

**THE FRIAR'S CURSE: A
LEGEND OF INISHOWEN,
OR, DREAMS OF FANCY
WHEN THE NIGHT WAS DARK**

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The Friar's Curse: A Legend of Inishowen, Or, Dreams of Fancy when the Night was Dark by
Michael Quigley

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MICHAEL QUIGLEY

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BY

MICHAEL QUIGLEY.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN presenting this little volume to the patronage of my countrymen, I have only to state, that it was written after the exhaustive labors of the day, by the light of the lamp, as a means to divert the mind from the sterner trials of every-day life. Under more favorable circumstances it might have been less unworthy.

As it is, I am in hopes that many, who, like me, are debarred from visiting in person the far-off hills of holy Ireland, will accompany me, in imagination, to the rude but hospitable hearth of our native glens. To those familiar with the locality of the story, I hope they will deal gently with the inexperienced and untutored hand, that has thus attempted to portray from the tablets of memory—scenes worthy the pencil and genius of an artist, who could contemplate in person the grandeur of the landscape—

“Till from the wondrous wild around,
The soul her inspiration found.”

The Friar's Curse.

CANTO FIRST.

The wintry day had closed in night,
Tho' not a star appeared in sight ;
The rain fell cold, fierce blew the blast,
And gloom the face of heaven o'er cast,
When turning from the surging Foyle, †
His winter leggings splashed with soil,
And bending 'neath a cumbrous load,
A traveler takes the mountain road,
That clambering o'er the Cloghan lone,
Winds through the vales of Inishowen.
The gale that from the hill swept down,
At times the torrent's roar would drown ;
Its pelting hail and blinding spray,
The traveler often held at bay ;
But ever 'twixt each fitful surge,
His toilsome upward way would urge.
Now dipping in the deep ravine,
The tortuous path is scarcely seen ;
Now o'er the treach'rous moor it bends,

Now cross the mountains breast ascends ;
Now backward turns to shun some mass
Of rock that blocks the narrow pass ;
Yet ev'ry step the traveler strode,
He seemed familiar with the road.
Soon darker shadows fall around,
The pathway climbs o'er icy ground,
As higher up the hill he wends,
He with more chilling gale contends ;
The rain and hail he braved below,
Now fall around his track in snow,
Till weary, way-worn and oppressed,
He wanders on the mountain's breast ;
His pathway lost, his vigor gone,
Benumb'd, confounded and alone.
May pitying heav'n in mercy bend,
And to his prayers an answer send.
We leave him lorn and in distress,
To view another's wretchedness,
Who at the closing of the day,
Traversed the self-same dreary way ;
Contending with the mountain gale,
Ere yet our trav'ler left the vale ;
Oft forced to turn, his breath to gain,
So fiercely swept the wintry rain ;
And as he climb'd the mountain hold,
The shrieking wind grew fierce and cold ;
The rain that drench'd him in the dale,
Now makes his cloak a coat of mail ;
Adds to the burden of his woe,
Up in this land of ice and snow ;

But his lithe limbs and youthful breast,
At last attain the mountain's crest ;
Where on the Cloghan's summit high,
Seen dimly 'gainst the murky sky,
He seems the monarch of the waste,
On barren throne of ruin placed,
Stern guardsman o'er his rude domain,
Who knows no rival in his reign !
Now turning down a narrow dell,
Where soft as dew on holy well,
The snow among the heather fell,
Beneath a crag's projecting crown,
Awhile to rest he sits him down.
There came a lull amid the storm,
The crescent moon unveiled her form,
Threw on Glentogher's mountain stream,
A churlish, chilling, sickly beam,
But not enough of light to show,
Its wand'rings in the vale below ;
Beneath the moon's dim light, display'd,
The scene the trav'ler now surveyed,
A scene so desolate and wild,
Had ne'er before his gaze beguil'd ;
In heaven the tempest-king unfur'd
His stormy banner o'er the world,
And in his tyrant wrath and pride,
From earth the struggling beams would hide
His black battalions from afar,
Now mustering to renew the war ;
Below Glentogher's giant base,
Lies dark as death—the eye may trace