

Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu

The House
by the Churchyard

Lingua

A PROLOGUE—BEING A DISH OF VILLAGE CHAT.

We are going to talk, if you please, in the ensuing chapters, of what was going on in Chapelizod about a hundred years ago. A hundred years, to be sure, is a good while; but though fashions have changed, some old phrases dropped out, and new ones come in; and snuff and hair-powder, and sacques and solitaires quite passed away—yet men and women were men and women all the same—as elderly fellows, like your humble servant, who have seen and talked with rearward stragglers of that generation—now all and long marched off—can testify, if they will.

In those days Chapelizod was about the gayest and prettiest of the outpost villages in which old Dublin took a complacent pride. The poplars which stood, in military rows, here and there, just showed a glimpse of formality among the orchards and old timber that lined the banks of the river and the valley of the Liffey, with a lively sort of richness. The broad old street looked hospitable and merry, with steep roofs and many coloured hall-doors. The jolly old inn, just beyond the turnpike at the sweep of the road, leading over the buttressed bridge by the mill, was first to welcome the excursionist from Dublin, under the sign of the Phoenix. There, in the grand wainscoted back-parlour, with 'the great and good King William,' in his robe, garter, periwig, and sceptre presiding in the panel over the chimney-piece, and confronting the large projecting window, through which the river, and the daffodils, and the summer foliage looked so bright and quiet, the Aldermen of Skinner's Alley—a club of the 'true blue' dye, as old as the Jacobite wars of the previous century—the corporation of shoemakers, or of tailors, or the freemasons, or the musical clubs, loved to dine at the stately hour of five, and deliver their jokes, sentiments, songs, and wisdom, on a pleasant summer's evening. Alas! the inn is as clean gone as the guests—a dream of the shadow of smoke.

Lately, too, came down the old 'Salmon House'—so called from the blazonry of that noble fish upon its painted sign-board—at the other end of the town, that, with a couple more, wheeled out at right angles

from the line of the broad street, and directly confronting the passenger from Dublin, gave to it something of the character of a square, and just left room for the high road and Martin's Row to slip between its flank and the orchard that overtopped the river wall. Well! it is gone. I blame nobody. I suppose it was quite rotten, and that the rats would soon have thrown up their lease of it; and that it was taken down, in short, chiefly, as one of the players said of 'Old Drury,' to prevent the inconvenience of its coming down of itself. Still a peevish but harmless old fellow—who hates change, and would wish things to stay as they were just a little, till his own great change comes; who haunts the places where his childhood was passed, and reverences the homeliest relics of by-gone generations—may be allowed to grumble a little at the impertinences of improving proprietors with a taste for accurate parallelograms and pale new brick.

Then there was the village church, with its tower dark and rustling from base to summit, with thick piled, bowering ivy. The royal arms cut in bold relief in the broad stone over the porch—where, pray, is that stone now, the memento of its old viceregal dignity? Where is the elevated pew, where many a lord lieutenant, in point, and gold lace, and thunder-cloud periwig, sate in awful isolation, and listened to orthodox and loyal sermons, and took French rappee; whence too, he stepped forth between the files of the guard of honour of the Royal Irish Artillery from the barrack over the way, in their courtly uniform, white, scarlet, and blue, cocked hats, and cues, and ruffles, presenting arms—into his emblazoned coach and six, with hanging footmen, as wonderful as Cinderella's, and out-riders out-blazing the liveries of the troops, and rolling grandly away in sunshine and dust.

The 'Ecclesiastical Commissioners' have done their office here. The tower, indeed, remains, with half its antique growth of ivy gone; but the body of the church is new, and I, and perhaps an elderly fellow or two more, miss the old-fashioned square pews, distributed by a traditional tenure among the families and dignitaries of the town and vicinage (who are they now?), and sigh for the queer, old, clumsy reading-desk and pulpit, grown dearer from the long and hopeless separation; and wonder where the tables of the Ten Commandments, in long gold letters of Queen Anne's date, upon a vivid blue ground, arched above, and flanking the communion-table, with its tall thin rails, and fifty other things that appeared to me in my nonage, as stable as the earth, and as sacred as the heavens, are gone to.

As for the barrack of the Royal Irish Artillery, the great gate leading into the parade ground, by the river side, and all that, I believe the earth, or rather that grim giant factory, which is now the grand feature

and centre of Chapelizod, throbbing all over with steam, and whizzing with wheels, and vomiting pitchy smoke, has swallowed them up.

A line of houses fronting this—old familiar faces—still look blank and regretfully forth, through their glassy eyes, upon the changed scene. How different the company they kept some ninety or a hundred years ago!

Where is the mill, too, standing fast by the bridge, the manorial appendage of the town, which I loved in my boyhood for its gaunt and crazy aspect and dim interior, whence the clapper kept time mysteriously to the drone of the mill-slucice? I think it is gone. Surely *that* confounded thing can't be my venerable old friend in masquerade!

But I can't expect you, my reader—polite and patient as you manifestly are—to potter about with me, all the summer day, through this melancholy and mangled old town, with a canopy of factory soot between your head and the pleasant sky. One glance, however, before you go, you will vouchsafe at the village tree—that stalworth elm. It has not grown an inch these hundred years. It does not look a day older than it did fifty years ago, *I* can tell you. There he stands the same; and yet a stranger in the place of his birth, in a new order of things, joyless, busy, transformed Chapelizod, listening, as it seems to me, always to the unchanged song and prattle of the river, with his reveries and affections far away among by-gone times and a buried race. Thou hast a story, too, to tell, thou slighted and solitary sage, if only the winds would steal it musically forth, like the secret of Mildas from the moaning reeds.

The palmy days of Chapelizod were just about a hundred years ago, and those days—though I am jealous of their pleasant and kindly fame, and specially for the preservation of the few memorials they have left behind, were yet, I may say, in your ear, with all their colour and adventure—perhaps, on the whole, more pleasant to read about, and dream of, than they were to live in. Still their violence, follies, and hospitalities, softened by distance, and illuminated with a sort of barbaric splendour, have long presented to my fancy the glowing and ever-shifting combinations upon which, as on the red embers, in a winter's gloaming, I love to gaze, propping my white head upon my hand, in a lazy luxury of reverie, from my own arm-chair, while they drop, ever and anon, into new shapes, and silently tell their 'winter's tales.'

When your humble servant, Charles de Cresseron, the compiler of this narrative, was a boy some fourteen years old—how long ago precisely that was, is nothing to the purpose, 'tis enough to say he remembers what he then saw and heard a good deal better than what happened a week ago—it came to pass that he was spending a pleasant week of his holidays with his benign uncle and godfather, the cu-

rate of Chapelizod. On the second day of his, or rather *my* sojourn (I take leave to return to the first person), there was a notable funeral of an old lady. Her name was Darby, and her journey to her last home was very considerable, being made in a hearse, by easy stages, from her house of Lisnabane, in the county of Sligo, to the church-yard of Chapelizod. There was a great flat stone over that small parcel of the rector's freehold, which the family held by a tenure, not of lives, but of deaths, renewable for ever. So that my uncle, who was a man of an anxious temperament, had little trouble in satisfying himself of the meerings and identity of this narrow tenement, to which Lemuel Mattocks, the sexton, led him as straight and confidently as he could have done to the communion-table.

My uncle, therefore, fiated the sexton's presentment, and the work commenced forthwith. I don't know whether all boys have the same liking for horrors which I am conscious of having possessed—I only know that I liked the churchyard, and deciphering tombstones, and watching the labours of the sexton, and hearing the old world village talk that often got up over the relics.

When this particular grave was pretty nearly finished—it lay from east to west—a lot of earth fell out at the northern side, where an old coffin had lain, and good store of brown dust and grimy bones, and the yellow skull itself came tumbling about the sexton's feet. These fossils, after his wont, he lifted decently with the point of his shovel, and pitched into a little nook beside the great mound of mould at top.

'Be the powers o' war! here's a battered head-piece for yez,' said young Tim Moran, who had picked up the cranium, and was eyeing it curiously, turning it round the while.

'Show it here, Tim;' 'let *me* look,' cried two or three neighbours, getting round as quickly as they could.

'Oh! murdher;' said one.

'Oh! be the powers o' Moll Kelly!' cried another.

'Oh! bloody wars!' exclaimed a third.

'That poor fellow got no chance for his life at all, at all!' said Tim.

'That was a bullet,' said one of them, putting his finger into a clean circular aperture as large as a half-penny.

'An' look at them two cracks. Och, murther!'

'There's only one. Oh, I see you're right, *two*, begorra!'

'Aich o' them a wipe iv a poker.'

Mattocks had climbed nimbly to the upper level, and taking the skull in his fist, turned it about this way and that, curiously. But though he was no chicken, his memory did not go far enough back to throw any light upon the matter.

‘Could it be the Mattross that was shot in the year ‘90, as I often heerd, for sthrikin’ his captain?’ suggested a by-stander.

‘Oh! that poor fellow’s buried round by the north side of the church,’ said Mattocks, still eyeing the skull. ‘It could not be Counsellor Gallagher, that was kilt in the jewel with Colonel Ruck—he was hot in the head—bud it could not be—augh! not at all.’

‘Why not, Misther Mattocks?’

‘No, nor the Mattross neither. This, ye see, is a dhry bit o’ the yard here; there’s ould Darby’s coffin, at the bottom, down there, sound enough to stand on, as you see, wid a plank; an’ he was buried in the year ‘93. Why, look at the coffin this skull belongs to, ‘tid go into powdher between your fingers; ‘tis nothin’ but tindher.’

‘I believe you’re right, Mr. Mattocks.’

‘Phiat! to be sure. ‘Tis longer undher ground by thirty years, good, or more maybe.’

Just then the slim figure of my tall mild uncle, the curate, appeared, and his long thin legs, in black worsted stockings and knee-breeches, stepped reverently and lightly among the graves. The men raised their hats, and Mattocks jumped lightly into the grave again, while my uncle returned their salute with the sad sort of smile, a regretful kindness, which he never exceeded, in these solemn precincts.

It was his custom to care very tenderly for the bones turned up by the sexton, and to wait with an awful solicitude until, after the reading of the funeral service, he saw them gently replaced, as nearly as might be, in their old bed; and discouraging all idle curiosity or levity respecting them, with a solemn rebuke, which all respected. Therefore it was, that so soon as he appeared the skull was, in Hibernian phrase, ‘dropt like a hot potato,’ and the grave-digger betook himself to his spade so nimbly.

‘Oh! Uncle Charles,’ I said, taking his hand, and leading him towards the foot of the grave; ‘such a wonderful skull has come up! It is shot through with a bullet, and cracked with a poker besides.’

‘Tis thrue for him, your raverence; he was murdered twiste over, whoever he was—rest his sowl;’ and the sexton, who had nearly completed his work, got out of the grave again, with a demure activity, and raising the brown relic with great reverence, out of regard for my good uncle, he turned it about slowly before the eyes of the curate, who scrutinised it, from a little distance, with a sort of melancholy horror.

‘Yes, Lemuel,’ said my uncle, still holding my hand, ‘twas undoubtedly a murder; ay, indeed! He sustained two heavy blows, beside that gunshot through the head.’

‘Twasn’t gunshot, Sir; why the hole ‘id take in a grape-shot,’ said an old fellow, just from behind my uncle, in a pensioner’s cocked hat,

leggings, and long old-world red frock-coat, speaking with a harsh reedy voice, and a grim sort of reserved smile.

I moved a little aside, with a sort of thrill, to give him freer access to my uncle, in the hope that he might, perhaps, throw a light upon the history of this remarkable memorial. The old fellow had a rat-like gray eye—the other was hid under a black patch—and there was a deep red scar across his forehead, slanting from the patch that covered the extinguished orb. His face was purplish, the tinge deepening towards the lumpish top of his nose, on the side of which stood a big wart, and he carried a great walking-cane over his shoulder, and bore, as it seemed to me, an intimidating, but caricatured resemblance to an old portrait of Oliver Cromwell in my Whig grandfather's parlour.

'You don't think it a bullet wound, Sir?' said my uncle, mildly, and touching his hat—for coming of a military stock himself, he always treated an old soldier with uncommon respect.

'Why, please your raverence,' replied the man, reciprocating his courtesy; '*I know* it's not.'

'And what *is* it, then, my good man?' interrogated the sexton, as one in authority, and standing on his own dunghill.

'The trepan,' said the fogey, in the tone in which he'd have cried 'attention' to a raw recruit, without turning his head, and with a scornful momentary skew-glance from his gray eye.

'And do you know whose skull that was, Sir?' asked the curate.

'Ay do I, Sir, *well*,' with the same queer smile, he answered. 'Come, now, you're a grave-digger, my fine fellow,' he continued, accosting the sexton cynically; 'how long do you suppose that skull's been under ground?'

'Long enough; but not so long, *my* fine fellow, as yours has been above ground.'

'Well, you're right there, for *I* seen him buried,' and he took the skull from the sexton's hands; 'and I'll tell you more, there was some dry eyes, too, at his funeral—ha, ha, ha!'

'You were a resident in the town, then?' said my uncle, who did not like the turn his recollections were taking.

'Ay, Sir, that I was,' he replied; 'see that broken tooth, there—I forgot 'twas there—and the minute I seen it, I remembered it like this morning—I could swear to it—when he laughed; ay, and that sharp corner to it—hang him,' and he twirled the loose tooth, the last but two of all its fellows, from its socket, and chucked it into the grave.

'And were you—you weren't in the army, *then*?' enquired the curate, who could not understand the sort of scoffing dislike he seemed to bear it.

‘Be my faith I was so, Sir—the Royal Irish Artillery,’ replied he, promptly.

‘And in what capacity?’ pursued his reverence.

‘Drummer,’ answered the mulberry-faced veteran.

‘Ho!—Drummer? That’s a good time ago, I dare say,’ said my uncle, looking on him reflectively.

‘Well, so it is, not far off fifty years,’ answered he. ‘He was a hard-headed codger, he was; but you see the sprig of shillelagh was too hard for him—ha, ha, ha!’ and he gave the skull a smart knock with his walking-cane, as he grinned at it and wagged his head.

‘Gently, gently, my good man,’ said the curate, placing his hand hastily upon his arm, for the knock was harder than was needed for the purpose of demonstration.

‘You see, Sir, at that time, our Colonel-in-Chief was my Lord Blackwater,’ continued the old soldier, ‘not that we often seen him, for he lived in France mostly; the Colonel-en-Second was General Chattersworth, and Colonel Stafford was Lieutenant-Colonel, and under him Major O’Neill; Captains, four—Cluffe, Devereux, Barton, and Burgh: First Lieutenants—Puddock, Delany, Sackville, and Armstrong; Second Lieutenants—Salt; Barber, Lillyman, and Pringle; Lieutenant Fireworkers—O’Flaherty—’

‘I beg your pardon,’ interposed my uncle, ‘*Fireworkers*, did you say?’

‘Yes, Sir.’

‘And what, pray, does a Lieutenant *Fireworker* mean?’

‘Why, law bless you, Sir! a Fireworker! ‘twas his business to see that the men loaded, sarved, laid, and fired the gun all right. But that doesn’t signify; you see this old skull, Sir: well, ‘twas a nine days’ wonder, and the queerest business you ever heerd tell of. Why, Sir, the women was frightened out of their senses, an’ the men puzzled out o’ their wits—they wor—ha, ha, ha! an’ I can tell you all about it—a mighty black and bloody business it was—’

‘I—I beg your pardon, Sir: but I think—yes—the funeral has arrived; and for the present, I must bid you good-morning.’

And so my uncle hurried to the church, where he assumed his gown, and the solemn rite proceeded.

When all was over, my uncle, after his wont, waited until he had seen the disturbed remains re-deposited decently in their place; and then, having disrobed, I saw him look with some interest about the church-yard, and I knew ‘twas in quest of the old soldier.

‘I saw him go away during the funeral,’ I said.

‘Ay, the old pensioner,’ said my uncle, peering about in quest of him.

And we walked through the town, and over the bridge, and we saw nothing of his cocked hat and red single-breasted frock, and returned rather disappointed to tea.

I ran into the back room which commanded the church-yard in the hope of seeing the old fellow once more, with his cane shouldered, grinning among the tombstones in the evening sun. But there was no sign of him, or indeed of anyone else there. So I returned, just as my uncle, having made the tea, shut down the lid of his silver tea-pot with a little smack; and with a kind but absent smile upon me, he took his book, sat down and crossed one of his thin legs over the other, and waited pleasantly until the delightful infusion should be ready for our lips, reading his old volume, and with his disengaged hand gently stroking his long shin-bone.

In the meantime, I, who thirsted more for that tale of terror which the old soldier had all but begun, of which in that strangely battered skull I had only an hour ago seen face to face so grizzly a memento, and of which in all human probability I never was to hear more, looked out dejectedly from the window, when, whom should I behold marching up the street, at slow time, towards the Salmon House, but the identical old soldier, cocked-hat, copper nose, great red single-breasted coat with its prodigious wide button-holes, leggings, cane, and all, just under the village tree.

‘Here he is, oh! Uncle Charles, here he comes,’ I cried.

‘Eh, the soldier, is he?’ said my uncle, tripping in the carpet in his eagerness, and all but breaking the window.

‘So it is, indeed; run down, my boy, and beg him to come up.’

But by the time I had reached the street, which you may be sure was not very long, I found my uncle had got the window up and was himself inviting the old boy, who having brought his left shoulder forward, thanked the curate, saluting soldier-fashion, with his hand to his hat, palm foremost. I’ve observed, indeed, than those grim old campaigners who have seen the world, make it a principle to accept anything in the shape of a treat. If it’s bad, why, it costs them nothing; and if good, so much the better.

So up he marched, and into the room with soldierly self-possession, and being offered tea, preferred punch, and the ingredients were soon on the little round table by the fire, which, the evening being sharp, was pleasant; and the old fellow being seated, he brewed his nectar, to his heart’s content; and as we sipped our tea in pleased attention, he, after his own fashion, commenced the story, to which I listened with an interest which I confess has never subsided.

Many years after, as will sometimes happen, a flood of light was unexpectedly poured over the details of his narrative; on my com-

ing into possession of the diary, curiously minute, and the voluminous correspondence of Rebecca, sister to General Chatterworth, with whose family I had the honour to be connected. And this journal, to me, with my queer cat-like affection for this old village, a perfect treasure—and the interminable *bundles* of letters, sorted and arranged so neatly, with little abstracts of their contents in red ink, in her own firm thin hand upon the covers, from all and to all manner of persons—for the industrious lady made fair copies of all the letters she wrote—formed for many years my occasional, and always pleasant winter night's reading.

I wish I could infuse their spirit into what I am going to tell, and above all that I could inspire my readers with ever so little of the peculiar interest with which the old town has always been tinted and saddened to my eye. My boyish imagination, perhaps, kindled all the more at the story, by reason of it being a good deal connected with the identical old house in which we three—my dear uncle, my idle self, and the queer old soldier—were then sitting. But wishes are as vain as regrets; so I'll just do my best, bespeaking your attention, and submissively abiding your judgment.

CHAPTER I.

THE RECTOR'S NIGHT-WALK TO HIS CHURCH.

AD. 1767—in the beginning of the month of May—I mention it because, as I said, I write from memoranda, an awfully dark night came down on Chapelizod and all the country round.

I believe there was no moon, and the stars had been quite put out under the wet 'blanket of the night,' which impenetrable muffler overspread the sky with a funereal darkness.

There was a little of that sheet-lightning early in the evening, which betokens sultry weather. The clouds, column after column, came up sullenly over the Dublin mountains, rolling themselves from one horizon to the other into one black dome of vapour, their slow but steady motion contrasting with the awful stillness of the air. There was a weight in the atmosphere, and a sort of undefined menace brooding over the little town, as if unseen crime or danger—some mystery of iniquity—was stealing into the heart of it, and the disapproving heavens scowled a melancholy warning.

That morning old Sally, the rector's housekeeper, was disquieted. She had dreamed of making the great four-post, state bed, with the dark green damask curtains—a dream that betokened some coming trouble—it might, to be sure, be ever so small—(it had once come with no worse result than Dr. Walsingham's dropping his purse, containing something under a guinea in silver, over the side of the ferry boat)—but again it might be tremendous. The omen hung over them doubtful.

A large square letter, with a great round seal, as big as a crown piece, addressed to the Rev. Hugh Walsingham, Doctor of Divinity, at his house, by the bridge, in Chapelizod, had reached him in the morning, and plainly troubled him. He kept the messenger a good hour awaiting his answer; and, just at two o'clock, the same messenger returned with a second letter—but this time a note sufficed for reply. 'Twill seem ungracious,' said the doctor, knitting his brows over his

closed folio in the study; 'but I cannot choose but walk clear in my calling before the Lord. How can I honestly pronounce hope, when in my mind there is nothing but *fear*—let another do it if he see his way—I do enough in being present, as 'tis right I should.'

It was, indeed, a remarkably dark night—a rush and downpour of rain! The doctor stood just under the porch of the stout brick house—of King William's date, which was then the residence of the worthy rector of Chapelizod—with his great surtout and cape on—his leggings buttoned up—and his capacious leather 'overalls' pulled up and strapped over these—and his broad-leafed hat tied down over his wig and ears with a mighty silk kerchief. I dare say he looked absurd enough—but it was the women's doing—who always, upon emergencies, took the doctor's wardrobe in hand. Old Sally, with her kind, mild, grave face, and gray locks, stood modestly behind in the hall; and pretty Lilius, his only child, gave him her parting kiss, and her last grand charge about his shoes and other exterior toggery, in the porch; and he patted her cheek with a little fond laugh, taking old John Tracy's, the butler's, arm. John carried a handsome horn-lantern, which flashed now on a roadside bush—now on the discoloured battlements of the bridge—and now on a streaming window. They stepped out—there were no umbrellas in those days—splashing among the wide and widening pools; while Sally and Lilius stood in the porch, holding candles for full five minutes after the doctor and his 'Jack-o'-the-lantern,' as he called honest John, whose arm and candle always befriended him in his night excursions, had got round the corner.

Through the back bow-window of the Phoenix, there pealed forth—faint in the distance and rain—a solemn royal ditty, piped by the tune-ful Aldermen of Skinner's Alley, and neither unmusical nor somehow uncongenial with the darkness, and the melancholy object of the doctor's walk, the chant being rather monastic, wild, and dirge-like. It was a quarter past ten, and no other sound of life or human neighbourhood was stirring. If secrecy were an object, it was well secured by the sable sky, and the steady torrent which rolled down with electric weight and perpendicularity, making all nature resound with one long hush—sh—sh—sh—sh—deluging the broad street, and turning the channels and gutters into mimic mill-streams which snorted and hurtled headlong through their uneven beds, and round the corners towards the turbid Liffey, which, battered all over with rain, muddy, and sullen, reeled its way towards the sea, rolling up to the heavens an aspect black as their own.

As they passed by the Phoenix (a little rivulet, by-the-bye, was spouting down from the corner of the sign; and indeed the night was such as might well have caused that suicidal fowl to abandon all

thoughts of self-incremation, and submit to an unprecedented death by drowning), there was no idle officer, or lounging waiter upon the threshold. Military and civilians were all snug in their quarters that night; and the inn, except for the 'Aldermen' in the back parlour, was doing no business. The door was nearly closed, and only let out a tall, narrow slice of candle-light upon the lake of mud, over every inch of which the rain was drumming.

The doctor's lantern glided by—and then across the street—and so leisurely along the foot-way, by the range of lightless hall doors towards the Salmon House, also dark; and so, sharp round the corner, and up to the church-yard gate, which stood a little open, as also the church door beyond, as was evidenced by the feeble glow of a lantern from within.

I dare say old Bob Martin, the sexton, and grave Mr. Irons, the clerk, were reassured when they heard the cheery voice of the rector hailing them by name. There were now three candles in church; but the edifice looked unpleasantly dim, and went off at the far end into total darkness. Zekiel Irons was a lean, reserved fellow, with a black wig and blue chin, and something shy and sinister in his phiz. I don't think he had entertained honest Bob with much conversation from those thin lips of his during their grizzly *tête-à-tête* among the black windows and the mural tablets that overhung the aisle.

But the rector had lots to say—though deliberately and gravely, still the voice was genial and inspiring—and exorcised the shadows that had been gathering stealthily around the lesser Church functionaries. Mrs. Irons's tooth, he learned, was still bad; but she was no longer troubled with 'that sour humour in her stomach.' There were sour humours, alas! still remaining—enough, and to spare, as the clerk knew to his cost. Bob Martin thanked his reverence; the cold rheumatism in his hip was better.' Irons, the clerk, replied, 'he had brought two prayer-books.' Bob averred 'he could not be mistaken; the old lady was buried in the near-vault; though it was forty years before, he remembered it like last night. They changed her into her lead coffin in the vault—he and the undertaker together—her own servants would not put a hand to her. She was buried in white satin, and with her rings on her fingers. It was her fancy, and so ordered in her will. They said she was mad. He'd know her face again if he saw her. She had a long hooked nose; and her eyes were open. For, as he was told, she died in her sleep, and was quite cold and stiff when they found her in the morning. He went down and saw the coffin to-day, half an hour after meeting his reverence.'

The rector consulted his great warming-pan of a watch. It was drawing near eleven. He fell into a reverie, and rambled slowly up

and down the aisle, with his hands behind his back, and his dripping hat in them, swinging nearly to the flags,—now lost in the darkness—now emerging again, dim, nebulous, in the foggy light of the lanterns. When this clerical portrait came near, he was looking down, with gathered brows, upon the flags, moving his lips and nodding, as if counting them, as was his way. The doctor was thinking all the time upon the one text:—Why should this livid memorial of two great crimes be now disturbed, after an obscurity of twenty-one years, as if to jog the memory of scandal, and set the great throat of the monster baying once more at the old midnight horror?

And as for that old house at Ballyfermot, why any one could have looked after it as well as he. ‘Still he must live somewhere, and certainly this little town is quieter than the city, and the people, on the whole, very kindly, and by no means curious.’ This latter was a mistake of the doctor’s, who, like other simple persons, was fond of regarding others as harmless repetitions of himself. ‘And his sojourn will be,’ he says, ‘but a matter of weeks; and the doctors mind wandered back again to the dead, and forward to the remoter consequences of his guilt, so he heaved a heavy, honest sigh, and lifted up his head and slackened his pace for a little prayer, and with that there came the rumble of wheels to the church door.