

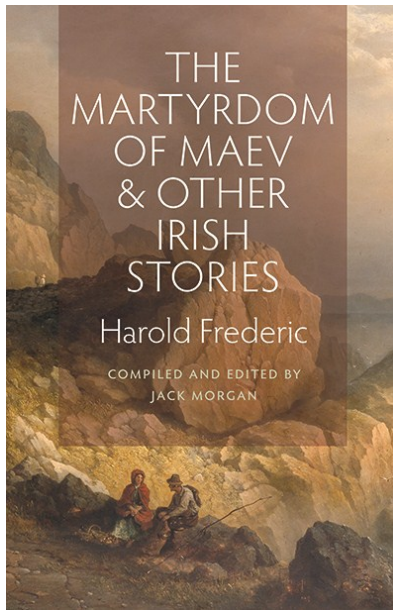


The Catholic University of America Press

The Martyrdom of Maev and Other Irish Stories

Harold Frederic

Compiled and Edited by Jack Morgan



**An exciting collection
of Irish short stories
by an acclaimed
American author**

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Harold Frederic was for a long time known primarily as a writer of New York regional fiction and historical novels. His most outstanding and influential novel, *The Damnation of Theron Ware* (1896) represents the first extended narrative in US literature of Irish-Catholic entry into American life. In 1995, a year short of that novel's centenary, Joyce Carol Oates wrote: "WHAT a wonderful novel is *The Damnation of Theron Ware*." Though raised in a German-American, Methodist environment in the Mohawk Valley of New York state, Frederic became intrigued with Ireland's people, politics, and history when post-Famine Irish began arriving in his hometown of Utica in the 1860s and 1870s.

The Martyrdom of Maev and Other Irish Stories gathers for the first time all of the Irish work Harold Frederic completed in his lifetime. He planned more, but died of a stroke in his early forties, in England, where he was employed as *The New York Times* London Correspondent. He had earlier written his publisher that he had been "toiling for years" on the archeology of the Iveagha (present Mizen) Peninsula in Cork, and that the projected book of historical fiction underway would be unique. *The Martyrdom of Maev and Other Irish Stories* brings together the four sixteenth-century stories that Frederic finished and published in magazines in 1895-96, and two of his stories set in the west of Ireland of the second-half of the nineteenth century.

Taken together the stories track the ramifications of the Elizabethan invasions as they extend to the famine, evictions, and humiliations still plaguing the country just before the rise of Parnell. The dramatic title story involves young romance caught in the political unrest that begot the Land-League and portrays as well the adamant, menacing, sexual prohibitions prevailing in the rural Ireland of the late nineteenth century. Others portray life within the remote Gaelic clans of late medieval Ireland. All the stories reveal Frederic's brilliant prose talent - "The Path of Murtoogh," for example, a starkly primitive revenge tale, is as dark and shocking as anything by Edgar Allen Poe.

For those who like Harold Frederic's fiction, or who love dramatic tales set in Ireland, this collection makes for compelling reading.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

JACK MORGAN is emeritus professor of English at University of Missouri-Rolla and author of *New World Irish: Notes on One Hundred Years of Lives and Letters in American Culture*.

PRaise FOR THE BOOK

Morgan has a gift for articulating Irish dimensions in unexpected places in American literature; here, he steps well "outside the Pale" by giving us a window on how Frederic—a German-American from upstate New York—nonetheless found the Irish irresistibly "compelling and contradictory." The stories, and Morgan's introductions, show clearly that Ireland has always functioned (both in the real world and in the imagination) as a site for scrutinizing modernity.

-James Silas Rogers, Editor,
New Hibernia Review

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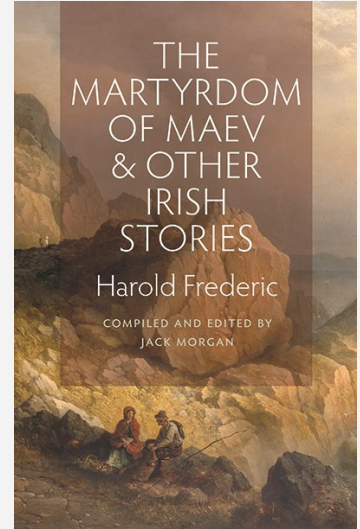
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