

"Faith—though I suppose 'tisn't right for me to say it—but at that time there was not a finer girl in the six parishes round than the same Molly. She was thin, a tall strappin' damsel wid hair as beautiful as the sunshine on Bantry Bay of a summer's evenin', an' eyes as wild an' as sparklin' as a clane run o' *potheen*, an' a face that if ye see the shadow of it in a strame—be me soul—ye'd leap in it 'twas as deep as the Falls o' Niagara. Well, anyway, betune the jigs an' the reels we got married, an' faith 'tis comfortable an' happy enough—we were—for some time.

"Wan cowl'd night as good luck should have it, I was comin' home after drivin' a new-paper man like yourself (good luck to yer honor) into Bantry, an' 'twas freezin' like blue blazes the same night; well the little mare was goin' on as smooth as a car after a tripe-woman, whin all at waunst she slipped an' fell; an' I barely escap'd bein' kilt myself.

"I called out a couple of the nabors, an' we soon found that her too foremost legs was broken, so we were obliged to put her out o' pain, an' many's the salty tear I lost over her too.

"After comin' home I sould the car for a thrifle an' took on to doin' a bit o' farmin' or a bit of laborin' work, or anythin' at all that would keep the hunger out from Molly an' the childer—for I forgot to tell yer honor that we wor after havin' two. But the times got bad, an' the work wasn't there; an' mind ye one mornin' I was obliged to go out 'idout a taste of breakfast in me stummuck. I was walkin' up an' down the bit of a street wid a sorrowful heart an' a hungry craw, when who do you think comes up to me but Jack Connell the 'orney.

"Good morrow, Mick', says he, for he was always free makin' an aisy like, the heavens be his bed (for he's dead be this.)

"Good morrow, kindly Master Jack, says I.

"Well, Mick, *avickyo*, says he, how is Molly an' all the childre?

"Poorly, yer honor, poorly, says I.

"I'm sorry to hear it, Mick, says he.

"God sees, I know that, sir, says I.

"Begor, Mick, says he, I think I'd be able to put somethin' in yer way, says he, 'av yond the pluck to do it?

"*Uisha*, faith, sir, says I, I'd do anything at all honest that would bring in a male o' victuals to the poor craythurs at home.

"Then, says he, sich a thing, Mick, says he, ye know ould Tom Purcell?

"Know him! says I, the ould villain—an' well.

"Faith, Mick, says he, he's into a heap o' trouble of late. The ould estates is gone to the dogs, an' to make a long story short would you serve a writ on him? says he.

"Bedad, yer honor, says I, if we're poor we're dacent; an' I didn't come to bein' a process-sarver yet, says I speaking up to him.

"But, says he, it 'ill be as good as a tin pound to ye if you'll do it.

"Well, sir, God forgive me, but I was timpl'd, I was thinkin' what a limb ould Tom was in his day, always turnin' out the poor to starve on the roads (an' among um me poor gran'tather, glory to him to-night,) an' thin again I remembered Molly with her beautiful face pinched up wid hunger, an' the two childre cryin' o' starvation an' faix me mind was med up in a minute.

"Begor, says I to Jack, Begor, says I, I'll do it.

"Aisy, says Jack, aisy a second, says he, and come in here, says he, an' lay me tell you the whole story.

"Well, me bould Mr. Jack took me into the office and tould me all the trouble they had in regard o' sarvin' Tom. How he barricaded up the doors, an' wouldn't leave man nor mortal next or near the place—let alone a bailiff; an' that many's the fellow tried to serve him, an' was near bein' shot for his trouble.

"O, be this an' be that, says I to Jack, I'll serve him, for I'd an ould grudge agin the same Tom be the way he thraited me gran'father. I'll sarve him, says I, in spite o' Doctor Foster if you'll only show me how.

"So after gettin' instructions from Jack in regard o' the 'riginal and the copy; an' a couple of shillin's to get somethin' to ait, I made the be-t o' me way home.

"Never a word I said to Molly about it, an' the next mornin' after four o'clock away I makes for Tom's house wid the 'riginal in wan o' me trouser's pockets, the copy in th' other an' a *sougarn* in the heel o' me list.

"After a party smart walk of a couple of mile I came up wid Tom's house, an' sure enough there it was barricaded like the charge o' Ballyclava, wid all kind o' ploughs an' harrows, an' the Lord knows what dhrawn up again the doore. I threw off me coat and weskit and bounced up a big sackymore tree just overright a windy an' in I looked. Begor, they was ould Tom himself snoarin' away like a porkypine in a *kish* o' dhry grass.

"Down I slips agin' an' kicks up the mornings delight in the haggart; screechin' an' roarin', and dancin', and singin' the same as if I was out of me senses.

"'Twasn't long anyway, till I heard a noise in the house, and behold ye who comes to the windy but me bould Tom. What did I do, but I picked the *sougarn* and up the three wid me, I tied wan ind of it to a bough, tied the other 'round me nick, an' (God preserve us) I jumped down purtendin' I was hanging meself—keeping a strong hould o' the rope for fear o' doin' it in airnest. I wasn't long hanging whin I heard ould Nancy Malono, Tom's house-keeper, roarin' *meela murder*, that there was a poor idioty boy hangin' himself in the haggart, goin' to the other world, says she, 'idout priest or docthur. In a half a jiffy I feels Tom grabbin' me be the heels.

"Hould on a minute, says he, don't destroy yerself like that, says he, goin' up the tree and cuttin' the *sougarn*. Down I flops, an' he ran over and ketched a hould o' me.

"What the blazes are ye up to? says he.

"All right, me hayro, says I, I'd do more than that to sarve ye, slippin' the *sougarn* over his shoulder's, an' before ye could bless yerself, sir, his hands was tied by his sides, an' I dragged him over an' lashed him to the three.

"O, for God's sake, says he, don't murder me in cowl'd blood.

"Never fear, me charmer, says I, puttin' me hands in me trouser's pockets. Ther's the copy, says I, shovin' it into his claw, and ther's the 'riginal, says I, houldin' it up, wid that, sir, he let a roar out of him that ud fill up the Pass o' Ceamanaigh, an' away I leaped over the ditch, took up me coat an' wes-kit an' ran home like a wild injun.

"Well, Jack paid me the money an' a pound from himself for doin' the job so clever. The few hapineo put me on me legs agin' an' if you please, sir, that's the way Tom Purcell was sarved."

We had now reached Bantry, so after paying my driver his fare, and a little extra for the story, I sauntered off in the direction of the Royal Hotel.