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THE

PURCELL PAPERS.

BY THE LATE

JOSEPH SHERIDAN LE FANU,

AUTHOR OF 'UNCLE SILAS.'

With a Memoir by

ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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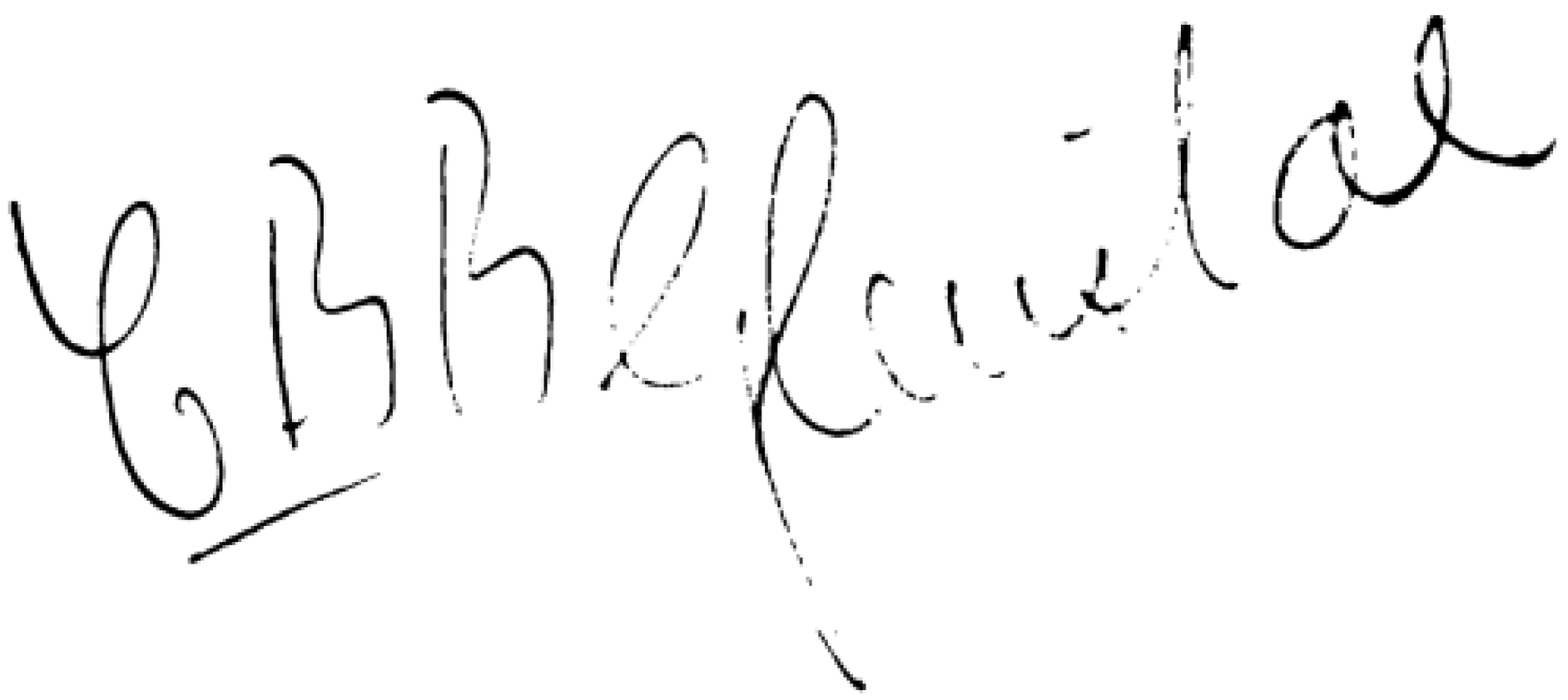

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THE PURCELL PAPERS.

JIM SULIVAN'S ADVENTURES IN THE GREAT SNOW.

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

JIM SULIVAN was a dacent, honest boy as you'd find in the seven parishes, an' he was a beautiful singer, an' an illegant dancer intirely, an' a mighty plisant boy in himself; but he had the divil's bad luck, for

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he married for love, an 'av coorse he niver had an asy minute afther.

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

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

Well, this wasn't at all plasin' to Jim

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

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

'Move aff,' says she, 'an' don't be in-thrudin' an the fire,' says she.

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

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

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

'That's purty behavour,' says she; 'it's fine usage you're givin' me, isn't it?' says she, gettin' wickeder every minute; 'but before I'm boiled,' says she, 'thry how you

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like *that*,' says she; an', sure enough, before he had time to put up his guard, she hot him a rale terrible clink iv the iron spoon acrass the jaw.

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

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

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

Well, she never minded a word he said, for he used to say the same thing all as one every time she dhrew blood; an' she had no expectation at all but he'd come back by the time supper id be ready; but

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faix the story didn't go quite so simple this time, for while he was walkin', lonesome enough, down the borheen, with his heart almost broke with the pain, for his shins an' his jaw was mighty troublesome, av course, with the thratement he got, who did he see but Mick Hanlon, his uncle's sarvint *by*, ridin' down, quite an asy, an the ould black horse, with a halter as long as himself.

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

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

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

'Oh, blur an agers, thin, it's welcome

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you are, Micky asthore,' says Jim; 'how is all wid the man an' the woman beyant?' says he.

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

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

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

'Well,' says Jim, 'will I have time,' says he, 'to go back to the house, for it would

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be a consolation,' says he, 'to tell the bad news to the woman?' says he.

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

And when Jim got to the farm his uncle was gettin' an illegantly, an' he was sittin' up sthrong an' warm in the bed, an' im-

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provin' every minute, an' no signs av dyin' an him at all at all; so he had all his throuble for nothin'.

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

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

'Oh!' says she, 'there's no use in pur-

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tendin', I know he's kilt himself; he has committed infantycide an himself,' says she, 'like a dissipated bliggard as he always was,' says she, 'God rest his soul. Oh, thin, isn't it me an' not you, Jim Soolivan, that's the unforthunate woman,' says she, 'for ain't I cryin' here, an' isn't he in heaven, the bliggard,' says she. 'Oh, voh, voh, it's not at home comfortable with your wife an' family that you are, Jim Soolivan,' says she, 'but in the other world, you aumathaun, in glory wid the saints I hope,' says she. 'It's I that's the unforthunate famale,' says she, 'an' not yourself, Jim Soolivan,' says she.

An' this way she kep' an till mornin', cryin' and lamintin ; an' wid the first light she called up all the sarvint bys, an' she tould them to go out an' to sarch every inch iv ground to find the corpse, 'for I'm sure,'

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says she, 'it's not to go hide himself he would,' says she.

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

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dirty turn as to go kill himself for spite.

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

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her quite an' asy into middlin' good humour, an' as soon as he seen it was time:

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

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

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

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year at any rate, an' that's twelve months lost; an' who's to look afther the farm all that time,' says he, 'an' to keep the men to their work?' says he.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So with that he made off with himself straight to Andy Curtis; an' before three days

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

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

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

So one night, when Nell Gorman an' her new husband, Andy Curtis, was snug an' warm in bed, an' fast asleep, an' every-thing quite, who should come to the door, sure enough, but Jim Soolivan himself,

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an' he beginned flakin' the door wid a big blackthorn stick he had, an' roarin' out like the divil to open the door, for he had a dhrop taken.

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

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

'Who's in it?' says Andy.

'It's me,' says Jim.

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

'Jim Soolivan,' says he.

'By jabers, you lie,' says Andy.

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

'It's him, sure enough,' says Nell; 'I know his speech; it's his wandherin' sowl

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that can't get rest, the crass o' Christ betune us an' harm.'

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

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

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

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

'Divil's cure to the bit iv me 'ill go back to glory, or anywhere else,' says he, 'this

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blessed night; so open the door at onst' an' let me in,' says he.

'The Lord forbid,' says she.

'By jabers, you'd betther,' says he, 'or it 'ill be the worse for you,' says he; an' wid that he fell to wallopin' the door till he was fairly tired, an' Andy an' his wife crassin' themselves an' sayin' their prayers for the bare life all the time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Och, by the hoky,' says Jim, 'it's too long I'm makin' a fool iv mysilf, gostherin' wid you outside iv my own door,' says he, 'for it's plain to be seen,' says he, 'you don't know what your're sayin', an'

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no one *else* knows what you mane, you unforthunate fool,' says he; 'so, onst for all, open the door quietly,' says he, 'or, by my sowkins, I'll not lave a splinther together,' says he.

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

'Bad luck to you,' says he; 'for a rale divil av a woman,' says he. I 'can't get any advantage av you, any way; but wait till I get hould iv you, that's all,' says he. An' he turned aff from the door, an' wint round to the cow-house, an' settled himself as well as he could, in the sthraw; an' he was tired enough wid the thravellin' he had in the day-time, an'

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a good dale bothered with what liquor he had taken ; so he was purty sure of sleepin' wherever he thrun himself.

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

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mystarious articles that was wantin', along wid him ; an' as soon as he kem in, 'God save all here,' says he.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Well, there wasn't a second word to the bargain ; so they paid him the money down, an' he sot the table down like an althar, before the door, an' he settled it out wid all the things he had wid him ; an' he lit a bit iv a holy candle, an' he scathered

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his holy wather right an' left ; an' he took up a big book, an' he wint an readin' for half an hour, good ; an' whin he kem to the end, he tuck hould iv his little bell, and he beginned to ring it for the bare life ; an', by my sowl, he rung it so well, that he wakened Jim Sulivan in the cow-house, where he was sleepin', an' up he jumped, widout a minute's delay, an' med right for the house, where all the family, an' the priest, an' the little mass-boy was assimbled, layin' the ghost ; an' as soon as his raverence seen him comin' in at the door, wid the fair fright, he flung the bell at his head, an' hot him sich a lick iv it in the forehead, that he sthretched him on the floor ; but faix he didn't wait to ax any questions, but he cut round the table as if the divil was afther him, an' out at the door, an' didn't stop even as much as to

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mount an his mare, but leathered away down the borheen as fast as his legs could carry him, though the mud was up to his knees, savin' your presence.

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

An' bad luck to the word he'd allow anyone to say an the business, ever after, at all, at all; so, av coorse, no one offinded

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his raverence, by spakin' iv the twelve pounds he got for layin' the sperit.

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

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A CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF A TYRONE FAMILY.

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

INTRODUCTION.

IN the following narrative, I have endeavoured to give as nearly as possible the *ipsissima verba* of the valued friend from whom I received it, conscious that any aberration from *her* mode of telling the tale of her own life

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would at once impair its accuracy and its effect.

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

I became acquainted with the lady from

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

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

She began as follows:

My maiden name was Richardson,* the designation of a family of some distinction

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

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

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

I remember well the eventful day of the wedding ; the thronging carriages, the noisy menials, the loud laughter, the merry faces, and the gay dresses. Such sights were then new to me, and harmonised ill with the sorrowful feelings with which I regarded the event which was to separate

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me, as it turned out, for ever from a sister whose tenderness alone had hitherto more than supplied all that I wanted in my mother's affection.

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

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

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

My having come into the world at all

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

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

It is not to be supposed, then, that I found in the society of my parents much to supply the loss of my sister. About a year after her marriage, we received letters from Mr. Carew, containing accounts of my sister's health, which, though not actually

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alarming, were calculated to make us seriously uneasy. The symptoms most dwelt upon were loss of appetite and cough.

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

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

In accordance with this announcement, my sister and Mr. Carew arrived in Dublin, where one of my father's carriages awaited them, in readiness to start upon whatever

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day or hour they might choose for their departure.

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

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

Tuesday came: the evening closed in, and

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yet no carriage; darkness came on, and still no sign of our expected visitors.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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We returned to the house, more panic-struck than I can describe.

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

* The residuary legatee of the late Frances Purcell, who has the honour of selecting such of his lamented old friend's manuscripts as may appear fit for publication, in order that the lore which they contain may reach the world before scepticism and utility have robbed our species of the precious gift of credulity, and scornfully kicked before them, or trampled into annihilation those harmless fragments of picturesque superstition which it is our object to preserve, has been subjected to the charge of dealing too largely in the marvellous; and it has been half insinuated that such

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I mention this circumstance, because it was one upon which a thousand wild and

is his love for *diablerie*, that he is content to wander a mile out of his way, in order to meet a fiend or a goblin, and thus to sacrifice all regard for truth and accuracy to the idle hope of affrighting the imagination, and thus pandering to the bad taste of his reader. He begs leave, then, to take this opportunity of asserting his perfect innocence of all the crimes laid to his charge, and to assure his reader that he never *pandered to his bad taste*, nor went one inch out of his way to introduce witch, fairy, devil, ghost, or any other of the grim fraternity of the redoubted Raw-head-and-bloody-bones. His province, touching these tales, has been attended with no difficulty and little responsibility; indeed, he is accountable for nothing more than an alteration in the names of persons mentioned therein, when such a step seemed necessary, and for an occasional note, whenever he conceived it possible, innocently, to edge in a word. These tales have been *written down*, as the heading of each announces, by the Rev. Francis Purcell, P.P., of Drumcoolagh; and in all the instances, which are many, in which the present writer has had an opportunity of comparing the manuscript of his departed friend with the actual traditions which are current amongst the

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

I was, for several years after this occurrence, long after the violence of my grief subsided, so wretchedly low-spirited and nervous, that I could scarcely be said to live; and during this time, habits of indecision, arising out of a listless acquiescence in the will of others, a fear of encountering even the slightest opposition, and a disposition to shrink from what are commonly

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families whose fortunes they pretend to illustrate, he has uniformly found that whatever of supernatural occurred in the story, so far from having been exaggerated by him, had been rather softened down, and, wherever it could be attempted, accounted for.

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called amusements, grew upon me so strongly, that I have scarcely even yet altogether overcome them.

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

I was now an only child; and, as my elder sister had died without issue, it was evident that, in the ordinary course of things, my father's property, which was altogether in his power, would go to me; and the consequence was, that before I was fourteen, Ashtown House was besieged by a host of suitors. However, whether it was

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