“Not a bit of me ever thought of it.”

“Nor no mutton?”

“Why, then, devil a morsel of mutton, Phaddhy; but we had a rib of beef.”

Phaddhy now looked over to his Reverence rather sheepishly, with the smile of a man on his face who felt himself foiled. “Well, yer Reverence has done me, sure enough,” he replied, rubbing his head—“I give it up to you, Father Philemy; but any how, I’m glad



I got it, and you're all welcome from the core of my heart. I'm only sorry I haven't as much more now to thrate you all like gintlemen; but there's some yet, and as much punch as will make all our heads come round."



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Our readers must assist us with their own imaginations, and suppose the conversation to have passed very pleasantly, and the night, as well as the guests, to be somewhat far gone. The principal part of the conversation was borne by the three clergymen, Captain Wilson, and Phaddy; that of the two nephews and Peter Malone ran in an under current of its own; and in the preceding part of the night, those who occupied the bottom of the table, spoke to each other rather in whispers, being too much restrained by that rustic bashfulness which ties up the tongues of those who feel that their consequence is overlooked among their superiors. According as the punch circulated, however, their diffidence began to wear off; and occasionally an odd laugh or so might be heard to break the monotony of their silence. The youngsters, too, though at first almost in a state of terror, soon commenced plucking each other; and a titter, or a suppressed burst of laughter, would break forth from one of the more waggish, who was put to a severe task in afterwards composing his countenance into sufficient gravity to escape detection, and a competent portion of chastisement the next day, for not being able to “behave himself with better manners.”

During these juvenile breaches of decorum, Katty would raise her arm in a threatening attitude, shake her head at them, and look up at the clergy, intimating more by her earnestness of gesticulation than met the ear. Several songs again went round, of which, truth to tell, Father Philomy’s were by far the best; for he possessed a rich, comic expression of eye, which, added to suitable ludicrousness of gesture, and a good voice, rendered him highly amusing to the company. Father Con declined singing, as being decidedly serious, though he was often solicited.

“He!” said Father Philemy, “he has no more voice than a woolpack; but Con’s a cunning fellow. What do you think, Captain Wilson, but he pretends to be too pious to sing, and gets credit for piety,—not because he is devout, but because he has a bad voice; now, Con, you can’t deny it, for there’s not a man in the three kingdoms knows it better than myself; you sit there with a face upon you that might go before the Lamentations of Jeremiah the Prophet, when you ought to be as jovial as another.”

“Well, Father Philemy,” said Phaddy, “as he won’t sing, may be, wid submission he’d examine Briney in his Latin, till his mother and I hear how’s he doing at it.”

“Ay, he’s fond of dabbling at Latin, so he may try him—I’m sure I have no objection—so, Captain, as I was telling you—”

“Silence there below!” said Phaddy to those at the lower end of the table, who were now talkative enough; “will yez whisht there till Father Con hears Briney a lesson in his Latin. Where are you, Briney? come here, ma bouchal.”

But Briney had absconded when he saw that the tug of war was about to commence. In a few minutes, however, the father returned, pushing the boy before him, who in his reluctance to encounter the ordeal of examination, clung to every chair, table, and

person in his way, hoping that his restiveness might induce them to postpone the examination till another occasion. The father, however, was inexorable, and by main force dragged him from all his holds, and, placed him before Father Con.



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“What’s come over you, at all at all, you unsignified shingawn you, to affront the gintleman in this way, and he kind enough to go for to give you an examination?—come now, you had bettther not vex me, I tell you, but hould up your head, and spake out loud, that we can all hear you: now, Father Con, achora, you’ll not be too hard upon him in the beginning, till he gets into it, for he’s aisy dashed.”

“Here, Briney,” said Father Philemy, handing him his tumbler, “take a pull of this and if you have any courage at all in you it will raise it;—take a good pull.” Briney hesitated.

“Why, but you take the glass out of his Reverence’s hand, sarrah,” said the father—“what! is it without dhrinking his Reverence’s health first?”

Briney gave a most melancholy nod at his Reverence, as he put the tumbler to his mouth, which he nearly emptied, notwithstanding his shyness.

“For my part,” said his Reverence, looking at the almost empty tumbler, “I am pretty sure that that same chap will be able to take care of himself through life. And so, Captain,—” said he, resuming the conversation with Captain Wilson—for his notice of Briney was only parenthetical.

Father Con now took the book, which was AEsop’s Fables, and, in accordance with Briney’s intention, it opened exactly at the favorite fable of Gallus Gallinacexis. He was not aware, however, that Briney had kept that place open during the preceding part of the week, in order to effect this point. Father Philemy, however, was now beginning to relate another anecdote to the Captain, and the thread of his narrative twined rather ludicrously with that of the examination.

Briney, after, a few hems, at length proceeded—“*Gallus Gallinaceus*, a dung-hill cock—”

“So, Captain, I was just after coming out of Widow Moylan’s—it was in the Lammas fair—and a large one, by the by, it was—so, sir, who should come up to me but Branagan. ‘Well, Branagan,’ said I, ‘how does the world go now with you?’——”

“*Gallus Gallinaceus*, a dunghill cock——”

——“Says he. ‘And how is that?’ says I.

“*Gallus Gallinaceus*——”

-----“Says he, ‘Hut tut, Branagan,’ says I--‘you’re drunk.’ ‘That’s the thing, sir’ says Branagan, ‘and I want to explain it all to your Reverence.’ ‘Well,’ said I, ‘go on——”



“*Gallus Gallinaceus*, a dunghill cock——”

——“Says he,——Let your *Gallus Gallinaceus* go to roost for this night, Con,” said Father Philemy, who did not relish the interruption of his story; “I say, Phaddy, send the boy to bed, and bring him down in your hand to my house on Saturday morning, and we will both examine him, but this is no time for it, and me engaged in conversation with Captain Wilson.--So, Captain ____ ‘Well, sir,’ says Branagan, and he staggering,—‘I took an oath against liquor, and I want your Reverence to break it,’ says he. ‘What do you mean?’ I inquired. ‘Why, please your Reverence,’ said he, ‘I took an oath against liquor, as I told you, not to drink more nor a pint of whiskey in one day, and I want your Reverence to break it for me, and make it only half a pint; for I find that a pint is too much for me; by the same token, that when I get that far, your Reverence, I disremember the oath entirely.”



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The influence of the bottle now began to be felt, and the conversation absolutely blew a gale, wherein hearty laughter, good strong singing, loud argument, and general good humor blended into one uproarious peal of hilarity, accompanied by some smart flashes of wit and humor which would not disgrace a prouder banquet. Phaddhy, in particular, melted into a spirit of the most unbounded benevolence—a spirit that would (if by any possible means he could effect it) embrace the whole human race; that is to say, he would raise them, man, woman, and child, to the same elevated state of happiness which he enjoyed himself. That, indeed, was happiness in perfection, as pure and unadulterated as the poteen which created it. How could he be otherwise than happy?—he had succeeded to a good property, and a stocking of hard guineas, without the hard labor of acquiring them; he had the “clargy” under his roof at last, partaking of a hospitality which he felt himself well able to afford them; he had settled with his Reverence for five years’ arrears of sin, all of which had been wiped out of his conscience by the blessed absolving hand of the priest; he was training up Briney for the Mission, and though last, not least, he was—far gone in his seventh tumbler!

“Come, jinteels,” said he, “spare nothing here—there’s lashings of every thing; thrate yourselves dacent, and don’t be saying tomorrow or next day, that ever my father’s son was nagerly. Death alive, Father Con, what are you doin’? Why, then, bad manners to me if that’ll sarve, any how.”

“Phaddhy,” replied Father Con, “I assure you I have done my duty.”

“Very well, Father Con, granting all that, it’s no sin to repate a good turn you know. Not a word I’ll hear, yer Reverence—one tumbler along with myself, if it was only for ould times.” He then filled Father Con’s tumbler with his own hand, in a truly liberal spirit. “Arrah, Father Con, do you remember the day we had the leapin’-match, and the bout at the shoulder-stone?”

“Indeed, I’ll not forget it, Phaddhy.”

“And it’s yourself that may say that; but I bleeve I rubbed the consate off of your Reverence—only that’s betune ourselves, you persave.”

“You did win the palm, Phaddhy, I’ll not deny it; but you are the only man that ever bet me at either of the athletics.’

“And I’ll say this for yer Reverence, that you are one of the best and most able-bodied gintlemen I ever engaged with. Ah! Father Con, I’m past all that now—but no matter, here’s yer Reverence’s health, and a shake. hands; Father Philomy, yer health, docthor: yer strange Reverence’s health—Captain Wilson, not forgetting you, sir: Mr. Pettier, yours; and I hope to see you soon with the robes upon you, and to be able to prache us a good sarmon. Parrah More—*wus dha lauv* (* give me yer hand), you



steeply you; and I haven't the smallest taste of objection to what Father Philemy hinted at—yell observe. Kitty, you

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thief of the world, where are you? Your health, avourneen; come here, and give us your fist, Katty: bad manners to me if I could forget you afther all;—the best crathur, your Reverence, under the sun, except when yer Reverence puts yer *comedher* on her at confession, and then she's a little, sharp or so, not a doubt of it: but no matther, Katty ahagur, you do it all for the best. And Father Philemy, maybe it's myself didn't put the thrick upon you in the Maragy More, about Katty's death—ha, ha, ha! Jack M'Craner, yer health—all yer healths, and yer welcome here, if you war seven times as many. Briney, where are you, ma bouchal? Come up and shake hands wid yer father, as well as another—come up, acushla, and kiss me. Ah, Briney, my poor fellow, ye'll never be the cut of a man yer father was; but no matther, avourneen, ye'll be a betther man, I hope; and God knows you may asy be that, for Father Philemy, I'm not what I ought to be, yer Reverence; however, I may mend, and will, maybe, before a month of Sundays goes over me: but, for all that, Briney, I hope to see the day when you'll be sitting an ordained priest at my own table; if I once saw that, I could die contented—so mind yer larning, acushla, and, his Reverence here will back you, and make inthorest to get you into the college. Musha, God pity them crathurs at the door—aren't they gone yet? Listen to them coughin', for fraid we'd forget them: and throth and they won't be forgot this bout any how—Katty, avourneen, give them every one, big and little, young and ould, their skinful—don't lave a wrinkle in them; and see, take one of them bottles—the crathurs, they're starved sitting there all night in the cowl—*and give them a couple of glasses a-piece—it's good, yer Reverence, to have the poor body's blessing at all times; and now, as I was saying, Here's all yer healths! and from the very veins of my heart yer welcome here.*"

Our readers may perceive that Phaddhy

"Was not only blest, but glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious;"

for, like the generality of our peasantry, the *native* drew to the surface of his character those warm, hospitable, and benevolent virtues, which a purer system of morals and education would most certainly keep in full action, without running the risk, as in the present instance, of mixing bad habits with frank, manly, and generous qualities.

* * * * *

"I'll not go, Con—I tell you I'll not go till I sing another song. Phaddhy, you're a prince—but where's the use of lighting more candles now, man, than you had in the beginning of the night? Is Captain Wilson gone? Then, peace be with him; it's a pity he wasn't on the right side, for he's not the worst of them. Phaddhy, where are you?"



“Why, yer Reverence,” replied Katty, “he’s got a little unwell, and jist laid down his head a bit.”

“Katty,” said Father Con, “you had better get a couple of the men to accompany Father Philemy home; for though the night’s clear, he doesn’t see his way very well in the dark—poor man, his eye-sight’s failing him fast.”



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“Then, the more’s the pity, Father Con. Here, Denis, let yourself and Mat go home wid Father Philemy.”

“Good-night, Katty,” said Father Con—“Good-night: and may our blessing sanctify you all.”

“Good-night, Father Con, ahagur,” replied Katty; “and for goodness’ sake see that they take care of Father Philemy, for it’s himself that’s the blessed and holy crathur, and the pleasant gintleman out and out.”

“Good-night, Katty,” again repeated Father Con, as the cavalcade proceeded in a body —“Good-night!” And so ended the Station.

THE PARTY FIGHT AND FUNERAL.

We ought, perhaps, to inform our readers that the connection between a party fight and funeral is sufficiently strong to justify the author in classing them under the title which is prefixed to this story. The one being usually the natural result of the other, is made to proceed from it, as is, unhappily, too often the custom in real life among the Irish.

It has been long laid down as a universal principle, that self-preservation is the first law of nature. An Irishman, however, has nothing to do with this; he disposes of it as he does with the other laws, and washes his hands out of it altogether. But commend him to a fair, dance, funeral, or wedding, or to any other sport where there is a likelihood of getting his head or his bones broken, and if he survive, he will remember you with a kindness peculiar to himself to the last day of his life—will drub you from head to heel if he finds that any misfortune has kept you out of a row beyond the usual period of three months—will render the same service to any of your friends that stand in need of it; or, in short, will go to the world’s end, or fifty miles farther, as he himself would say, to serve you, provided you can procure him a bit of decent fighting. Now, in truth and soberness, it is difficult to account for this propensity; especially when the task of ascertaining it is assigned to those of another country, or even to those Irishmen whose rank in life places them too far from the customs, prejudices, and domestic opinions of their native peasantry, none of which can be properly known without mingling with them. To my own knowledge, however, it proceeds in a great measure from education. And here I would beg leave to point out an omission of which the several boards of education have been guilty, and which, I believe, no one but myself has yet been sufficiently acute and philosophical to ascertain, as forming a *sine qua non* in the national instruction of the lower orders of Irishmen.



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The cream of the matter is this:—a species of ambition prevails in the Green Isle, not known in any other country. It is an ambition of about three miles by four in extent; or, in other words, is bounded by the limits of the parish in which the subject of it may reside. It puts itself forth early in the character, and a hardy perennial it is. In my own case, its first development was noticed in the hedge-school which I attended. I had not been long there, till I was forced to declare myself either for the Caseys or the Murphys, two tiny factions, that had split the school between them. The day on which the ceremony of my declaration took place was a solemn one. After school, we all went to the bottom of a deep valley, a short distance from the school-house; up to the moment of our assembling there, I had not taken my stand under either banner: that of the Caseys was a sod of turf, stuck on the end of a broken fishing-rod—the eagle of the Murphy's was a Cork red potato, hoisted in the same manner. The turf was borne by an urchin, who afterwards distinguished himself in fairs and markets as a *builla batthah* (* cudgel player) of the first grade, and from this circumstance he was nicknamed *Parrah Rackhan*. (* Paddy the Rioter) The potato was borne by little Mickle M'Phauden Murphy, who afterwards took away Katty Bane Sheridan, without asking either her own consent or her father's. They were all then boys, it is true, but they gave a tolerable promise of that eminence which they subsequently attained.

When we arrived at the bottom of the glen, the Murphys and the Caseys, including their respective followers, ranged themselves on either side of a long line, which was drawn between the belligerent powers with the but-end of one of the standards. Exactly on this line was I placed. The word was then put to me in full form—"Whether will you side with the dacent Caseys, or the blackguard Murphys?" "Whether will you side with the dacent Murphys, or the blackguard Caseys?" "The potato for ever!" said I, throwing up my caubeen, and running over to the Murphy standard. In the twinkling of an eye we were at it; and in a short time the deuce an eye some of us had to twinkle. A battle royal succeeded, that lasted near half an hour, and it would probably have lasted above double the time, were it not for the appearance of the "master," who was seen by a little shrivelled vidette, who wanted an arm, and could take no part in the engagement. This was enough—we instantly radiated in all possible directions, so that by the time he had descended through the intricacies of the glen to the field of battle, neither victor nor vanquished was visible, except, perhaps, a straggler or two as they topped the brow of the declivity, looking back over their shoulders, to put themselves out of doubt as to their visibility by the master. They seldom looked in vain, however, for there he usually stood, shaking at us his rod, silently prophetic of its application on the following day. This threat, for the most part, ended in smoke; for except he horsed about forty or fifty of us, the infliction of impartial justice was utterly out of his power.



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[Illustration: PAGE 763— Usually stood, shaking at us his rod]

But besides this, there never was a realm in which the evils of a divided cabinet were more visible: the truth is, the monarch himself was under the influence of female government—an influence which he felt it either contrary to his inclination or beyond his power to throw off. “Poor Norah, long may you reign!” we often used to exclaim, to the visible mortification of the “master,” who felt the benevolence of the wish bottomed upon an indirect want of allegiance to himself. Well, it was a touching scene!—how we used to stand with the waistbands of our small-clothes cautiously grasped in our hands, with a timid show of resistance, our brave red faces slobbered over with tears, as we stood marked for execution! Never was there a finer specimen of deprecation in eloquence than we then exhibited—the supplicating look right up into the master’s face—the touching modulation of the whine—the additional tightness and caution with which we grasped the waistbands with one hand, when it was necessary to use the other in wiping our eyes and noses with the polished sleeve-cuff—the sincerity and vehemence with which we promised never to be guilty again, still shrewdly including the condition of present impunity for our offence:—“this—one—time— master, if ye please, sir;” and the utter hopelessness and despair which were legible in the last groan, as we grasp the “master’s” leg in utter recklessness of judgment, were all perfect in their way. Reader, have you ever got a reprieve from the gallows? I beg pardon, my dear sir; I only meant to ask, are you capable of entering into what a personage of that description might be supposed to feel, on being informed, after the knot had been neatly tied under the left ear, and the cap drawn over his eyes, that her majesty had granted him a full pardon? But you remember your own schoolboy days, and that’s enough.

The nice discrimination with which Norah used to time her interference was indeed surprising. God help us! limited was our experience, and shallow our little judgments, or we might have known what the master meant, when with upraised arm hung over us, his eye was fixed upon the door of the kitchen, waiting for Norah’s appearance.

Long, my fair and virtuous countrywomen, I repeat it to you all, as I did to Norah—may you reign in the hearts and affections of your husbands (but nowhere else), the grace, ornaments, and happiness of their hearths and lives, you jewels, you! You are paragons of all that’s good, and your feelings are highly creditable to yourselves and to humanity.

When Norah advanced, with her brawny, uplifted arm (for she was a powerful woman) and forbidding aspect, to interpose between us and the avenging, terrors of the birch, do you think that she did not reflect honor on her sex and the national character! I sink the base allusion to the *miscoun** of fresh butter, which we had placed in her hands that morning, or the dish of eggs, or of meal, which we had either begged or stolen at home, as a present for her; disclaiming, at the same time, the rascally idea of giving it as a bribe, or from any motive beneath the most lofty minded and disinterested generosity on our part.



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* A portion of butter, weighing from one pound to six or eight, made in the shape of a prism.

Then again, never did a forbidding face shine with so winning and amicable an expression as did hers on that merciful occasion. The sun dancing a hornpipe on Easter Sunday morning, or the full moon sailing as proud as a peacock in a new halo head-dress, was a very disrespectable sight, compared to Norah's red beaming face, shrouded in her dowl cap with long ears, that descended to her masculine and substantial neck. Owing to her influence, the whole economy of the school was good; for we were permitted to cuff one another, and do whatever we pleased, with impunity, if we brought the meal, eggs, or butter; except some scapegoat who was not able to accomplish this, and he generally received on his own miserable carcass what was due to us all.

Poor Jack Murray! His last words on the scaffold, for being concerned in the murder of Pierce the gauger, were, that he got the first of his bad habits under Pat Mulligan and Norah—that he learned to steal by secreting at home, butter and meal to paste up the master's eyes to his bad conduct—and that his fondness for quarrelling arose from being permitted to head a faction at school; a most ungrateful return for the many acts of grace which the indulgence of Norah caused; to be issued in his favor.

I was but a short time under Pat, when, after the general example, I had my cudgel, which I used to carry regularly to a certain furze bush within fifty perches of the "seminary," where I hid it till after "dismiss.*"! I grant it does not look well in me to become I my own panegyrist; but I can at least declare, that there were few among the Gaseys able to, resist the prowess of this right arm, puny as it was at the period in question. Our battles were obstinate and frequent; but as the quarrels of the two families and their relations on each side, were as bitter and pugnacious in fairs and markets as ours were in school, we hit upon the plan of holding our Lilliputian engagements upon the same days on which our fathers and brothers contested. According to this plan, it very often happened that the corresponding parties were successful, and as frequently, that whilst the Caseys were well drubbed in the fair, their sons were victorious at school, and vice versa.

For my part, I was early trained in cudgelling, and before I reached my fourteenth year, could pronounce as sage and accurate an opinion upon the merits of a shillelagh, as it is called, or cudgel, as a veteran of sixty could at first sight. Our plan of preparing them was this: we sallied out to any place where there was an underwood of blackthorn or oak, and, having surveyed the premises with the eye of a connoisseur, we selected the straightest root-growing piece which we could find: for if not root-growing we did not consider it worth cutting, knowing from experience that a mere branch, how straight and fair soever it

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might look, would be apt to snap in the twist and tug of war. Having cut it as close to the root as possible, we then lopped off the branches, and put it up the chimney to season. When seasoned, we took it down, and wrapping it in brown paper, well steeped in hog's lard or oil, we buried it in a horse dunghill, paying it a daily visit for the purpose of making it straight by doubling back the bends or angles across the knee, in a direction contrary to their natural tendency. Having daily repeated this until we had made it straight, and renewed the oil wrapping paper until the staff was perfectly saturated, we then rubbed it well with a woollen cloth, containing a little black-lead and grease, to give it a polish. This was the last process, except that if we thought it too light at the top, we used to bore a hole in the lower end with a red-hot iron spindle, into which we poured melted lead, for the purpose of giving it the knock-down weight.

There were very few of Paddy Mulligan's scholars without a choice collection of such cudgels, and scarcely one who had not, before his fifteenth year, a just claim to be called the hero of a hundred fights, and the heritor of as many bumps on the cranium as would strike both Gall and Spurzheim speechless.

Now this, be it known, was, and in some districts yet is, an integral part of an Irish peasant's education. In the northern parts of Ireland, where the population of the Catholics on the one side, and of Protestant and Dissenters on the other, is nearly equal, I have known the respective scholars of Catholic and Protestant schools to challenge each other and meet half-way to do battle, in vindication of their respective creeds; or for the purpose of establishing the character of their respective masters as the more learned man; for if we were to judge by the nature of the education then received, we would be led to conclude that a more commercial nation than Ireland was not on the face of the earth, it being the indispensable part of every scholar's business to become acquainted with the *three sets of Bookkeeping*.

The boy who was the handiest and the most daring with the cudgel at Paddy Mulligan's school was Denis Kelly, the son of a wealthy farmer in the neighborhood. He was a rash, hot-tempered, good-natured lad, possessing a more than common share of this blackthorn ambition; on which account he was cherished by his relations as a boy that was likely at a future period to be able to walk over the course of the parish, in fair, market, or patron. He certainly grew up a stout, able young fellow; and before he reached nineteen years, was unrivalled at the popular exercises of the peasantry. Shortly after that time he made his debut in a party-quarrel, which took place in one of the Christmas Margamores, (* Big Markets) and fully sustained the anticipations which were formed of him by his relations. For a year or two afterwards no quarrel was fought without him; and his prowess rose until he had gained the very pinnacle of that ambition which he had determined to reach. About this time I was separated from him, having found it necessary, in order to accomplish my objects in life, to reside with a relation in another part of the country.



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The period of my absence, I believe, was about fifteen years, during which space I heard no account of him whatsoever. At length, however, that inextinguishable attachment which turns the affections and memory to the friends of our early days—to those scenes which we traversed when the heart was light and the spirits buoyant—determined me to make a visit to my native place, that I might witness the progress of time and care upon those faces that were once so familiar to me; that I might again look upon the meadows, and valleys, and groves, and mountains, where I had so often played, and to which I still found myself bound by a tie that a more enlightened view of life and nature only made stronger and more enduring. I accordingly set off, and arrived late in the evening of a December day, at a little town within a few miles of my native home. On alighting from the coach and dining, I determined to walk home, as it was a fine frosty night. The full moon hung in the blue unclouded firmament in all her lustre, and the stars shone out with that tremulous twinkling motion so peculiarly remarkable in frost. I had been absent, I said, about fifteen years, and felt that the enjoyment of this night would form an era in the records of my memory and my feelings. I find myself indeed utterly incapable of expressing what I experienced; but those who have ever been in similar circumstances will understand what I mean. A strong spirit of practical poetry and romance was upon me; and I thought that a commonplace approach in the open day would have rendered my return to the scenes of my early life a very stale and unedifying matter. I left the inn at seven o'clock, and as I had only five miles to walk, I would just arrive about nine, allowing myself to saunter on at the rate of two miles and half per hour. My sensations, indeed, as I went along, were singular; and as I took a solitary road that went across the mountains, the loneliness of the walk, the deep gloom of the valleys, the towering height of the dark hills, and the pale silvery-light of a sleeping lake, shining dimly in the distance below, gave me such a distinct notion of the sublime and beautiful, as I have seldom since experienced. I recommend every man who has been fifteen years absent from his native fields to return by moonlight.

Well, there is a mystery yet undiscovered in our being, for no man can know the full extent of his feelings or his capacities. Many a slumbering thought, and sentiment, and association reposes within him, of which he is utterly ignorant, and which, except he come in contact with those objects whose influence over his mind can alone call them into being, may never be awakened, or give him one moment of either pleasure or pain. There is, therefore, a great deal in the position which we hold in society, and simply in situation. I felt this on that night: for the tenor of my reflections was new and original, and my feelings had a warmth and freshness in them,

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which nothing but the situation in which I then found myself could give them. The force of association, too, was powerful; for, as I advanced nearer home, the names of hills, and lakes, and mountains, that I had utterly forgotten, as I thought, were distinctly revived in my memory, and a crowd of youthful thoughts and feelings, that I imagined my intercourse with the world and the finger of time had blotted out of my being, began to crowd afresh on my fancy. The name of a townland would instantly return with its appearance; and I could now remember the history of families and individuals that had long been effaced from my recollection.

But what is even more singular is, that the superstitious terrors of my boyhood began to come over me as formerly, whenever a spot noted for supernatural appearances met my eye. It was in vain that I exerted myself to expel them, by throwing the barrier of philosophic reasoning in their way; they still clung to me, in spite of every effort to the contrary. But the fact is, that I was, for the moment, the slave of a morbid and feverish sentiment, that left me completely at the mercy of the dark and fleeting images that passed over my fancy. I now came to a turn where the road began to slope down into the depths of a valley that ran across it. When I looked forward into the bottom of it, all was darkness impenetrable, for the moon-beams were thrown off by the height of the mountains that rose on each side of it. I felt an indefinite sensation of fear, because at that moment I recollected that it had been, in my younger days, notorious as the scene of an apparition, where the spirit of a murdered pedlar had never been known to permit a solitary traveler to pass without appearing to him, and walking cheek-by-jowl along with him to the next house on the way, at which spot he usually vanished. The influence of my feelings, or, I should rather say, the physical excitement of my nerves, was by no means slight, as these old traditions recurred to me; although, at the same time, my moral courage was perfectly unimpaired, so that, notwithstanding this involuntary apprehension, I felt a degree of novelty and curiosity in descending the valley: "If it appear," said I, "I shall at least satisfy myself as to the truth of apparitions." My dress consisted of a long, dark surtout, the collar of which, as the night was keen, I had turned up about my ears, and the corners of it met round my face. In addition to this I had a black silk handkerchief tied across my mouth to keep out the night air, so that, as my dark fur traveling cap came down over my face, there was very little of my countenance visible. I now had advanced half way into the valley, and all about me was dark and still: the moonlight was not nearer than the top of the hill which I was descending; and I often turned round to look upon it, so silvery and beautiful it appeared in the distance. Sometimes I stopped for a few moments, admiring' its effect,



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and, contemplating the dark mountains as they stood out against the firmament, then kindled into magnificent grandeur by the myriads of stars that glowed in its expanse. There was perfect silence and solitude around me; and, as I stood alone in the dark chamber of the mountains, I felt the impressiveness of the situation gradually supersede my terrors. A sublime sense of religious awe descended on me; my soul kindled into a glow of solemn and elevated devotion, which gave me a more intense perception of the presence of God than I had ever before experienced. "How sacred—how awful," thought I, "is this place!—how impressive is this hour!—surely I feel myself at the footstool of God! The voice of worship is in this deep, soul-thrilling silence, and the tongue of praise speaks, as it were, from the very solitude of the mountains!" I then thought of Him who went up into the mountain-top to pray, and felt the majesty of those admirable descriptions of the Almighty, given in the Old Testament, blend in delightful harmony with the beauty and fitness of the Christian dispensation, that brought light and immortality to light. "Here," said I, "do I feel that I am indeed immortal, and destined for scenes of a more exalted and comprehensive existence!"

I then proceeded further into the valley, completely freed from the influence of old and superstitious associations. A few paces below me a small river crossed the road, over which was thrown a little stone bridge of rude workmanship. This bridge was the spot on which the apparition was said to appear; and as I approached it, I felt the folly of those terrors which had only a few minutes before beset me so strongly. I found my moral energies recruited, and the dark phantasms of my imagination dispelled by the light of religion, which had refreshed me with a deep sense of the Almighty presence. I accordingly walked forward, scarcely bestowing a thought upon the history of the place, and had got within a few yards of the bridge, when on resting my eye accidentally upon the little elevation formed by its rude arch, I perceived a black coffin placed at the edge of the road, exactly upon the bridge itself!

It may be evident to the reader, that, however satisfactory the force of philosophical reasoning might have been upon the subject of the solitude, I was too much the creature of sensation for an hour before, to look on such a startling object with firm nerves. For the first two or three minutes, therefore, I exhibited as finished a specimen of the dastardly as could be imagined. My hair absolutely raised my cap some inches off my head; my mouth opened to an extent which I did not conceive it could possibly reach; I thought my eyes shot out from their sockets, and my fingers spread out and became stiff, though powerless. The "*obstupui*" was perfectly realized in me, for, with the exception of a single groan, which I gave on first seeing the object, I found that if one word would save my life, or transport me to



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my own fireside, I could not utter it. I was also rooted to the earth, as if by magic; and although instant tergiversation and flight had my most hearty concurrence, I could not move a limb, nor even raise my eyes off the sepulchral-looking object which lay before me. I now felt the perspiration fall from my face in torrents, and the strokes of my heart fell audibly on my ear. I even attempted to say, "God preserve me!" but my tongue was dumb and powerless, and could not move. My eye was still upon the coffin, when I perceived that, from being motionless, it instantly began to swing,—first in a lateral, then in a longitudinal direction, although it was perfectly evident that no human hand was nearer it than my own. At length I raised my eyes off it, for my vision was strained to an aching intensity, which I thought must have occasioned my eye-strings to crack. I looked instinctively about me for assistance—but all was dismal, silent, and solitary: even the moon had disappeared among a few clouds that I had not noticed in the sky.

As I stood in this state of indescribable horror, I saw the light gradually fade away from the tops of the mountains, giving the scene around me a dim and spectral ghastliness, which, to those who were never in such a situation, is altogether inconceivable.

At length I thought I heard a noise as it were of a rushing tempest, sweeping from the hills down into the valley; but on looking up, I could perceive nothing but the dusky desolation that brooded over the place. Still the noise continued; again I saw the coffin move; I then felt the motion communicated to myself, and found my body borne and swung backwards and forwards, precisely according to the motion of the coffin. I again attempted to utter a cry for assistance, but could not: the motion in my body still continued, as did the approaching noise in the hills. I looked up a second time in the direction in which the valley wound off between them, but judge of what I must have suffered, when I beheld one of the mountains moving, as it were, from its base, and tumbling down towards the spot on which I stood! In the twinkling of an eye the whole scene, hills and all, began to tremble, to vibrate, and to fly round me, with a rapid, delirious motion; the stars shot back into the depths of heaven, and disappeared; the ground on which I stood began to pass from beneath my feet; a noise like the breaking of a thousand gigantic billows again burst from every direction, and I found myself instantly overwhelmed by some deadly weight, which prostrated me on the earth, and deprived me of sense and motion.



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I know not how long I continued in this state; but I remember that, on opening my eyes the first object that presented itself to me, was the sky glowing as before with ten thousand stars, and the moon walking in her unclouded brightness through the heavens. The whole circumstance then rushed back upon my mind, but with a sense of horror very much diminished; I arose, and on looking towards the spot, perceived the coffin in the same place. I then stood, and endeavoring to collect myself, viewed it as calmly as possible; it was, however, as motionless and distinct as when I first saw it. I now began to reason upon the matter, and to consider that it was pusillanimous in me to give way to such boyish terrors. The confidence, also, which my heart, only a short time before this, had experienced in the presence and protection of the Almighty, again returned, and, along with it, a degree of religious fortitude, which invigorated my whole system. "Well," thought I, "in the name of God I shall ascertain what you are, let the consequence be what it may." I then advanced until I stood exactly over it, and raising my foot gave it a slight kick. "Now," said I, "nothing remains but to ascertain whether it contains a dead body or not;" but on raising the end of it, I perceived by its lightness, that it was empty. To investigate the cause of its being left in this solitary spot was, however, not within the compass of my philosophy, so I gave that up. On looking at it more closely, I noticed a plate, marked with the name and age of the person for whom it was intended, and on bringing my eyes near the letters, I was able, between fingering and reading, to make out the name of my old cudgel-fighting school-fellow, Denis Kelly.

This discovery threw a partial light upon the business; but I now remembered to have heard of individuals who had seen black, unearthly coffins, inscribed with the names of certain living persons; and that these were considered as ominous of the death of those persons. I accordingly determined to be certain that this was a real coffin; and as Denis's house was not more than a mile before me, I decided on carrying it that far, "If he be dead," thought I, "it will be all light, and if not, we will see more about it." My mind, in fact, was diseased by terror. I instantly raised the coffin, and as I found a rope lying on the ground under it, I strapped it about my shoulders and proceeded: nor could I help smiling when I reflected upon the singular transition which the man of sentiment and sensation so strangely underwent;—from the sublime contemplation of the silent mountain solitude and the spangled heavens to the task of carrying a coffin! It was an adventure, however, and I was resolved to see how it would terminate.

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There was from the bridge an ascent in the road, not so gradual as that by which I descended on the other side; and as the coffin was rather heavy, I began to repent of having anything to do with it; for I was by no means experienced in carrying coffins. The carriage of it was, indeed, altogether an irksome and unpleasant concern; for owing to my ignorance of using the rope that tied it skilfully, it was every moment sliding down my back, dragging along the stones, or bumping against my heels: besides, I saw no sufficient grounds I had for entering upon the ludicrous and odd employment of carrying another man's coffin, and was several; times upon the point of washing my hands out of it altogether. But the novelty of the incident, and the mystery in which it was involved, decided me in bringing it as far as Kelly's house, which was exactly on my way home.

I had yet half a mile to go; but I thought it would be best to strap it more firmly about my body before I could start again: I therefore set it standing on its end, just at the turn of the road, until I should breathe a little, for I was rather exhausted by a trudge under it of half a mile and upwards. Whilst the coffin was in this position, I standing exactly behind it (Kelly had been a tall man, consequently it was somewhat higher than I was), a crowd of people, bearing lights, advanced round the corner; and the first object which presented itself to their vision, was the coffin in, that position, whilst I was totally invisible behind it. As soon as they saw it, there was an involuntary cry of consternation from the whole crowd; at this time I had the coffin once more strapped firmly by a running knot to my shoulders, so that I could loose it whenever I pleased. On seeing the party, and hearing certain expressions which dropped from them, I knew at once that there had been some unlucky blunder in the business on their part; and I would have given a good deal to be out of the circumstances in which I then stood. I felt that I could not possibly have accounted for my situation, without bringing myself in for as respectable a portion of rank cowardice as those who ran away from the coffin; for that it was left behind in a fit of terror, I now entertained no doubt whatever, particularly when I remembered the traditions connected with the spot in which I found it.

*"Manim a Yea agus a wurrah!"** exclaimed one of them, "if the black man hasn't brought it up from the bridge! *Dher a larna heena*** , he did; for it was above the bridge we first seen him: jst for all the world—the Lord be about us—as Antony and me war coming out on the road at the bridge, there he was standing—a headless man, all black, without face or eyes upon him—and then we left the coffin and cut across the fields home."

* My soul to God and the Virgin.

** By the very book—meaning the Bible, which, in the Irish, is not simply called the book, but the very book, or the book itself.



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“But where is he now, Eman?” said one of them, “are you sure you seen him?”

“Seen him!” both exclaimed, “do you think we’d take to our scrapers like two hares, only we did; arrah, bad manners to you, do you think the coffin could walk up wid itself from the bridge to this, only he brought it?—isn’t that enough?”

“Thru for yez,” the rest exclaimed, “but what’s to be done?”

“Why to bring the coffin home, now that we’re all together,” another observed; “they say he never appears to more than two at wanst, so he won’t be apt to show himself now, when we’re together.”

“Well, boys, let two of you go down to it,” said one of them, “and we’ll wait here till yez bring it up.”

“Yes,” said Eman Dhu, “do you go down, Owen, as you have the Scapular* on you, and the jug of holy water in your hand, and let Billy M’Shane, here repate the confeethurs (* *The Confiteor*) along wid you.”

* The scapular is one of the highest religious orders, and is worn by both priest and layman. It is considered by the people a safeguard against evil both spiritual and physical.

“Isn’t it the same thing, Eman,” replied Owen, “if I shake the holy water on you, and whoever goes wid you? sure you know that if only one dhrup of it touched you, the devil himself couldn’t harm you!”

“And what needs yourself be afraid, then,” retorted Eman; “and you has the Scapular on you to the back of that? Didn’t you say, you war coming out, that if it was the devil, you’d dispurse him?”

“You had bettther not be mintioning his name, you *omadhaun*,” replied the other; “if I was your age, and hadn’t a wife and childre on my hands, it’s myself that would trust in God, and go down manfully; but the people are hen-hearted now, besides what they used to be in my time.”

During this conversation, I had resolved, if possible, to keep up the delusion, until I could get myself extricated with due secrecy out of this ridiculous situation; and I was glad to find that, owing to their cowardice, there was some likelihood of effecting my design.

“Ned,” said one of them to a little man, “go down and speak to it, as it can’t harm you.”

“Why sure,” said Ned, with a tremor in his voice, “I can speak to it where I am, widout going within rache of it. Boys, stand close to me: hem—In the name of—but don’t you



think I had better spake to it in the Latin I sarve mass* wid; it can't but answer that, for the sowl of it, seeing it's a blest language?"

* The person who serves mass, as it is called, is he who makes the responses to the priest during that ceremony. As the mass is said in Latin the serving of it must necessarily fall upon many who are ignorant of that language, and whose pronunciation of it is, of course, extremely ludicrous.

"Very well," the rest replied; "try that Ned; give it the best and ginteelest grammar you have, and maybe it may thrate us dacent."



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Now it so happened that, in my schoolboy days, I had joined a class of young fellows who were learning what is called the "*Sarvin' of Mass*" and had impressed it so accurately on a pretty retentive memory, that I never forgot it. At length, Ned pulled, out his beads, and bedewed himself most copiously with the holy water. He then shouted out, with a voice which resembled that of a man in an ague fit, "Dom-i-n-us vo-bis-cum?" "Et cum spiritu tuo," I replied, in a husky sepulchral tone, from behind the coffin. As soon as I uttered these words, the whole crowd ran back instinctively with fright; and Ned got so weak, that they were obliged to support him.

"Lord have marcy on us!" said Ned; "hoys, isn't it an awful thing to speak to a spirit? my hair is like I dunna what, it's sticking up so stiff upon my head."

"Spake to it in English, Ned," said they, till we hear what it will say. Ax it does anything trouble it; or whether its sowl's in Purgatory."

"Wouldn't it be bettther," observed another, "to ax it who murdhered it; maybe it wants to discover that?"

"In the—na-me of Go-o-d-ness," said Ned, down to me, "what are you?"

"I'm the soul," I replied in the same voice, "of the pedlar that was murdered on the bridge below."

"And—who—was—it, sur, wid—submission, that—murdhered—you?"

To this I made no reply.

"I say," continued Ned, "in—the—name—of—G-o-o-d-ness—who was it—that took the liberty of murdhering you, dacent man?"

"Ned Corrigan," I answered, giving his own name.

"Hem! God presarve us! Ned Corrigan!" he exclaimed. "What Ned, for there's two of them—is it myself or the other vagabone?"

"Yourself, you murderer!" I replied.

"Ho!" said Ned, getting quite stout, "is that you, neighbor? Come, now, walk out wid yourself out of that coffin, you vagabone you, whoever you are."

"What do you mane, Ned, by spaking to it that-a-way?" the rest inquired.

"Hut," said Ned, "it's some fellow or other that's playing a thrick upon us. Sure I never knew either act nor part of the murdher, nor of the murdherers; and you know, if it was



anything of that nature, it couldn't tell me a lie, and me a Scapularian along wid axing it in God's name, with Father Feasthalagh's Latin."

"Big tare-an'-ouns;" said the rest; "if we thought it was any man making fun of us, but we'd crop the ears off his head, to tache him to be joking!"

To tell the truth, when I heard this suggestion, I began to repent of my frolic; but I was determined to make another effort to finish the adventure creditably.

"Ned," said they, "throw some of the holy water on us all, and in the name of St. Pether and the Blessed Virgin, we'll go down and examine it in a body."



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This they considered a good thought, and Ned was sprinkling the water about him in all directions, whilst he repeated some jargon which was completely unintelligible. They then began to approach the coffin at dead-march time, and I felt that this was the only moment in which my plan could succeed; for had I waited until they came down all would have been discovered. As soon, therefore, as they began to move towards me, I also began, with equal solemnity, to retrograde towards them; so that, as the coffin was between us, it seemed to move without human means.

“Stop, for God’s sake, stop,”—shouted Ned; “it’s movin’! It has made the coffin alive; don’t you see it thravelling this way widout hand or foot, barring the boards?”

There was now a halt to ascertain the fact: but I still retrograded. This was sufficient; a cry of terror broke from the whole group, and, without waiting for further evidence, they set off in the direction they came from, at full speed, Ned flinging the jug of holy water at the coffin, lest the latter should follow, or the former encumber him in his flight. Never was there so complete a discomfiture; and so eager were they to escape, that several of them came down on the stones; and I could hear them shouting with desperation, and imploring the more advanced not to leave them behind. I instantly disentangled myself from the coffin, and left it standing exactly in the middle of the road, for the next passenger to give it a lift as far as Denis Kelly’s, if he felt so disposed. I lost no time in making the best of my way home; and on passing poor Denis’s house I perceived, by the bustle and noise within, that he was dead.

I had given my friends no notice of this visit; my reception was consequently the warmer, as I was not expected. That evening was a happy one, which I shall long remember. At supper I alluded to Kelly, and received from my brother a full account, as given in the following narrative, of the circumstances which caused his death.

“I need not remind you, Toby, of our schoolboy days, nor of the principles usually imbibed at such schools as that in which the two tiny factions of the Caseys and the Murphys qualified themselves, among the latter of whom you cut so distinguished a figure. You will not, therefore, be surprised to hear that these two factions are as bitter as ever, and that the boys who at Pat Mulligan’s school belabored each other, in imitation of their brothers and fathers, continue to set the same iniquitous example to their children; so that this groundless and hereditary enmity is likely to descend to future generations; unless, indeed, the influence of a more enlightened system of education may check it. But, unhappily, there is a strong suspicion of the object proposed by such a system; so that the advantages likely to result from it to the lower orders of the people will be slow and distant.”

“But, John,” said I, “now that we are upon that subject, let me ask what really is the bone of contention between Irish factions?”



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“I assure you,” he replied, “I am almost as much at a loss, Toby, to give you a satisfactory answer, as if you asked me the elevation of the highest mountain on the moon; and I believe you would find equal difficulty in ascertaining the cause of their feuds from the factions themselves. I really am convinced they know not, nor, if I rightly understand them, do they much care. Their object is to fight, and the turning of a straw will at any time furnish them with sufficient grounds for that. I do not think, after all, that the enmity between them is purely personal: they do not hate each other individually; but having originally had one quarrel upon some trifling occasion, the beaten party cannot bear the stigma of defeat without another trial of strength. Then, if they succeed, the onus of retrieving lost credit is thrown upon the party that was formerly victorious. If they fail a second time, the double triumph of their conquerors excites them to a greater determination to throw off the additional disgrace; and this species of alternation perpetuates the evil.

“These habits, however, familiarize our peasantry to acts of outrage and violence—the bad passions are cultivated and nourished, until crimes, which peaceable men look upon with fear and horror, lose their real magnitude and deformity in the eyes of Irishmen. I believe this kind of undefined hatred between either parties or nations, is the most dangerous and fatal spirit which can pervade any portion of society. If you hate a man for an obvious and palpable injury, it is likely that when he cancels that injury by an act of subsequent kindness, accompanied by an exhibition of sincere sorrow, you will cease to look upon him as your enemy; but where the hatred is such that, while feeling you cannot, on a sober examination of your heart, account for it, there is little hope that you will ever be able to stifle the enmity that you entertain against him. This, however, in politics and religion, is what is frequently designated as principle—a word on which men, possessing higher and greater advantages than the poor ignorant peasantry of Ireland, pride themselves. In sects and parties, we may mark its effects among all ranks and nations. I therefore, seldom wish, Toby, to hear a man assert that he is of this party or that, from principle; for I am usually inclined to suspect that he is not, in this case, influenced by conviction.

“Kelly was a man who, but for these scandalous proceedings among us, might have been now alive and happy. Although his temperament was warm, yet that warmth communicated itself to his good as well as to his evil qualities. In the beginning his family were not attached to any faction—and when I use the word faction, it is in contradistinction to the word party—for faction, you know, is applied to a feud or grudge between Roman Catholics exclusively. But when he was young, he ardently attached himself to the Murphys; and, having continued among them until manhood, he could not abandon them, consistently with that sense of mistaken honor which forms so prominent a feature in the character of the Irish peasantry. But although the Kellys were not *faction-men*, they were bitter *party-men*, being the ringleaders of every quarrel Which took place between the Catholics and Protestants, or, I should rather say, between the Orangemen and Whiteboys.



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“From the moment Denis attached himself to the Murphys, until the day he received the beating which subsequently occasioned his death, he never withdrew from them. He was in all their battles; and in course of time, induced his relations to follow his example; so that, by general consent, they were nicknamed ‘the Errigle Slashers.’ Soon after you left the country, and went to reside with my uncle, Denis married a daughter of little Dick Magrath’s, from the Race-road, with whom he got a little money. She proved a kind, affectionate wife; and, to do him justice, I believe he was an excellent husband. Shortly after his marriage his father died, and Denis succeeded him in his farm; for you know that, among the peasantry, the youngest generally gets the landed property—the elder children being obliged to provide for themselves according to their ability, as otherwise a population would multiply upon a portion of land inadequate to its support.

“It was supposed that Kelly’s marriage would have been the means of producing a change in him for the better, but it did not. He was, in fact, the slave of a low, vain ambition, which constantly occasioned him to have some quarrel or other on his hands; and, as he possessed great physical courage and strength, he became the champion of the parish. It was in vain that his wife used every argument to induce him to relinquish such practices; the only reply he was in the habit of making, was a good-humored slap on the back and a laugh, saying,

“‘That’s it, Honor; sure and isn’t that the Magraths, all over, that would let the manest spalpeen that ever chewed cheese thramp upon them, without raising a hand in their own defence; and I don’t blame you for being a coward, seeing that you have their blood in your veins—not but that there ought to be something better in you, after all; for it’s the M’Karrons, by your mother’s side, that had the good dhrop of their own in them, anyhow—but you’re a Magrath out and out.’

“‘And, Denis,’ Honor would reply, ‘it would be a blessed day for the parish, if all in it were as peaceable as the same Magraths. There would be no sore heads, nor broken bones, nor fighting, nor slashing of one another in fairs and markets, when people ought to be minding their business. You’re ever and always at the Magraths, bekase they don’t join you agin the Caseys or the Orangemen, and more fools they’d be to make or meddle between you, having no spite agin either of them; and it would be wiser for you to be *sed* by the Magraths, and *red* your hands out of sich ways altogether. What did ever the Murphys do to sarve you or any of your family, that you’d go to make a great man of yourself fighting for them? Or what did the poor Caseys do to make you go agin the honest people? Arrah, bad manners to me, if you know what you’re about, or if *sonse* (* Good Luck) or grace can ever come of it; and mind my words, Denis, if God hasn’t said it, you’ll live to rue your folly for the same work.’



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“At this Denis would laugh heartily. ‘Well said, Honor *Magrath*, but not *Kelly*, Well, it’s one comfort that our childher aren’t likely to follow your side of the house, any way. Come here, Lanty; come over, acushla, to your father! Lanty, ma bouchal, what ’ill you do when you grow a man?”

“I’ll buy a horse of my own to ride on, daddy.’

“A horse, Lanty! and so you will, ma bouchal; but that’s not it—sure that’s not what I mane, Lanty. What ’ill you do to the Caseys?”

“Ho, ho! the Caseys! I’ll bate the blackguards wid your blackthorn, daddy!’

“Ha, ha, ha! that’s my stout man, my brave little soger! *Wus dha lamh avick!*—give me your hand, my son! Here, Nelly,’ he would say to the child’s eldest sister, ‘give him a brave whang of bread, to make him able to bate the Caseys. Well, Lanty, who more will you leather, ahagur?’

“All the Orangemen; I’ll kill all the Orangemen!’

“This would produce another laugh from the father, who would again kiss and shake hands with his son, for these early manifestations of his own spirit.

“Lanty, ma bouchal,’ he would say, ‘thank God, you’re not a *Magrath*; ’tis you that’s a *Kelly*, every blessed inch of you! and if you turn out as good a *buillagh balthah* as your father afore you, I’ll be contint, avour-neen!’

“God forgive you, Denis,’ the-wife would reply, ‘it’s long before you’d think of larning him his prayers, or his cateehiz, or anything that’s good! Lanty, agra, come over to myself, and never heed what that man says; for, except you have some poor body’s blessing, he’ll bring you to no good.’

“Sometimes, however, Kelly’s own natural good sense, joined with the remonstrances of his wife, prevailed for a short time, and he would withdraw himself from the connection altogether; but the force of habit and of circumstances was too strong in him, to hope that he could ever overcome it by his own firmness, for he was totally destitute of religion. The peaceable intervals of his life were therefore very short.

“One summer evening I was standing in my own garden, when I saw a man galloping up towards me at full speed. When he approached, I recognized him as one of the Murphy faction, and perceived that he was cut and bleeding.

“Murphy,’ said I, ‘What’s the matter!’

“Hard fighting, sir,’ said he, ‘is the matter. The Caseys gathered all their faction, bekase they heard that Denis Kelly has given us up, and they’re sweeping the street wid us. I’m



going hot foot for Kelly, sir, for even the very name of him will turn the tide in our favor. Along wid that, I have sent in a score of the Duggans, and, if I get in Denis, plase God we'll clear the town of them!

“He then set off, but pulled up abruptly, and said,

“Arrah, Mr. Darcy, maybe you'd be civil enough to lind me the loan of a sword, or bagnet, or gun, or anything that way, that would be sarviceable to a body on a pinch?”



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“Yes!’ said I, ‘and enable you to commit murder? No, no, Murphy; I’m sorry it’s not in my power to put a final stop to such dangerous quarrels!’

“He then dashed off, and in the course of a short time I saw him and Kelly, both on horseback, hurrying into the town in all possible haste, armed with their cudgels. The following day, I got my dog and gun, and sauntered about the hills, making a point to call upon Kelly. I found him with his head tied up, and his arm in a sling.

“Well, Denis,’ said I, ‘I find you have kept your promise of giving up quarrels!’

“And so I did, sir,’ said Denis; ‘but, sure you wouldn’t have me for to go desart them, when the Caseys war three to one over them? No; God be thanked, I’m not so mane as that, anyhow. Besides, they welted both my brothers within an inch of their lives.’

“I think they didn’t miss yourself,’ said I.

“You may well say they did not, sir,’ he replied: ‘and, to tell God’s truth, they thrashed us right and left out of the town, although we rallied three times, and came in agin. At any rate, it’s the first time for the last five years that they dare go up and down the street, calling out for the face of a Murphy, or a Kelly; for they’re as bitter now agin us as agin the Murphys themselves.’

“Well, I hope, Denis,’ I observed, ‘that what occurred yesterday will prevent you from entering into their quarrels in future. Indeed, I shall not give over, until I prevail on you to lead a quiet and peaceable life, as the father of a rising family ought to do.’

“Denis,’ said the wife, when I alluded to the children, looking at him with a reproachful and significant expression—‘Denis, do you hear that!—the father of a family, Denis! Oh, then, God look down on that family; but it’s—Musha, God bless you and yours, sir,’ said she to me, dropping that part of the subject abruptly; ‘it’s kind of you to trouble yourself about him, at all at all: it’s what them that has a better right to do it, doesn’t do.’

“I hope,’ said I, ‘that Denis’s own good sense will show him the folly and guilt of his conduct, and that he will not, under any circumstances, enter into their battles in future. Come, Denis, will you promise me this?’

“If any man,’ replied Denis, ‘could make me do it, it’s yourself, sir, or any one of your family; but if the priest of the parish was to go down on his knees before me, I wouldn’t give it up till we give them vagabone Caseys one glorious battherin,’ which, plase God, we’ll do, and are well able to do, before a month of Sundays goes over us. Now, sir, you needn’t say another word,’ said he, seeing me about to speak; ‘for by Him that made me we’ll do it! If any man, I say, could persuade me agin it, you could; but, if we don’t pay them full interest for what we got, why my name’s not Denis Kelly—ay, sweep them like varmint out of the town, body and sleeves!’

“I saw argument would be lost on him, so I only observed, that I feared it would eventually end badly.



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“Och, many and many’s the time, Mr. Darcy,’ said Honor, ‘I prophesied the same thing; and, if God hasn’t said it, he’ll be coming home a corpse to me some day or other; for he got as much bating, sir, as would be enough to kill a horse; and, to tell you God’s truth, sir, he’s breeding up his childher—’

“Honor,’ said Kelly, irritated, ‘whatever I do, do I lave it in your power to say that I’m a bad husband? so don’t rise me by your talk, for I don’t like to be provoked. I know it’s wrong, but what can I do? Would you have me for to show the Garran-bane,* and lave them like a cowardly thraitor, now that the other faction is coming up to be their match? No; let what will come of it, I’ll never do the mane thing—death before dishonor!’

* The white horse, *i.e.*, be wanting in mettle. Tradition affirms that James the Second escaped on a white horse from the battle of the Boyne; and from this circumstance a white horse has become the emblem of cowardice.

“In this manner Kelly went on for years; sometimes, indeed, keeping quiet for a short period, but eventually drawn in, from the apprehension of being reproached with want of honor and truth, to his connection. This, truly, is an imputation which no peasant could endure; nor, were he thought capable of treachery, would he be safe from the vengeance of his own party. Many a time have I seen Kelly reeling home, his head and face sadly cut, the blood streaming from him, and his wife and some neighbor on each side of him—the poor woman weeping and deploring the senseless and sanguinary feuds in which her husband took so active a part.

“About three miles from this, down at the Long Ridge, where the Shannons live, dwelt a family of the Grogans, cousins to Denis. They were anything but industrious, although they might have lived very independently, having held a farm on what they called an old take, which means a long lease taken out when lands were cheap. It so happened, however, that, like too many of their countrymen, they paid little attention to the cultivation of their farm; the consequence of which neglect was, that they became embarrassed, and overburdened with arrears. Their landlord was old Sam Simmons, whose only fault to his tenants was an excess of indulgence, and a generous disposition wherever he could possibly get an opportunity to scatter his money about him, upon the spur of a benevolence which, it would seem, never ceased goading him to acts of the most Christian liberality and kindness. Along with these excellent qualities, he was remarkable for a most rooted aversion to law and lawyers; for he would lose one hundred pounds rather than recover that sum by legal proceedings, even when certain that five Pounds would effect it; but he seldom or never was known to pardon a breach of the peace.

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“I have always found that an excess of indulgence in a landlord never fails ultimately to injure and relax the industry of the tenant; at least, this was the effect which his forbearance produced on them. But the most extraordinary good-nature has its limits, and so had his; after repeated warning, and the most unparalleled patience on his part, he was at length compelled to determine on at once removing them from his estate, and letting his land to some more efficient and deserving tenant. He accordingly desired them to remove their property from the premises, as he did not wish, he said, to leave them without the means of entering upon another farm, if they felt so disposed. This they refused to do; adding, that they would, at least, put him to the expense of ejecting them. He then gave orders to his agent to seize; but they, in the mean time, had secreted their effects by night among their friends and relations, sending a cow to this one, and a horse to that; so that, when the bailiff came to levy his execution, he found very little, except the empty walls. They were, however, ejected without ceremony, and driven altogether off the farm, for which they had actually paid nothing for the three preceding years. In the mean time the farm was advertised to be let, and several persons had offered themselves as tenants; but what appeared very remarkable was, that the Roman Catholics seldom came a second time to make any further inquiry about it; or, if they did, Simmons observed that they were sure to withdraw their proposals, and ultimately decline having anything to do with it.

“This was a circumstance which he could not properly understand; but the fact was, that the peasantry were almost to a man members of a widely-extending system of agrarian combination, the secret influence of which intimidated such of their own religion as intended to take it, and prevented them from exposing themselves to the penalty which they knew those who should dare to occupy it must pay. In a short time, however, the matter began to be whispered about, until it spread gradually, day after day, through the parish, that those who already had proposed, or intended to propose, were afraid to enter upon the land on any terms. Hitherto, it is true, these threats floated about only in the vague form of rumor.

“The farm had been now unoccupied for about a year; party spirit ran very high among the peasantry, and no proposals came in, or were at all likely to come. Simmons then got advertisements printed, and had them posted up in the most conspicuous parts of this and the neighboring parishes. It was expected, however, that they would be torn down; but, instead of that, there was a written notice posted up immediately under each, which ran in the following words:—

“Take Notess.

“Any man that'll dare to take the farm belonging to smooth Sam Simmons, and sitivated at the long ridge, will be flayed alive.



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“ Mat Midnight.

“B. N.—It’s it that was latterrally occupied by the Grogans.’

“This occasioned Simmons and the other magistrates of the barony to hold a meeting, at which they subscribed to the amount of fifty pounds as a reward for discovering the author or authors of the threatening notice; but the advertisement containing the reward, which was posted in the usual places through the parish, was torn down on the first night after it was put up. In the meantime, a man, nicknamed Vengeance—Vesey Vengeance, in consequence of his daring and fearless spirit, and his bitterness in retaliating injury—came to Simmons, and proposed for the farm. The latter candidly mentioned the circumstances of the notice, and fairly told him that he was running a personal risk in taking it.

“‘Leave that to me, sir,’ said Vengeance; ‘if you will set me the farm at the terms I offer, I am willing to become your tenant; and let them that posted up the notices go to old Nick, or, if they annoy me, let them take care I don’t send them there. I am a true blue, sir—a purple man*—have lots of fire-arms, and plenty of stout fellows in the parish ready and willing to back me; and, by the light of day if they make or meddle with me or mine, we will hunt them in the face of the world, like so many mad dogs, out of the country: what are they but a pack of ribles, that would cut our throats, if they dared?’

* These terms denote certain stages of initiation in the Orange system

“‘I have no objection,’ said Simmons, ‘that you should express a firm determination to defend your life and protect your property; but I utterly condemn the spirit with which you seem to be animated. Be temperate and sober, but be firm. I will afford you every assistance and protection in my power, both as a magistrate and a landlord; but if you speak so incautiously, the result may be serious, if not fatal, to yourself.’

“‘Instead of that,’ said Vengeance, ‘the more a man appears to be afeard, the more danger he is in, as I know by what I have seen; but, at any rate, if they injure me, I wouldn’t ask better sport than taking down the ribles—the bloody-minded villains! Isn’t it a purty thing that a man darn’t put one foat past the other only as they wish. By the light o’ day, I’ll pepper them!’

“Shortly after this, Vengeance, braving all their threats, removed to the farm, and set about its cultivation with skill and vigor. He had not been long there, however, when, a notice was posted one night on his door, giving him ten days to clear off from this interdicted spot, threatening, in case of non-compliance, to make a bonfire of the house and offices, inmates included. The reply, which Vengeance made to this was fearless and characteristic. He wrote another notice, which he posted on the chapel-door,

stating that he would not budge an inch—recommending, at the same time, such as intended paying him a nightly



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visit to be careful that they might not chance to go home with their heels foremost. This, indeed, was setting them completely at defiance, and would, no doubt have been fatal to Vesey, were it not for a circumstance which I will now relate:—In a little dell, below Vesey's house, lived a poor woman, called Doran, a widow; she inhabited a small hut, and was principally supported by her two sons, who were servants, one to a neighboring farmer, a Roman Catholic, and the other to Dr. Ableson, rector of the parish. He who had been with the rector lost his health shortly before Vengeance succeeded the Grogans as occupier of the land in question, and was obliged to come home to his mother. He was then confined to his bed, from which, indeed, he never rose.

“This boy had been his mother's principal support—for the other was unsettled, and paid her but little attention, being like most of those in his situation, fond of drinking, dancing, and attending fairs. In short, he became a Ribbonman, and consequently was obliged to attend their nightly meetings. Now it so happened that for a considerable time after the threatening notice had been posted on Vengeance's door, he received no annoyance, although the period allowed for his departure had been long past, and the purport of the paper uncomplied with. Whether this proceeded from an apprehension on the part of the Ribbonmen of receiving a warmer welcome than they might wish, or whether they deferred the execution of their threat until Vengeance might be off his guard, I cannot determine; but the fact is, that some months had elapsed and Vengeance remained hitherto unmolested.

“During this interval the distress of Widow Doran had become known to the inmates of his family, and his mother—for she lived with him—used to bring down each day some nourishing food to the sick boy. In these kind offices she was very punctual; and so great was the poverty of the poor widow, and so destitute the situation of her sick son, that, in fact, the burden of their support lay principally upon Vengeance's family.

“Vengeance was a small, thin man, with fair hair, and fiery eyes; his voice was loud and shrill, his utterance rapid, and the general expression of his countenance irritable. His motions were so quick, that he rather seemed to run than walk. He was a civil, obliging neighbor, but performed his best actions with a bad grace; a firm, unflinching friend, but a bitter and implacable enemy. Upon the whole he was generally esteemed and respected—though considered as an eccentric character, for such indeed he was. On hearing of Widow Doran's distress, he gave orders that a portion of each meal should be regularly sent down to her and her son; and from that period forward they were both supported principally from his table.

“In this way some months had passed, and still Vengeance was undisturbed in his farm. It often happened, however, that Doran's other son came to see his brother; and

during these visits it was but natural that his mother and brother should allude to the kindness which they daily experienced from Vesey.



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“One night, about twelve o’clock, a tap came to Widow Doran’s door, who happened to be attending the invalid, as he was then nearly in the last stage of his illness. When she opened it, the other son entered, in an evident hurry, having the appearance of a man who felt deep and serious anxiety.

“‘Mother,’ said he, ‘I was very uneasy entirely about Mick, and just started over to see him, although they don’t know at home that I’m out, so I can’t stay a crack; but I wish you would go to the door for two or three minutes, as I have something to say to him.’

“‘Why, thin, Holy Mother!—Jack, a-hagur, is there anything the matther, for you look as if you had seen something?’*

* This phrase means—you look as if you had seen a ghost; it is a very common one.

“‘Nothing worse than myself, mother,’ he replied; ‘nor there’s nothing the matther at all—only I have a few words to say to Mick here, that’s all.’

“The mother accordingly removed herself out of hearing.

“‘Mick,’ says the boy, ‘this is a bad business—I wish to God I was clear and clane out of it.’

“‘What is it?’ said Mick, alarmed. “‘Murther, I’m afeard, if God doesn’t turn it off of them, somehow.

“‘What do you mane, man, at all?’ said the invalid, raising himself, in deep emotion, on his elbow, from his poor straw bed.

“‘Vengeance,’ said he—‘Vengeance, man—he’s going to get it. I was out with the boys on Sunday evening, and at last it’s agreed on to visit him to-morrow night. I’m sure and sartin he’ll never escape, for there’s more in for him than taking the farm, and daring them so often as he did—he shot two fingers off of a brother-in-law of Jem Reilly’s one night that they war on for threshing him, and that’s coming home to him along with the rest.’

“‘In the name of God, Jack,’ inquired Mick, ‘what do they intend to do to him?’

“‘Why,’ replied Jack, ‘it’s agreed to put a coal in the thatch, in the first place; and although they were afeared to name what he’s to get besides, I doubt they’ll make a spatchcock of himself. They won’t meddle with any other of the family, though—but he’s down for it.’

“‘Are you to be one of them?’ asked Mick.



“I was the third man named,’ replied the other, ’bekase, they said, I knew the place.’

“Jack,’ said his emaciated brother, with much solemnity, raising himself up in the bed—
’Jack, if you have act or part in that bloody business, God in his glory you’ll never see.
Fly the country—cut off a finger or toe—break your arm—or do something that may
prevent you from being there. Oh, my God!’ he exclaimed, whilst the tears fell fast down
his pale cheeks—’to go to murder the man, and lave his little family widout a head or a
father over them, and his wife a widow! To burn his place, widout rhime, or rason, or
offince! Jack, if you go, I’ll die cursing you. I’ll appear to you—I’ll let you rest neither
night nor day, sleeping nor waking, in bed or out of bed. I’ll haunt you, till you’ll curse
the very hour you war born.’



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“Whist, Micky,’ said Jack, ‘you’re frightening me: I’ll not go—will that satisfy you?’

“Well, dhrop down on your two knees, there,’ said Micky, ‘and swear before the God that has his eye upon you this minute, that you’ll have no hand in injuring him or his, while you live. If you don’t do this, I’ll not rest in my grave and maybe I’ll be a corpse before mornin.’

“Well Micky, said Jack, who though wild and unthinking, was a lad whose heart and affections were good, ‘it would be hard for me to refuse you that much, and you! not likely to be long wid me—I will;’ and he accordingly knelt down and swore solemnly, in words which his brother dictated to him, that he would not be concerned in the intended murder.

“Now, give me your hand, Jack,’ said the invalid; ‘God bless you—and so He will. Jack, if I depart before I see you again, I’ll die happy. That man has supported me and my mother for near the last three months, bad as you all think him. Why, Jack, we would both be dead of hunger long ago, only for his family; and, my God! to think, of such a murdhering intention makes my blood run cowl’d’—

“You had better give him a hint, then,’ said Jack, ‘some way, or he’ll be done for, as sure as you’re stretched on that bed; but don’t mintion names, if you wish to keep me from being murdhered for what I did. I must be off now, for I stole out of the barn:* and only that Atty Laghy’s gone along wid the master to the —— fair, to help him to sell the two coults, I couldn’t get over at all.’

* Laboring servants in Ireland usually sleep in barns.

“Well, go home, Jack, and God bless you, and so He will, for what you did this night.’

“Jack accordingly departed, after bidding his mother and brother farewell.

“When the old woman came in, she asked her son if there was anything wrong with his brother, but he replied that there was not.

“Nothing at all,’ said he—‘but will you get up airly in the morning, plase God, and tell Vesey Johnston that I want to see him; and—that—I have a great dale to say to him?’

“To be sure I will, Micky; but, Lord guard us, what ails you, avourneen, you look so frightened?’

“Nothing at all, at all, mother; but will you go where I say airly to-morrow, for me?’

“It’s the first thing I’ll do, God willin’,’ replied the mother. And the next morning Vesey was down with the invalid very early, for the old woman kept her word and paid him a timely visit.



“Well, Micky, my boy,’ said Vengeance, as he entered the hut, ‘I hope you’re no worse this morning.’

“Not worse, sir,’ replied Mick; ‘nor, indeed, am I anything better either, but much the same way. Sure it’s I that knows very well that my time here is but short.’

“Well, Mick, my boy,’ said Vengeance, ‘I hope you’re prepared for death—and that you expect forgiveness, like a Christian. Look up, my boy, to God at once, and pitch the priests and their craft to ould Nick, where they’ll all go at the long-run.’



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“I b’lieve,’ said Mick, with a faint smile, ‘that you’re not very fond of the priests, Mr. Johnston; but if you knew the power they possess as well as I do, you wouldn’t spake of them so bad, anyhow.’

“‘Me fond of them!’ replied the other; ‘why, man, they’re a set of the most gluttonous, black-looking hypocrites that ever walked on neat’s leather; and ought to be hunted out of the country—hunted out of the country, by the light of day! every one of them; for they do nothing but egg up the people against the Protestants.’

“‘God help you, Mr. Johnston,’ replied the invalid, ‘I pity you from my heart for the opinion you hould about them. I suppose if you were sthrucc dead on the spot wid a blast from the fairies, that you think a priest couldn’t cure you by one word’s spaking?’

“‘Cure me!’ said Vengeance, with a laugh of disdain; ‘by the light of day! if I caught one of them curing me, I’d give him the purtiest chase you ever saw in your life, across the hills.’

“‘Don’t you know,’ said Mick, ‘that priest Dannelly cured Bob Beaty of the falling sickness—until he broke the vow that was laid upon him, of not going into a church, and the minute he crossed the church-door, didn’t he dhrop down as bad as ever—and what could the minister do for him?’

“‘And don’t you know,’ rejoined Vengeance, ‘that that’s all a parcel of the most lying stuff possible; lies—lies—all lies—and vagabondism? Why, Mick, you Papishes worship the priests; you think they can bring you to heaven at a word. By the light of day, they must have good sport laughing at you, when they get among one another. Why don’t they teach you and give you the Bible to read, the ribelly rascals? but they’re afraid you’d know too much then.’

“‘Well, Mr. Johnston,’ said Mick, ‘I b’lieve you’ll never have a good opinion of them, at any rate.’

“‘Ay, when the sky falls,’ replied Vengeance; ‘but you’re now on your death bed, and why don’t you pitch them to ould Nick, and get a Bible? Get a Bible, man; there’s a pair of them in my house, that’s never used at all—except my mother’s, and she’s at it night and day. I’ll send one of them down to you: turn yourself to God—to your Redeemer, that died on the mount of Jehosha-phat, or somewhere about Jerusalem, for your sins—and don’t go out of the world from the hand of a rascally priest, with a band about your eyes, as if you were at blind-man’s-buff, for, by the light of day, you’re as blind as a bat in a religious way.’

“‘There’s no use in sending me a Bible,’ replied the invalid, ‘for I can’t read it: but, whatever you may think, I’m very willing to lave my salvation with my priest.’



“‘Why, man,’ observed Vengeance, ‘I thought you were going to have sense at last, and that you sent for me to give you some spiritual consolation.’

“‘No, sir,’ replied Mick; ‘I have two or three words to spake to you.’

“‘Come, come, Mick, now that we’re on a spiritual subject, I’ll hear nothing from you till I try whether it’s possible to give you a trute insight into religion. Stop, now, and let us lay our heads together, that we may make out something of a dacenter creed for you to believe in than the one you profess. Tell me the truth, do you believe in the priests?’



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“How?’ replied Mick; ‘I believe that they’re holy men—but I know they can’t save me widout the Redeemer and His blessed mother,’

“By the light above us, you’re shuffling, Mick—I say you do believe in them—now, don’t tell me to the contrary—I say you’re shuffling as fast as possible.’

“I tould you truth, sir,’ replied Mick; ‘and if you don’t believe me, I can’t help it.’

“Don’t trust in the priests, Mick; that’s the main point to secure your salvation.’

“Mick, who knew his prejudices against the priests, smiled faintly, and replied—

“Why, sir, I trust in them as bein’ able to make inthercession wid God for me, that’s all’

“They make intercession! By the stool I’m sitting on, a single word from one of them would ruin you. They, a set of ribles, to make interest for you in heaven! Didn’t they rise the rebellion in Ireland?—answer me that.’

“This is a subject, sir, we would never agree on,’ replied Mick.

“Have you the Ten Commandments?’ inquired Vesey.

“I doubt my mimory’s not clear enough to have them in my mind,’ said the lad, feeling keenly the imputation of ignorance, which he apprehended from Vesey’s blunt observations.

“Vesey, however, had penetration enough to perceive his feelings, and, with more delicacy than could be expected from him, immediately moved the question.

“No matter, Mick,’ said he, ‘if you would give up the priests, we would get over that point: as it is, I will give you a lift in the Commandments; and, as I said a while ago,’ if you take my advice, I’ll work up a creed for you that you may depend upon. But now, for the Commandments—let me see.

“First: Thou shalt have no other gods but me. Don’t you see, man how that peppers the priests?’

“Second: Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day.’

“Third: That shalt not make to thyself—no, hang it no!—I’m out—that’s the Second—very right. Third: Honor thy father and thy mother—you understand that, Mick? It means that you are bound to—to—just so—to honor your father and your mother, poor woman.’

“My father—God be good to him!—is dead near fourteen years, sir,’ replied Mick.



“Well, in that case, Mick, you see all that’s left for you is to honor your mother—although I’m not certain of that either; the Commandments make no allowance at all for death, and in that case why, living or dead, the surest way is to respect and obey them—that is, if the thing were’nt impossible. I wish we had blind George M’Girr here, Mick; although he’s as great a rogue as ever escaped hemp, yet he’d beat the devil himself at a knotty point.’

“His breath would be bad about a dying man,’ observed Mick.

“Ay, or a living one,’ said Vesey; ‘however, let us get on—we were at the Third. Fourth: Thou shalt do no murder.’

“At the word murder, Mick started, and gave a deep groan, whilst his eyes and features assumed a gaunt and hollow expression, resembling that of a man struck with an immediate sense of horror and affright.



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“Oh! for heaven’s sake, sir, stop there,” said Doran, “that brings to my mind the business I had with you, Mr. Johnston.”

“What is it about?” inquired Vengeance, in his usual eager manner.

“Do you mind,” said Mick, “that a paper was stuck one night upon your door, threatening you, if you wouldn’t lave that farm you’re in?”

“I do, the blood-thirsty villains! but they knew a trick worth two of coming near me.”

“Well,” said Mick, “a strange man, that I never seen before, came into me last night, and tould me, if I’d see you, to say that you would get a visit from the boys this night, and to take care of yourself.”

“Give me the hand, Mick,” said Vengeance,—“give me the hand; in spite of the priests, by the light of day you’re an honest fellow. This night you say, they’re to come? And what are the bloody wretches to do, Mick. But I needn’t ask that, for I suppose it’s to murder myself, and to burn my place.

“I’m afeard, sir, you’re not far from the truth,” replied Mick; “but, Mr. Johnston, for God’s sake don’t mintion my name; for, if you do, I’ll get myself what they were laying out for you, be bumed in my bed maybe.”

“Never fear, Mick,” replied Vengeance; “your name will never cross my lips.”

“It’s a great thing,” said Mick, “that would make me turn informer: but sure, only for your kindness and the goodness of your family, the Lord spare you to one another! mightn’t I be dead long ago? I couldn’t have one minute’s peace if you or yours came to any harm when I could prevint it.”

“Say no more, Mick,” said Vengeance, taking his hand again; “I know that, leave the rest to me; but how do you find yourself, my poor fellow? You look weaker than you did, a good deal.”

“Indeed I’m going very fast, sir,” replied Mick; “I know it’ll soon be over with me.”

“Hut, no, man,” said Vengeance, drawing his hand rapidly across his eyes, and clearing his voice, “not at all—don’t say so; would a little broth serve you? or a bit of fresh meat?—or would you have a fancy for anything that I could make out for you? I’ll get you wine, if you think it would do you good.”

“God reward you,” said Mick feebly—“God reward you, and open your eyes to the truth. Is my mother likely to come in, do you think?”



“‘She must be here in a few minutes,’ the other replied; ‘she was waiting till they’d churn, that she might bring you down a little fresh milk and butter.’

“‘I wish she was wid me,’ said the poor lad, ‘for I’m lonely wantin’ her—her voice and the very touch of her hands goes to my heart. Mother, come home, and let me lay my head upon your breast, agra machree, for I think it will be for the last time: we lived lonely, avourneen, wid none but ourselves—sometimes in happiness, when the nabors ’ud be kind to us—and sometimes in sorrow, when there ’ud be none to help us. It’s over now, mother, and I’m lavin’ you for ever!’



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"Vengeance wiped his eyes—'Rouse yourself, Mick,' said he, 'rouse yourself.'

"'Who is that sitting along with you on the stool?' said Mick.

"'No one,' replied his neighbor; 'but what's the matter with you, Mick?—your face is changed.'

"Mick, however, made no reply; but after a few slight struggles, in which he attempted to call upon his mother's name, he breathed his last. When Vengeance saw that he was dead—looked upon the cold, miserable hut in which this grateful and affectionate young man was stretched—and then reflected on the important service he had just rendered he could not suppress his tears.

"After sending down some of the females to assist his poor mother in laying him out, Vengeance went among his friends and acquaintances, informing them of the intelligence he had received, without mentioning the source from which he had it. After dusk that evening, they all flocked, as privately as possible, to his house, to the number of thirty or forty, well provided with arms and ammunition. Some of them stationed themselves in the out-houses, some behind the garden edge, and others in the dwelling-house."

When my brother had got thus far in his narrative, a tap came to the parlor-door, and immediately a stout-looking man, having the appearance of a laborer, entered the room. "Well, Lachlin," said my brother, "what's the matter?"

"Why, sir," said Lachlin, scratching his head, "I had a bit of a favor to ax, if it would be plaisin' to you to grant it to me."

"What is that," said my brother. "Do you know, sir," said he, "I haven't been at a wake—let us see—this two or three years, anyhow; and, if you'd have no objection, why, I'd slip up awhile to Denis Kelly's; he's a distant relation of my own, sir; and blood's thicker than wather you know."

"I'm just glad you came in, Lachlin," said my brother, "I didn't think of you; take a chair here, and never heed the wake to-night, but sit down and tell us about the attack on Vesey Vengeance, long ago. I'll get you a tumbler of punch; and, instead of going to the wake to night, I will allow you to go to the funeral to-morrow."

"Ah, sir," said Lachlin, "you know whenever the punch is consarned, I'm aisily persuaded; but not making little of your tumbler, sir," said the shrewd fellow, "I would get two or three of them if I went to the wake."

"Well, sit down," said my brother, handing him one, "and we won't permit you to get thirsty while you're talking, at all events."



“In troth, you haven’t your heart in the likes of it,” said Lachlin.

“Gintlemen, your healths—your health, sir, and we’re happy to see you wanst more. Why, thin, I remember you, sir, when you were a gorsoon, passing to school wid your satchel on your back; but, I’ll be bound you’re by no means as soople now as you were thin. Why, sir,” turning to my brother “he could fly or kick football with the rabbits.—Well, this is raal stuff!”



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“Now, Lachlin,” said my brother, “give us an account of the attack you made on Vesey Vengeance’s house, at the Long Ridge, when all his party were chased out of the town.”

“Why, thin, sir, I ought to be ashamed to mention it; but you see, gentleman, there was no getting over being connected with them; but I hope your brother’s safe, sir!”

“Oh, perfectly safe, Lachlin; you may rest assured he’ll never mention it.”

“Well, sir,” said Lachlin, addressing himself to me, “Vesey Vengeance was—.”

“Lachlin,” said my brother, “he knows all about Vesey; just give an account of the attack.”

“The attack, sir! no, but the chivey we got over the mountains. Why, sir, we met in, an ould empty house, you see, that belonged to the Farrells of Ballyboulteen, that went over to America that spring. There war none with us, you may be sure, but them that war up;* and in all we might be about sixty or seventy. The Grogans, one way or another, got it up first among them, because they expected Mr. Simmons would take them back when he’d find that no one else dare venture upon their land. There war at that time two fellows down from the county Longford, in their neighborhood, of the name of Collier—although that wasn’t their right name—they were here upon their keeping, for the murder of a proctor in their own part of the country. One of them was a tall, powerful fellow, with sandy hair, and red brows; the other was a slender chap, that must have been drawn into it by his brother—for he was very mild and innocent, and always persuaded us against evil. The Grogans brought lashings of whiskey, and made them that war to go foremost almost drunk—these war the two Colliers, some of the strangers from behind the mountains, and a son of Widdy Doran’s, that knew every inch about the place, for he was bred and born just below the house a bit. He wasn’t with us, however, in regard of his brother being under board that night; but, instead of him, Tim Grogan went to show the way up the little glin to the house, though, for that matter, the most of us knew it as well as he did; but we didn’t like to be the first to put a hand to it, if we could help it.

* That is, had been made members of a secret society.

“At any rate, we sat in Farrell’s empty house, drinking whiskey, till they war all gathered, when about two dozen of them got the damp soot from the chimney, and rubbed it over their faces, making them so black, that their own relations couldn’t know them. We then went across the country in little lots, of about six or ten, or a score, and we war glad that the wake was in Widdy Doran’s, seeing that if any one would meet we war going to it you know, and the blackening of the faces would pass for a frolic; but there was no great danger of being met for it was now long beyond midnight.



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“Well, gentlemen, it puts me into a tremble, even at this time, to think of how little we cared about doing what we were bent upon. Them that had to manage the business war more than half drunk; and, hard fortune to me! but you would think it was to a wedding they went—some of them singing songs against the law—some of them quite merry, and laughing as if they had found a mare’s nest. The big fellow, Collier, had a dark lantern wid a half-burned turf in it to light the bonfire, as they said; others had guns and pistols—some of them charged and some of them not; some had bagnets, and ould rusty swords, pitchforks, and go on. Myself had nothing in my hand but the flail I was thrashing wid that day; and to tell the thruth, the devil a step I would have gone with them, only for fraid of my health; for, as I said awhile agone, if any discovery was made afterwards, them that promised to go, and turned tail, would be marked as the informers. Neither was I so blind, but I could see that there war plenty there that would stay away if they durst.

“Well, we went on till we came to a little dark corner below the house, where we met and held a council of war upon what we should do. Collier and the other strangers from behind the mountains war to go first, and the rest were to stand round the house at a distance—he carried the lantern, a bagnet, and a horse-pistol; and half a dozen more war to bring over bottles of straw from Vengeance’s own haggard, to hould up to the thatch. It’s all past and gone now—but three of the Reillys were desperate against Vesey that night, particularly one of them that he had shot about a year and a half before—that is, peppered two of the right-hand fingers of him, one night in a scuffle, as Vesey came home from an Orange lodge. Well, all went on purty fair; we had got as far as the out-houses, where we stopped, to see if we could hear any noise; but all was quiet as you plase.

“Now, Vengeance,’ says Reilly, swearing a terrible oath out of him—‘you murdering Orange villain, you’re going to get your pay,’ says he.

“‘Ay,’ says Grogan, ‘what he often threatened to others he’ll soon meet himself, plase God—come, boys,’ says he, ‘bring the straw and light it, and just lay it up, my darlings, nicely to the thatch here, and ye’ll see what a glorious bonfire we’ll have of the black Orange villain’s blankets in less than no time.’

“Some of us could hardly stand this: ‘Stop, boys,’ cried one of Dan Slevin’s sons—‘stop, Vengeance is bad enough, but his wife and children never offinded us—we’ll not burn the place.’

“‘No,’ said others, spaking out when they heard any body at all having courage to do so—‘it’s too bad, boys, to burn the place; for if we do,’ says they, ‘some of the innocent may be burned before they get from the house, or even before they waken out of their sleep.’

“Knock at the door first,’ says Slevin, ‘and bring Vengeance out; let us cut the ears off of his head and lave him.’



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“Damn him!” says another, ‘let us not take the vagabone’s life; it’s enough to take the ears from him, and to give him a prod or two of a bagnet on the ribs; but don’t kill him.’

“Well, well,’ says Reilly, ‘let us knock at the door, and get himself and the family out,’ says he, ‘and then we’ll see what can be done wid him.’

“Tattheration to me,’ says the big Longford fellow, ‘if he had sarved me, Reilly, as he did you, but I’d roast him in the flames of his own house,’ says he.

“I’d have you to know,’ says Slevin, ‘that you have no command here, Collier. I’m captain at the present time,’ says he; ‘and more nor what I wish shall not be done. Go over,’ says he to the blackfaces, ‘and rap him up.’

“Accordingly they began to knock at the door, commanding Vengeance to get up and come out to them.

“Come, Vengeance,’ says Collier, ‘put on you, my good fellow, and come out till two or three of your neighbors, that wish you well, gets a sight of your purty face, you babe of grace!’

“Who are you that wants me at all?’ says Vengeance from within.

“Come out, first,’ says Collier; ‘a few friends that has a crow to pluck with you; walk out, avourneen; or if you’d rather be roasted alive, why you may stay where you are,’ says he.

“Gentlemen,’ says Vengeance, ‘I have never, to my knowledge, offended any of you; and I hope you won’t be so cruel as to take an industrious, hard-working man from his family, in the clouds of the night, to do him an injury. Go home, gentlemen, in the name of God, and let me and mine alone. You’re all mighty dacent gentlemen, you know, and I’m determined never to make or meddle with any of you. Sure, I know right well it’s purtecting me you would be, dacent gentlemen. But I don’t think there’s any of my neighbors there, or they wouldn’t stand by and see me injured.’

“Thru for you, avick,’ says they giving, at the same time; a terrible patterrara agin the door, with two or three big stones.

“Stop, stop!’ says Vengeance, ‘don’t break the door, and I’ll open it. I know you’re merciful, dacent gentlemen—I know your merciful.’

“So the thief came and unbarred it quietly, and the next minute about a dozen of them that war within the house let slap at us. As God would have had it, the crowd didn’t happen to be forenent the door, or numbers of them would have been shot, and the night was dark, too, which was in our favor. The first volley was scarcely over, when there was another slap from the outhouse; and after that another from the gardens; and



after that, to be sure, we took to our scrapers. Several of them were very badly wounded; but as for Collier, he was shot dead, and Grogan was taken prisoner, with five more, on the spot. There never was such a chase as we got; and only that they thought there was more of us in it, they might have tuck most of us prisoners.



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“Fly, boys!” says Grogan as soon as they fired out of the house—‘we’ve been sould,’ says he, ‘but I’ll die game, any how,’—and so he did, poor fellow; for although he and the other four war transported, one of them never sould the pass or staged. Not but that they might have done it, for all that, only that there was a whisper sent to them, that if they did, a single soul belonging to one of them wouldn’t be left living. The Grogans were cousins of Denis Kelly’s, that’s now laid out there above.

“From the time this tuck place till after the ’sizes, there wasn’t a stir among them on any side; but when that war over, the boys began to prepare. Denis, heavens be his bed, was there in his glory. This was in the spring ’sizes, and the May fair soon followed. Ah! that was the bloody sight, I’m tould—for I wasn’t at it—atween the Orangemen and them. The Ribbonmen war bate though, but not till after there was a desperate fight on both sides. I was tould that Denis Kelly that day knocked down five-and-twenty men in about three-quarters of an hour; and only that long John Grimes hot him a *polthoge* on the sponce with the butt-end of the gun, it was thought the Orangemen would be beat. That blow broke his skull, and was the manes of his death. He was carried home senseless.”

“Well, Lachlin,” said my brother, “if you didn’t see it, I did. I happened to be looking out of John Carson’s upper window—for it wasn’t altogether safe to contemplate it within reach of the missiles. It was certainly a dreadful and barbarous sight. You have often observed the calm, gloomy silence that precedes a thunder-storm; and had you been there that day, you might have witnessed its illustration in a scene much more awful. The thick living mass of people extended from the corner-house, nearly a quarter of a mile, at this end of the town, up to the parsonage on the other side. During the early part of the day, every kind of business was carried on in a hurry and an impatience, which denoted the little chance they knew there would be for transacting it in the evening.

“Up to the hour of four o’clock the fair was unusually quiet, and, on the whole, presented nothing in any way remarkable; but after that hour you might observe the busy stir and hum of the mass settling down into a deep, brooding, portentous silence, that was absolutely fearful. The females, with dismay and terror pictured in their faces, hurried home; and in various instances you might see mothers, and wives, and sisters, clinging about the sons, husbands, and brothers, attempting to drag them by main force from the danger which they knew impended over them. In this they seldom succeeded: for the person so urged was usually compelled to tear himself from them by superior strength.

“The pedlars and basket-women, and such as had tables and standings erected in the streets, commenced removing them with all possible haste. The shopkeepers, and other inhabitants of the town, put up their shutters, in order to secure their windows from being shattered. Strangers, who were compelled to stop in town that night, took shelter in the inns and other houses of entertainment where they lodged: so that about five o’clock the street was completely clear, and free for action.



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“Hitherto there was not a stroke—the scene became even more silent and gloomy, although the moral darkness of their ill-suppressed passions was strongly contrasted with the splendor of the sun, that poured down a tide of golden light upon the multitude. This contrast between the natural brightness of the evening, and the internal gloom of their hearts, as the beams of the sun rested upon the ever-moving crowd, would, to any man who knew the impetus with which the spirit of religious hatred was soon to rage among them, produce novel and singular sensations. For, after all Toby, there is a mysterious connection between natural and moral things, which often invest both nature and sentiment with a feeling that certainly would not come home to our hearts if such a connection did not exist. A rose-tree beside a grave will lead us from sentiment to reflection; and any other association, where a painful or melancholy thought is clothed with a garb of joy or pleasure, will strike us more deeply in proportion as the contrast is strong. On seeing the sun or moon struggling through the darkness of surrounding clouds, I confess, although you may smile, that I feel for the moment a diminution of enjoyment—something taken, as it were, from the sum of my happiness.

“Ere the quarrel commenced, you might see a dark and hateful glare scowling from the countenances of the two parties, as they viewed and approached each other in the street—the eye was set in deadly animosity, and the face marked with an ireful paleness, occasioned at once by revenge and apprehension. Groups were silently hurrying with an eager and energetic step to their places of rendezvous, grasping their weapons more closely, or grinding their teeth in the impatience of their fury. The veterans on each side were surrounded by their respective followers, anxious to act under their direction; and the very boys seemed to be animated with a martial spirit, much more eager than that of those who had greater experience in party quarrels.

“Jem Finigan’s public-house was the head-quarters and rallying-point of the Ribbonmen; the Orangemen assembled in that of Joe Sherlock, the master of an Orange lodge. About six o’clock the crowd in the street began gradually to fall off to the opposite ends of the town—the Roman Catholics towards the north, and the Protestants towards the south. Carson’s window, from which I was observing their motions, was exactly half way between them, so that I had a distinct view of both. At this moment I noticed Denis Kelly coming forward from the closely condensed mass formed by the Ribbonmen: he advanced with his cravat off, to the middle of the vacant space between the parties, holding a fine oak cudgel in his hand. He then stopped, and addressing the Orangemen, said,

“Where’s Vengeance and his crew now? Is there any single Orange villain among you that dare come down and meet me here like a man? Is John Grimes there? for if he is, before we begin to take you out of a face, to hunt you altogether out of the town, ye Orange villains I would be glad that he’d step down to Denis Kelly here for two or three minutes; I’ll not keep him longer.’



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“There was now a stir and a murmur among the Orangemen, as if a rush was about to take place towards Denis; but Grimes, whom I saw endeavoring to curb them in, left the crowd, and advanced toward him.

“At this moment an instinctive movement among both masses took place; so that when Grimes had come within a few yards of Kelly, both parties were within two or three perches of them. Kelly was standing, apparently off his guard, with one hand thrust carelessly into the breast pocket of his waistcoat, and the cudgel in the other; but his eye was fixed calmly upon Grimes as he approached. They were both powerful, fine men—brawny, vigorous, and active; Grimes had somewhat the advantage of the other in height; he also fought with his left hand, from which circumstance he was nicknamed Kitlhouge. He was a man of a dark, stern-looking countenance; and the tones of his voice were deep, sullen, and of appalling strength.

“As they approached each other, the windows on each side of the street were crowded; but there was not a breath to be heard in any direction, nor from either party. As for myself, my heart palpitated with anxiety. What they might have felt I do not know: but they must have experienced considerable apprehension; for as they were both the champions of their respective parties, and had never before met in single encounter, their characters depended on the issue of the contest.

“‘Well, Grimes,’ said Denis, ‘sure I’ve often wished for this same meetin,’ man, betune myself and you; I have what you’re goin’ to get, *in* for you this long time; but you’ll get it now, avick, plase God—’

“‘It was not to scould I came, you Popish, ribly rascal,’ replied Grimes, ‘but to give you what you’re long—’

“Ere the word had been out of his mouth, however, Kelly sprung over to him; and making a feint, as if he intended to lay the stick on his ribs, he swung it past without touching him and, bringing it round his own head like lightning, made it tell with a powerful back-stroke, right on Grimes’s temple, and in an instant his own face was sprinkled with the blood which sprung from the wound. Grimes staggered forwards towards his antagonist, seeing which, Kelly sprung back, and was again meeting him with full force, when Grimes, turning a little, clutched Kelly’s stick in his right hand, and being left-handed himself, ere the other could wrench the cudgel from him, he gave him a terrible blow upon the back part of the head, which laid Kelly in the dust.

“There was then a deafening shout from the Orange party; and Grimes stood until Kelly should be in the act of rising, ready then to give him another blow. The coolness and generalship of Kelly, however, were here very remarkable; for, when he was just getting to his feet, ‘Look at your party coming down upon me!’ he exclaimed to Grimes, who turned round to order them back, and, in the interim, Kelly was upon his legs.



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“I was surprised at the coolness of both men; for Grimes was by no means inflated with the boisterous triumph of his party—nor did Denis get into a blind rage on being knocked down. They approached again, their eyes kindled into savage fury, tamed down into the wariness of experienced combatants; for a short time they stood eyeing each other, as if calculating upon the contingent advantages of attack or defence. This was a moment of great interest; for, as their huge and powerful frames stood out in opposition, strung and dilated by the impulse of passion and the energy of contest, no judgment, however experienced, could venture to anticipate the result of the battle, or name the person likely to be victorious. Indeed it was surprising how the natural sagacity of these men threw their attitudes and movements into scientific form and symmetry. Kelly raised his cudgel, and placed it transversely in the air, between himself and his opponent; Grimes instantly placed his against it—both weapons thus forming a St. Andrew’s cross—whilst the men themselves stood foot to foot, calm and collected. Nothing could be finer than their proportions, nor superior to their respective attitudes; their broad chests were in a line; their thick, well-set necks laid a little back, as were their bodies, without, however, losing their balance; and their fierce but calm features, grimly but placidly scowling at each other, like men who were prepared for the onset.

“At length Kelly made an attempt to repeat his former feint, with variations; for whereas he had sent the first blow to Grimes’s right temple, he took measures now to reach the left; his action was rapid, but equally quick was the eye of his antagonist, whose cudgel was up in ready guard to meet the blow. It met it; and with such surprising power was it sent and opposed, that both cudgels, on meeting, bent across each other into curves. An involuntary huzza followed this from their respective parties—not so much on account of the skill displayed by the combatants as in admiration of their cudgels, and of the judgment with which they must have been selected. In fact, it was the staves, rather than the men, that were praised; and certainly the former did their duty. In a moment their shillelaghs were across each other once more, and the men resumed their former attitudes; their savage determination, their kindled eyes, the blood which disfigured the face of Grimes, and begrimed also the countenance of his antagonist into a deeper expression of ferocity, occasioned many a cowardly heart to shrink from the sight. There they stood, gory and stern, ready for the next onset; it was first made by Grimes, who tried to practise on Kelly the feint which Kelly had before practised on him. Denis, after his usual manner, caught the blow in his open hand, and clutched the staff, with an intention of holding it until he might visit Grimes, now apparently unguarded, with a levelling blow; but Grimes’s



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effort to wrest the cudgel from his grasp, drew all Kelly's strength to that quarter, and prevented him from availing himself of the other's defenceless attitude. A trial of muscular power ensued, and their enormous bodily strength was exhibited in the stiff tug for victory. Kelly's address prevailed; for while Grimes pulled against him with all his collected vigor, the former suddenly let go his hold, and the latter, having lost his balance, staggered back; lightning could not be more quick than the action of Kelly, as, with tremendous force, his cudgel rung on the unprotected head of Grimes, who fell, or rather was shot to the ground, as if some superior power had clashed him against it; and there he lay for a short time, quivering under the blow he had received.

"A peal of triumph now arose from Kelly's party; but Kelly himself, placing his arms a-kimbo, stood calmly over his enemy, awaiting his return to the conflict. For nearly five minutes he stood in this attitude, during which time Grimes did not stir; at length Kelly stooped a little, and peering closely into his face, exclaimed—

"Why, then, is it acting you are?—any how, I wouldn't put it past you, you cunning vagabone; 'tis lying to take breath he is—get up, man, I'd scorn to touch you till you're on your legs; not all as one, for sure it's yourself would show me no such forbearance. Up with you, man alive, I've none of your thrachery in me. I'll not rise my cudgel till you're on your guard.'

"There was an expression of disdain, mingled with a glow of honest, manly generosity on his countenance, as he spoke, which made him at once the favorite with such spectators as were not connected with either of the parties. Grimes arose, and it was evident that Kelly's generosity deepened his resentment more than the blow which had sent him so rapidly to the ground; however, he was still cool, but his brows knit, his eye flashed with double fierceness, and his complexion settled into a dark blue shade, which gave to his whole visage an expression fearfully ferocious. Kelly hailed this as the first appearance of passion; his brow expanded as the other approached, and a dash of confidence, if not of triumph, softened in some degree the sternness of his features.

"With caution they encountered again each collected for a spring, their eyes gleaming at each other like those of tigers. Grimes made a motion as if he would have struck Kelly with his fist; and, as the latter threw up his guard against the blow, he received a stroke from Grimes's cudgel in the under part of the right arm. This had been directed at his elbow, with an intention of rendering the arm powerless: it fell short, however, yet was sufficient to relax the grasp which Kelly had of his weapon. Had Kelly been a novice, this stratagem alone would have soon vanquished him; his address, however, was fully equal to that of his antagonist. The staff dropped instantly from his grasp, but a stout thong of black polished leather, with a shining tassel at the end of it, had bound it securely to his massive wrist; the cudgel, therefore, only dangled from his arm, and did

not, as the other expected, fall to the ground, or put Denis to the necessity of stooping for it—Grimes's object being to have struck him in that attitude.



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“A flash of indignation now shot from Kelly’s eye, and with the speed of lightning he sprung within Grimes’s weapon,—determined to wrest it from him. The grapple that ensued was gigantic. In a moment Grimes’s staff was parallel with the horizon between them, clutched in the powerful grasp of both. They stood exactly opposite, and rather close to each other; their arms sometimes stretched out stiff and at full length, again contracted, until their faces, glowing and distorted by the energy of the contest, were drawn almost together. Sometimes the prevailing strength of one would raise the staff slowly, and with gradually developed power, up in a perpendicular position: again the reaction of opposing strength would strain it back, and sway the weighty frame of the antagonist, crouched and set into desperate resistance, along with it; whilst the hard pebbles under their feet were crumbled into powder, and the very street itself furrowed into gravel by the shock of their opposing strength. Indeed, so well matched a pair never met in contest: their strength, their wind, their activity, and their! natural science appeared to be perfectly equal.

“At length, by a tremendous effort, Kelly got the staff twisted nearly out of Grimes’s hand, and a short shout, half encouraging, half indignant, came from Grimes’s party. This added shame to his other passions, and threw an impulse of almost superhuman strength into him: he recovered his advantage, but nothing more; they twisted—they heaved their great frames against each other—they struggled—their action became rapid—they swayed each other this way and that—their eyes like fire—their teeth locked, and their nostrils dilated. Sometimes they twined about each other like serpents, and twirled round with such rapidity, that it was impossible to distinguish them—sometimes, when a pull of more than ordinary power took place, they seemed to cling together almost without motion, bending down until their heads nearly touched the ground, their cracking joints seeming to stretch by the effort, and the muscles of their limbs standing out from the flesh, strung into amazing tension.

“In this attitude were they, when Denis, with the eye of a hawk, spied a disadvantage in Grimes’s position; he wheeled round, placed his broad shoulder against the shaggy breast of the other, and giving him what is called an ‘inside crook,’ strained him, despite of every effort, until he got him off his shoulder, and off the point of resistance. There was a cry of alarm from the windows, particularly from the females, as Grimes’s huge body was swung over Kelly’s shoulder, until it came down in a crash upon the hard gravel of the street, while Denis stood in triumph, with his enemy’s staff in his hand. A loud huzzah followed this from all present except the Orangemen, who stood bristling with fury and shame for the temporary defeat of their champion.

“Denis again had his enemy at his mercy; but he scorned to use his advantage ungenerously; he went over, and placing the staff in his hands—for the other had got to his legs—retrograded to his place, and desired Grimes to defend himself.



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“After considerable manoeuvring on both sides, Denis, who appeared to be the more active of the two, got an open on his antagonist, and by a powerful blow upon Grimes’s ear, sent him to the ground with amazing force. I never saw such a blow given by mortal; the end of the cudgel came exactly upon the ear, and as Grimes went down, the blood spurted out of his mouth and nostrils; he then kicked convulsively several times as he lay upon the ground, and that moment I really thought he would never have breathed more.

“The shout was again raised by the Ribbonmen, who threw up their hats, and bounded from the ground with the most vehement exultation. Both parties then waited to give Grimes time to rise and renew the battle; but he appeared perfectly contented to remain where he was: for there appeared no signs of life or motion in him.

“‘Have you got your gruel, boy?’ said Kelly, going over to where he lay;—‘Well, you met Denis Kelly, at last, didn’t you? and there you lie; but plase God, the most of your sort will soon lie in the same state. Come, boys,’ said Kelly, addressing his own party, ‘now for bloody Vengeance and his crew, that thransported the Grogans and the Caffries, and murdered Collier. Now, boys, have at the murderers, and let us have satisfaction for all!’

“A mutual rush instantly took place; but, ere the Orangemen came down to where Grimes lay, Kelly had taken his staff, and handed it to one of his own party. It is impossible to describe the scene that ensued. The noise of the blows, the shouting, the yelling, the groans, the scalped heads, and gory visages, gave both to the ear and eye an impression that could not easily be forgotten. The battle was obstinately maintained on both sides for nearly an hour, and with a skill of manoeuvring, attack, and retreat, that was astonishing.

“Both parties arranged themselves against each other, forming something like two lines of battle, and these extended along the town nearly from one end to the other. It was curious to remark the difference in the persons and appearances of the combatants. In the Orange line the men were taller, and of more powerful frames; but the Ribbonmen were more hardy, active, and courageous. Man to man, notwithstanding their superior bodily strength, the Orangemen could never fight the others; the former depend too much upon their fire and side-arms, but they are by no means so well trained to the use of the cudgel as their enemies. In the district where the scene of this fight is laid, the Catholics generally inhabit the mountainous part of the country, to which, when the civil feuds of worse times prevailed, they had been driven at the point of the bayonet; the Protestants and Presbyterians, on the other hand, who came in upon their possessions, occupy the richer and more fertile tracts of the land; being more wealthy, they live with less labor, and on better food. The characteristic features produced by these causes are such as might be expected—the Catholic being, like his soil, hardy, thin, and capable of bearing all weathers; and the Protestants, larger, softer, and more inactive.



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“Their advance to the first onset was far different from a faction fight. There existed a silence here, that powerfully evinced the inextinguishable animosity with which they encountered. For some time they fought in two compact bodies, that remained unbroken so long as the chances of victory were doubtful. Men went down, and were up, and went down in all directions, with uncommon rapidity; and as the weighty phalanx of Orangemen stood out against the nimble line of their mountain adversaries, the intrepid spirit of the latter, and their surprising skill and activity soon gave symptoms of a gradual superiority in the conflict. In the course of about half an hour, the Orange party began to give way in the northern end of the town; and as their opponents pressed them warmly and with unsparing hand, the heavy mass formed by their numbers began to break, and this decomposition ran up their line until in a short time they were thrown into utter confusion. They now fought in detached parties; but these subordinate conflicts, though shorter in duration than the shock of the general battle, were much more inhuman and destructive; for whenever any particular gang succeeded in putting their adversaries to flight, they usually ran to the assistance of their friends in the nearest fight—by which means they often fought three to one. In these instances the persons inferior in numbers suffered such barbarities, as it would be painful to detail.

“There lived a short distance out of the town a man nicknamed Jemmy Boccagh, on account of his lameness—he was also sometimes called ‘Hop-an’-go-constant,’ who fell the first victim to party spirit. He had got arms on seeing his friends likely to be defeated, and had the hardihood to follow, with charged bayonet, a few Ribbonmen, whom he attempted to intercept, as they fled from a large number of their enemies, who had got them separated from their comrades. Boccagh ran across a field, in order to get before them in the road, and was in the act of climbing a ditch, when one of them, who carried a spade-shaft, struck him a blow on the head, which put an end to his existence.*

* Fact. The person who killed him escaped to America where he got himself naturalized, and when the British government claimed him, he pleaded his privilege of being an American citizen, and he was consequently not given up. Boccagh was a very violent Orangeman, and a very offensive one.

“This circumstance imparted, of course, fiercer hatred to both parties,—triumph inspiring the one, a thirst for vengeance nerving the other. Kelly inflicted tremendous punishment in every direction; for scarcely a blow fell from him which did not bring a man to the ground. It absolutely resembled a military engagement, for the number of combatants amounted at least to four thousand men. In many places the street was covered with small pools and clots of blood, which flowed from those who lay insensible—while others were borne away bleeding, groaning, or staggering, having been battered into a total unconsciousness of the scene about them.



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“At length the Orangemen gave way, and their enemies, yelling with madness and revenge, began to beat them with unrestrained fury. The former, finding that they could not resist the impetuous tide which burst upon them, fled back past the church, and stopped not until they had reached an elevation, on which lay two or three heaps of stones, that had been collected for the purpose of paving the streets. Here they made a stand, and commenced a vigorous discharge of them against their pursuers. This checked the latter; and the others, seeing them hesitate and likely to retreat from the missiles, pelted them with such effect, that the tables became turned, and the Ribbonmen made a speedy flight back into the town.

“In the meantime several Orangemen had gone into Sherlock’s, where a considerable number of arms had been deposited, with an intention of resorting to them in case of a defeat at the cudgels. These now came out, and met the Ribbonmen on their flight from those who were pelting them with the stones. A dreadful scene ensued. The Ribbonmen, who had the advantage in numbers, finding themselves intercepted before by those who had arms, and pursued behind by those who had recourse to the stones, fought with uncommon bravery and desperation. Kelly, who was furious, but still collected and decisive, shouted out in Irish, lest the opposite party might understand him, ‘Let every two men seize upon one of those who have the arms.’

“This was attempted, and effected with partial success; and I have no doubt but the Orangemen would have been ultimately beaten and deprived of their weapons, were it not that many of them, who had got their pistols out of Sherlock’s, discharged them among their enemies, and wounded several. The Catholics could not stand this; but wishing to retaliate as effectually as possible, lifted stones wherever they could find them, and kept up the fight at a distance, as they retreated. On both sides, wherever a solitary foe was caught straggling from the rest, he was instantly punished with a most cruel and blood-thirsty spirit.

“It was just about this time that I saw Kelly engaged with two men, whom he kept at bay with great ease—retrograding, however, as he fought, towards his own party. Grimes, who had for some time before this recovered and joined the fight once more, was returning, after having pursued several of the Ribbonmen past the market-house, where he spied Kelly thus engaged. With a Volunteer gun in his hand, and furious with the degradation of his former defeat, he ran-over and struck him with the butt-end of it upon the temple—and Denis fell. When the stroke was given, an involuntary cry of ‘Murder, —foul, foul!’ burst from those who looked on from the windows; and long John Steele, Grimes’s father-in-law, in indignation, raised his cudgel to knock him down for this treacherous and malignant blow;—but a person out of Neal Cassidy’s back-yard hurled a round stone, about six pounds in weight, at Grimes’s head, that felled him to the earth, leaving him as insensible, and nearly in as dangerous a state as Kelly,—for his jaw was broken.



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“By this time the Catholics had retreated out of the town, and Denis might probably have received more punishment, had those who were returning from the pursuit recognized him; but James Wilson, seeing the dangerous situation in which he lay, came out, and, with the assistance of his servant-man, brought him into his own house. When the Orangemen had driven their adversaries off the field, they commenced the most hideous yellings through the streets—got music, and played party tunes—offered any money for the face of a Papist; and any of that religion who were so unfortunate as to make their appearance, were beaten in the most relentless manner. It was precisely the same thing on the part of the Ribbonmen; if a Protestant, but above all, an Orangeman, came in their way, he was sure to be treated with barbarity; for the retaliation on either side was dreadfully unjust—the innocent suffering as well as the guilty. Leaving the window, I found Kelly in a a bad state below stairs.

“‘What’s to be done?’ said I to Wilson.

“‘I know not,’ replied he, ‘except I put him between us on my jaunting car, and drive him home.’

“This appeared decidedly the best plan we could adopt; so, after putting to the horse, we placed him on the car, sitting one on each side of him, and, in this manner, left him at his own house.

“‘Did you run no risk,’ said I, ‘in going among Kelly’s friends, whilst they were under the influence of party feeling and exasperated passion?’

“‘No,’ said he; ‘we had rendered many of them acts of kindness, and had never exhibited any spirit but a friendly one towards them; and such individuals, but only such, might walk through a crowd of enraged Catholics or Protestants quite unmolested.’

“The next morning Kelly’s landlord, Sir W. E-----, and two magistrates, were at his house, but he lay like a log, without sense or motion. Whilst they were there, the surgeon arrived and, after examining his head declared that the skull was fractured. During that and the following day, the house was surrounded by crowds, anxious to know his state; and nothing might be heard amongst most of them but loud and undisguised expressions of the most ample revenge. The wife was frantic; and, on seeing me, hid her face in her hands, exclaiming.

“‘Ah, sir, I knew it would come to this; and you, too, tould him the same thing. My curse and God’s curse on it for quarrelling! Will it never stop in the counthry till they rise some time and murdher one another out of the face?’



“As soon as the swelling in his head was reduced, the surgeon performed the operation of trepanning, and thereby saved his life; but his strength and intellect were gone, and he just lingered for four months, a feeble, drivelling simpleton, until, in consequence of a cold, which produced inflammation in the brain, he died, as hundreds have died before, the victim of party spirit.”

Such was the account which I heard of my old school-fellow, Denis Kelly; and, indeed, when I reflected upon the nature of the education he received, I could not but admit that the consequences were such as might naturally be expected to result from it.



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The next morning a relation of Mrs. Kelly's came down to my brother, hoping that, as they wished to have as decent a funeral as possible, he would be so kind as to attend it.

"Musha, God knows, sir," said the man, "it's poor Denis, heavens be his bed! that had the regard and reverence for every one, young and ould, of your father's family; and it's himself that would be the proud man, if he was living, to see you, sir, riding after his coffin."

"Well," said my brother, "let Mrs. Kelly know that I shall certainly attend, and so will my brother, here, who has come to pay me a visit. Why, I believe, Tom, you forget him!"

"Your brother, sir! Is it Master Toby, that used to cudgel the half of the country when he was at school? Gad's my life, Masther Toby (I was now about thirty-six), but it's your four quarters, sure enough! Arrah, thin, sir, who'd think it—you're grown so full and stout?—but, faix, you'd always the bone in you! Ah, Masther Toby!" said he, "he's lying cowl'd, this morning, that would be the happy man to lay his eyes wanst more upon you. Many an' manys the winther's evening did he spind, talking about the time when you and he were bouchals (* boys) together, and of the pranks you played at school, but especially of the time you both leathered the four Grogans, and tuck the apples from thim—my poor fellow—and now to be stretched a corpse, lavin' his poor widdy and childher behind him!"

I accordingly expressed my sorrow for Denis's death, which, indeed, I sincerely regretted, for he possessed materials for an excellent character, had not all that was amiable and good in him been permitted to run wild.

As soon as my trunk and traveling-bag had been brought from the inn, where I had left them the preceding night, we got our horses, and, as we wished to show particular respect to Denis's remains, rode up, with some of our friends, to the house. When we approached, there were large crowds of the country-people before the door of his well-thatched and respectable-looking dwelling, which had three chimneys, and a set of sash-windows, clean and well glazed. On our arrival, I was soon recognized and surrounded by numbers of those to whom I had formerly been known, who received and welcomed me with a warmth of kindness and sincerity, which it would be in vain to look for among the peasantry of any other nation. Indeed, I have uniformly observed, that when no religious or political feeling influences the heart and principles of an Irish peasant, he is singularly sincere and faithful in his attachments, and has always a bias to the generous and the disinterested. To my own knowledge, circumstances frequently occur, in which the ebullition of party spirit is, although temporary, subsiding after the cause that produced it has passed away, and leaving the kind peasant to the natural, affectionate, and generous impulses of his character. But poor Paddy, unfortunately, is as combustible a material in politics or religion as in fighting—thinking it his duty to take the weak side*, without any other consideration than because it is the weak side.



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* A gentleman once told me an anecdote, of which he was an eye-witness. Some peasants, belonging to opposite factions, had met under peculiar circumstances; there were, however, two on one side, and four on the other— in this case, there was likely to be no fight; but, in order to balance the number, one of the more numerous party joined the weak side—“bekase, boys, it would be a burnin’ shame, so it would, for four to kick two; and, except I join them, by the powers, there’s no chance of there being a bit of sport, or a row, at all at all!” Accordingly, he did join them, and the result of it was, that he and his party were victorious, so honestly did he fight.

When we entered the house I was almost suffocated with the strong fumes of tobacco-smoke, snuff, and whiskey; and as I had been an old school-fellow of Denis’s, my appearance was the signal for a general burst of grief among his relations, in which the more distant friends and neighbors of the deceased joined, to keep up the keening.

I have often, indeed always, felt that there! is something extremely touching in the Irish cry; in fact, that it breathes the very spirit of wild and natural sorrow. The Irish peasantry, whenever a death takes place, are exceedingly happy in seizing upon any contingent circumstances that may occur, and making them subservient to the excitement of grief for the departed, or the exaltation and praise of his character and virtues. My entrance was a proof of this—I had scarcely advanced to the middle of the floor, when my intimacy with the deceased, our boyish sports, and even our quarrels, were adverted to with a natural eloquence and pathos, that, in spite of my firmness, occasioned me to feel the prevailing sorrow. They spoke, or chaunted mournfully, in Irish; but the substance of what they said was as follows:—

“Oh, Denis, Denis, avourneen! you’re lying low, this morning of sorrow!—lying low are you, and does not know who it is (alluding to me) that is standing over you, weeping for the days you spent together in your youth! It’s yourself, *acushla agus asthore machree* (the pulse and beloved of my heart), that would stretch out the right hand warmly to welcome him to the place of his birth, where you had both been so often happy about the green hills and valleys with each other! He’s here now, standing over you; and it’s he, of all his family, kind and respectable as they are, that was your own favorite, Denis, *avourneen dhelish!* He alone was the companion that you loved!—with no other could you be happy!—For him did you fight, when he wanted a friend in your young quarrels! and if you had a dispute with him, were you not sorry for it? Are you not now stretched in death before him, and will he not forgive you?”

All this was uttered, of course, extemporaneously, and without the least preparation. They then passed on to an enumeration of his virtues as a father, a husband, son, and brother—specified his worth as he stood related to society in general, and his kindness as a neighbor and a friend.



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An occurrence now took place which may serve, in some measure, to throw light upon many of the atrocities and outrages which take place in Ireland. Before I mention it, however, I think it necessary to make a few observations relative to it. I am convinced that those who are intimately acquainted with the Irish peasantry will grant that there is not on the earth a class of people in whom the domestic affections of blood-relationship are so pure, strong, and sacred. The birth of a child will occasion a poor man to break in upon the money set apart for his landlord, in order to keep the christening, surrounded by his friends and neighbors, with due festivity. A marriage exhibits a spirit of joy, an exuberance of happiness and delight, to be found only in the Green Island; and the death of a member of a family is attended with a sincerity of grief, scarcely to be expected from men so much the creatures of the more mirthful feelings. In fact, their sorrow is a solecism in humanity—at once deep and loud—mingled up, even in its deepest paroxysms, with a laughter-loving spirit. It is impossible that an Irishman, sunk in the lowest depths of affliction, could permit his grief to flow in all its sad solemnity, even for a day, without some glimpse of his natural humor throwing a faint and rapid light over the gloom within him. No: there is an amalgamation of sentiments in his mind which, as I said before, would puzzle any philosopher to account for. Yet it would be wrong to say, though his grief has something of an unsettled and ludicrous character about it, that he is incapable of the most subtle and delicate shades of sentiment, or the deepest and most desolating intensity of sorrow. But he laughs off those heavy vapors which hang about the moral constitution of the people of other nations, giving them a morbid habit, which leaves them neither strength nor firmness to resist calamity—which they feel less keenly than an Irishman, exactly as a healthy man will feel the pangs of death with more acuteness than one who is wasted away by debility and decay. Let any man witness an emigration, and he will satisfy himself that this is true. I am convinced that Goldsmith's inimitable description of one in his "Deserted Village," was a picture drawn from actual observation. Let him observe the emigrant, as he crosses the Atlantic, and he will find, although he joins the jest, and the laugh, and the song, that he will seek a silent corner, or a silent hour, to indulge the sorrow which he still feels for the friends, the companions, and the native fields that he has left behind him. This constitution of mind is beneficial: the Irishman seldom or never hangs himself, because he is capable of too much real feeling to permit himself to become the slave of that which is factitious. There is no void in his affections or sentiments, which a morbid and depraved sensibility could occupy; but his feelings, of what character soever they may be, are strong, because they are fresh and healthy.



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For this reason, I maintain, that when the domestic affections come under the influence of either grief or joy, the peasantry of no nation are capable of feeling so deeply. Even on the ordinary occasions of death, sorrow, though it alternates with mirth and cheerfulness, in a manner peculiar to themselves, lingers long in the unseen recesses of domestic life: any hand, therefore, whether by law or violence, that plants a wound here, will suffer to the death.

When my brother and I entered the house, the body had just been put into the coffin and it is usual after this takes place, and before it is nailed down, for the immediate relatives of the family to embrace the deceased, and take their last look and farewell of his remains. In the present instance, the children were brought over, one by one, to perform that trying and melancholy ceremony. The first was an infant on the breast, whose little innocent mouth was held down to that of its dead father; the babe smiled upon his still and solemn features, and would have played with his grave-clothes, but that the murmur of unfeigned sorrow, which burst from all present, occasioned it to be removed. The next was a fine little girl, of three or four years, who inquired where they were going to bring her daddy, and asked if he would not soon come back to her.

“My daddy’s sleeping a long time,” said the child, “but I’ll waken him till he sings me ‘Peggy Slevin.’ I like my daddy best, bekase I sleep wid him—and he brings me good things from the fair; he bought me this ribbon,” said she, pointing to a ribbon which he had purchased for her.

The rest of the children were sensible of their loss, and truly it was a distressing scene. His eldest son and daughter, the former about fourteen, the latter about two years older, lay on the coffin, kissing his lips, and were with difficulty torn away from it.

“Oh!” said the boy, “he is going from us, and night or day we will never see him or hear him more! Oh! father—father—is that the last sight we are ever to see of your face? Why, father dear, did you die, and leave us forever?—forever—wasn’t your heart good to us, and your words kind to us—Oh! your last smile is smiled—your last kiss given—and your last kind word spoken to your children that you loved, and that loved you as we did. Father, core of my heart, are you gone forever, and your voice departed? Oh! the murdherers, oh! the murdherers, the murdherers!” he exclaimed, “that killed my father; for only for them, he would be still wid us: but, by the God that’s over me, if I live, night or day I will not rest, till I have blood for blood; nor do I care who hears it, nor if I was hanged the next minute.”



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As these words escaped him, a deep and awful murmur of suppressed vengeance burst from his relations. At length their sorrow became too strong to be repressed; and as it was the time to take their last embrace and look of him, they came up, and after fixing their eyes on his face in deep affliction, their lips began to quiver, and their countenances became convulsed. They then burst out simultaneously into a tide of violent grief, which, after having indulged in it for some time, they checked. But the resolution of revenge was stronger than their grief, for, standing over his dead body, they repeated, almost word for word, the vow of vengeance which the son had just sworn. It was really a scene dreadfully and terribly solemn; and I could not avoid reflecting upon the mystery of nature, which can, from the deep power of domestic affection, cause to spring a determination to crime of so black a dye. Would to God that our peasantry had a clearer sense of moral and religious duties, and were not left so much as they are to the headlong impulse of an ardent temperament and an impetuous character; and would to God that the clergy who superintend their morals, had a better knowledge of human nature, and a more liberal education!

During all this time the heart-broken widow sat beyond the coffin, looking upon what passed with a stupid sense of bereavement; and when they had all performed this last ceremony, it was found necessary to tell her that the time was come for the procession of the funeral, and they only waited for; her to take, as the rest did, her last look and embrace of her husband. When she heard this, it pierced her like an arrow; she became instantly collected, and her complexion assumed a dark shade of despairing anguish, which it was an affliction even to look upon, one then stooped over the coffin, and kissed him several times, after which she ceased sobbing, and lay silently with her mouth to his.

The character of a faithful wife sorrowing for a beloved husband has that in it which compels both respect and sympathy. There was not at this moment a dry eye in the house. She still lay silent on the coffin; but, as I observed that her bosom seemed not to heave as it did a little before, I was convinced that she had become insensible. I accordingly beckoned to Kelly's brother, to whom I mentioned what I had suspected; and on his going over to ascertain the truth, he found her as I had said. She was then brought to the air, and after some trouble—recovered; but I recommended them to put her to bed, and not to subject her to any unnecessary anguish, by a custom which was really too soul-piercing to endure. This, however, was, in her opinion, the violation of an old rite, sacred to her heart and affections—she would not hear of it for an instant. Again she was helped out between her brother and brother-in-law; and, after stooping down, and doing as the others had done—



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"Now," said she, "I will sit here, and keep him under my eye as long as I can—surely you won't blame me for it; you all know the kind husband he was to me, and the good right I have to be sorry for him! Oh!" she added, "is it throe at all?—is he, my own Denis, the young husband of my early—and my first love, in good airnest, dead, and going to leave me here—me, Denis, that you loved so tindherly, and our childher, that your brow was never clouded aginst? Can I believe myself or is it a dhrame? Denis, *avick machree! avick machree!** your hand was dreaded, and a good right it had, for it was the manly hand, that was ever and always raised in defence of them that wanted a friend; abroad, in the faction-fight, against the oppressor, your name was ever feared, acushla?—but at home—at home—where was your fellow Denis, agrah, do you know the lips that's spaking to you?—your young bride—your heart's light—Oh! I remimber the day you war married to me like yesterday. Oh! avourneen, then and since wasn't the heart of your own Honor bound up in you—yet not a word even to me. Well, agrah, machree, 'tishn't your fault, it's the first time you ever refused to spake to your own Honor. But you're dead, avourneen, or it wouldn't be so—you're dead before my eyes—husband of my heart, and all my hopes and happiness goes into the coffin and the grave along wid you, forever!"

* Son of my heart! Son of my heart!

All this time she was rocking herself from side to side, her complexion pale and ghastly as could be conceived, and the tears streaming from her eyes. When the coffin was about to be closed, she retired until it was nailed down, after which she returned with her bonnet and cloak on her, ready to accompany it to the grave. I was astonished—for I thought she could not have walked two steps without assistance; but it was the custom, and to neglect it, I found, would have thrown the imputation of insincerity upon her grief. While they were preparing to bring the coffin out, I could hear the chat and conversation of those who were standing in crowds before the door, and occasionally a loud, vacant laugh, and sometimes a volley of them, responsive to the jokes of some rustic wit, probably the same person who acted master of the revels at the wake.

Before the coffin was finally closed, Ned Corrigan, whom I had put to flight the preceding night, came up, and repeated the De Profundis, in very strange Latin, over the corpse. When this was finished, he got a jug of holy water, and after dipping his thumb in it, first made the sign of the cross upon his own forehead, and afterwards sprinkled it upon all present, giving my brother and myself an extra compliment, supposing, probably, that we stood most in need, of it. When this was over, he sprinkled the corpse and the coffin in particular most profusely. He then placed two pebbles from Lough Derg* and a bit of holy candle, upon the breast of the corpse, and having said a Pater and Ave, in which he was joined by the people, he closed the lid and nailed it down.



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* Those who make a station at Lough Derg are in the habit of bringing home some of its pebbles, which are considered to be sacred and possessed of many virtues.

“Ned,” said his brother, “are his feet and toes loose?”

“Musha, but that’s more than myself knows,” replied Ned—“Are they, Katty?” said he, inquiring from the sister of the deceased.

“Arrah, to be sure, avourneen!” answered Katty—“do you think we would lave him to be tied that way, when he’d be risin’ out of his last bed at the day of judgment? Wouldn’t it be too bad to have his toes tied thin, avourneen?”

The coffin was then brought out and placed upon four chairs before the door, to be keened; and, in the mean time, the friends and well-wishers of the deceased were brought into the room to get each a glass of whiskey, as a token of respect. I observed also, that such as had not seen any of Kelly’s relations until then, came up, and shaking hands with them, said—“I’m sorry for your loss!” This expression of condolence was uniform, and the usual reply was, “Thank you, Mat, or Jim!” with a pluck of the skirt, accompanied by a significant nod, to follow. They then got a due share of whiskey; and it was curious, after they came out, their faces a little flushed, and their eyes watery with the strong, ardent spirits, to hear with what heartiness and alacrity they entered into Denis’s praises.

When he had been keened in the street, there being no hoarse, the coffin was placed upon two handspikes, which were fixed across, but parallel to each other under it. These were borne by four men, one at the end of each, with the point of it crossing his body a little below his stomach; in other parts of Ireland, the coffin is borne upon a bier on the shoulders, but this is more convenient and less distressing.

When we got out upon the road, the funeral was of great extent—for Kelly had been highly respected. On arriving at the merin which bounded the land he had owned, the coffin was laid down, and a loud and wailing keene took place over it. It was again raised, and the funeral proceeded in a direction which I was surprised to see it take, and it was not until an acquaintance of my brother’s had explained the matter that I understood the cause of it. In Ireland when a murder is perpetrated, it is sometimes usual, as the funeral proceeds to the grave-yard, to bring the corpse to the house of him who committed the crime, and lay it down at his door, while the relations of the deceased kneel down, and, with an appalling solemnity, utter the deepest, imprecations, and invoke the justice of heaven on the head of the murderer. This, however, is generally omitted if the residence of the criminal be completely out of the line of the funeral, but if it be possible, by any circuit, to approach it, this dark ceremony is never omitted. In cases where the crime is doubtful, or unjustly imputed, those who are thus visited come out, and laying their right hand upon the coffin, protest their innocence of



the blood of the deceased, calling God to witness the truth of their asseverations; but, in cases where the crime is clearly proved against the murderer, the door is either closed, the ceremony repelled by violence, or the house abandoned by the inmates until the funeral passes.*



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* Many of these striking and startling old customs have nearly disappeared, and indeed it is better that they should.

The death of Kelly, however, could not be actually, or, at least, directly considered a murder, for it was probable that Grimes did not inflict the stroke with an intention to take away his life, and, besides, Kelly survived it four months. Grimes's house was not more than fifteen perches from the road: and when the corpse was opposite the little bridleway that led up to it, they laid it down for a moment, and the relations of Kelly surrounded it, offering up a short prayer, with uncovered heads. It was then borne toward the house, whilst the keening commenced in a loud and wailing cry, accompanied with clapping of hands, and every other symptom of external sorrow. But, independent of their compliance with this ceremony, as an old usage, there is little doubt that the appearance of anything connected with the man who certainly occasioned Kelly's death, awoke a keener and more intense sorrow for his loss. The wailing was thus continued until the coffin was laid opposite Grimes's door; nor did it cease then, but, on the contrary, was renewed with louder and more bitter lamentations.

As the multitude stood compassionating the affliction of the widow and orphans, it was the most impressive and solemn spectacle that could be witnessed. The very house seemed to have a condemned look; and, as a single wintry breeze waved a tuft of long grass that grew on a seat of turf at the side of the door, it brought the vanity of human enmity before my mind with melancholy force. When the keening ceased, Kelly's wife, with her children, knelt, their faces towards the house of their enemy, and invoked, in the strong language of excited passion, the justice of heaven upon the head of the man who had left her a widow, and her children fatherless. I was anxious to know if Grimes would appear to disclaim the intention of murder; but I understood that he was at market—for it happened to be market-day.

"Come out!" said the widow—"come out, and look at the sight that's here before you! Come and view your own work! Lay but your hand upon the coffin, and the blood of him you murdered will spout, before God and these Christian people, in your guilty face! But, oh! may the Almighty God bring this home to you!—May you never lave this life, John Grimes, till worse nor has overtaken me and mine fall upon you and yours! May our curse light upon you this day!—the curse, I say, of the widow and the orphans, that your bloody hand has made us, may it blast you! May you, and all belonging to you wither off of the 'airth! Night and day, sleeping and waking—like snow off the ditch, may you melt, until your name and your place be disremembered, except to be cursed by them that will hear of you and your hand of murder! Amin, we pray God this day!—and the widow and orphans' prayer will not fall to the ground while your guilty head is above it! Childhre, do you all say it?"



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At this moment a deep, terrific murmur, or rather ejaculation, corroborative of assent to this dreadful imprecation, pervaded the crowd in a fearful manner; their countenances darkened, their eyes gleamed, and their scowling visages stiffened into an expression of determined vengeance.

When these awful words were uttered, Grimes's wife and daughters approached the window in tears, sobbing, at the same time, loudly and bitterly.

"You're wrong," said the wife—"you're wrong, Widow Kelly, in saying that my husband murdered him:—he did not murder him; for when you and yours were far from him, I heard John Grimes declare before the God who's to judge him, that he had no thought or intention of taking his life; he struck him in anger, and the blow did him an injury that was not intended. Don't curse him, Honor Kelly," said she, "don't curse him so fearfully; but, above all, don't curse me and my innocent childher, for we never harmed you, nor wished you ill! But it was this party work did it! Oh, my God!" she exclaimed, wringing her hands in utter bitterness of spirit, "when will it be ended between friends and neighbors, that ought to live in love and kindness together instead of fighting in this bloodthirsty manner!"

She then wept more violently, as did her daughters.

"May God give me mercy in the last day, Mrs. Kelly, as I pity from my heart and soul you and your orphans," she continued; "but don't curse us, for the love of God—for you know we should forgive our enemies, as we ourselves, that are the enemies of God, hope to be forgiven."

"May God forgive me, then, if I have wronged you or your husband," said the widow, softened by their distress; "but you know, that whether he intended his life or not, the stroke he gave him has left my childher without a father, and myself dissolate. Oh, heavens above me!" she exclaimed, in a scream of distraction and despair, "is it possible—is it throe—that my manly husband—the best father that ever breathed the breath of life—my own Denis, is lying dead—murdered before my eyes? Put your hands on my head, some of you—put your hands on my head, or it will go to pieces. Where are you, Denis—where are you, the strong of hand, and the tender of heart? Come to me, darling, I want you in my distress. I want comfort, Denis; and I'll take it from none but yourself, for kind was your word to me in all my afflictions!"

All present were affected; and, indeed, it was difficult to say, whether Kelly's wife or Grimes's was more to be pitied at the moment. The affliction of the latter and of her daughters was really pitiable; their sobs were loud, and the tears streamed down their cheeks like rain. When the widow's exclamations had ceased, or rather were lost in the loud cry of sorrow which were uttered by the keeners and friends of the deceased—they, too, standing somewhat apart from the rest, joined in it bitterly; and the solitary wail of Mrs. Grimes, differing



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in character from that of those who had been trained to modulate the most profound grief into strains of a melancholy nature, was particularly wild and impressive. At all events, her Christian demeanor, joined to the sincerity of her grief, appeased the enmity of many; so true is it that a soft answer turneth away wrath. I could perceive, however, that the resentment of Kelly's male relations did not appear to be in any degree moderated.

The funeral again proceeded, and I remarked that whenever a strange passenger happened to meet it, he always turned back, and accompanied it for a short distance, after which he resumed his journey, it being considered unlucky to omit this visage on meeting a funeral. Denis's residence was not more than two miles from the churchyard, which was situated in the town where he had received the fatal blow. As soon as we had got on about the half of this way, the priest of the parish met us, and the funeral, after proceeding a few perches more, turned into a green field, in the corner of which stood a table with the apparatus for saying mass spread upon it.

The coffin was then laid down once more, immediately before this temporary altar; and the priest, after having robed himself, the wrong or the sable side of the vestments out, as is usual in the case of death, began to celebrate mass for the dead, the congregation all kneeling. When this was finished, the friends of the deceased approached the altar, and after some private conversation, the priest turned round, and inquired aloud—

“Who will give Offerings?”

The people were acquainted with the manner in which this matter is conducted, and accordingly knew what to do. When the priest put the question, Denis's brother, who was a wealthy man, came forward, and laid down two guineas on the altar; the priest took this up, and putting it on a plate, set out among the multitude, accompanied by two or three of those who were best acquainted with the inhabitants of the parish. He thus continued putting the question, distinctly, after each man had paid; and according as the money was laid down, those who accompanied the priest pronounced the name of the person who gave it, so that all present might hear it. This is also done to enable the friends of the deceased to know not only those who show them this mark of respect, but those who neglect it, in order that they may treat them in the same manner on similar occasions. The amount of money so received is very great; for there is a kind of emulation among the people, as to who will act with most decency and spirit, that is exceedingly beneficial to the priest. In such instances the difference of religion is judiciously overlooked; for although the prayers of Protestants are declined on those occasions, yet it seems the same objection does not hold good against their money, and accordingly they pay as well as the rest. When the priest came round to where I stood, he shook hands with my brother, with whom he appeared to be on very friendly and familiar terms; he and I were then introduced to each other.



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“Come,” said he, with a very droll expression of countenance, shaking the plate at the same time up near my brother’s nose,—“Come, Mr. D’Arcy, down with your offerings, if you wish to have a friend with St. Peter when you go as far as the gates; down with your money, sir, and you shall be remembered, depend upon it.”

“Ah,” said my brother, pulling out a guinea, “I would with the greatest pleasure; but I fear this guinea is not orthodox. I’m afraid it has a heretical mark upon it.”

“In that case,” replied his Reverence laughing heartily, “your only plan is to return it to the bosom of the church, by laying it on the plate here—it will then be within the pale, you know.”

This reply produced a great deal of good-humor among that part of the crowd which immediately surrounded them—not excepting his nearest relations, who laughed heartily—

“Well,” said my brother, as he laid it on the plate, “how many prayers will you offer up in my favor for this?”

“Leave that to myself,” said his Reverence, looking at the money; “it will be before you, I say, when you go to St. Peter.”

He then held the plate over to me in a droll manner; and I added another guinea to my brother’s gift; for which I had the satisfaction of having my name called out so loud, that it might be heard a quarter of a mile off.

“God bless you, sir,” said the priest, “and I thank you.”

“John,” said I, when he left us, “I think that is a pleasant and rather a sensible man?”

“He’s as jovial a soul,” replied my brother, “as ever gave birth to a jest, and he sings a right good song. Many a convivial hour have he and I spent together; and a more hospitable man besides, never yet existed. Although firmly attached to his own religion, he is no bigot; but, on the contrary, an excellent, liberal, and benevolent man.”

When the offerings were all collected, he returned to the altar, repeated a few additional prayers in prime style—as rapid as lightning; and after hastily shaking the holy water on the crowd, the funeral moved on. It was now two o’clock, the day clear and frosty, and the sun unusually bright for the season. During mass, many were added to those who formed the funeral train at the outset; so that, when we got out upon the road, the procession appeared very large. After this, few or none joined it; for it is esteemed by no means “dacent” to do so after mass, because, in that case, the matter is ascribed to an evasion of the offerings; but those whose delay has not really been occasioned by this motive, make it a point to pay them at the grave-yard, or after the interment, and

sometimes even on the following day—so jealous are the peasantry of having any degrading suspicion attached to their generosity.



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The order of the funeral now was as follows:—Foremost the women—next to them the corpse, surrounded by the relations—the eldest son, in deep affliction, “led the coffin,” as chief mourner, holding in his hand the corner of a sheet or piece of linen, fastened to the mort-cloth, called moor-cloth. After the coffin came those who were on foot, and in the rear were the equestrians. When we were a quarter of a mile from the churchyard, the funeral was met by a dozen of singing-boys, belonging to a chapel choir, which the priest, who was fond of music, had some time before formed. They fell in, two by two, immediately behind the corpse, and commenced singing the Requiem, or Latin hymn for the dead.

The scene through which we passed at this time, though not clothed with the verdure and luxuriant beauty of summer, was, nevertheless, marked by that solemn and decaying splendor which characterizes a fine country, lit up by the melancholy light of a winter setting sun. It was, therefore, much more in character with the occasion. Indeed—I felt it altogether beautiful; and, as the “dying day-hymn stole aloft,” the dim sunbeams fell, through a vista of naked, motionless trees, upon the coffin, which was borne with a slower and more funereal pace than before, in a manner that threw a solemn and visionary light upon the whole procession, this, however, was raised to something dreadfully impressive, when the long train, thus proceeding with a motion so mournful, as seen, each, or at least the majority of them, covered with a profusion of crimson ribbons, to indicate that the corpse they bore—owed, his death to a deed of murder. The circumstance of the sun glancing his rays upon the coffin was not unobserved by the peasantry, who considered it as a good omen to the spirit of the departed.

As we went up the street which had been the scene of the quarrel that proved so fatal to Kelly, the coffin was again laid down on the spot where he received his death-blow; and, as was usual, the wild and melancholy keene was raised. My brother saw many of Grimes’s friends among the spectators, but he himself was not visible. Whether Kelly’s party saw then or not, we could not say; if they did, they seemed not to notice them, for no expression of revenge or indignation escaped them.

At length we entered the last receptacle of the dead. The coffin was now placed upon the shoulders of the son and brothers of the deceased, and borne round the churchyard; whilst the priest, with his stole upon him, preceded it, reading prayers for the eternal repose of the soul. Being then laid beside the grave, a “De profundis” was repeated by the priest and the mass-server; after which a portion of fresh clay, carried from the fields, was brought to his Reverence, who read a prayer over it, and consecrated it. This is a ceremony which is never omitted at the interment of a Roman Catholic. When it was over, the coffin was laid into the grave, and the blessed clay shaken over it. The priest now took the shovel in his own hands, and threw in the three first shovelfuls—one in the name of the Father, one in the name of the Son, and one in the name of the Holy Ghost. The sexton then took it, and in a short time Denis Kelly was fixed for ever in his narrow bed.

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While these ceremonies were going forward, the churchyard presented a characteristic picture. Beside the usual groups who straggle through the place, to amuse themselves by reading the inscriptions on the tombs, you might see many individuals kneeling on particular graves, where some relation lay—for the benefit of whose soul they offered up their prayers with an attachment and devotion which one cannot but admire.

Sometimes all the surviving members of the family would assemble, and repeat a Rosary for the same purpose. Again, you might see an unhappy woman beside a newly-made grave, giving way to lamentation and sorrow for the loss of a husband, or of some beloved child. Here, you might observe the “last bed” ornamented with hoops, decked in white paper, emblematic of the virgin innocence of the individual who slept below;—there, a little board-cross informing you that “this monument was erected by a disconsolate husband to the memory of his beloved wife.” But that which excited greatest curiosity was a sycamore-tree, which grow in the middle of the burying-ground.

It is necessary to inform the reader, that in Ireland many of the church-yards are exclusively appropriated to the interment of Roman Catholics, and, consequently, the corpse of no one who had been a Protestant would be permitted to pollute or desecrate them. This was one of them: but it appears that by some means or other, the body of a Protestant had been interred in it—and hear the consequence! The next morning heaven marked its disapprobation of this awful visitation by a miracle; for, ere the sun rose from the east, a full-grown sycamore had shot up out of the heretical grave, and stands there to this day, a monument at once of the profanation and its consequence. Crowds were looking at this tree, feeling a kind of awe, mingled with wonder, at the deed which drew down such a visible and lasting mark of God’s displeasure. On the tombstones near Kelly’s grave, men and women were seated, smoking tobacco to their very heart’s content; for, with that profusion which characterizes the Irish in everything, they had brought out large quantities of tobacco, whiskey, and bunches of pipes. On such occasions it is the custom for those who attend the wake or the funeral to bring a full pipe home with them; and it is expected that, as often as it is used, they will remember to say “God be merciful to the soul of him that this pipe was over.”

The crowd, however, now began to disperse; and the immediate friends of the deceased sent the priest, accompanied by Kelly’s brother, to request that we would come in, as the last mark of respect to poor Denis’s memory, and take a glass of wine and a cake.

“Come, Toby,” said my brother, “we may as well go in, as it will gratify them; we need not make much delay, and we will still be at home in sufficient time for dinner.”

“Certainly you will,” said the Priest; “for you shall both come and dine with me to-day.”



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“With all my heart,” said my brother; “I have no objection, for I know you give it good.”

When we went in, the punch was already reeking from immense white jugs, that couldn't hold less than a gallon each.

“Now,” said his Reverence, very properly, ‘you have had a decent and creditable funeral, and have managed every thing with great propriety; let me request, therefore, that you will not get drunk, nor permit yourselves to enter into any disputes or quarrels; but be moderate in what you take, and go home peaceably.’”

“Why, thin, your Reverence,” replied the widow, “he's now in his grave, and, thank God, it's he that had the dacent funeral all out—ten good gallons did we put over you, asthore, and it's yourself that liked the dacent thing, any how—but sure, sir, it would shame him where he's lyin', if we disregarded him so far as to go home widout bringing in our friends, that didn't desart us in our throuble, an' thratin' them for their kindness.”

While Kelly's brother was filling out all their glasses, the priest, my brother, and I, were taking a little refreshment. When the glasses were filled, the deceased's brother raised his in his hand, and said,—

“Well, gintlemen,” addressing us, “I hope you'll pardon me for not dhrinking your healths first; but people, you know, can't break through an ould custom, at any rate—so I give poor Denis's health that's in his warm grave, and God be merciful to his sowl.”

The priest now winked at me to give them their own way; so we filled our glasses, and joined the rest in drinking “Poor Denis's health, that's now in his warm grave, and God be merciful to his soul.”

When this was finished, they then drank ours, and thanked us for our kindness in attending the funeral. It was now past five o'clock; and we left them just setting into a hard bout of drinking, and rode down to his Reverence's residence.

“I saw you smile,” said he, on our way, “at the blundering toast of Mat Kelly; but it would be labor in vain to attempt setting them right. What do they know about the distinctions of more refined life? Besides, I maintain, that what they said was as well calculated to express their affection, as if they had drunk honest Denis's memory. It is, at least, unsophisticated. But did you hear,” said he, “of the apparition that was seen last night, on the mountain road above Denis's?”

“I did not hear of it,” I replied, equivocating a little.

“Why,” said he, “it is currently reported that the spirit of a murdered pedlar, which haunts the hollow of the road at Drumfurrar bridge, chased away the two servant men as they were bringing home the coffin, and that finding it a good fit, he got into it, and walked half a mile along the road, with the wooden surtout upon him; and, finally, that to wind



up the frolic, he left it on one end half-way between the bridge and Denis's house, after putting a crowd of the countrymen to flight. I suspect some droll knave has played them a trick. I assure you, that a deputation of them, who declared that they saw the coffin move along of itself, waited upon me this morning, to know whether they ought to have put him into the coffin, or gotten another."



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“Well,” said my brother, in reply to him, “after dinner we will probably throw some light upon that circumstance; for I believe my brother here knows something about it.”

“So, sir,” said the priest, “I perceive you have been amusing yourself at their expense.”

I seldom spent a pleasanter evening than, I did with Father Miloy (so he was called), who was, as my brother said, a shrewd, sensible man, possessed of convivial powers of the first order. He sang us several good songs; and, to do him justice, he had an excellent voice. He regretted very much the state of party and religious feeling, which he did every thing in his power to suppress. “But,” said he, “I have little co-operation in my efforts to communicate knowledge to my flock, and implant better feelings among them. You must know,” he added, “that I am no great favorite with them. On being appointed to this parish by my bishop, I found that the young man who was curate to my predecessor had formed a party against me, thinking, by that means, eventually to get the parish himself. Accordingly, on coming here, I found the chapel doors closed on me: so that a single individual among them would not recognize me as their proper pastor. By firmness and spirit, however, I at length succeeded, after a long struggle against the influence of the curate, in gaining admission to the altar; and, by a proper representation of his conduct to the bishop, I soon made my gentleman knock under. Although beginning to gain ground in the good opinion of the people, I am by no means yet a favorite. This curate and I scarcely speak; but I hope that in the course of time, both he and they will begin to find, that by kindness and a sincere love for their welfare on my part, good-will and affection will ultimately be established among us. At least, there shall be nothing left undone, so far as I am concerned, to effect it.”

It was now near nine o'clock, and my brother was beginning to relate an anecdote concerning the clergyman who had preceded Father Molloy in the parish, when a messenger from Mr. Wilson, already alluded to, came up in breathless haste, requesting the priest, for God's sake, to go down into town instantly, as the Kellys and the Grimeses were engaged in a fresh quarrel.

“My God!” he exclaimed—“when will this work have an end? But, to tell you the truth, gentlemen, I apprehended it; and I fear that something still more fatal to the parties will yet be the consequence. Mr. D'Arcy, you must try what you can do with the Grimeses, and I will manage the Kellys.”

We then proceeded to the town, which was but a very short distance from the Priest's house; and, on arriving, found a large crowd before the door of the house in which the Kellys had been drinking, engaged in hard conflict. The priest was on foot, and had brought his whip with him, it being an argument, in the hands of a Roman Catholic pastor, which tells so home that it is seldom gainsaid. Mr. Molloy



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and my brother now dashed in amongst them: and by remonstrance, abuse, blows, and entreaty, they with difficulty succeeded in terminating the fight. They were also assisted by Mr. Wilson and other persons, who dared not, until their appearance, run the risk of interfering between them. Wilson's servant, who had come for the priest, was still standing beside me, looking on; and, while my brother and Mr. Molloy were separating the parties, I asked him how the fray commenced.

"Why, sir," said he, "it bein' market-day, the Grimeses chanced to be in town, and this came to the ears of the Kellys, who were drinking in Cassidy's here, till they got tipsy; some of them then broke out, and began to go up and down the street, shouting for the face of a murdering Grimes. The Grimeses, sir, happened at the time to be drinking with a parcel of their friends in Joe Sherlock's, and hearing the Kellys calling out for them, why, as the dhróp, sir, was in on both sides, they were soon at it. Grimes has given one of the Kelly's a great bating; but Tom Grogan, Kelly's cousin, a little before we came down, I'm tould, has knocked the seven senses out of him, with the pelt of a brick-bat in the stomach."

Soon after this, however, the quarrel was got under; and, in order to prevent any more bloodshed that night, my brother and I got the Kellys together, and brought them as far as our residence, on their way home. As they went along, they uttered awful vows, and determinations of the deepest revenge, swearing repeatedly that they would shoot Grimes from behind a ditch, if they could not in any other manner have his blood. They seemed highly intoxicated; and several of them were cut and abused in a dreadful manner; even the women were in such a state of excitement and alarm, that grief for the deceased was, in many instances, forgotten. Several of both sexes were singing; some laughing with triumph at the punishment they had inflicted on the enemy; others of them, softened by what they had drunk, were weeping in tones of sorrow that might be heard a couple of miles off. Among the latter were many of the men, some of whom, as they staggered along, with their frieze big coats hanging off one shoulder, clapped their hands, and roared like bulls, as if they intended, by the loudness of their grief then, to compensate for their silence when sober. It was also quite ludicrous to see the men kissing each other, sometimes in this maudlin sorrow, and at others when exalted into the very madness of mirth. Such as had been cut in the scuffle, on finding the blood trickle down their faces, would wipe it off—then look at it, and break out into a parenthetical volley of curses against the Grimeses; after which, they would resume their grief, hug each other in mutual sorrow, and clap their hands as before. In short, such a group could be seen nowhere but in Ireland.

When my brother and I had separated from them, I asked him what had become of Vengeance, and if he were still in the country.



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“No,” said he; “with all his courage and watchfulness, he found that his life was not safe; he, accordingly, sold off his property, and collecting all his ready cash, emigrated to America, where, I hear, he is doing well.”

“God knows,” I replied, “I shouldn’t be surprised if one-half of the population were to follow his example, for the state of society here, among the lower orders, is truly deplorable.”

“Ay, but you are to consider now,” he replied, “that you have been looking at the worst of it. If you pass an unfavorable opinion upon our countrymen when in the public house or the quarrel, you ought to remember what they are under their own roofs, and in all the relations of private life.”

The “Party Fight,” described in the foregoing sketch, is unhappily no fiction, and it is certain that there are thousands still alive who have good reason to remember it. Such a fight, or I should rather say battle—for such in fact it was—did not take place in a state of civil society, if I can say so, within the last half century in this country. The preparations for it were secretly being made for two or three months previous to its occurrence, and however it came to light, it so happened that each party became cognizant of the designs of the other. This tremendous conflict, of which I was an eye-witness,—being then but about twelve years of age—took place in the town, or rather city, of Clogher, in my native county of Tyrone. The reader may form an opinion of the bitterness and ferocity with which it was fought on both sides when he is informed that the Orangemen on the one side, and the Ribbonmen on the other, had called in aid from the surrounding counties of Monaghan, Cavan, Fermanagh, and Derry; and, if I mistake not, also from Louth. In numbers, the belligerents could not have been less than from four to five thousand men. The fair day on which it occurred is known simply as “the Day of the great Fight.”

THE LOUGH DERG PILGRIM.

In describing the habits, superstitions, and feelings of the Irish people, it would be impossible to overlook a place which occupies so prominent a position in their religious usages as the celebrated Purgatory of St. Patrick, situated in a lake that lies among the bleak and desolate looking mountains of Donegal.

It may also be necessary to state to the reader, that the following sketch, though appearing in this place, was the first production from my pen which ever came before the public. The occasion of its being written was this:—I had been asked to breakfast by the late Rev. Caesar Otway, some time I think in the winter of 1829. About that time, or a little before, he had brought out his admirable work called, “Sketches in Ireland, descriptive of interesting portions of Donegal, Cork, and Kerry.” Among the remarkable localities of Donegal, of course it was natural to suppose, that “*Lough Derg*,”



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or the celebrated "*Purgatory of St. Patrick*," would not be omitted. Neither was it; and nothing can exceed the accuracy and truthful vigor with which he describes its situation and appearance. In the course of conversation, however, I discovered that he had never been present during the season of making the Pilgrimages, and was consequently ignorant of the religious ceremonies which take place in it. In consequence, I gave him a pretty full and accurate account I of them, and of the Station which I myself had made there. After I had concluded, he requested me to put what I had told him upon paper, adding, "I will dress it up and have it inserted in the next edition."

I accordingly went home, and on the fourth evening afterwards brought him the Sketch of the Lough Derg Pilgrim as it now appears, with the exception of some offensive passages which are expunged in this edition. Such was my first introduction to literary life.

And here I cannot omit paying my sincere tribute of grateful recollection to a man from whom I have received so many acts of the warmest kindness. To me he was a true friend in every sense of the word. In my early trials his purse and his advice often supported, soothed, and improved me. In a literary point of view I am under the deepest obligations to his excellent judgment and good taste. Indeed were it not for him, I never could have struggled my way through the severe difficulties with which in my early career I was beset.

"Green be the turf above thee,
Friend of my early days;
None knew thee but to love thee,
Or named thee but to praise."

But to my theme, which will be better understood, as will my description of the wild rites performed on the shores of its most celebrated island, by the following extracts, taken from this able and most vivid describer of Irish scenery:

"The road from the village of Petigo leading towards Lough Derg, runs along a river tumbling over rocks; and then after proceeding for a time over a boggy valley, you ascend into a dreary and mountainous tract, extremely ugly in itself, but from which you have a fine view indeed of the greatest part of the lower lake of Lough Erne, with its many elevated islands, and all its hilly shores, green, wooded, and cultivated, with the interspersed houses of its gentry, and the comfortable cottages of its yeomanry—the finest yeomanry in Ireland—men living in comparative comfort, and having in their figures and bearing that elevation of character which a sense of loyalty and independence confers. I had at length, after traveling about three miles, arrived where the road was discontinued, and by the direction of my guide, ascended a mountain-path

that brought me through a wretched village, and led to the top of a hill. Here my boy left me, and went to look for the man who was to ferry us to Purgatory, and on the ridge where I stood I had leisure to look around. To



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the south-west lay Lough Erne, with all its isles and cultivated shores; to the north-west lay Lough Derg, and truly never did I mark such a contrast. Lough Derg under my feet—the lake, the shores, the mountains, the accompaniments of all sorts presented the very landscape of desolation; its waters expanding in their highland solitude, amidst a wide waste of moors, without one green spot to refresh the eye, without a house or tree—all mournful in the brown hue of its far-stretching bogs, and the gray uniformity of its rocks; the surrounding mountains even partook of the sombre character of the place; their forms without grandeur, their ranges continuous and without elevation. The lake itself was certainly as fine as rocky shores and numerous islands could make it: but it was encompassed with such dreariness; it was deformed so much by its purgatorial island; the associations connected with it were of such a degrading character, that really the whole prospect before me struck my mind with a sense of painfulness, and I said to myself, ‘I am already in Purgatory.’ A person who has never seen the picture that was now under my eye, who had read of a place consecrated by the devotion of ages, towards which the tide of human superstition had flowed for twelve centuries, might imagine that St. Patrick’s Purgatory, secluded in its sacred island, would have all the venerable and gothic accompaniments of olden time; and its ivied towers and belfried steeples, its carved windows, and cloistered arches, its long dark aisles and fretted vaults would have risen out of the water, rivalling Iona or Lindisfarn; but nothing of the sort was to be seen. The island, about half a mile from the shore, presented nothing but a collection of hideous slated houses and cabins, which gave you an idea that they were rather erected for the purpose of tollhouses or police-stations than any thing else.

“I was certainly in an interesting position. I looked southerly towards Lough Erne, with the Protestant city of Enniskillen rising amidst its waters, like the island queen of all the loyalty, and industry, and reasonable worship that have made her sons the admiration of past and present time; and before me, to the north, Lough Derg, with its far-famed isle, reposing there as the monstrous birth of a dreary and degraded superstition, the enemy of mental cultivation, and destined to keep the human understanding in the same dark unproductive state as the moorland waste that lay outstretched around. I was soon joined by my guide and by two men carrying oars, with whom I descended from the ridge on which I was perched, towards the shores of the lake, where there was a sort of boat, or rather toll-house, at which the pilgrims paid a certain sum before they were permitted to embark for the island. In a few minutes we were afloat; and while sitting in the boat I had time to observe my ferrymen: one was a stupid countryman, who did not speak; the other was an old man with a Woollen



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night-cap under his hat, a brown snuff-colored coat, a nose begrimed with snuff, a small gray eye enveloped amidst wrinkles that spread towards his temples in the form of birds' claws, and gave to his countenance a sort of leering cunning that was extremely disagreeable. I found he was the clerk of the island chapel; that he was a sort of master of the ceremonies in purgatory, and guardian and keeper of it when the station time was over and priests and pilgrims had deserted it. I could plainly perceive that he had smoked me out as a Protestant, that he was on his guard against me as a spy, and that his determination was to get as much and to give as little information as he could; in fact, he seemed to have the desire to obtain the small sum he expected from me with as little exposure of his cause, and as little explanation of the practices of his craft as possible. The man informed me that the station time was over about a month, and he confirmed my guide's remark that the Pope's jubilee had much diminished the resort of pilgrims during the present season. He informed me also that the whole district around the lough, together with all its islands, belonged to Colonel L-----, a relation of the Duke of Wellington; and that this gentleman, as landlord, had leased the ferry of the island to certain persons who had contracted to pay him L260 a year; and to make up this sum, and obtain a suitable income for themselves, the ferrymen charged each pilgrim five pence. Therefore, supposing that the contractors make cent, per cent, by their contract, which it may be supposed they do, the number of pilgrims to this island may be estimated at 13,000; and, as my little guide afterwards told me (although the cunning old clerk took care to avoid it), that each pilgrim paid the priest from 1s. 8d. to 2s. 6d., therefore we may suppose that the profit to the prior of Lough Derg and his priests was no small sum.

"In a short time I arrived at the island, and as stepping out of the boat I planted my foot on the rocks of this scene of human absurdity, I felt ashamed for human nature, and looked on myself as one of the millions of fools that have, century after century, degraded their understandings by coming hither. The island I found to be of an oval shape.

"The buildings on it consisted of a slated house for the priests, two chapels, and a long range of cabins on the rocky surface of the island, which may contain about half an acre; there were also certain round walls about two feet high, enclosing broken stone and wooden crosses; these were called saints' beds, and around these circles, on the sharp and stony rocks, the pilgrims go on their naked knees. Altogether I may briefly sum up my view of this place, and say that it was filthy, dreary, and altogether detestable—it was a positive waste of time to visit it, and I hope I shall never behold it again."*



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* Fire at Lough Derg.—On the 15th Aug 1842, the station at this celebrated place was brought to a conclusion; but in the course of the night it was discovered that some of the houses were on fire, and four dwellings which, we believe, were recently erected, were altogether consumed. The people of the neighboring country directed their efforts chiefly to the preservation of the prior's house, which adjoined those in flames, and by pouring a continued supply of water against its windows, succeeded in saving it. The night being calm, and the wind in a favorable direction, the injury sustained was less than must have existed under different circumstances. The houses burnt were occupied as lodgings for pilgrims when on station.

The following is extracted from Bishop Henry Jones's account, published in 1647:

“The island called St. Patrick's Purgatory is altogether rocky, and rather level; within the compass of the island, in the water towards the north-east, about two yards from the shore, stand certain rocks, the least of which, and next the shore, is the one St. Patrick knelt on for the third part of the night in prayer, he did another third in his cell, which is called his bed, and another third in the cave or purgatory; in this stone there is a cleft or print, said to be made by St. Patrick's knees; the other stone is much greater and further off in the lake, and covered with water, called Lachavanny: this is esteemed of singular virtue; standing thereon healeth pilgrims' feet, bleeding as they are with cuts and bruises got in going barefoot round the blessed beds.

“The entrance into the island is narrow and rocky; these rocks they report to be the guts of a great serpent metamorphosed into stones. When Mr. Copinger, a gentleman drawn thither by the fame of the place, visited it, there was a church covered with shingles dedicated to St. Patrick, and it was thus furnished: at the east end was a high altar covered with linen, over which did hang the image of our Lady with our Saviour in her arms; on the right did hang the picture of the three kings offering their presents to our Saviour; and on the left the picture of our Saviour on the cross; near the altar, and on the south side, did stand on the ground an old worm-eaten image of St. Patrick; and behind the altar was another of the same fabric, but still older in appearance, called St. Arioge; and on the right hand another image called St. Volusianus.

“Between the church and the cave there is a small rising ground, and on a heap of stones lay a little stone cross, part broken, part standing; and. in the east of the church was another cross made of twigs interwoven: 'this is known by the name of St. Patrick's altar, on which lie three pieces of a bell, which they say St. Patrick used to carry in, his hand. Here also was laid a certain knotty bone of some bigness, hollow in the midst like the nave of a wheel, and out of which issue, as it were, natural spokes: this was: shown as a great rarity, being part of a great, serpent's tail—one of those monsters the blessed Patrick expelled out of Ireland.



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“Towards the narrowest part of the island were six circles—some call them saints’ beds, or beds of penance. Pilgrims are continually praying and kneeling about these beds; and they are compassed around with sharp stones and difficult passages for the accommodation of such as go barefooted.

“In the farthest part northward of the island, are certain beds of stone cast together; as memorials for some that are elsewhere; buried; but who trust to the prayers and merits of those who daily resort to this Purgatory. Lastly, in this island are several Irish cabins covered with thatch, and another for shriving or confession; and there are: separate places assigned for those who come from the four provinces of Ireland.

“In all, the pilgrims remain on the island nine days; they eat but once in the twenty-four hours, of oatmeal and water. They have liberty to refresh themselves with the water of the lake, which, as Roth says, ‘is of such virtue, that though thou shouldst fill thyself with it, yet will it not offend; but is as if it flowed from some mineral.’

“The pilgrims at night lodge or lie on straw, without pillow or pallet, rolling themselves in their mantles, and wrapping their heads in their breeches; only on some one of the eight nights they must lie on one of the saints’ beds, whichever they like.”

* * * * *

I was, at the time of performing this station, in the middle of my nineteenth year—of quick perception—warm imagination—a mind peculiarly romantic—a morbid turn for devotion, and a candidate for the priesthood, having been made slightly acquainted with Latin, and more slightly still with Greek.

At this period, however, all my faculties merged like friendly streams into the large current of my devotion. Of religion I was completely ignorant, although I had sustained a very conspicuous part in the devotions of the family, and signalized myself frequently; by taking the lead in a rosary. I had often out-prayed and out-fasted an old circulating pilgrim, who occasionally visited our family; a feat on which few would have ventured; and I even arrived to such a pitch of perfection at praying, that with the assistance of young and powerful lungs, I was fully able to distance him at any English prayer in which we joined. But in Latin, I must allow, that owing to my imperfect knowledge of its pronunciation, and to some twitches of conscience I felt on adventuring to imitate, him by overleaping this impediment, he was able to throw me back a considerable distance in his turn; so that when we both started for a *De Profundis*, I was always sure to come in second. Owing to all this I was considered a young man of promise, being, moreover, as my master often told my father, a youth of prodigious parts and great cuteness. Indeed, on this subject my master’s veracity could not be questioned; because when I first commenced Latin, I was often heard repeating



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the prescribed tasks in my sleep. Many of his relations had already, even upon the strength of my prospective priesthood, begun to claim relationship with our family, and before I was nineteen, I found myself godfather to a dozen godsons and as many goddaughters; every one of whom I had with unusual condescension taken under my patronage; and most of the boys were named after myself. Finding that I was thus responsible for so much, in the opinion of my friends, and having the aforesaid character of piety to sustain, I found it indispensable to make the pilgrimage. Not that I considered myself a sinner, or by any means bound to go from that motive, for although the opinion of my friends, as to my talents and sanctity, was exceedingly high, yet, I assure you, it cut but a very indifferent figure, when compared with my own on both these subjects.

I very well remember that the first sly attempt I ever made at a miracle was in reference to Lough Derg; I tried it by way of preparation for my pilgrimage. I heard that there had been a boat lost there, about the year 1796, and that a certain priest who was in her as a passenger, had walked very calmly across the lake to the island, after the boat and the rest of the passengers in her had all gone to the bottom. Now, I had, from my childhood, a particular prejudice against sailing in a boat, although Dick Darcy, a satirical and heathenish old bachelor, who never went to Mass, used often to tell me, with a grin which I was never able rightly to understand, that I might have no prejudice against sailing, "because," Dick would say, "take my word for it, you'll never die by drowning." At all events, I thought to myself, that should any such untoward accident occur to me, it would be no unpleasant circumstance to imitate the priest; but that it would be infinitely more agreeable to make the first experiment in a marl-pit, on my father's farm, than on the lake. Accordingly, after three days' fasting, and praying for the power of not sinking in the water, I slipped very quietly down to the pit, and after reconnoitering the premises, to be sure there was no looker-on, I approached the brink. At this moment my heart beat high with emotion, my soul was wrapt up to a most enthusiastic pitch of faith, and my whole spirit absorbed in feelings, where hope—doubt—gleams of uncertainty—visions of future eminence—twitches of fear—reflections on my expertness in swimming—on the success of the water-walking priest aforementioned—and on the depth of the pond—had all insisted on an equal share of attention. At the edge of the pit grew large water-lilies, with their leaves spread over the surface; it is singular to reflect upon what slight and ridiculous circumstances the mind will seize, when wound up in this manner to a pitch of superstitious absurdity. I am really ashamed, even whilst writing this, of the confidence I put for a moment in a treacherous water-lily, as its leaf lay spread so smoothly and



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broadly over the surface of the pond, as if to lure my foot to the experiment. However, after having stimulated myself by a fresh pater and ave, I advanced, my eyes turned up enthusiastically to heaven—my hands resolutely clenched—my teeth locked together—my nerves set—and my whole soul strong in confidence—I advanced, I say, and lest I might give myself time to cool from this divine glow, I made a tremendous stride, planting my right foot exactly in the middle of the treacherous water-lily leaf, and the next moment was up to the neck in water. Here was devotion cooled. Happily I was able to bottom the pool, or could swim very well, if necessary; so I had not much difficulty in getting out. As soon as I found myself on the bank, I waited not to make reflections, but with a rueful face set off at full speed for my father's house, which was not far distant; the water all the while whizzing out of my clothes, by the rapidity of the motion, as it does from a water-spaniel after having been in that element. It is singular to think what a strong authority vanity has over the principles and passions in the weakest and strongest moments of both; I never was remarkable, at that open, ingenuous period of my life, for secrecy; yet did I now take especial care not to invest either this attempt at the miraculous, or its concomitant failure, with anything like narration. It was, however, an act of devotion that had a vile effect on my lungs, for it gave me a cough that was intolerable; and I never felt the infirmities of humanity more than in this ludicrous attempt to get beyond them; in which, by the way, I was nearer being successful than I had intended, though in a different sense. This happened a month before I started for Lough Derg.

It was about six o'clock of a delightful morning in the pleasant month of July, when I set out upon my pilgrimage, with a single change of linen in my pocket, and a pair of discarded shoes upon my bare feet; for, in compliance with the general rule, I wore no stockings. The sun looked down upon all nature with great good humor; everything smiled around me; and as I passed for a few miles across an upland country which stretched down from a chain of dark rugged mountains that lay westward, I could not help feeling, although the feeling was indeed checked—that the scene was exhilarating. The rough upland was in several places diversified with green spots of cultivated land, with some wood, consisting of an old venerable plantation of mountain pine, that hung on the convex sweep of a large knoll away to my right,—with a broad sheet of lake that curled to the fresh arrowy breeze of morning, on which a variety of water-fowl were flapping their wings or skimming along, leaving a troubled track on the peaceful waters behind them; there were also deep intersections of precipitous or sloping glens, graced with hazel, holly, and every description of copse-wood. On other occasions I have drunk deeply of pleasure, when in the midst of this scenery, bearing about me the young, free, and bounding spirit, its first edge of enjoyment unblunted by the collision of base minds and stony hearts, against which experience jostles us in maturer life.



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The dew hung shining upon the leaves, and fell in pattering showers from the trees, as a bird, alarmed at my approach, would spring from the branch and leave it vibrating in the air behind her; the early challenge of the cock grouse, and the *quick-go-quick* of the quail, were cheerfully uttered on all sides. The rapid martins twittered with peculiar glee, or, in the light caprice of their mirth, placed themselves for a moment upon the edge of a scaur, or earthly precipice, in which their nests were built, and then shot up again to mingle with the careering and joyful flock that cut the air in every direction. Where is the heart which could not enjoy such a morning scene? Under any other circumstances it would have enchanted me; but here, in fact, that intensity of spirit which is necessary to the due contemplation of beautiful prospects, was transferred to a gloomier object. I was under the influence of a feeling quite new to me. It was not pleasure, nor was it pain, but a chilliness of soul which proceeded from the gloomy and severe task that I had undertaken—a task which, when I considered the danger and the advantages annexed to its performance, was sufficient to abstract me from every other object. It was really the first exercise of that jealous spirit of mistaken devotion which keeps the soul in perpetual sickness, and invests the innocent enjoyments of life with a character of sin and severity. It was this gloomy feeling that could alone have strangled in their birth those sensations which the wisdom of God has given as a security in some degree against sin, by opening to the heart of man sources of pleasure, for which the soul is not compelled to barter away her innocence, as in those of a grosser nature. I may be wrong in analyzing the sensation, but for the first time in my life I felt anxious and unhappy; yet, according to my own opinions, I should have been otherwise. I was startled at what I experienced, and began to consider it as a secret intimation that I had chosen a wrong time for my journey. I even felt as if it would not prosper—as if some accident or misfortune would befall me ere my return. The boat might sink, as in 1796: this was quite alarming. The miraculous experiment on the pond here occurred to me with full force, and came before my imagination in a new point of view. The drenching I got had a deep and fearful meaning. It was ominous—it was prophetic,—and sent by a merciful Providence to deter me from attending the pilgrimage at this peculiar time—perhaps on this particular day: to-morrow the spell might be broken, the danger past, and the difference of a single day could be nothing. Just at this moment an unlucky hare, starting from an adjoining thicket, scudded across my path, as if to fill up the measure of these ominous predictions. I paused, and my foot was on the very turn to the rightabout, when instantly a thought struck me which produced a reaction in my imagination. Might not all this be the temptation of the devil,



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suggested to prevent me from performing this blessed work? not the hare itself be some-----? In short, the counter-current carried me with it. I had commenced my journey, and every one knows that when a man commences a journey it is unlucky to turn back. On I went, but still with a subdued and melancholy tone of feeling. If I met a cheerful countryman, his mirth found no kindred spirit in me: on the contrary, my taciturnity seemed to infect him; for, after several ineffectual' attempts at conversation, he gradually became silent, or hummed a tune to himself, and, on parting, bade me a short, doubtful kind of good day, looking over his shoulder, as he departed, with a face of scrutiny and surprise.

After getting five or six miles across the country, I came out on one of these by-roads which run independently of all advantages of locality, "up hill and down dale," from one little obscure village to another. These roads are generally paved with round broad stones, laid curiously together in longitudinal rows like the buttons on a schoolboy's jacket; Owing to the infrequency of travellers on them, they are quite overgrown with grass, except in one stripe along the middle, which is kept naked by the hoofs of horses and the tread of foot passengers. There is some tradition connected with these roads, or the manner of their formation, which I do not remember.

At last I came out upon the main road; and you will be pleased to imagine to yourself the figure of a tall, gaunt, gawkish young man, dressed in a good suit of black cloth, with shirt and cravat like snow, striding solemnly along, without shoe or stocking; for about this time I was twelve miles from home, and blisters had already risen upon my feet, in consequence of the dew having got into my shoes, which at the best were enough to cut up any man; I had therefore to strip and carry my shoes—one in my pocket, and another stuffed in my hat; being thus with great reluctance compelled to travel barefoot: yet I soon turned even this to account, when I reflected that it would enhance the merit of my pilgrimage, and that every fresh blister would bring down a fresh blessing. 'Tis true I was nettled to the soul, on perceiving the face of a laborer on the way-side, or of a traveller who met me, gradually expanding into a broad sarcastic grin, as such an unaccountable figure passed him. But these I soon began to suspect were Protestant grins; for none but heretics would presume by any means to give me a sneer. The Catholics taking me for a priest, were sure to doff their hats to me; or if they wore none, as is not unfrequent when at labor, they would catch their forelocks with their finger and thumb, and bob down their heads in the act of veneration. This attention of my brethren more than compensated for the mirth of all other sects; in fact, their mistaking me for a priest began to give me a good opinion of myself, and perfectly reconciled me to the fatiguing severity of the journey.



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I have had occasion to remark, while upon this pilgrimage, or rather long afterwards,—for I was but little versed then in the science of reflection—that it is impossible to calculate upon the capabilities of either body or mind, until they are drawn out by some occasion of peculiar interest, in which those of either or both are thrown upon their own energies and resources. In my opinion, the great secret or the directing principle of all enterprise rests in the motive of action; for, whenever a suitable interest can be given to the principles of human conduct, the person bound by, and feeling that interest will not only perform as much as could possibly be expected from his natural powers, but he will recruit his energies by drawing in all the adventitious aid which the various relations of that interest, as they extend to other objects, are capable of affording him. It was amazing, for instance, to observe the vigor and perseverance with which feeble, sickly old creatures, performed the necessary austerities of this dreadful pilgrimage;—creatures, who if put to the same fatigue, on any other business, would at once sink under it; but the motive supplied energy, and the infirmities of nature borrowed new strength from the deep and ardent devotion of the spirit.

The first that I suspected of being fellow pilgrims were two women whom I overtook upon the way. They were dressed in gray cloaks, striped red and blue petticoats; drugget, or linseywoolsey gowns, that came within about three inches of their ankles. Each had a small white bag slung at her back, which contained the scanty provisions for the journey, and the oaten cakes, crisp and hard-baked, for the pilgrimage to the lake. The hoods of their cloaks fell down their backs, and each dame had a spotted cotton kerchief pinned around her *dowd* cap at the chin, whilst the remainder of it fell down the shoulders, over the cloaks. Each had also a staff in her hand, which she held in a manner peculiar to a travelling woman—that is, with her hand round the upper end of it, her right thumb extended across its head, and her arm, from the elbow down, parallel with the horizon. The form of each, owing to the want of that spinal strength and vigor which characterize the erect gait of man, was bent a little forward, and this, joined to the idea produced by the nature of their journey, gave to them something of an ardent and devoted character, such as the mind and eye would seek for in a pilgrim, I saw them at some distance before me, and knew by the staves and white bags behind them that they were bound for Lough Derg. I accordingly stretched out a little that I might overtake them; for in consequence of the absorbing nature of my own reflections, my journey had only been a solitary one, and I felt that society would relieve me. I was not a little surprised, however, on finding that as soon as I topped one height of the road, I was sure to find my two old ladies a competent distance before



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me in the hollow (most of the northern roads are of this nature), and that when I got to the bottom, I was as sure to perceive their heads topping the next hill, and then gradually sinking out of my sight. I was surprised at this, and perhaps a little nettled, that a fresh active young fellow should not have sufficient mettle readily to overtake two women. I did stretch out, therefore, with some vigor, yet it was not till after a chase of two miles or so that I found myself abreast of them. As soon as they noticed me they dropped a curtesy each, addressing me at the same time as a clergyman, and I returned their salutation with all due gravity. Upon my inquiring how far they had travelled that day, it appeared that they had actually performed a journey seven miles longer than mine: "We needn't ax your Reverence if you're for the Islan'?" said one of them. "I am," I replied, not caring to undeceive her as to my Reverentiality.

The truth was, in the midst of all my sanctity I felt proud of the old woman's mistake as to my priesthood, and really had not so much ready virtue about me, on the occasion, as was sufficient to undeceive her. I was even thankful to her for the inquiry, and thought, on a closer inspection, I perceived an uncommon portion of good sense and intelligence in her face. "My very excellent, worthy woman," said I, "how is it that you are able to travel at such a rate, when one would suppose you should be fatigued by this time, after so long a journey?"

"Musha?" said she, "but your Reverence ought to know that."—I felt puzzled at this: "How should I know it?" said I.

"I'm sure," she continued, "you couldn't expect a poor ould crathur o' sixty to travel at this rate, at all at all; except for raisons, your Reverence:"—looking towards me quite confidently and knowingly. This was still more oracular, and I felt very odd under it; my character for devotion was at stake, and I feared that the old lady was drawing me into a kind of vicious circle. "Your Reverence knows, that for the likes o' me, that can hardly move to the market of a Saturday, Lord help me! an' home agin, for to travel at this rate, would be impossible, any how, except," she added, "for what I'm carryin', sir, blessed be God for it!"—peering at me again with more knowing and triumphant look.

"Why that's true," said I, thoughtfully; and then, assuming a bit of the sacerdotal privilege, and suddenly raising my voice, though I was as innocent as the child unborn of her meaning,—"that's true; but now as you appear to be a sensible, pious woman, I hope you-understand the nature of what you are carrying—and in a proper manner, too, for you know that's the chief point."

"Why, Father dear, I do my best, avourneen; an' I ought of a sartinty to know it, bekase blessed Friar Hagan spent three dys instructin' Mat and myself in it; an' more betoken, that Mat sent him a sack o' phaties, an' a bag of oats for his trouble, not forgettin' the



goose he got from myself, the Micklemas afther.—Arrah how long is that ago, Katty a-haygur?" said she, addressing her companion.



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“Ten years,” said Katty. “Oh! it’s more, I’m thinkin’; it’s ten years since poor Dick, God rest his sowl, died, and this was full two years afore that: but no matther, agra, I’ll let your Reverence hear the prayer, at any rate.” She here repeated a beautiful Irish prayer to the Blessed Virgin, of which that beginning with “Hail, holy Queen!” in the Roman Catholic prayer-books is a translation, or perhaps the original. While she was repeating the prayer, I observed her hand in her bosom, apparently extricating something, which, on being brought out, proved to be a scapular; she held it up, that I might see it: “Your Reverence,” said she, “this is the ninth journey of the kind I made: but you don’t wonder now, I bleeve, how stoutly I’m able to stump it.”

“You really do stump it stoutly, as you’ say,” I replied.

“Ay,” said she, “an’ not a wan’ o’ me but’s as weak as a cat, at home scarce can put a hand to any thing; but then, your Reverence, my eldest daughter, Elish, jist minds the house, an’ lots the ould mother mind the prayers, as I’m not able to do a hand’s turn, worth namin’.”

“But you appear to be stout and healthy,” I observed, “if a person may judge by your looks.”

“Glory be to them that giv it to me then! that I am at the present time, *padre dheelish*. But don’t you know I’m always so durin’ this journey; I’ve a wicket heart-burn that torments the very life out o’ me, all the year round till this; and what ’ud your Reverence think, but it’s sure to lave me, clear and clane, and a fortnight or so afore I come here; I never wanst feels a bit iv it, while I rouse and prepare myself for the Island, nor for a month after I come here agen, Glory be to God.” She then turned to her companion, and commenced, in a voice half audible—“Musha! Katty a-haygur, did ye iver lay your two livin’ eyes on so young a priest? a sweet and holy crathur he is, no doubt, and has goodness in his face, may the Lord bless him!”

“Musha!” said she, “surely your Reverence can’t be long afther bein’ ordained, I’m thinkin’?”

“Well, that’s very strange,” said I, evading her, “so you tell me your heartburn leaves you, and that you get stout every year about the time of your pilgrimage?”

“An’ troth an’ I do!—hut! what am I sayin’? Indeed, sir, may be that’s more than I can say, either, your Reverence: but for sartin’ it is”—

“Do you mean that you do, or that you do not?” I inquired.

“Indeed, your Reverence, you jist hot it—the Lord bless you, and spare you to the parents that reared ye; an’ proud people may they be at having the likes of ’im, Katty avourneen”—turning abruptly to Katty, that she might disarm my interrogatories on this



tender subject with a better grace—"proud people, as I said afore, the Lord may spare him to them!"

We here topped a little hill, and saw the spire of a steeple, and the skirts of a country town, which a passenger told us was about three miles distant.



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My feet by this time were absolutely in griskins, nor was I by any means prepared for a most unexpected proposal, which the spokeswoman, after some private conversation with the other, undertook to make. I could not imagine what the purport of the dialogue was; but I easily saw, that I myself was the subject of it, for I could perceive them glance at me occasionally, as if they felt a degree of hesitation in laying down the matter for my approval; at length she opened it with great adroitness:—"Musha, an' to be sure he will, Katty dear an' darlin'—and mightn't you know he would—the refusin' to do it isn't in his face, as any body that has eyes to see may know—you ashamed!—and what for would ye be ashamed?—asthore, it's 'imself that's not proud, or he wouldn't tramp it, barefooted, along wud two ould crathurs like huz; him that has no sin to answer for—but I'll spake to 'im myself, and yell see it's he that won't refuse it. Why thin, your Reverence, Katty an' I war thinkin', that as there's only three of us, an' the town's afore us, where we'll rest a while, plaise God—for by that time the shower that's away over there will be comin' down;—that as there's but three of us, would it be any harm if we sed a bit of a Rosary, and your Reverence to join us?"

This was, indeed, a most unexpected attack; but it was evident that I was set down by this curious woman as a paragon of piety; though indeed her object was rather to smooth the way in my mind, for what she intended should be a very excellent opinion of her own godliness.

I looked about me, and as far as my eye could reach, the road appeared solitary. I did, 'tis true, debate the matter with myself, pro and con, for I felt the absurdity of my situation, and of this abrupt proposal, more than I was willing to suppose I did. Still, thought I, it is a serious thing to refuse praying with this poor woman, because she is poor—God is no respecter of person—this too is a Rosary to the Blessed Virgin; besides, nothing can be too humbling for a person when once engaged in this holy station—"So, pride, I trample you under my feet!" said I to myself, at a moment when the appearance of a respectable person on the road would have routed all my humility. I complied, however, with a very condescending grace, and to it we went. The old women pulled out their beads, and I got my hat, which had one of my shoes in it, under my arm. They requested that I would open the Rosary, which I did: and thus we kept tossing the ball of prayer from one to another along the way, whilst I was bending and sinking on the hard gravel in perfect agony. But we had not gone far, when the shower, which we did not suppose would have fallen until we should reach the town, began to descend with greater bounty than we were at all prepared for, or than I was, at least; for I had no outside coat: but indeed the morning was so beautiful, that rain was scarcely to be apprehended. With respect to the old lady, she appeared to be better acquainted



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with the necessary preparations for such a journey than I had been: for as soon as the shower became heavy (and it fell very heavily), she whipped off her cloak, and before I could say a syllable to the contrary, had it pinned about me. She then drew out of a large four-cornered pocket of red cloth, that hung at her side, a hare's-skin cap, which in a twinkling was on her own cranium. But what was most singular, considering the heat of the weather, was the appearance of an excellent frieze jacket, such as porters and draymen usually wear, with two outside pockets on the sides, into one of which she drove her arm up to the elbow, and in the other hand carried her staff like a man—I thought she wore the cap, too, a little to the one side on her head. Indeed, a more ludicrous appearance could scarcely be conceived than she now exhibited. I, on the other hand, cut an original figure, being six feet high, with a short gray cloak pinned tightly about me, my black cassimere small-clothes peeping below it—my long, yellow, polar legs, unencumbered with calves, quite naked—a good hat over the cloak—but no shoes on my feet, marching thus gravely upon my pilgrimage, with two such figures!

In this singular costume did we advance the rain all the time falling in torrents. The town, however, was not far distant, and we arrived at a little thatched house, where “dry lodgin” was offered above the door, both to “man and baste;” and never did an unfortunate group stand more in need of dry lodging, for we were wet to the skin. On entering the town, we met a carriage, in which were a gentleman and two ladies: I chanced to be walking a little before the woman, but could perceive, by casting a glance into the carriage, that they were in convulsions with laughter; to which I have strong misgivings of having contributed in no ordinary degree. But I felt more indignant at the wit, forsooth, of the well-fed serving-man behind the coach, who should also have his joke upon us; for as we passed, he turned to my companion, whom he addressed as a male personage—“And why, you old villain, do you drive your cub to the ‘island’ pinioned in such a manner,—give him the use of his arms, you sinner!”—thus intimating that I was a booby son of her's in leading-strings. The old lady looked at him with a very peculiar expression of countenance; I thought she smiled, but never did a smile appear to me so pregnant with bitterness and cursing scorn. “Ay,” said she, “there goes the well-fed heretic, that neither fasts nor prays—his God is his belly—they have the fat of the land for the present, your Reverence, but wait a bit. In the mane time, we had betther get in here a little, till this shower passes—you see the sun's beginnin' to brighten behind the rain, so it can't last long: and a bit of breakfast will do none of us any harm.” We then entered the house aforesaid, which presented a miserable prospect for refreshment; but as I was in some measure identified



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with my fellow-travelers, I could not with a good grace give them up. I had not at the time the least experience of the world, was incapable of that discrimination which guides some people, as it were by instinct, in choosing their society, and had altogether but a poor notion of the more refined decorum of life. When we got in, the equivocal lady began to exercise some portion of authority. "Come," said she, "here's a clergyman, and you had better lose no time in gettin' his Reverence his breakfast;" then, said, the civil creature to the mistress, in the same kind of half audible tone—

"Avourneen, if you have anything comfortable, get it for him; he is generous, an' will pay you well for it; a blessed crathur he is too, as ever brought good luck under your roof; Lord love you, if ye hard him discoursin' uz along the road, as if he was one of ourselves, so mild and sweet! I'm sure I'll always have a good opinion of myself for puttin' on the jacket this bout, at any rate, as I was able to spare his Reverence the cloak, a-haygur! the mild crathur!"

While my fellow traveller was thus talking, I had time to observe that the woman of the house was a cleanly-looking creature, with something of a sickly appearance. An old gray-headed man sat in something between a chair and a stool, formed of one solid piece of ash, supported by three legs sloping outwards; the seat of it was quite smooth by long use, and a circular row of rungs, capped by a piece of semicircular wood, shaped to receive the reclining body of whoever might occupy it, rose from the seat in presumptuous imitation of an arm-chair. There were two other chairs besides this, but the remainder of the seats were all stools. The room was square, with a bed in each of the corners adjoining the fire, covered with blue drugget quilts, stoutly quilted; there was another room in which the travellers slept. Opposite me on the wall was the appropriate picture of St. Patrick himself, with his crosier in hand, driving all kinds of venomous reptiles out of the kingdom. The Hermit of Killamey was on his right, and the Yarmouth Tragedy, or the dolorious history of Jemmy and Nancy, two unfortunate lovers, on his left. Such is the rigorous economy of a pilgrimage, and such is the circumstances of the greater part of those who undertake it, that it is to houses of this description the generality of them resort. These "dry lodging" houses may not improperly be called Pilgrims' Inns, a great number of them being opened only during the continuance of the three months in which the stations are performed.

Breakfast was now got ready, but it was evident that my two companions had not been taken into account; for there was "an equipage" only for one. I inquired from my speaking partner if she and her fellow-traveller would not breakfast. The only reply I received was a sorrowful shake of the head, and "Och, no, plaise your Reverence, no!" in quite an exhausted cadence. On hearing this,



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the kind landlady gave them a look of uncommon pity, exclaiming at the same time, as if in communication with her own feelings, "Musha, God pity them, the poor crathurs; an they surely can't but be both wake an ungrny afther sich a journey, this blessed an' broilin'day—och! och! if I had it or could afford it, an' they shouldn't want, any way—- arrah, won't ye thry and ate a bit of something?" addressing herself to them. "Ooh, then, no, alanna, but I'd just thank ye for a dhrink of cowld wather, if ye plase; an' that may be the strengthenin' of us a bit." I saw at once that their own little stock of provisions, if they really had any, was too scanty to allow the simple creatures the indulgence of a regular meal; still I thought they might, if they felt so very weak, have taken even the slightest refreshment from their bags. However, I was bound in honor, and also in charity, to give them their breakfast, which I ordered accordingly for them both, it being, I considered, only fair that as we had prayed together we should eat together. Whilst we were at breakfast, the landlady, with a piece of foresight for which I afterwards thanked her, warmed a pot of water, in which my feet were bathed; she then took out a large three-cornered pincushion with tassels, which hung at her side, a darning needle, and having threaded it, she drew a white woollen thread several times along a piece of soap, pressing it down with her thumb until it was quite soapy; this she drew very tenderly through the blisters which were risen on my feet, cutting it at both ends, and leaving a part of it in the blister. It is decidedly the best remedy that ever was tried, for I can declare that during the remainder of my pilgrimage, not one of these blisters gave me the least pain.

When breakfast was over, and these kind attentions performed, we set out once more; and from this place, I remarked, as we advanced, that an odd traveller would fall in upon the way: so that before we had gone many miles farther, the fatigue of the journey was much lessened by the society of the pilgrims. These were now collected into little groups, of from three to a dozen, each, with the exception of myself and one or two others of a decenter cast, having the staff and bag. The chat and anecdotes were, upon the whole, very amusing; but although there was a great variety of feature, character, and costume among so many, as must always be the case where people of different lives, habits, and pursuits, are brought together; still I could perceive that there was a shade of strange ruminating abstraction apparent on all. I could observe the cheerful narrator relapse into a temporary gloom, or a fit of desultory reflection, as some train of thought would suddenly rise in his mind. I could sometimes perceive a shade of pain; perhaps of anguish, darken the countenance of another, as if a bitter recollection was awakened; yet this often changed, by an unexpected transition, to a gleam of joy and satisfaction, as if a quick sense or hope of relief flashed across his heart.



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When we came near Petigo, the field for observation was much enlarged. The road was then literally alive with pilgrims, and reminded me, as far as numbers were concerned, of the multitudes that flocked to market on a fair-day. Petigo is a snug little town, three or four miles from the lake, where the pilgrims all sleep on the night before the commencement of their stations. When we were about five or six miles from it, the road presented a singular variety of grouping. There were men and women of all ages, from the sprouting devotee of twelve, to the hoary, tottering pilgrim of eighty, creeping along, bent over his staff, to perform this soul-saving work, and die.

Such is the reverence in which this celebrated place is held, that as we drew near it, I remarked the conversation to become slack; every face put on an appearance of solemnity and thoughtfulness, and no man was inclined to relish the conversation of his neighbor or to speak himself. The very women were silent. Even the lassitude of the journey was unfelt, and the unfledged pilgrim, as he looked up in his father's or mother's face, would catch the serious and severe expression he saw there, and trot silently on, forgetting that he was fatigued.

For my part, I felt the spirit of the scene strongly, yet, perhaps, not with such an exclusive interest as others. I had not only awe, terror, enthusiasm, pride, and devotion to manage, but suffered heavy annoyance from the inroad of a villanous curiosity which should thrust itself among the statelier feelings of the occasion, and set all attempts to restrain it at defiance. It was a sad bar to my devotions, which, but for its intrusion, I might have conducted with more meritorious steadiness. How, for instance, was it possible for me to register the transgressions of my whole life, heading them under the "seven deadly sins," with such a prospect before me as the beautiful waters and shores of Lough Erne?

Despite of all the solemnity about me, my unmanageable eye would turn from the very blackest of the seven deadly offences, and the stoutest of the four cardinal virtues, to the beetling, abrupt, and precipitous rocks which hung over the lake as if ready to tumble into its waters. I broke away, too, from several "acts of contrition" to conjecture whether the dark, shadowy inequalities which terminated the horizon, and penetrated, methought, into the very skies far beyond the lake, were mountains or clouds: a dark problem, which to this day I have not been able to solve. Nay, I was taken twice, despite of the most virtuous efforts to the contrary, from a *Salve Regina*, to watch a little skiff, which shone with its snowy sail spread before the radiant evening sun, and glided over the waters, like an angel sent on some happy-message. In fact, I found my heart on the point of corruption, by indulging in what I had set down in my vocabulary as the lust of the eye, and had some faint surmise that I was plunging into obduracy. I accordingly made a private mark with the nail of my thumb, on the "act of contrition" in my prayer-book, and another on the *Salve Regina*, that I might remember to confess for these devilish wanderings. But what all my personal piety could not effect, a lucky turn in the road accomplished, by bringing me from the view of the lake; and thus ended my temptations and my defeats on these points.



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When we got into Petigo, we found the lodging-houses considerably crowded. I contrived, however, to establish myself as well as another, and in consequence of my black, dress and the garrulous industry of my epicene companion, who stuck close to me all along, was treated with more than common respect. And here I was deeply impressed with the remarkable contour of many visages, which I had now a better opportunity of examining than while on the road. There seemed every description of guilt, and every degree of religious feeling, mingled together in the same mass, and all more or less subdued by the same principle of abrupt and gloomy abstraction.

There was a little man dressed in a turned black coat, and drab cassimere small-clothes, who struck me as a remarkable figure; his back was long, his legs and thighs short and he walked on the edge of his feet. He had a pale, sorrowful face, with bags hung under his eyes, drooping eyelids, no beard, no brows, and no chin; for in the place of the two latter, there was a slight frown where the brows ought to have been, and a curve in the place of the chin, merely perceptible from the bottom of his underlip to his throat. He wore his own hair, which was a light bay, so that you could scarcely distinguish it from a wig. I was given to understand that he was a religious tailor under three blessed orders.

There was another round-shouldered man, with black, twinkling eyes, plump face, rosy cheeks, and nose twisted at the top. In his character, humor appeared to be the predominant principle. He was evidently an original, and, I am sure, had the knack of turning the ludicrous side of every object towards him. His eye would roll about from one person to another while fingering his beads, with an expression of humor something like delight beaming from his fixed, steady countenance; and when anything that would have been particularly worthy of a joke met his glance, I could perceive a tremulous twinkle of the eye intimating his inward enjoyment. I think still this jocular abstinence was to him the severest part of the pilgrimage. I asked him was he ever at the "Island" before; he peered into my face with a look that infected me with risibility, without knowing why, shrugged up his shoulders, looked into the fire, and said "No," with a dry emphatic cough after it—as much as to say, you may apply my answer to the future as well as to the past. Religion, I thought, was giving him up, or sent him here as a last resource. He spoke to nobody.

A little behind the humorist sat a very tall, thin, important-looking personage, dressed in a shabby black coat; there was a cast of severity and self-sufficiency in his face, which at once indicated him to be a man of office and authority, little accustomed to have his own will disputed. I was not wrong in my conjecture; he was a classical schoolmaster, and was pompously occupied, when I first saw him, reading through his spectacles, with his head raised aloft, the seven Penitential Psalms in Latin, out of the Key of Paradise, to a circle of women and children, along with two or three men in frieze coats, who listened with profound attention.



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A little to the right of Syntax, were a man and woman—the man engaged in teaching the woman a Latin charm against the colic, to which it seems she was subject. Although they all, for the most part, who were in the large room about us, prayed aloud, yet by fastening the attention on any particular person, you could hear what he said. I therefore heard, the words of this charm, and as my memory is not bad, I still remember them; they ran thus:

Petrus sedebat super lapidem marmoreain juxta cedem Jerusalem et dolebat, Jesus veniebat et rogabat "Petre, quid doles?" "Doleo vento ventre." "Surge, Petre, et sanus esto." Et quicumque haec verba non scripta sed memoriter tradita recitat nunquam dolebit vento ventre.

These are the words literally, but I need not say, that had the poor woman sat there since, she would not have got them impressed on her memory.

There were also other countenances in which a man might almost read the histories of their owners. Methought I could perceive the lurking, unsubdued spirit of the battered rake, in the leer of his roving eye, while he performed, in the teeth of his flesh, blood, and principles, the delusive vow to which the shrinking spirit, at the approach of death, on the bed of sickness, clung, as to its salvation; for it was evident that superstition had only exacted from libertinism what fear and ignorance had promised her.

I could note the selfish, griping miser, betraying his own soul, and holding a false promise to his heart, as with lank jaw, keen eye, and brow knit with anxiety for the safety of his absent wealth, he joined some group, sager if possible to defraud them even of the benefit of their prayers, and attempting to practise that knavery upon heaven which had been so successful upon earth.

I could see the man of years, I thought, withering away under the disconsolation of an ill-spent life, old without peace, and gray without wisdom, flattering himself that he is religious because he prays, and making a merit of offering to God that which Satan had rejected; thinking, too, that he has withdrawn from sin, because the ability of committing it has left him, and taking credit for subduing his propensities, although they have only died in his nature.

I could mark, too, I fancied, the stiff, set features of the pharisee, affecting to instruct others, that he might show his own superiority, and descanting on the merits of works, that his hearers might know he performed them himself.

I could also observe the sly, demure over-doings of the hypocrite, and mark the deceitful lines of grave meditation running along that part of his countenance where in others the front of honesty lies open and expanded. I could trace him when he got beyond his depth, where the want of sincerity in religion betrayed his ignorance of its forms. I could note the scowling, sharp-visaged bigot, wrapt up in the nice observance of trifles,



correcting others, if the object of their supplications embraced anything within a whole hemisphere of heresy, and not so much happy because he thought himself the way of salvation, as because he thought others out of it—a consideration which sent pleasure tingling to his fingers' ends.



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But notwithstanding all this, I noticed, through the gloom of the place, many who were actuated by genuine, unaffected piety, from whom charity and kindness beamed forth through all the disadvantages around them. Such people, for the most part, prayed in silence and alone. Whenever I saw a man or woman anxious to turn away their faces, and separate themselves from the flocks of gregarious babblers, I seldom failed to witness the outpouring of a contrite spirit. I have certainly seen, in several instances, the tear of heartfelt repentance bedew the sinner's cheek. I observed one peculiarly interesting female who struck me very much. In personal beauty she was very lovely—her form perfectly symmetrical, and she evidently belonged to rather a better order of society. Her dress was plain, though her garments were by no means common. She could scarcely be twenty, and yet her face told a tale of sorrow, of deep, wasting, desolating sorrow. As the prayers, hymns, and religious conversations which went on, were peculiar to the place, time, and occasion—it being near the hour of rest:—she probably did not feel that reluctance in going to pray in presence of so many which she otherwise would have felt. She kept her eye on a certain female who had a remote dusky corner to pray in, and the moment she retired from it, this young creature went up and there knelt down. But what a contrast to the calm, unconscious, and insipid mummery which went on at the moment through the whole room! Her prayer was short, and she had neither book nor beads; but the heavings of her bosom, and her suppressed sobs, sufficiently proclaimed her sincerity. Her petition, indeed, seemed to go to heaven from a broken heart. When it was finished, she remained a few moments on her knees, and dried her eyes with her handkerchief. As she rose up, I could mark the modest, timid glance, and the slight blush as she presented herself again amongst the company, where all were strangers. I thought she appeared, though in the midst of such a number, to be woefully and pitiably alone.

As for my own companion, she absolutely made the grand tour of all the praying knots on the promises, having taken a very tolerable bout with each. There were two qualities in which she shone preeminent—voice and distinctness; for she gave by far the loudest and most monotonous chant. Her visage also was remarkable, for her complexion resembled the dark, dingy red of a winter apple. She had a pair of very piercing black eyes, with which, while kneeling with her body thrown back upon her heels as if they were a cushion, she scrutinized, at her ease, every one in the room, rocking herself gently from side to side. The poor creature paid a marked attention to the interesting young woman I have just mentioned. At last, they dropped off one by one to bed, that they might be up early the next morning for the Lough, with the exception of some half-dozen, more long-winded than the rest whose voices I could hear at their sixth rosary, in the rapid elevated tone peculiar to Catholic devotion, until I fell asleep.



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The next morning, when I awoke, I joined with all haste the aggregate crowd that proceeded in masses towards the lake—or Purgatory—which lies amongst the hills that extend to the north-east of Petigo. While ascending the bleak, hideous mountain range, whose ridge commands a full view of this celebrated scene of superstition, the manner and appearance of the pilgrims were deeply interesting. Such groupings as pressed forward around me would have made line studies either for him who wished to deplore or to ridicule the degradations and absurdities of human nature; indeed there was an intense interest in the scene. I look back at this moment with awe towards the tremulous and high-strained vibrations of my mind, as it responded to the excitement. Reader, have you ever approached the Eternal City? have you ever, from the dreary solitudes of the Campagna, seen the dome of St. Peter's for the first time? and have the monuments of the greatest men and the mightiest deeds that ever the earth witnessed—have the names of the Caesars, and the Catos, and the Scipios, excited a curiosity amounting to a sensation almost too intense to be borne? I think I can venture to measure the expansion of your mind, as it enlarged itself before the crowding visions of the past, as the dim grandeur of ages rose up and developed itself from amidst the shadows of time; and entranced amidst the magic of your own associations, you desired to stop—you were almost content to go no farther—your own Rome, you were in the midst of—Rome free—Rome triumphant—Rome classical. And perhaps it is well you awoke in good time from your shadowy dream, to escape from the unvaried desolation and the wasting malaria that brooded all around. Reader, I can fancy that such might have been your sensations when the domes and the spires of the world's capital first met your vision; and I can assure you, that while ascending the ridge that was to give me a view of Patrick's Purgatory, my sensations were as impressively, as powerfully excited. For I desire you to recollect, that the welfare of your immortal soul was not connected with your imaginings, your magnificent visions did not penetrate into the soul's doom. You were not submitted to the agency, of a transcendental power. You were, in a word, a poet, but not a fanatic. What comparison, then, could there be between the exercise of your free, manly, cultivated understanding, and my feelings on this occasion, with my thick-coming visions of immortality, that almost lifted me from the mountain-path I was ascending, and brought me, as it were, into contact with the invisible world? I repeat it, then, that such were my feelings, when all the faculties which exist in the mind were aroused and concentrated upon one object. In such a case, the pilgrim stands, as it were, between life and death; and as it was superstition that placed him there, she certainly conjures up to his heated fancy those dark, fleeting, and indistinct images which are adjusted to that gloom



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which she has already cast over his mind. Although there could not be less than two hundred people, young and old, boys and girls, men and women, the hale and the sickly, the blind and the lame, all climbing to gain the top with as little delay as possible, yet was there scarcely a sound, certainly not a word, to be heard among them. For my part, I plainly heard the palpitations of my heart, both loud and quick. Had I been told that the veil of eternity was about to be raised before me at that moment, I could scarcely have felt more intensely. Several females were obliged to rest for some time, in order to gain both physical and moral strength—one fainted; and several old men were obliged to sit down. All were praying, every crucifix was out, every bead in requisition; and nothing broke a silence so solemn but a low, monotonous murmur of deep devotion.

As soon as we ascended the hill, the whole scene was instantly before us: a large lake, surrounded by an amphitheatre of mountains, bleak, uncomfortable, and desolate. In the lake itself, about half a mile from the edge next us, was to be seen the "Island," with two or three slated houses on it, naked and un-plastered, as desolate-looking almost as the mountains. A little range of exceeding low hovels, which a dwarf could scarcely enter without stooping, appeared to the left; and the eye could rest on nothing more, except a living mass of human beings crawling slowly about. The first thing the pilgrim does when he gets a sight of the lake, is to prostrate himself, kiss the earth, and then on his knees offer up three Paters and Aves, and a Creed for the favor of being permitted to see this blessed place. When this is over, he descends to the lake, and after paying tenpence to the ferry-man, is rowed over to the Purgatory.

When the whole view was presented to me, I stood for some time to contemplate it; I cannot better illustrate the reaction which, took place in my mind, than by saying that it resembles that awkward inversion which a man's proper body experiences when, on going to pull something from which he expects a marvellous assistance, it comes with him at a touch, and the natural consequence is, that he finds his head down and his heels up. That which dashed the whole scene from the dark elevation in which the romance of devotion had placed it was the appearance of slated houses, and of the smoke that curled from the hovels and the prior's residence. This at once brought me back to humanity: and the idea of roasting meat, boiling pots, and dressing dinners, dispossessed every fine and fearful image which had floated through my imagination for the last twelve hours. In fact, allowing for the difference of situation, it nearly resembled John's Well, or James's Fair, when beheld at a distance, turning the slated houses into inns, and the hovels into tents. A certain idea, slight, untraceable, and involuntary, went over my brain on that occasion, which, though



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it did not then cost me a single effort of reflection, I think was revived and developed at a future period of my life, and became, perhaps to a certain extent, the means of opening a wider range of thought to my mind, and of giving a new tone to my existence. Still, however, nothing except my idea of its external appearance disappointed, me; I accordingly ascended with the rest, and in a short time found myself among the living mass upon the island.

The first thing I did was to hand over my three cakes of oaten bread which I had got made in Petigo, tied up in a handkerchief, as well as my hat and second shirt, to the care of the owner of one of the, huts: having first, by the way, undergone a second prostration on touching the island, and greeted it with fifteen holy kisses, and another string of prayers. I then, according to the regulations, should commence the stations, lacerated as my feet were after so long a journey; so that I had not a moment to rest. Think, therefore, what I must have suffered, on surrounding a large chapel, in the direction of from east to west, over a pavement of stone spikes, every one of them making its way along my nerves and muscles to my unfortunate brain. I was absolutely stupid and dizzy with the pain, the praying, the jostling, the elbowing, the scrambling and the uncomfortable penitential murmurs of the whole crowd. I knew not what I was about, but went through the forms in the same mechanical spirit which pervaded all present. As for that solemn, humble, and heartfelt sense of God's presence, which Christian prayer demands, its existence in the mind would not only be a moral but a physical impossibility in Lough Derg. I verily think that if mortification of the body, without conversion of the life or heart—if penance and not repentance could save the soul, no wretch who performed a pilgrimage here could with a good grace be damned. Out of hell the place is matchless, and if there be a purgatory in the other world, it may very well be said there is a fair rehearsal of it in the county of Donegal in Ireland.

When I commenced my station, I started from what is called the "Beds," and God help St. Patrick if he lay upon them: they are sharp stones placed circularly in the earth, with the spike ends of them up, one circle within another; and the manner in which the pilgrim gets as far as the innermost, resembles precisely that in which school-boys enter the "Walls of Troy" upon their slates. I moved away from these upon the sharp stones with which the whole island is surfaced, keeping the chapel, or "Prison," as it is called, upon my right; then turning, I came round again with a circumbendibus, to the spot from which I set out. During this circuit, as well as I can remember, I repeated fifty-five paters and aves, and five creeds, or five decades; and be it known, that the fifty prayers were offered up to the Virgin Mary, and the odd five to God! I then commenced getting round the eternal beds, during which



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I repeated, I think, fifteen paters and aves more; and as the bods decreased in circumference, the prayers decreased in length, until a short circuit and three paters and aves finished the last and innermost of these blessed couches. I really forgot how many times each day the prison and these beds are to be surrounded, and how many hundred prayers are to be repeated during the circuit, though each circuit is in fact making the grand tour of the island; but I never shall forget that I was the best part of a July day at it, when the soles of my feet were flayed, and the stones hot enough to broil a beefsteak! When the first day's station was over, it is necessary to say that a little rest would have been agreeable? But no, this would not suit the policy of the place; here it may be truly said that there is no rest for the wicked. The only luxury allowed me was the privilege of feasting upon one of my cakes (having not tasted food that blessed day until then); upon one of my cakes, I say, and a copious supply of the water of the lake, which, to render the repast more agreeable, was made lukewarm! This was to keep my spirits up after the delicate day's labor I had gone through, and to cheer me against the pleasant prospect of a hard night's praying without sleep, which lay in the back ground! But when I saw everyone at this refreshing meal with a good, thick, substantial bannock, and then looked at the immateriality of my own, I could not help reverting to the woman who made them for me, with a degree of vivacity not altogether in unison with the charity of a Christian. The knavish creature defrauded me of one-half of the oatmeal, although I had purchased it myself in Petigo for the occasion; being determined that as I was only to get two meals in the three days, they should be such as a person could fast upon. Never was there a man more bitterly disappointed; for they were not thicker than crown-pieces, and I searched for them in my mouth to no purpose—the only thing like substance I could feel there was the warm water. At last, night came; but here to describe the horrors of what I suffered I hold myself utterly inadequate. I was wedged in a shake-down bed with seven others, one of whom was a Scotch Papist—another a man with a shrunk leg, who wore a crutch—all afflicted with that disease which northern men that feed on oatmeal are liable to; and then the swarms that fell upon my poor young skin, and probed, and stung, and fed on me! it was pressure and persecution almost insupportable, and yet such was my fatigue that sleep even here began to weigh down my eyelids.

I was just on the point of enjoying a little rest, when a man ringing a large hand-bell, came round crying out in a low, supernatural growl, which could be heard double the distance of the loudest shout—"Waken up, waken up, and come to the prison!" The words were no sooner out of his mouth, than there was a sudden start, and a general scramble in the dark for our respective garments. When we got dressed,



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we proceeded to the waters of the lake, in which we washed our face and hands, repeating prayers during the ablution. This to me was the most impressive and agreeable part of the whole station. The night, while we were in bed, or rather in torture, had become quite stormy, and the waves of the lake beat against the shore with the violence of an agitated sea. There was just sufficient moon to make the “darkness visible,” and to show the black clouds drifting with rapid confusion, in broken masses, over our heads. This, joined to the tossing of the billows against the shore—the dark silent groups that came, like shadows, stooping for a moment over the surface of the waters, and retreating again in a manner which the severity of the night rendered necessarily quick, raising thereby in the mind the idea of gliding spirits—then the preconceived desolation of the surrounding scenery—the indistinct shadowy chain of dreary mountains which, faintly relieved by the lurid sky, hemmed in the lake—the silence of the forms, contrasted with the tumult of the elements about us—the loneliness of the place—its isolation and remoteness from the habitations of men—all this put together, joined to the feeling of deep devotion in which I was wrapped, had really a sublime effect upon me. Upon the generality of those who were there, blind to the natural beauty and effect of the hour and the place, and viewing it only through the medium of superstitious awe, it was indeed calculated to produce the notion of something not belonging to the circumstance and reality of human life.

From this scene we passed to one, which, though not characterized by its dark, awful beauty, was scarcely inferior to it in effect. It was called the “Prison,” and it is necessary to observe here, that every pilgrim must pass twenty-four hours in this place, kneeling, without food or sleep, although one meal of bread and warm water, and whatever sleep he could get in Petigo with seven in a bed, were his allowance of food and sleep during the twenty-four hours previous. I must here beg the good reader’s attention for a moment, with, reference to our penance in the “Prison.” Let us consider how the nature of this pilgrimage: it must be performed on foot, no matter what the distance of residence (allowing for voyages)—the condition of life—the age or the sex of the pilgrim may be. Individuals from France, from America, England, and Scotland, visit it—as voluntary devotees, or to perform an act of penance for some great crime, or perhaps to atone for a bad life in general. It is performed, too, in the dead heat of summer, when labor is slack, and the lower orders have sufficient leisure to undertake it; and, I may add, when travelling on foot is most fatiguing; they arrive, therefore, without a single exception, blown and jaded almost to death. The first thing they do, notwithstanding this, is to commence the fresh rigors of the station, which occupies them several hours. This consists in what I have already



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described, viz., the pleasant promenade upon the stony spikes around the prison and the “beds;” that over, they take their first and only meal for the day; after which, as in my own case just related, they must huddle themselves in clusters, on what is barefacedly called a bed, but which is nothing more nor less than a beggarman’s shakedown, where the smell, the heat, the filth, and above all, the vermin, are intolerable to the very farthest stretch of the superlative degree. As soon as their eyes begin to close here, they are roused by the bell-man, and summoned at the hour of twelve—first washing themselves as aforesaid, in the lake, and then adjourning to the prison which I am about to describe. There is not on earth, with the exception of pagan rites,—and it is melancholy to be compelled to compare any institution of the Christian religion with a Juggernaut,—there is not on earth, I say, a regulation of a religious nature, more barbarous and inhuman than this. It has destroyed thousands since its establishment—has left children without parents, and parents childless. It has made wives widows, and torn from the disconsolate husband the mother of his children; and is itself the monster which St. Patrick is said to have destroyed in the place—a monster, which is a complete and significant allegory of this great and destructive superstition. But what is even worse than death, by stretching the powers of human sufferance until the mind cracks under them, it is said sometimes to return these pitiable creatures maniacs—exulting in the laugh of madness, or sunk for ever in the incurable apathy of religious melancholy. I mention this now, to exhibit the purpose for which these calamities are turned to account, and the dishonesty which is exercised over these poor, unsuspecting people, in consequence of their occurrence. The pilgrims, being thus aroused at midnight are sent to prison; and what think you is the impression under which they enter it? one indeed, which, when we consider their bodily weakness and mental excitement, must do its work with success. It is this: that as soon as they enter the prison a supernatural tendency to sleep will come over them, which, they say, is peculiar to the place; that this is an emblem of the influence of sin over the soul, and a type of their future fate; that if they resist this they will be saved; but if they yield to it, they will not only be damned in the next world, but will go mad, or incur some immediate and dreadful calamity in this. Is it any wonder that a weak mind and exhausted body, wrought upon by these bugbears, should induce upon by itself, by its own terrors, the malady of derangement? We know that nothing acts so strongly and so fatally upon reason, as an imagination diseased by religious terrors: and I regret to say, that I had upon that night an opportunity of witnessing a fatal instance of it.



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After having washed ourselves in the dark waters of the lake, we entered this famous prison, which is only a naked, unplastered chapel, with an altar against one of the sides and two galleries. On entering this place, a scene presented itself altogether unparalleled on the earth, and in every point of view capable to sustain the feelings raised in the mind by the midnight scenery of the lake as seen during the ablutions. The prison was full, but not crowded; for had it been crowded, we would have been happy. It was, however, just sufficiently filled to give every individual the pleasure of sustaining himself, without having it in his power to recline for a moment in an attitude of rest, or to change that most insupportable of all bodily suffering, uniformity of position. There we knelt upon a hard ground floor, and commenced praying; and again I must advert to the policy which prevails in this island. During the period of imprisonment, there are no prescribed prayers nor ceremonies whatever to be performed, and this is the more strange, as every other stage of the station has its proper devotions. But these are suspended here, lest the attention of the prisoners might be fixed on any particular object, and the supernatural character of drowsiness imputed to the place be thus doubted—they are, therefore, turned in without anything to excite them to attention or to resist the propensity to sleep occasioned by their fatigue and want of rest. Having thus nothing to do, nothing to sustain, nothing to stimulate them, it is very natural that they should, even if unexhausted by previous lassitude, be inclined to sleep; but everything that can weigh them down is laid upon them in this heavy and oppressive superstition, that the strong delusion may be kept up.

On entering the prison, I was struck with the dim religious twilight of the place. Two candles gleamed faintly from the altar, and there was something I thought of a deadly light about them, as they burned feebly and stilly against the darkness which hung over the other part of the building. Two priests, facing the congregation, stood upon the altar in silence, with pale spectral visages, their eyes catching an unearthly glare from the sepulchral light of the slender tapers. But that which was strangest of all, and, as I said before, without a parallel in this world, was the impression and effect produced by the deep, drowsy, hollow, hoarse, guttural, ceaseless, and monotonous hum, which proceeded from about four hundred individuals, half asleep and at prayer; for their cadences were blended and slurred into each other, as they repeated, in an awe-struck and earnest undertone, the prayers in which they were engaged. It was certainly the strangest sound I ever heard, and resembled a thousand subterraneous groans, uttered in a kind of low, deep, unvaried chant. Nothing could produce a sense of gloomy alarm in a weak superstitious mind equal to this; and it derived much of its wild and



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singular character, as well as of its lethargic influence, from its continuity; for it still—still rung lowly and supernaturally on my ear. Perhaps the deep, wavy prolongation of the bass of a large cathedral bell, or that low, continuous sound, which is distinct from its higher and louder intonations, would give a faint notion of it, yet only a faint one; for the body of hoarse monotony here was immense. Indeed, such a noise had something so powerfully lulling, that human nature, even excited by the terrible suggestions of superstitious fear, was scarcely able to withstand it.

Now the poor pilgrims forget, that this strong disposition to sleep arises from the weariness produced by their long journeys—by the exhausting penance of the station, performed without giving them time to rest—by the other still more natural consequence of not giving them time to sleep—by the drowsy darkness of the chapel—and by the heaviness caught from the low peculiar murmur of the pilgrims, which would of itself overcome the lightest spirit. I was here but a very short time when I began to doze, and just as my chin was sinking placidly on my breast, and the words of an Ave Maria dying upon my lips, I felt the charm all at once broken by a well-meant rap upon the occiput, conferred through the instrumentality of a little angry-looking squat urchin of sixty years, and a remarkably good black-thorn cudgel, with which he was engaged in thwacking the heads of such sinners, as, not having the dread of insanity and the regulations of the place before their eyes, were inclined to sleep. I declare the knock I received told to such a purpose on my head, that nothing occurred during the pilgrimage that vexed me so much.

After all, I really slept the better half of the night; yet so indescribably powerful was the apprehension of derangement, that my hypocritical tongue wagged aloud at the prayers, during these furtive naps. Nay, I not only slept but dreamed. I experienced also that singular state of being, in which, while the senses are accessible to the influence of surrounding objects, the process of thought is suspended, the man seems to enjoy an inverted existence, in which the soul sleeps, and the body remains awake and susceptible of external impressions. I once thought I was washing myself in the lake, and that the dashing noise of its waters rang in my ears: I also fancied myself at home in conversation with my friends; yet, in neither case, did I altogether forget where I was. Still in struggling to bring my mind back, so paramount was the dread of awaking deranged should I fall asleep, that these occasional visions—associating themselves with this terror—and this again broken in upon by the hoarse murmurs about me, throwing their dark shades on every object that passed my imagination, the force of reason being too vague at the moment; these occasional visions I say, and this jumbling together of broken images and disjointed thoughts,



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had such an effect upon me, that I imagined several times that the awful penalty was exacted, and that my reason was gone for ever. I frequently started, and on seeing two dim lights upon the altar, and on hearing the ceaseless and eternal murmurs going on—going on—around me, without being immediately able to ascribe them to their proper cause, I set myself down as a lost man; for on that terror I was provokingly clear during the whole night. I more than once gave an involuntary groan or shriek, on finding myself in this singular state; so did many others, and these groans and shrieks were wildly and fearfully contrasted with the never-ending hum, which, like the ceaseless noise of a distant waterfall, went on during the night. The perspiration occasioned by this inconceivable distress, by the heat of the place, and by the unchangeableness of my position, flowed profusely from every core. About two o'clock in the morning an unhappy young man, either in a state of lethargic indifference, or under the influence of these sudden paroxysms, threw himself, or fell from one of the galleries, and was so shattered by the fall that he died next day at twelve o'clock,—and, what was not much to the credit of the clergymen on the island—without the benefit of the clergy; for I saw a priest with his stole and box of chrism finishing off his extreme unction when he was quite dead. This is frequently done in the Church of Rome, under a hope that life may not be utterly extinct, and that consequently the final separation of the soul and body may not have taken place.

In this prison, during the night, several persons go about with rods and staves, rapping those on the head whom they see heavy; snuff-boxes also go around very freely, elbows are jogged, chins chucked, and ears twitched, for the purpose of keeping each other awake. The rods and staves are frequently changed from hand to hand, and I thought it would be a lucky job if I could get one for a little, to enable me to change my position. I accordingly asked a man who had been a long time banging in this manner, if he would allow me to take his place for some time, and he was civil enough to do so. I therefore set out on my travels through the prison, rapping about me at a great rate, and with remarkable effect; for, whatever was the cause of it, I perceived that not a soul seemed the least inclined to doze after a visit from me; on the contrary, I observed several to scratch their heads, giving me at the same time significant looks of very sincere thankfulness.

But what I am convinced was the most meritorious act of my whole pilgrimage, as it was certainly the most zealously performed, was a remembrance I gave the squat fellow, who visited me in the early part of the night. He was engaged, tooth and nail, with another man, at a *De Profundis*, and although not asleep at the time, yet on the principle that prevention is better than cure, I thought it more prudent to let him have his rap before the occasion for it might come on: he accordingly got full payment, at compound interest, for the villanous knock he had lent me before.



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This employment stirred my blood a little, and I got much lighter. I could now pay some attention to the scene about me, and the first object that engaged it was a fellow with a hare-lip, who had completely taken the lead at prayer. The organs of speech seemed to have been transferred from his mouth to his nose, and, although Irish was his vernacular language, either some fool or knave had taught him to say his prayers in English: and you may take this as an observation founded on fact, that the language which a Roman Catholic of the lower class does not understand, is the one in which it is disposed to pray. As for him he had lots of English prayers, though he was totally ignorant of that language. The twang from the nose, the loud and rapid tone in which he spoke, and the malaproprian happiness with which he travestied every prayer he uttered, would have compelled any man to smile. The priests laughed outright before the whole congregation, particularly one of them, whom I well knew; the other turned his face towards the altar, and leaning over a silver pix, in which, according to their own tenets, the Redeemer of the world must have been at that moment, as it contained the consecrated wafers, gave full vent to his risibility. Now it is remarkable that no one present attached the slightest impropriety to this—I for one did not; although it certainly occurred to me with full force at a subsequent period.

When morning came, the blessed light of the sun broke the leaden charm of the prison, and infused into us a wonderful portion of fresh vigor. This day being the second from our arrival, we had our second station to perform, and consequently all the sharp spikes to re-traverse. We were not permitted at all to taste food during these twenty-four hours, so that our weakness was really very great. I beg leave, however, to return my special acknowledgments for the truly hospitable allowance of wine with which I, in common with every other pilgrim, was treated. This wine is made by filling a large pot with the lake water, and making it lukewarm. It is then handed round in jugs and wooden noggins—to their credit be it recorded—in the greatest possible abundance. On this alone I breakfasted, dined, and supped, during the second or prison day of my pilgrimage.

At twelve o'clock that night we left prison, and made room for another squadron, who gave us their kennels. Such a luxury was sleep to me, however, that I felt not the slightest inconvenience from the vermin, though I certainly made a point to avoid the Scotchman and the cripple. On the following day I confessed; and never was an unfortunate soul so grievously afflicted with a bad memory as I was on that occasion—the whole thing altogether, but particularly the prison scene, had knocked me up, I could not therefore remember a tithe of my sins; and the priest, poor man, had really so much to do, and was in such a hurry, that he had me clean absolved before I had got half through the preface, or knew what I was about. I then went with a fresh batch to receive the sacrament, which I did from the hands of the good-natured gentleman who enjoyed so richly the praying talents of the hare-lipped devotee in the prison.



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I cannot avoid mentioning here a practice peculiar to Roman Catholics, which consists in an exchange of one or more prayers, by a stipulation between two persons: I offer up a pater and ave for you, and you again for me. It is called swapping or exchanging prayers. After I had received the sacrament, I observed a thin, sallow little man, with a pair of beads, as long as himself, moving from knot to knot, but never remaining long in the same place. At last he glided up to me, and in a whisper asked me if I knew him. I answered in the negative. "Oh, then, a lanna, ye war never here before?" "Never." "Oh, I see that, acushla, you would a known me if you had: well then, did ye never hear of Sol Donnel, the pilgrim?"

"I never did," I replied, "but are we not all pilgrims while here?"

"To be sure, aroon, but I'm a pilgrim every place else, you see, as well as here, my darlin' sweet young man."

"Then you're a pilgrim by profession?"

"That's it, asthore machree; everybody that comes here the second time, sure, knows Sol Donnel, the blessed pilgrim."

"In that case it was impossible for me to know you, as I was-never here before."

"Acushla, I know that, but a good beginnin' are ye makin' of it—an' at your time of life too; but, avick, it must prosper wid ye, comin' here I mane."

"I hope it may." "Well yer parents isn't both livin' it's likely?" "No." "Aye! but yell jist not forget that same, ye see; I b'lieve I sed so—your father dead, I suppose?" "No, my mother." "Your mother; well, avick, I didn't say that for a sartinty; but still, you see, avourneen, maybe somebody could a tould ye it was the mother, forhaps, afther all." "Did you know them?" I asked. "You see, a lanna, I can't say that, without first hearin' their names." "My name is B-----." "An' a dacent bearable name it is, darlin'. Is yer father of them da-cent people, the B-----s of Newtownlimavady, ahagur!" "Not that I know of." "Oh, well, well, it makes no maxim between you an' me, at all, at all; but the Lord mark you to grace, any how; it's a dacent name sure enough, only if yer mother was livin', it's herself 'ud be the proud woman, an' well she might, to see such a clane, promisin' son steppin' home to her from Lough Derg." "Indeed I'm obliged to you," said I; "I protest I'm obliged to you, for your good opinion of me." "It's nothin' but what ye deserve, avick! an' more nor that—yer the makin's of a clargy I'm guessin'?" "I am," said I, "surely designed for that." "Oh, I knew it, I knew it, it's in your face; you've the sogarth in yer very face; an' well will ye become the robes when ye get them on ye: sure, an' to tell you the truth (in a whisper, stretching up his mouth to my ear), I feel my heart warm towardst you, somehow." "I declare I feel much the same towards you," I returned, for the fellow in spite of me was gaining upon my good opinion; "you are a decent, civil soul." "An' for that raison,



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and for your dacent mother's sake (*sobies-coat inpassy, amin*), (* *Requiescat in pace.*) I'll jist here offer up the *gray profungus* (* *De profundis*) for the release of her sowl out o' the burning flames of pur-gathur." I really could not help shuddering at this. He then repeated a psalm for that purpose, the 130th in our Bible, but the 129th in theirs. When it was finished, with all due gesticulation, that is to say, having thumped his breast with great violence, kissed the ground, and crossed himself repeatedly, he says to me, like a man confident that he had paved his way to my good graces, "Now, avick, as we *did* do so much, you're the very darlin' young man that I won't lave, widout the best, maybe, that's to come yet, ye see; bekase I'll swap a prayer wid you, this blessed minute." "I'm very glad you mentioned it," said I. "But you don't know, maybe, darlin', that I'm undher five ordhers." "Dear me! is it possible you're under so many?" "Undher five ordhers, acushla!"—"Well," I replied, "I am ready."—"Undher five ordhers—but I'll lave it to yourself; only when it's over, maybe, ye'll hear somethin' from me that'll make you thankful you ever gave me silver any way."

By this time I saw his drift: but he really had managed his point so dexterously—not forgetting the *De profundis*—that I gave him tenpence in silver: he pocketed it with great alacrity, and was at the prayer in a twinkling, which he did offer up in prime, style—five paters, five aves, and a creed, whilst I set the same number to his credit. When we had finished, he made me kneel down to receive his blessing, which he gave in great form:—"Now," said he, in a low, important tone, "I'm goin' to show you a thing that'll make you bless the born day you ever seen my face; and it's this—did ye ever hear of the blessed Thirty Days' Prayer?"* "I can't say I did." "Well, avick, in good time still; but there's a blessed book, if you can get it, that has a prayer in it, named the Thirty Bays' Prayer, an' if ye jist repate that same, every day for thirty days fastin', there's no request ye'll ax from heaven, good, bad, or indifferent, but ye'll get. And now do you begrudge givin' me what I got?" "Not a bit," said I, "and I'll certainly look for the book." "No, no, the darlin' fine young man," soliloquizing aloud—"Well and well did I know you wouldn't, nor another along wid it—sensible and learned as ye are, to know the blessed worth of what ye got for it; not makin', at the same time, any comparishment at all at all atween it and the dirty thrash of riches of this earth, that every wan has their heart fixed upon—exceptin' them that the Lord gives the larnin' an' the edication to, to know betther."

* There is such a prayer, and I have often seen it in Catholic Prayer-books.



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Oh, flattery! flattery! and a touch of hypocrisy on my part! Between ye, did ye make another lodgment on my purse, which was instantly lightened by an additional bank token, value tenpence, handed over to this sugar-tongued old knave. When he Pocketed this, he shook me cordially by the band, bidding me “not to forgit the Thirty Days’ Prayer, at any rate.” He then glided off with his small, sallow face, stuck between his little shrugged shoulders, fingering his beads, and praying audibly with great apparent fervor, whilst his little keen eye was reconnoitering for another pigeon. In the course of a few minutes, I saw him lead a large, soft, warm-looking, countryman, over to a remote corner, and enter into an earnest conversation with him, which, I could perceive, ended by their both kneeling down, I suppose, to swap a prayer; and I have no doubt but he lightened the honest countryman’s purse, as well as mine.

On the third day I was determined, if possible, to leave it early; so I performed my third and last station round the chapel and the beds, reduced to such a state of weakness and hunger, that the coats of my stomach must have been rubbing against each other; my feet were quite shapeless. I therefore made the shortest circuit and the longest strides possible, until I finished it.

I witnessed this day, immediately before my departure from this gloomy and truly purgatorial settlement, a scene of some interest. A priest was standing before the door of the dwelling-house, giving tickets to such as were about to confess, this being a necessary point. When he had despatched them all, I saw an old man and his son approach him, the man seemingly sixty, the boy about fourteen. They had a look of peculiar decency, but were thin and emaciated, even beyond what the rigor of their penance here could produce. The youth tottered with weakness, and the old man supported him with much difficulty. It is right to mention here, that this pilgrimage was performed in a season when sickness and famine prevailed fearfully in this kingdom. They advanced up to the priest to pay their money on receiving the tickets; he extended his palm from habit, but did not speak. The old man had some silver in his hand; and as he was about to give it to the priest, I saw the child look up beseechingly in his father’s face, whilst an additional paleness came over his own, and his eyes filled with tears. The father saw and felt the appeal of the child, and hesitated; the priest’s arm was still extended, his hand open:—“Would you, sir,” said the old man, addressing the priest, “be good enough to hear a word from me?” “For what?” replied the priest, in a sharp tone. “Why, sir,” answered the old man, “I am very much distressed.” “Ay—it is the common story! Come, pay the money; don’t you see I’ve no time to lose?” “I won’t detain you a minute, sir,” said the man; “this child”——“You want to keep the money, then? that’s your object; down with it on the instant, and begone.”



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The old man dropped it into the priest's hand, in a kind of start, produced by the stern tone of voice in which he was addressed. When the priest got the money he seemed in a better humor, not wishing, I could see, to send the man away with a bad impression of him. "Well, now what's that you were going to say to me?" "Why, sir," resumed the old man, "that I have not a penny in my possession behind what I have just now put into your hand—not the price of a morsel for this child or myself, although we have forty miles to travel!" "Well, and how am I to remedy that? What brought you here, if you had not what would bear your expenses?" "I had, sir, on setting out; but my little boy was five days sick in Petigo, and that took away with it what we had to carry us home." "And you expect me, in short, to furnish you with money to do that? Do you think, my good man, there are not paupers in my own parish, that have a better right to assistance than you have!" "I do not doubt it, sir," said he, "I do not doubt it; and as for myself I could crawl home upon anything; but what is this child to do? he is already sinking with hunger and—" The poor man's utterance here failed him as he cast his eyes on the poor, pale boy. When he had recovered himself a little, he proceeded:—"He is all that it has pleased God to leave to his afflicted mother and me, out of seven of them. His other brother and sister and him were all we had living for some years; they are seven weeks dead yesterday, of the fever; and when he was given over, sir, his mother and I vowed, that if God would spare him to us, either she or I would bring him to the 'Island,' as soon as he would be able for the journey. He was but weakly settin' out, and we had no notion that the station was so tryin' as it is: it has nearly overcome my child, and how he will be able to walk forty miles in this weak, sickly state, God only knows?" "Oh! sir," said the boy, "my poor father is worse off and weaker than I am, and he is sick too, sir; I am only weak, but not sick; but my poor father's both weak and sick," said he, his tears streaming from him, as he pressed his father's arm to his breast—"my poor father is both weak and sick, ay, and hungry too," said he. "Take this," said the priest, "it is as much as I can afford to give you," putting a silver fivepenny-piece into his hand; "there's a great deal of poor in my own parish." "Alas I thought, you are not a father. Indeed, sir," said the poor man, "I thought you would have allowed me to keep the silver I gave you, as how can we travel two-and-forty miles on this?" "I tell you, my good man," said the priest, resuming a sterner tone, "I have done as much for you as I can afford: and if every one gives you as much, you won't be ill off."



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The tears stood in the old man's eyes, as he fixed them hopelessly upon his boy whilst the child looked ravenously at the money, trifling as it was, and seemed to think of nothing except getting the worth of it of food. As they left the priest, "Oh, come, come father," said the little fellow, "come and let us get something to eat." "Easy, dear, till I draw my breath a little, for, John I am weak; but the Lord is strong, and will bring us home, if we put our trust in him; for if he's not more merciful to his poor creatures, than some that acts in his name here, John, we would have a bad chance." They here sat down on the ledge of a rock, a few yards from the chapel, and I still remained bound to the spot by the interest I felt in what I had just witnessed. "What do you want, sir," said the priest to me; "did you get your ticket?" "I did, sir," I replied; "but I hope you will permit me to become an advocate for that poor man and his son, as I think their case is one in which life and death are probably concerned!" "Really, my good young man, you may spare your advocacy, I'm not to be duped with such tales as you've heard." "By the tale, sir, if tale you call it," I returned, "which the father told, I think, any man might be guided in his charity; but really I think the most pitiful story was to be read in their faces." "Do you think so? Well, if that's your opinion, I'm sure you have a fair opportunity of being charitable; as for me, I have no more time to lose with either you or them," said he, going into a comfortable house, whilst I could have fairly seen him up to the neck in the blessed element about us. I here stepped over, and instantly desired the old man to hand me the fivepence, telling him at the same time that there was something better in prospect, as a proof of which I gave him half-a-crown. I then returned to the priest, and laid his fivepence down on the table before him; for I had the generosity, the fire, and the candor of youth about me, unrepressed by the hardening experience of life. "What's this, sir?" said he. "Your money, sir," I replied—"it is such a very trifle, that it would be of no service to them, and they will be enabled to go home without it; the old man returns it." "That is as much as to say," he replied, sarcastically, "that you will patronize them yourself; I wish you joy of it. Was it to witness the distresses of others that you came to the island, let me ask?" "Perhaps I came from a worse motive," I returned. "I haven't the least doubt of it," said he; "but move off—one word of insolence more," said he, stretching to a cutting whip, for the use of which he was deservedly famous. "I will cut you up, sirrah, while I'm able to stand over you." "Upon my word," said I, extending my feet one after another, "you have cut me up pretty well already, I think; but," I added, with coolness, "is that, sir, the weapon of a Christian?" "Is it the weapon of a Christian, sir? whatever weapon it is, you will soon feel the weight of it," said



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he, brandishing it over my head. "My good father," said I, "do you remember, since nothing else will restrain you, that the laws of the country will not recognize such horsewhip Christianity?" "The laws of the country. Oh, God help it for a country! Yes! yes! excellent. Here Michael—I say, come here—drive out this fellow. I'll be calm; I'll not, put myself in a passion—out with him! this fellow." On turning round to contemplate the person spoken to, we recognized each other as slight acquaintances. "Bless me," said he, "what's the matter? Why," he added, addressing me, "what's this?" "How? do you know him, Michael?" "Tut, I do—isn't he for the mission?" "Oh—ho!—is that it? well, I'm glad I know so much; good-bye to you, for the present; never fear but I'll keep my eye upon you." So saying, we separated. Michael followed me out. "This is an awkward business," said he, "you had better make submission, and ask his pardon; for you know he can injure your prospects, and will do so, if you don't submit; he is not of the most forgiving cast—but that's between ourselves." "What o'clock is it?" said I. "Near three." "Well, good-bye, and God bless you; if he had a spark of humanity in him, I would beg his pardon at once, if I thought I had offended him; but as to making submission to such a man, as you call it—why—this is a very sultry day, my friend." I returned directly to the old man and his son; and, let purity or motive go as it may, truth to tell, they were no losers by the priest's conduct; as I certainly slipped them a few additional shillings, out of sheer contempt for him. On tasting a little refreshment in one of the cabins, the son fainted—but on the whole they were enabled to accomplish their journey home; and the father's blessing was surely a sufficient antidote against the Priest's resentment.

I was now ready to depart; and on my way to the boat, found my two old female companions watching, lest I should pass, and they might miss my company on the way. It was now past three o'clock, and we determined to travel as far as we could that night, as the accommodations were vile in Petigo; and the spokeswoman mentioned a house of entertainment, about twelve miles forward, where, she said, we would find better treatment. When we got on terra firma, the first man I saw was the monosyllabic humorist, sitting on a hillock resting himself—his eyes fixed on the earth, and he evidently in a brown study on what he had gone through. He was drawing in his breath gradually, his cheeks expanding all the while, until they reached the utmost point of distention, when he would all at once let it go with a kind of easy puff, ending in a groan, as he surveyed his naked feet, which were now quite square, and, like my own, out of all shape. I asked him how he liked the station; he gave me one of the old looks, shrugged his shoulders, but said nothing—it was, however, a shrug condemnatory. I then asked him would he ever make another pilgrimage? He answered me by another shrug, a grave look, dryly raising his eye-brows, and a second appeal to his feet, all of which I easily translated into strong negatives. We refreshed ourselves in Petigo.



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When we were on the way home, I observed that, although the singular and fatal accident which befell the young man in the prison excited very little interest at the time of its occurrence, yet no sooner had they who witnessed it got clear of the island, than it was given with every possible ornament; so that it would be as easy to recognize the plain fact, when decked out by their elucidations, as it would be to understand the sense of an original author, after it has come through the hands of half a hundred commentators. But human nature is a darker enigma than any you could find, in the "Lady's Magazine." Who would suppose, for instance, that it was the same motive which set their tongues wagging now, that had chained their spirits by the strong force of the marvellous and the terrible, while they were in prison! Yet this was the fact; but their influence hung while there, like the tyrant's sword, over each individual head; and until the danger of falling asleep in the "Prison" was past, they could feel no interest for anything beyond themselves. In both cases, however, they were governed by the force of the marvellous and the terrible.

When we had finished our journey for the day, I was glad to find a tolerable bed; and never did man enjoy such a luxury of sweet sleep as I did that night. My old companion, too, evinced an attention to me seldom experienced in an accidental traveller. She made them get down water and bathe my feet, and asked me at what hour I would set out in the morning, telling me that she would see my clothes brushed, and everything done herself—so minute was the honest creature in her little attentions. I told her I would certainly take a nap in the morning, as I had slept so little for the last three nights, and was besides so fatigued. "Musha to be sure, and why not, agra! afther the hard bout you had in that blessed Island! betoken that you're tinder and too soft rared to bear it like them that the work hardens; sleep!—to be sure you'll sleep your fill—you want it, in coorse; and now go to bed, and you'll appear quite another man in the mornin', please God!"

I did not awake the next morning till ten o'clock, when I found the sun shining full into the room. I accordingly dressed myself partially, and I say partially—for I was rather surprised to find an unexpected chasm in my wardrobe; neither my hat, coat, nor waistcoat being forthcoming. But I immediately made myself easy, by supposing that my kind companion had brought them to be brushed. Yet I relapsed into something more than surprise when I saw my fellow-traveler's redoubtable jacket lying on the seat of a chair, and her hare's-skin cap on the top of it. My misgivings now were anything but weak; nor was I at all improved, either in my religion or philosophy, when, on calling up the landlady I heard that my two companions had set out that morning at four o'clock. I then inquired about my clothes, but all to no purpose; the poor landlady knew nothing about them: which,

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in fact, was the case; but she told me that the old one brushed them before she went away, saying that they were ready for me to put on whenever I wanted them. “Well,” said I, “she has made another man of me.” The landlady desired me to try if I had my purse; and I found that the kind creature had certainly spared my purse, but showed no mercy at all to what it contained, which was one pound in paper, and a few shillings in silver, the latter, however, she left me. I had now no alternative but to don the jacket and the hare’s-skin cap, which when I had done, with as bad a grace and as mortified a visage as ever man dressed himself with, I found I had not the slightest encouragement to throw my eye over the uniform gravity of my appearance, as I used to do in the black, for, alas! that which I was proudest of, *viz.* the clerical cut which it bestowed upon me was fairly gone—I had now more the appearance of a poacher than a priest.

[Illustration: PAGE 818— In this trim did I return to my friends]

In this trim did I return to my friends—a goose stripped of my feathers; a dupe beknaved and beplundered—having been almost starved to death in the “island,” and nearly cudgelled by one of the priests. As soon as I crossed the threshold at home, the whole family were on their knees to receive my blessing, there being a peculiar virtue in the Lough Derg blessing. The next thing I did, after giving them an account of the manner in which I was plundered and stripped, was to make a due distribution of the pebbles* of the lake, to contain which my sisters had, previous to my journey, wrought me a little silk bag. This I brought home, stuffed as full as my purse was empty; for the epicene old villain left it to me in all its plenitude—disdaining to touch it. When I went to mass the following Sunday, I was surrounded by crowds, among whom I distributed my blessing, with an air of seriousness not at all lessened by the loss of my clothes and the emptying of my purse. On telling that part of my story to the priest, he laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. He was a small, pleasant little man, who was seldom known to laugh at anybody’s joke but his own. Now, the said merriment of the Reverend Father I felt as contributing to make me look exceedingly ridiculous and sheepish. “So,” says he, “you have fallen foul of Nell M’Collum, the most notorious shuler in the province! a gipsy, a fortuneteller, and a tinker’s widow; but rest contented, you are not the first she has gulled—but beware the next time.”—“There is no danger of *that*,” said I, with peculiar emphasis.

* An uncommon virtue in curing all kinds of complaints is ascribed to these pebbles, small bags of which are brought home by the pilgrims, and distributed to their respective relations and friends.