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THE STORY OF MISS FITZGERALD.

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Portsmouth, R. I., was settled in 1638. Nine years later it was the most populous town in the colony. Here Eleazar Slocum was born on the "25th day of the 10th month 1664." He resided there until some twenty years of age when he removed to Dartmouth Township, now included in the city of New Bedford, Mass.

In Dartmouth, he wedded an Irish girl named **Elephell Fitzgerald**. Concerning her, there are two theories. The first is that she was the daughter of an Irish earl and came to this country with her sister, who was eloping with an English officer. The second theory is that favored by Charles E. Slocum, M. D. Ph. D. In his History of the Slocums he inclines to the belief that Miss Fitzgerald was one of those Irish maidens who were shipped to New England in Cromwell's time or at later periods.

There were doubtless large numbers of these Irish girls brought over. The majority of them were, without question, Roman Catholics. Frequently their fate was a hard and cruel one. Thebaud, in his Irish Race in the Past and the Present, writing on the subject says:

"Such of them as were sent North were to be distributed among the 'saints' of New England, to be esteemed by the said 'saints' as 'idolaters,' 'vipers,' 'young reprobates,' just objects of 'the wrath of God; or, if appearing to fall in with their new and hard task-masters, to be greeted with words of dubious praise as 'brands snatched from the burning,' 'vessels of reprobation,' destined, perhaps, by a due initiation of the 'saints' to become 'vessels of the election,' in the meantime to be unmercifully scourged with the 'besom of righteousness,' at the slightest fault or mistake."

Some, however, met a better fate. Their lines fell in more fortunate places. In many cases they were kindly treated and, in time, married into the families of their recent masters. Some of them, too, reared large families of manly sons and womanly daughters and lived to a happy old age. Many of their descendants must exist today in high places. Perhaps some are not aware of their maternal Irish descent, while a few may be reluctant to acknowledge it if they are. 65 Yet, many of these Irish girls were descended from the old nobility and clansmen whose names and fames had ranked with the most illustrious in Europe.

Miss Fitzgerald's marriage to Eleazar Slocum took place in about 1687. Their children were Meribah, born in 1689; Mary, born 1691; Eleazar, born in 1693-'94; John, 1696-'97; Benjamin, 1699, and Joanna, 1702. There was also another child named Ebenezer. In 1699 the husband and father is recorded as giving £3 toward building a Quaker meeting house. His will was proved

in 1727. It makes the following provisions concerning his wife:

“Item—I give and bequeath Elephell, my beloved wife, the sum of twenty pounds [per] annum of Good and Lawful money of New England, to be paid Yearly and Every Year By my Executors During her Naturall life—

“Item—I give and bequeath to Elephell my beloved wife an Indian girl named Dorcas During the time she hath to Serve by Indenture—she fulfilling all articles on my behalf—

“Item—I give and Bequeath to Elephell my beloved wife, The great low room of my Dwelling house with the two bedrooms belonging together with the Chamber over it and the Bedrooms belonging thereto, and the Garrett and also what part of the Nw Addition she shall Choose and one half of the cellar, During her Natural life.

“Item—I will that my executors procure and supply Elephell my wife with firewood sufficient During her Natural life, And whatsoever Provisions and Corn shall be left after my Decease, I give to Elephell my wife for her support, and also the hay for Support of the Cattle. The above gifts and Bequests is all and what I intend for Elephell my wife instead of her thirds or Dowry.”

To his son Eleazar he bequeathed the northerly part of the homestead farm, 100 acres, with house, barns, orchard, etc.; to son Ebenezer, the southerly part of the homestead farm “on which my dwelling house stands.” To Eleazar and Ebenezer he also gives other lands, and to Ebenezer, in addition, one pair of oxen, a pair of steers, eight cows, two heifers, and £12. The remainder of the horses, cattle, etc., he gives to Eleazar and Ebenezer. The inventory shows £5,790 18s 11d personal estate.

His widow, Elephell (Fitzgerald) Slocum, made a will “the 19th day of the first month called March 1745–6.” It was proved on October 4, 1748. Joanna, one of her daughters, married Daniel, son of John Weeden of Jamestown, R. I. A son of theirs was named Gideon Slocum Weeden.

The late Esther B. Carpenter of Wakefield, R. I., author of a delightful volume of sketches entitled *South County Neighbors*, once alluded to Miss Fitzgerald in a note to the writer. Miss Carpenter said that she remembered to have heard her maternal grandmother say that she valued her Irish line of descent from Miss Fitzgerald above any other she could claim. This Irish connection had always been a common remark in the family. The grandmother in question had named one of her daughters Alice Joanna after her Irish ancestress, whose daughter Joanna had married a Weeden as already stated. Many of the Weeden, Slocum, and other families now in Rhode Island trace descent back to Elephell, the gentle Irish girl. Descendants of Elephell (Fitzgerald) Slocum are found today in New Bedford, Mass. The writer recently conversed with one of them.

