THE TALE OF A TOMBSTONE.

AN IRISH SEXTON'S STORY

BY DANIEL O'CONNELL TOWNLEY.

[Nors .- The following delightful little romance is from the pen of Daniel O'C. Townley, Lsq., the accomplished author of the spirited poetical brockure recently published in THE EVENING TELEGRAPH, entitled "The Rooneys." The present sketch is transferred to our columns from the Catholic World for March, a monthly magazine of general literature and science, of more than ordinary excellence, published in New York by Lawrence Kehoe, Esq., at No. 145 Nassau street. The Catholic World Is issued under the approbation of the Most Reverend Archbishop James McCloskey, of New York, and while it is especially interesting to Roman Catholics, it will be found entertaining to people of all religious denominations, and to the world outside of the Church. -ED. EV. TELEGRAPH.]

It is quite true to say that the American makes a mistake who, in his European tour. leaves Ireland out in the cold unvisited. He at least fails to make an acquaintance which could not prove otherwise than interesting, and possibly to find a burying-place where, if he had them, he might dispose of his superfluous prejudices bearing upon that island and its people-prejudices for the most part begotten of ill-directed reading or formed with the hasty conclusions of a very limited expe-

If a politician, he cannot fail to learn, ere he travels many miles, whether in Connaught or in Ulster, what he ought not to do with a people having a desire to see them prosperous and contented. If a historian, he may find food for a chapter unwritten by Hume and Smollet, or even by the more impartial Macaulay-a chapter which may throw some light upon the cause, ever obscurely and often antruthfully given, whose effect is that spirit of retrogression which hovers over the unhappy island, and lays its blighting hand upon every acre from Cork to the Giant's Causeway. If he be a painter, a poet, or a novelist, he may find in Ireland and her people an Eldorado with mines as inexhaustible as the ore is rich. If a tourist merely, even such a one as does London in a fortnight, Paris in a week and the Rhine on the fastest steamer upon that ancient river-that brilliant soul who takes his sleep o' moonlit nights, and on the days which follow, sits yawning over dinner till the shadows fall, and the storied headlands have been passed unseen-even such as he, stupid or blast, as the case may be, may find in Ireland something to awake to momen tary energy, at least, his sleeping thought and action.

Approaching the fall of 18-, having done the continental celebrities the year before, and having been in England since early in the month of May, I concluded, before returning to New York, that I should pay a flying visit to the emerald cradle of that prolific race which is, in the language of the stump, when it suits the orators to say so, the bone and sinew of these States; the great lever which uproots our forests; the great spade which hollows our canals; the huge pick and shovel and barrow that lay our iron roads over mountain and morass; and the mighty polling power which develops the peculiarities of legislators, contributes most generously to the revenue of the excise. and to the sustenance of the many good and bad people whose business of life it is to get this truly erratic people into all manner of

trouble, including jails, and out of it. With no prejudices against the Irish people, and some clear-sightedness as to the causes of their proverbial discontent, unthriftiness, and frequent turbulence, I went quite ready to sorrow or be glad, just as either mood was suggested by my surroundings; neither to sneer at their emotional enthusiasm nor to turn disgusted from their hila-

rious mirth.

Crossing from Holyhead to Dublin, I remained in that city for a few days, then visited the South and West, leaving the North to finish off with. But as the purpose of this sketch is not to detail either impressions of the country or its people, or all the personal experiences of my journey, I must proceed to the narration of the single incident, the object of this writing, referring the reader, if his appetite lean in the direction, to the pencillings of Mr. Willis or the much more truthful story-telling of Mrs. Hall. My immediate purpose is gained if I have in a slight degree awakened the reader's interest for that which follows, and if he understands that I had now almost reached that period which I had set down for the close of my tour and my return home.

Of the month I had set apart for Irelandthe bonne bouche, or if you like the Celtic better, the "doch an durhas" of my feast-I had but one week left when I found myself at Warrenpoint, a pleasant watering place on the margin of the bay of Carlingford, going northward to Belfast, Here I had been two days, rather longer than I had proposed to remain, but the season and the place at this time of the year are especially attractive. So near Ireland's highest mountain as I then was, it occurred to me how discreditable the confession would be that I had not seen it save in the purple distance, and I concluded to do myself the honor of a near acquaintance-sit upon its topmost ridge, and rifle a sprig of heather from its venerable crown, as a relic of the nearest spot to heaven on the Isle of Saints.

"No," said mine host, "your honor must mever say good-by to Ireland until you see her only living monarch who has not emigrated or been transported to a penal colony.' Slieve Donard, the king in question, was but twelve miles distant, or rather the village mestling at its foot. The road to Newcastle, the name this village bears, was one of pecuhar beauty all the way; and I chose, to me, the most enjoyable of all the ways of reaching it; I determined to walk there. So, about o'clock, on a beautiful autumn morning, the dew still upon the grass, and glistening upon the rustling leaves of the beeches in a grove of which my rustic hotel lay shadowed, armed with a stout blackthorn, a book in either pocket, and a light breakfast in its appropriate department, I set out journey; accomplished it most enjoyably, arriving with but a faint rememberance that I had eaten any

breakfast whatever, and just in time for the table d'hôte at Brady's. The hotel was full with the motley occupants peculiar, there as elsewhere, to hotels by the seaside in the bathing season. Among the guests were reverend gentlemen assorted in the nicest manner, lean kine and fat; the good-natured parish priest and the more sanctimonious and exclusive curate of the orthodox persuasion; surly country squires who

had rushed down to please their wives and the girls-"what did they want with salt water?" the city shopkeeper and his prim property, exulting in evidence of ton in every word and movement. Even the eye-glassed, red, and wiry-whiskered Cockney could be seen and heard, possibly attracted there by the reputation of the "Hirish girls for fine hives and hintellects," or probably from a peculiar horror, for private reasons, of other watering places nearer home, where landlords were less generous and accommodating, being more experienced. These, and such as these, with a few who came to see rather than to be seen,

made up the guests at Brady's. After dinner I joined a party of the class last mentioned who purposed devoting the rest of the afternoon to an excursion upon the mountain. ascending as high at least as would enable then to enjoy a scene pronounced by travellers to be one of the finest in a land praised alike in song and story for its scenic beauty. The unmingled enjoyment of that ascent-for the labor of the journey was a pleasure, toois one of the most pleasant of the many happy memories which I owe to the "Isle of Tears," The landscape which unrolled itself like a scroll when we ascended was of remarkably beauty. Rich with all the gorgeous coloring of the season was spread out, as far as the eye could reach, the unshorn wealth of cornfield and of meadow. Here and there a clump of beech or chesnut sheltered, half hidden among the foliage, the snow-white walls of a farm-

Lilliputian figures crept stealthly along through lane and over pasture, more like the tiny figures in a Flemish painting than men and cattle at their labor. The rock-bound bay was alive with its freight of toy-like fishing boats, whose white sails borrowed the golden hues of evening as the sun stole down towards the heathery forehead of Slieve Donard. The whole scene, embraced from an altitude of fourteen hundred feet, is again before me, and I revel for a moment, whilst the illusion lasts, in the unspeakable emotion which was

But as I set out to tell a story whose theatre is not the mountain, but the valley underneath, I must e'en come down again to supper and to prose, leaving, however reluctantly, Slieve Donard and its poetry behind me.

Leaving Newcastle with that regret which all must feel who leave it at such a season, I started next morning after breakfast for Castlewellan, where I intend taking the coach for Newry, having ordered my luggage to be forwarded there from my hotel at the Point,

Castlewellan is but four miles distant, and the journey thither was said to be one of the most enjoyable walks in this remantic region. The road for the entire distance is one unf the lesser hills on which the village stands,

interrupted ascent towards the summit of one affording from every point-unless when now and then a jutting mountain crag overhangs the path and for a moment intercepts the vision-a view of the broad expanse of sea, the valley widening as you rise-each footstep of the ascent adding some new beauty of form and color, light and shadow, to the scene. Half way upon my journey I sat down to

est for a minute or two by the road side, and lighted a cigar. Under its soothing influence and that of the scene beneath me, I dropped into one of those blissful reveries in which we sometimes forget our earthliness for awhile, our souls absorbed in ecstatic contemplation of the wondrous beauty, yet still more wondrous mystery, of the Creator's handiwork.

I had been thus but a short time indeed when the sound approaching footsteps broke in upon my thought, followed by the customary salutation, "God save you, sir, 'tis a heavenly morning that we have." Replying in the country phraseology, "God

save you kindly," I raised my eyes to see the passing figure of a stooped old man, with a spade upon his shoulder, moving slowly onward 'neath his weight of years, and in my direction. Always fond companion, when wanderof a ing in this way, being usually fortunate enough to meet with those to whom the scenes around me were familiar, and from whom I often learned much indeed that was new and interesting, I arose to resume my walk. Strongly impressed by the venerable form of the old peasant, as I deemed him, and thus attracted. I joined him, making some casual remarks about the appearance of the country, which easily opened the way to conversation. Enough of years have passed since that autumn morning to have worn out the then feeble thread of the old man's life, but palpable to my memory as the recollections of my wedding-day is every lineament of that expressive face. I hear again, as I write, the gentle music of his voice, his white hairs float before me stirred by the morning mountain breeze, and I greet again his expressive salutation, felt again if again unspoken, "God save you kindly."

To all my inquiries touching the country round about, and the harvest, then all but gathered from the fields, he replied in that simple yet lucid manner common to the most uneducated Irish peasant when he speaks of things familiar to him, chastened in his every remark by expressions of his gratitude to God for bounties received, and of his reliance upon His wisdom and goodness in affliction.

His calling, he told me, was a sad one. He too, was a laborer in the field, but the harvest he gathered was moist with the tears of many. Death himself was the reaper. He was the village sexton.

I had often before met men of his melancholy occupation, but the hearts of these seemed to have been hardened by the very nature of their handicraft, as they became familiarized with that sorrow bitterest to human nature—the parting for ever in this world with the truest and best beloved; but in the good old man beside me the keenest sympathy for his suffering fellow-mortals seemed to have found a meet and fitting resting-place. I learned from him that a few rods further on my way stood the chapel and burying-ground of Drumbhan, where for some fifty years back he had made the last dwelling-places of his friends and neighbors. Five minutes' walking brought us to the open gate and to the pathway leading to the modest village church, within whose sacred walls a number of the villagers had

already gathered to early mass. Guided by my new acquaintance, I also entered, joining in the sacred ceremony, which began soon afterwards.

How is it, I ask you who have accompanied me thus far, reader, how is it—and the feeling is common to almost all of us-that in such a simple edifice as that I knelt in, paintless and unpictured, unadorned by the bright conceptions of genius or the cunning fingers of art; with naked floor and whitewashed wall; window untinted with Scripture story, itself suggestive of devotion; no ornament save the simple embellishments of the altar; no music save the solemn voice of the priest, distinctly audible in the respectful stillness of the place; how is it, I ask you, that in such a sanctuary our souls seem to reach nearer to their God in silent adoration. than when we kneel on velvet cushions in the temples of the city, with their graven oak and marble pillars, their lofty domes of painted

glass, their frescoes and their statuary, their ! mighty organs, and their hundred choristers? On leaving the church at the conclusion of the mass, I rejoined the sexton, who had stopped a moment at the porch for his spade, where he had left it in the angle as we entered. I followed him across the yard, and through the wicket which separated us from the burying-ground. Calling my attention to some of the more imposing monuments of the place, he passed forward along the narrow pathway to perform the melancholy task which he had told me was his first duty of this morning-to make a grave for the last, the very last, of the companions of his boyhood; one, he said, whose death, like his life, was all peace, and that was part of the reward of the gentleness of his nature, the fulness of which was here-

Passing from stone to stone, to linger for a moment at this which told its tale of the early call of the young and innocent, or at that which spoke of many years and mayhap of many sorrows, I stopped near to one which, from the quaintness of the inscription and chaste simplicity of its form had a peculiar attraction for me. It was a cross in granite with a wreath not unskilfully chiselled crowning the upper limb, whilst along the extended arms was a single line, "The Widow and her

Leaning on a more aspiring tombstone near, I read again and again these simple words, all the while imagination doing its work of making a nistory for the mother and her child, when from this my second reverie of the morning I was again aroused by the voice of my aged

"I see you have been reading that inscription, sir," he said. "I have," I replied, "and it has stirred my curiosity rather strangely. It seems to me that there is much which th tombstone does not tell.

"Very much indeed, sir," returned the sexton; "look around meas I may at thee familiar forms, there is not one amongst them tells as and a tale as this one.'

'Your reply does not lessen my curiosity," said; "and even if it be the saddest of your sad experiences, and that I did not fear to trespass too much upon your feelings or your time, I should ask you to tell me the story of those whose resting-place is thus beautifully, yet strangely marked."

"No trespass, sir, no trespass," the old man replied. "If the story be one to recall a scene which will make my old eyes weep, it will just be such a one as suits my heart this morning. So having yet an hour to spare before the remains of my old friend can reach the ground, we shall sit down upon this grave here whilst I tell you the story of Mary Dono-

Glancing around to see that no unexpected duty called him, he seated himself on the mound proposed. I sat down beside him, an eager listener to that which follows, given to you in words as near his own as may be, but wanting in that richness of accent and figurative expression peculiar to his class and to his country

Had business or pleasure called you to Castlewellan some six years ago, began the sexton, you could hardly have failed to meet a good-natured innocent, some seventeen or eighteen years old, ever to be seen the first at Blaney's when a traveller pulled up his horse for retreshments or coach or car to set down or to receive a passenger. Ere the rattle of hoof or wheel had ceased in the court-yard before the inn, the voice of poor Ned Donovan was sure to fall upon the stranger's ear in a greeting wild, yet musical, and with that peculiarity of expression which told the story plainly that he was one of those to whom, for his own wise purpose doubtless, God had been but sparing in the gift of mind. And yet there was a childish joyousness in his every look and tone that compensated in some measure for his misfortune, evidence as it was that he was saved from the cares and anxieties common even to those of his early years.

Ned loved the horses and the cars, and knew every professional driver that came that way to fair or market for miles and miles around. He reserved, however, especial affection for the regular roadsters, man and beast; those, I mean, that drove daily to Blaney's from Newry, Rathfriland, or Dromore. The men, well acquainted with his ways, never spoke a hasty or unkind word to him, although he was occasionally self-willed in the matter of the horse-feed and the watering. The horses naturally returned the affection of one whose attendance upon them was untiring. He talked to them incessantly in public or in private; their comfort occupied the first place in his thought. He curried, whisked them down, patted and praised their best points with all the enthusiasm of a connoisseur, or, when the like happened, mourned over a broken knee or a windgall as over some serious domestic trouble, as indeed to him it was. All this and more of the kind was done without fee or reward, save the privilege at all hours of the kitchen fireside and the stables, with an occasional ride down to the river, "wid the creatures for a drink," as he would say, or "to wash the mud from their legs, and bad scran to it.15

Few days passed, however, failing to bring him a chance horse to hold for a fine gentleman, "wid boots and spurs bedad," or when he had not an errand to run, or to lend a helping hand with the luggage of some generous traveller; and with these opportunities came sixpences, sometimes even shillings, for his trouble, but oftener just because he was Ned Donovan. Many to whom his story was unknown often wondered at the glistening eager eye with which he counted his earnings over, and at the happiness an additional sixpence seemed to give him: all this was so unlike the hourly evidences of his most unselfish nature. Strangers, less charitable in mind than in pocket, led astray by this seeming love of money, not unfrequently thought that much of the boy's idiocy was put on, and they said so; but they did not know him, nor happily he the meaning of their sneers. It was amusing to follow him at the lucky moment when he got a shilling or so in this way, when he invariably made straight for the bar of the inn to deposit it with the utmost gravity of manner in the safe keeping of good Mrs. Blaney. He had learnt from bitter experience how unsafe it was to be his own banker, as he had frequently lost his earnings in the hay loft or the stable, before the happy thought had struck him to find a better keeper for them. You would have heard there, too, how he invariably came at night to withdraw his funds, and how he always had money given him, more or less. For there were unlucky days for Ned, when travellers were few or forgetful; but his memory was far from faithful in this regard, and good Mrs. Blaney was more

than kind. The reason for this seeming selfishness of Ned is easily told. He had a mother whom he loved with all his strange impassioned nature, a widowed mother. To receive her grateful smile in return for the wages of his industry each evening when he reached his home, was the crowning happiness of the

God was kindly with him-he was not alone, "Synonymous with "Idiot" among the Irish peasantry, when used in this way; they rarely use the word idiot unless in derision.

poor boy! He had a mother, and all that mother's love. Had you travelled that way you must have noticed their little cottage at the turning going up the hill to St. Mary's. You may see it even now as you pass, but the roses Mary trained there are dead and gone, the little latticed window broken, the garden weedy and desolate, telling its tale of sorrow like the tombstone.

Mary Donovan had lived there for many rears - since her boy was quite a child. She came one morning, so the gossips said, a passenger by the coach, somewhere from the Her child was then but four years North. old, and then, as ever after, an object for the sympathy of the kind of heart. She took humble lodgings, and applied to the shopkeepers and the neighboring gentry for employment at her needle, with which she was wonderfully skilled, they said. The prejudices which met her at the first, from all save the kind landlady of the "Stag," soon gave way before her patient, unbending uprightness of character, and the unfathomable sorrow that weighed her down, for sorrow is a sacred thing; even the voice of scandal hushes in its presence. Her past history was her secret. Whether it was one of shame or of suffering virtue no tongue could tell. Silent as the grave to all impertment inquiry, meck and humble before her God, and gentle as gentleness itself with every living thing, her mystery became respected, and she and her boy beloved.

From that evening when, wet and weary from her journey, she first awoke the kindly sympathies of the hostess of the "Stag"same good-natured Mrs. Blaneytwelve long years the widow pursued her peaceful way, earning for herself and for her hild not merely a livelihood, but many of the comforts of dress and food which were looked upon as luxuries by those around her; and never did mother receive more fulness of reward in the passionate love of offspring than she in that of her all but mindless boy.

When he was yet a child, often have I watched him sitting at her feet, as she sat at the cottage door or window plying her ever busy needle, listening to the strange stories of the fairies and the leprechauns of the olden times she could tell so well, Of Heaven and its glories, too, she would sometimes speak, to be interrupted by some strange remark, suggestive of more than human wisdom. Then the startled mother would fix her eyes upon his face so earnestly, as if in hope that God at last would shed light upon the shadowed mind of her bereaved one, to meet always and ever the glance of childish adoration, but with it, alas! the vacant smile that spoke forgetfulness already of the transitory ray of reason that a moment rested there.

Often have I stopped, as I passed that way, to listen to some quaint old ballad full of the melancholy music of her voice, and make my priendly inquiries for herself and child, sure to find him in his usual resting-place. My welcome was a warm one always, and my grey hairs-for they were grey even then, sir -often mingled with the yellow curls of the boy as he clambered up my knee to kiss me. We were warm friends, sir, Mary and I-for I and I only, of all living beings, knew her secret and the story of her sorrow; and this was the way I learned it.

One day, soon after her arrival in the town. I had just risen from early msss in the chapel, and turned in here upon my morning round, when the voice of some one veeping bitterly, and the sad wail of a child accompanying, drew my attention to a corner of the yard and to the kneeling figure of a woman and that of a little boy seated among the long grass of the grave beside her. Mourners were no unfamiliar sights to me, even at such an early hour, but the woman's dress bespoke the stranger and awoke my curiosity. I neared the grave, and recognized it as that of a good old man, once the village school master, who had died two years before. knew him well; for many years he had dwelt amongst us, respected himself as for his calling. He had been happy in the affections of an only child-a daughter, the very picture of her mother, he used to say, whom he had buried amongst strangers. In her was centred his every earthly hope. She was his pride, and her pleasure all the reward he sought in a life lades with all the petty vexations of the teacher. She forsook him and her happy home, and fled to England with one whom she had known for a few weeks only, who had met her at Rostrevor. where her father's fond indulgence had sent her for the season: forsook all for a husbandscandal said, a lover-who, whilst enamored of her beauty, scorned her father's pov-erty. The old man never raised his head again in the village. Two years of sorrow, and the grave closed over him. I made it. The savings of his industrious life still lay in the hands of the village pastor in safe-keeping for the lost one should she ever return to claim it; but Mary never claimed it.

I drew nearer, for my heart told me who the mourner was. I, too, had loved the girl, as who indeed had not? I, too, had shared the sorrow of her honest father, and many a time had yearned to know the fate of the fair-haired daughter of his affection.

I drew still nearer; my step was noiseless upon the grass. I leaned upon a headstone near me. I spoke the words that pressed for utterance, "Mary, Mary," I said, "You come too late, too late!"

She started from the grave; an exclamation of terror and surprise broke from her. She looked me wildly in the face, as if the spirit of her injured father stood in shape before her, and recognizing the sad features of that father's friend, she sank, sobbing convulsively, upon the grave again, hiding her pale face in the long grass which covered it.

I raised her kindly in my arms, and sitting down beside her, her wondering yet gentle boy between my knees. I heard her sad tale of passion and remorse. No other ever heard that story; she asked my silence, and I spoke

From that time forward, year after year, the penitent paid frequent visits to her father's grave; her gentle manner asked for no nquiry, and none was made, and there was nothing left of the once joyous daughter of the schoolmaster to challenge recognition. The boy, too, seemed to love the place, and oftentimes accompanied her. For her sake it was he loved it, seeming to comprehend that here there was something sharing with him her affection, some link which bound them both to the place forever.

Well, years passed on, and, as I have said the voice of scandal had long been hushed; the child had almost reached to manhood, and the silver threads of time and sorrow had stelen in among the once golden locks of the mother. Childlike ever, and uniformly good and cheerful, Ned rose each morning, and as it had been for some years, the daylight was not more certain to enter the pleasant bar-room of the "Stag" than was the shadow of the innocent to fall across its threshold, its earliest visitor. Evening brought him home with his caresses, his childish chat, and his petty earnings to his mother, who, happy at the pleasure his employment gave him, was profuse in the praises that he loved to hear.

And so matters had gone on for years, just as if they might have done so for ever, when God in his wisdom brought that sore affliction upon us all-the famine and the sickness of 47. Who that has lived through that year of misery and horror, but shudders at the remembrances its very name recalls? Who but wails some beloved one snatched away with scarce a moment's warning ?- the child from its mother's arms; the mother from the child's caresses; the youth standing full of hope on the threshold of his manhood, when the warm blood froze suddenly in his veins, the glad visions of his future faded before him as the relentless hand of death seized him with a grasp of iron, leaving him upon the earth but one hour of agony, and the breath to say farewell; the aged flung into the grave upon whose brink they had, trembling, stood for years clinging to life with more than the tenacity of the young-all, all stricken with that horror of dissolution; bowed down as if a curse had fallen upon us for our sins as once came the plague upon the Egyptians.

First amongst the victims was the long-tried, patient Mary. With sufficient warning only bring the good priest to her side, to receive the last rites of her faith, to press in her enfeebled arms her terror-stricke son, and upon his lips one agonizing kiss-and her soul was

The agony of the boy when once he realized the great grief that had fallen upon him was, they told me, so fearful and so wild as to wring with horror the hearts of all who heard him. After a time he was somewhat pacified by the gentle per-suasion of the priest, and the kind soothing of some good-natured neighbors, who, dis-regarding the danger of the infection, had gathered in out of love and pity. They strove to lead him from the deathbed; but no, the first paroxysm of despair once over, he sat himself down, silent, yet stern, by the bedside. He spoke not, he wept not. Apparently unconscious of the presence of others as of his own existence, the icy fingers of one hand clasped in his, he thus sat gazing, motionless as stone, upon the dead face of his mother,

On through the long hours of that autumn night sat the stricken mourner, and though daylight came, ay, even the sunlight that he loved stole in and crept up upon the bed till it fell upon the placid features of the dead, illumining them as with the glory of immortality, still he moved not. Dead as the dead he seemed, in all but the strange, weird evidence of being in his eyes. Stolid he remained to all remonstrances; silent as motionless to all words of comfort.

The hour came at last for preparation towards the removal of the body—for the cholera did not spare the poor body after death, decay set in so apidly-when, contrary to the expectation of all, the innocent voluntarily arose and even assisted at the necessary dutiess, duties which must have conveyed to him the knowledge of his approaching parting with her to whom he still clung as lovingly in death as he had done

It was the afternoon of the day following that of Mary's death when a few neighbors gathered to see her home, poor girl! I should not say a few either, for they were many at such a time, when the dead cart rattled hourly past the door, and sorrowing and desolation was in every home. They bore her from the cottage and along

the way leading to the burying ground of Castlewellan, the parish she had lived and died The wailing orphan walked stealthily behind, his head low bent, unearthly pallor on his face, his fingers interlaced before him, every motion and expression speaking of the sorrow unto death, of the mortal agony of desolation. Mournfully the procession passed along till it reached the cross road leading to this village here; but continuing their journey, those forming it were suddenly interrupted by a shoulder and came upon my way, feeling wild, unearthly cry from the lips of the idiot. drawn towards the place, I knew not why.

"Where are yez goin', men, where are yez goin', men, I say? You must take her to Drumbhan, you must take her to Drumbhan! She said she would lie there some day beside her father; do you hear that, men? So bring her to Drumbhan, I say !"

His agony was fearful, his shriek inhuman in the flerceness of its passion. The bearers stopped, the mourners gathered around the boy, but vain was every effort to appease him, and still his cry rose far above their words of comfort:--"Bring her to Drumbhan, oh!

None there knew, as I have said, the mother's story, and all believed this but a wild, unreasonable fancy of poor Ned's; but had it been otherwise, what could they do? The grave was already made, and the good priest waiting to give the last religious rite to the body of this patient and enduring Christian.

Seeing that they again moved on, Ned suddenly seased his cry, as if he had formed some strange resolution which pacified him, and relapsed into the sullen gloom that had preceded the outery of his anguish. They buried her; he came away quietly with them. They sought, some of them, to bring him to their houses, thinking to save him the agony of returning home just then to miss her presence; but all efforts to lead him any way that towards his desolate home were fruitless. He returned to the cottage. He sat down by the vacant bed and rocked himself to and fro, singing with mournful pathos snatches from an old ballad, a favorite of his mother's.

An old neighbor promising to remain with him that night and care for the cottage till next day, when arrangements were to be made for the disposal of its contents and for the future of poor Ned, the others went to their homes.

The shadows of the night came down. In and near the cottage all was silent. The old woman crept towards the boy to rouse him from his lethargy, and to urge him to take some food which she had prepared for him. He was asleep. Thanking God for this, His greatest gift to the sorrowing heart, the old woman sat down, and covering her shoulders with her cloak, dozed away an hour or two, then awoke and watched, then slept again, again awoke to find the idiot still asleep, and then slept again.

About an hour after sunrise she started from her seat, alarmed by an outcry at the door, her name being loudly called. "In God's name, what's the matter? who's dead now? is

it the priest, alanna ? "Oh, may the Lord be betune us an harum," said a voice from amongst a crowd of excited people at the door, "if they haven't raised poor Mary's body in the night! Here's Brian an' myself saw the empty grave as we passed by the chapel yard just now. Sure never was such a thing as that ever heard of before in Castlewellan anyhow.

"Whisht, whisht, for the love av God," said the old woman, "or Ned will hear yez, and turning towards the bedside, hoping that he still slept quietly, she saw but his vacant seat—the boy was gone.
"I know it all, I know it all," she cried.

"As sure as God's in heaven this day, he's gone and raised her up himself. I heard him in his sleep, the crature, but thought nothing of his demented talk. Go after him, men! Go after him, I say! He has gone wid her to Drumbhan.'

They hurried off with many others who now

heard this extraordinary story. eagerly down the hill towards the village here. You know the distance, maybe? Two long miles at least. Well, when they had reached within half a mile of this spot, sure enough, God knows, they overtook the crasy boy, wheeling before him on a barrow the coffin containing the dead body of his mother.

Never did human eye see sight like this before. He heard their hurried footsteps coming on behind him, and setting down the barrow gently on the road, he turned suddenly upon them with all the frenzy of the flercest madness in his face, and raising up the spade that lay beside the coffin, and brandishing it above his head, he cried, "Back, back, I tell you all; touch her one of you, and I'll cleave him! Didn't I tell you to bring her to Drumb han? Didn't I tell you she wanted to sleep down here beside her father? You thought that you were good, did you, and Father Connor, too, to put her up in the hill beside the big church there? But what did you know? what did you know? Did she tell any of you last night that she couldn't rest there; did she do that, I say? No, no, she came to me who loved her, to her own poor Ned-she came and asked me to bring her to Drumbhan; and so I will-so I will, I say, in spite of you all ! in spite of you all !"

So saying, he raised the barrow once again and passed onward with his burden. They spoke not. They made no effort to turn him from his purpose. Many there were who would gladly have eased the exhausted creature of his burden, but, awe-stricken, they feared to approach him, and silently fell behind a second time in sad procession at the widow's funeral.

At last he reached the gate there. I was standing at it when he came. He wheeled his burden along that path behind us, and to the grave here. I followed with the rest, as powerless to interfere as they. He laid down the barrow gently again, and taking up the spade he had carried with him, began to dig the grave. I joined him. He looked at me first inquiringly; then recognizing me, muttered something to himself as if approvingly. Other hands besides ours were soon at work, and a few minutes more found Mary resting by her father's side and the last sod carefully replaced-when, failing only when his task was done, the worn-out boy sank senseless upon the grave.

They carried him away gently, and when consciousness returned, they soothed him with kind words. The women blessed him and praised his mother, and his love for her, till recollection returned, and tears for his loss stole silently down the idiot's cheeks. All traces of passion had disappeared, and in its place there seemed the evidence of a newborn intelligence in the mute yet expressive sorrow of that pale face.

He went with them without a murmur: several times turned hastily whilst in sight of the graveyard to look back, then disappeared.

All that day the picture of that poor creature and the scene in which he played so strange a part, haunted me at every step. Still I saw him coming as he did that morning down the hill; the barrow, the coffin, the crowd walking solemnly after. Still I saw it through that long, long day, and leave my fancy it would not. That night I could not True, I had loved poor Mary and I had loved her boy; still I had laid away in their narrow beds many, very many that were dear to me, linked to my affection by the closest ties of kindred, but I had never sorrowed, old man as I was, as I had done that day; never felt such awe at the untold mystery of our nature and the wonderful ways of my God. In the morning I arose early, early for me,

and although no duty called me here till after early prayers, I took my spade upon my The morning was as beautiful as this one, nd as I think I have said before the s

of the year the same. Already here and ther. I noticed, as I came along, familiar faces in the fields, and some, too, of my neighbors I met upon the road; but contrary to my usual cusom I avoided the familiar chat so frequently indulged in when we met each other at such an early hour, passing on with a "good morrow" only, eager to reach Drumbhan. Some twenty minutes brought me to the

chapel, for I lived then as I do now, a short mile below there. I went in to say a prayer, conscious of my weakness, in the hope to shake the weight from off my shoulders that pressed me down so heavily. Thence passing into the graveyard here, I turned my eyes in this direction to behold, prostrate upon the grave of his mother, the loving, harmless boy.

My knees trembled as with palsy. How came he here? I said, and when? asked not; I knew too well of this love that was more than earthly. Tottering, I drew near; I called him by his name. He answered not. I called again. No voice replied: nor sound, nor motion was there save the echo of my voice and my hurried footfall as I neared the spot. I stooped, raised him in my arms, I parted from his brow the long hair damp with the dew of morning. I gazed upon that pale, pale face, which, in the holy peace that rested there, spoke of the goodness and the mercy of our Heavenly Father, into whose holy keeping the spotless soul had passed. He was

The sexton's tale was told.

COPARTNERSHIPS.

DISSOLUTION.

The Copartnership heretofore existing between the undersigned, under the firm of DAVLES BROTHERS. ceases from this date. CHARLES E, DAVIES, PETER A. DAVIES, Philadelphia, March 30, 186

The undersigned has this day commenced the transaction of a general BANKING AND BROKERAGE BUSINESS, at No. 22) DOUK Street, GOVERNMENT SECURITIES of all kinds STOCKS, BONDS, and GOLD bought and sold on COMMISSION,
MERCANTILE PAPER and LOANS ON COL LATERAL negotiated.

SAMUEL N. DAVIES. Philadelphia, April 1, 1867.

DISSOLUTION OF COPARTNERSHIP,—
firm-name of BROOKE & FUGH, doing business at Nos. Ital and 1758 MARKET Street, is this day dissolved by mutual consent. All persons who have claims against the above firm will present them to the undersigned for immediate settlement, and those who are indebted to the same will please make early payment.

NATHAN BROOKE, Philladelphia, April 1, 1887.

Philadelphia, April 1, 1887.

NOTICE OF COPARTNERSHIP.

The undersigned bave this day formed a Copartnership under the firm-name of BROOKE, COLKET & CO., for five years, ending the list day of March, 1872, and will continue the Flour, Grain, and Produce Commission Business, at the old stand, Nes. 1731 and 1782 MARKET Street.

NATHAN BROOKE.

GEORGE H. COLKET, EDWARD H. PUGH.

Philadelphia, April 1, 1867.

4 2 12t

TEW YORK DYEING AND PRINTING ESOmice in Philadelphia, No. 50 North EIGHTH Street,
West side.
This Company, now in the forty-eighth year of its
existence, is prepared to BYE, CLEANSE, and
FINISH, in an unequalised manner, all kinds of
ladice and gentlemen's Garmenia and Picce Goods.
Ladics' Dresses and Velvet Mantillas, Gent's Coats,
Pants, etc., cleansed, without affecting the shape or
color.