

THE TWO BLACKSMITHS

Their Strange Experience With a Ghost at Randalstown and Harry Donnell's Resolution.

Irish Fireside Stories.

Upwards of forty years ago, in the beautiful little village of Randalstown,

Whom never a town surpasses For honest men and bonnie lasses, there lived a blacksmith named James Walker; he was an industrious, honest man, and regularly attended the Presbyterian house of worship—but still he had his fallings. He occasionally took a little too much of the mountain-dew, to quench the spark in his throat, but was accounted a most excellent workman, notwithstanding. About a mile and a half from the village on the road leading to Ahoghill, lived another blacksmith, called Harry Donnell. Harry was in most respects a similar character; for he too had a similar falling, with this exception, that though he had to pass through Randalstown to the chapel, he made it a point never to be seen tippy on Sunday. At any other time, when he came to the village, James and he were sure to have a drop. During their potations, however, they never meddled with religion, wisely observing, that it was a subject too sacred for discussion over the bottle. Their time was generally employed in discussing the most improved methods of shoeing horses, making spades and plow-irons, etc., and whatever improvement any one had made or found out, it was freely imparted to the other.

It happened one year, in the latter part of the autumn, that Harry had been detained longer than usual from seeing his friend, but having got his corn in, and the potatoes secured from the coming frosty blast, he resolved to go to the village, to purchase some iron, and coals, and other articles, but more especially to see his friend James, and have a glass. He left home in the afternoon of one of the dreary days in November, telling his family not to be uneasy if he should delay longer than usual, being almost certain he would get company home.

As he rode along the road, his eye wandered with delight down the sloping vale of the River Main, where the then comfortable farmers resided in independence, and hospitality sat smiling at their board; but, alas! the times are altered there now. He soon reached the town; and having made his purchases, and arranged all to his mind, he called at the shop of his friend, James, from whom he received a hearty shake of the hand, with an expression of surprise at his being so long absent.

They immediately went to the Globe Tavern—were shown into the little parlor, where a rousing turf-fire was blazing in the grate, at which they sat down—called for half-a-pint of spirits, and in a short time a smoking jug of punch was on the table, which they speedily quaffed, discoursing on their usual topics, and the jug was again and again emptied and replenished, till the toll of the curfew informed them it was nine o'clock. Harry remarked that it was time he was home, adding a wish that he was past Drumary Bush, "where," he said, "so many fearsome things had been seen, and about which so many alarming stories had been told." This led them into a discussion on the existence of ghosts, fairies, and other aerial beings; James arguing that there were no such things, and Harry as firmly maintaining that there were. At last, James, seeing that all his arguments had no effect in convincing Harry, or in removing his fear, proffered to accompany him beyond the dreaded bush; protesting that he feared neither ghost, or fairy, nor even emissary of the old boy himself. Harry thankfully accepted his company; and when matters were thus arranged, they repaired to the bar, to pay the reckoning; after which Harry, remarking that it would be very dangerous to go out in so cold a night after drinking warm punch, without a taste of raw spirits, called for another noggin, during the drinking of which their former subject was renewed at the bar, and was attentively listened to by all who surrounded the kitchen fire. At last, Harry and James set off; James still protesting that he was a little afraid of passing Drumary Bush as any other bush. Their discourse ran mostly on the same subject till—

The dreaded bush was drawing night, but, to their great inward satisfaction, all was quiet. Scarcely had they proceeded a few paces further, when a blazing light sprung up, and seemed to dance about the bush, with great rapidity; this put them to a stand. James said, "In God's name, we'll see what it is," but they had not gone more than a few steps, when something clad in white stepped on the road giving a wild, unearthly scream; and just opposite to them they heard another, still more terrific. James philosophy instantly forsook him; and both spurred their horses back to the town; but still, as they ventured to peep round, they saw the white ghost, and the light following till they came opposite Feehogue, where the apparition and light glided down a dark avenue, and disappeared. Over exertion and terror made them now slacken their pace; but they soon renewed it, on hearing a foot coming fast behind them; they stopped, however, on hearing a human voice cry out, "If you are Christians or men, I entreat you to stand, for I am frightened out of my senses by a ghost." This person soon joined them, and to their great joy, they found it was Jamie Irons, the barber of Randalstown who declared he would faint, or perhaps die, unless he would soon get a glass of whiskey. This he was promised, as they were now at the head of the town. They came to the same inn, called for a pint of spirits, of which Jamie got a large share, and related to the amazed inmates their strange adventure—Irons confirming it by declaring that as he was coming up Feehogue avenue, a white woman or ghost, followed by a blazing light, passed him, and afterwards glided, without any noise, through the orchard-hedge.

The whiskey soon restored their wasted spirits; and Jamie, seeing no chance of any more liquor coming in, began to remark that it would be a pity Harry should be detained in town all night. That as there were now three of them, he proposed that they should go to Drumary, and see Harry past, offering himself as a vidette. To this they agreed; and, taking another glass, they set off, Irons, as he promised, being some perches in advance. They soon arrived at the bush—but nothing was to be heard, save the distant swells and falls of the River Main; so, leaving Harry on the top of Drumary Brae, the two returned to town. Harry being now in full spirits, and, as he thought, out of all danger, began to grow quite courageous—swearing that he could beat any fellow who durst oppose him on the road—nor was he afraid of the very old boy. The whiskey was now taking full effect. In this way he went on, till he reached Seymour's bridge, a mile out of town, where there was, and still ought to be, a school-house, against the gable of which he leaned himself, in order to rest; when, looking towards the west, across the road, he saw on the height opposite, a man in the attitude of challenging him to fight. Harry instantly stepped on the road, ordered him to come down, and keep less vaporing, or he would soon make him repent it; to this the man seemed to pay no attention, but still kept taunting him, as formerly. At this Harry, losing all patience, made a race at him; but forgetting there was an old gravel-pit, generally full of water, on a level with the road, and directly opposite, he plunged into it, over head, and would probably have been drowned had he not been providentially rescued by a young man coming down the road at the time, who heard the plunge. When brought out, he could hardly be persuaded that what he took for a man in the attitude of fighting was nothing but a large rag-wort waving in the wind. He, however, resolved in future never to be drunk after night in Randalstown, or stay there late, which resolution he faithfully kept till the day of his death.

The story of the ghost and the two smiths passed current in the town and country; and was firmly believed by almost everyone; and there are still some people living in the neighborhood, who would yet vouch for its authenticity; but the truth is, Jamie Irons, as he informed the writer, was the ghost himself; he was, perhaps, the greatest man for tricks of this sort, ever bred in the county of Antrim; and, though his countenance was indicative of nothing but wisdom and the utmost gravity, so that he was seldom seen to smile, yet he was of a most playful and merry disposition, and delighted in humbugging everyone that he knew was self-conceited, or too opinionative. On the night mentioned, he

was sitting at the inn's kitchen-fire, and, when James Walker so frequently protested that he feared no ghost or evil spirit, he resolved to put his courage to a fair trial. Getting, therefore, a white sheet, a keening, and a bunch of splinters of bog-iron, such as is used by fishers at night, he proceeded before the two smiths to Drumary; and, with the assistance of a person he brought for the purpose, performed, as can be easily imagined, the above deception on the blacksmiths.

DEATH NOT TO BE DREADED.

Why should we consider death an evil, or something to be dreaded? If we live as we would like to be found at the hour of death, we have no cause to fear that visitor who is so sure to come sooner or later. But if we live in the service of the Devil, the arch-enemy of God, we are also His enemies, hence cowardly and afraid of death, and it is no wonder we are terrified at the bare thoughts of death while we are in a state of mortal sin.

Yet with all our knowledge of the fact, as is taught by the Church, that if we die in a state of mortal sin our souls will be condemned for all eternity, how many of us are free from the incubus of mortal sin, and how many are utterly indifferent, whether they are in that state or not? We earnestly hope, dear reader, that you are not in a state of mortal sin. But should you feel that you are, lose no time until you have cast the sin from you, for you know not but that you may be the first of all to receive the summons to appear before the bar of God's justice. You may be old, middle-aged, or young, healthy and ambitious for worldly honors, but that will make no difference when God calls you—you must go. Death comes like a thief in the night at the time he is least expected. To those who feel that they are at peace with God—that is, in a state of grace—death is simply a transition from a life of trouble, anxiety and temptation to one of perfect happiness with God. The only pain they suffer is that of parting from friends here, but when the body is out of sight they are soon forgotten—yet it matters not to them whether they are forgotten or not, they have those who went before them, relatives and friends, and millions of celestials to meet and welcome them on the other side of the grave—not only to welcome them but to conduct them to Paradise.

Every soul cleansed by the waters of Baptism, confirmed in the Faith and illumined by the refulgent rays of God's grace, that wilfully neglects to avail itself of the near-provided for keeping in union with the Church, assumes a fearful risk, and may well dread death.

Cardinal Gibbons on Confession.

"My experience," says the Cardinal, "is that the confessional is the most powerful lever ever erected by a merciful God for raising men from the mire of sin. It has more weight in withdrawing men from vice than even the pulpit. In public sermons we scatter the seed of the Word of God, in the confessional we reap the harvest. In sermons, to use a military phrase, the fire is at random, but in confession it is a dead shot. The words of the priest go home to the heart of the sinner. The confessor exhorts the penitent, according to his spiritual wants. He cautions him against the frequentation of dangerous company, or other occasions of sin; or he recommends special practices of piety suited to the penitent's wants. Of all the labors that our sacred ministry imposes on us, there are none more arduous or more irksome, than that of hearing confessions. It is no trifling thing to sit for six or eight consecutive hours on a hot summer's day, listening to the stories of sin and sorrow and misery. It is only the consciousness of the immense good he is doing that sustains the confessor in the sacred tribunal. He is one who can have compassion on the ignorant and erring, because he himself is also encompassed with infirmity. He is one upon whose lips is set a human and divine seal, for the words whispered into his ear can never be uttered by human voice."

Medicine and Law at Yale.

The faculties of the Yale Law and Medical Schools are arranging for a formal interchange of courses. They have decided that certain subjects in each department shall be open to seniors of the other. A course in medical jurisprudence in the law school will be open to the medical students.

Australia is a country without a plume or an orphanage. Every waltz taken to a receiving house, where it is kept until a country home is found for it.

AT SHILLELAGH.

Our Irish Correspondent Has a Pleasant Time at the Lively Little Town.

Much of County Wicklow Owned by One Man.

SHILLELAGH, IRELAND.

Shillelagh is one of the nicest little places one could come across, neatest cottages, nicest post-office—all neat, new, trim and snug. This is the end of the branch railway from Wooden-Bridge. It was from the once beautiful woods around Shillelagh, it is said, that the famous "Spring of Shillelagh" came, and from whose verdant dales was plucked the "Shamrock so Green" by the gallant boys of Wicklow. I was invited into the hotel by a couple of whole-hearted, jolly fellows, whom I met, to have some refreshment. And if the hotel was an original-looking affair enough, the waitress was still more original—a real "heef to the heels"—who was soon to be married to a blacksmith. She was like the Irish lad who went to join the English army and, when rejected by the colonel of the regiment for not being tall enough, exclaimed: "Sir, sure if I'm not tall I'm thick!" If our newly-found waitress was lacking in the perpendicular she made up for it in diameter. But as to my newly-made acquaintances—Mr. T. B. Grierson, Chief Engineer of the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford Railway, and Mr. Joseph McCarroll, one of the owners of the "Wicklow Star" newspaper—I found them both social, decent fellows. And it was pleasing to note that they seemed thoroughly Irish in heart and sympathy, which speaks well, I thought, for the railway and the newspaper concerned. I was glad to bear from Mr. Grierson that the D. W. and W. Company are going to extend the line and build a new railway from Shillelagh to Enniscorthy (a sort of loop line) via the beautiful vale of Newtownbarry. This will open up a very pretty tourist district, and add to the charm of this line another beautiful section. I heard later that this company are about to apply to Parliament for powers to connect Waterford and New Ross by rail and thus supply the long-missing link of railway communication between Cork and Dublin around the coast. Then there is no knowing how many tourists may come up this way to admire the beauties of Wicklow, the Nore, Slaney, and Barrow, and should they stop at this interesting Shillelagh hotel—perchance get a glimpse at the fat, jolly waitress. Well, one cannot expect to find a "Hotel-d'Elite" in a place where there is only a post-office, a police barracks, a couple of shops and any amount of mountains, amidst which is seen towering above all the rest Lugnaquilla (3,414 ft.), snow-capped. This peak, said a Wicklow man, is seldom without snow, except in the very middle of summer. Shillelagh is merely a demesne village, mainly occupied by the employees of Lord Fitzwilliam, who lives in a beautiful place hard by and owns a big slice of the county of Wickow—netting a rental of some 260,000. As a landlord he is on good terms with his tenants. I was told. Subsequently I had a walk through Earl Fitzwilliam's demesne, a charming place called Coolatin Park, to which is attached a picturesque farm of some thousands of acres in full view of the Blackstairs Mountains and the beautiful valley in which, as I have said, Newtownbarry is situated. I could see innumerable sheep and cattle browsing on the pretty slopes. Earl Fitzwilliam is the largest land proprietor in Wicklow, who together with Lord Powercourt and Carsefort, the Countess of Wicklow and a few others own all this beautiful county, while the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles, the former owners, are left to turn to shopkeeping or something else for a living. It is all the same now to the O'Byrnes, O'Tooles, O'Kavangs and the rest of the Clans, who were ousted from their homes and their lands, whether Lord Fitzwilliam and the rest of his fellow-landlords are Cromwellians or Elizabethans. It is like the "Wheel of Fortune"—you lose, I win. But the "wheel" is a long time turning in favor of those who lost so heavily two or three hundred years ago. Nor are the Clans, i.e. the Irish farmers, likely to be again on the winning side until Ireland has another Parnell and a United Ireland to assert its rights. But, dear reader, excuse the digression. I am mainly concerned for the present with Beautiful, Historic Ireland.

From Wooden-Bridge to Avoca the traveler runs deeper and deeper into this fairy-land of beauty. The same marvellously green valley—sheltered, guarded, adorned, and rendered more peaceful by the same bold, picturesque, tree-clad heights—and the beauty of the scene is immensely heightened by the same sparkling, singing, murmuring, peaceful Avoca river, which the train crosses several times in the short distance of a couple of miles. Pretty villas and residences peeping out amidst the trees here and there add to the attractions of this highly favored, charming spot. I got off at Avoca, an ideal village, and revelled, as I might say, for a whole day amidst the loveliest scenes imaginable—immortalized by the poet Tom Moore. A mile or so up from Avoca the scenery becomes bold and rugged, where a big bare golden hill stands out, on the side of which I noticed some shafts and chimney stacks. This, I was informed, is a combined iron, sulphur and copper mines, managed by an energetic Englishman, named Captain Higgins. As if to be in keeping with the beauty of the surroundings, the village has very pretty Catholic and Protestant churches. I made agreeable calls on the parish priest and the curate. Truly, this is a poetic spot, a charming spot, where the storms of life, not less than atmospheric disturbances, might be but little felt. To use the poet's words—

Where the storms that we feel in this cold world should cease, And our hearts, like thy waters, be mingled in peace.

From Avoca I walked on to what is called the "Upper Meeting of the Waters," some two miles off, where the scenery assumes a wilder type of beauty. This might be called the meeting country, too. But how mingling and poetry could go hand in hand or exist side by side one wonders, for such is the fact. Although the mines were here, it seems they were not discovered when Tom Moore came along. As I walked up that romantic valley the whether was fine, and I passed some bare rocky hills overlooking the Avoca river. There are evidences of much excavation, and the earth seemed very much fractured with iron and sulphur, while around on the hillsides are seen various shafts here and there. One might truly say of the picture before him—There is poetry in that scene, there is iron, sulphur, copper and ochre in that scene! From this onwards the scenery becomes a little tamer. If the expression may be used, until you come to the "Meeting of the Waters," where one is a little disappointed—not in poetic interest but in the actual beauty of the spot itself, which is not as impressive as one is led to anticipate. It is from here to the sea at Arklow, some eight miles, that the untold beauties of the world-famed Vale of Avoca are seen. Perhaps when Moore wrote his famous verses, he had the whole valley before his mind. A difference of opinion exists as to which is the real "Meeting of the Waters,"—the one at Wooden-Bridge or that at the "Lion's Arch Bridge," which are some four miles apart. Nor is the writer going to decide the question; he will leave it as he found it. The poet himself tells the truth and says: "I wrote the song at neither place, though I believe the scene under Castle Howard, was the one that suggested it." Everywhere the beauty of the scenery was enhanced by the "sear and yellow leaf"—autumn tints. Going along the road I saw, I won't say gentlemen pigs or poetic pigs, but real Irish pigs (hogs) they are called in America) dancing something like an Irish jig, as they were attacked by some unfriendly dogs. Nor shall the wayfarer be dry either if he cares to take anything stronger than the pure water in Avoca river; for he would hardly care to quench his thirst with that sledge, being impregnated with sulphur and ochre from the mines. It is said to poison all the fish. No Bacchus comes to the rescue, and public houses are bristling at every turn along the beautiful valley.

At last, and this ended my day's researches, I came on the sought-for spot—the "Meeting of the Waters." Here the Avonbeg joins the Avonmore, and the united streams, called the Avoca River, flow on to the sea. The Avonbeg is spanned here by a quaint stone bridge, and over across the narrow valley the Avonmore is crossed by an ivy-clad bridge called the "Lion's Arch," leading to Castle Howard, the beautiful demesne of Colonel Howard, situated away up on a wooded slope. I could see the turrets of the cream-colored castle sticking up amidst the trees, but un-

fortunately time did not permit me to visit the place as I had to catch a train at Avoca. Beside the "Meeting of the Waters" is a "put"—just to remind one that even poets take a drop of the "mountain-dew." Just across the stile, in a green field beside the bridge, where the river leaps from rock to rock, is a huge, gnarled oak-tree called "Moore's Tree." And, strange to say, that while all the trees in the woods around are blooming this particular tree is fast decaying! Perhaps, having lost its coat, it is dying from the effects of the cold. The truth is that admirers of the famous bard have cut and carried away all the bark of the tree. As I essayed to cut a little bark with my penknife, a brown goat which was clipping the grass looked at me very hard as if resenting the intrusion. As I was lost in admiration at the scenes around about me, heightened by poetic associations, a train came rushing up the valley on its way to Dublin. But the "iron horse," of course, did not exist in Tom Moore's time to disturb the poet's dreaming. But this age of ours is an iron age, and there seems to be a greater crop of inventors than poets around.

EDMUND D. WHELAN

IDEAL AMERICANISM.

Rev. Thomas Conaty, D. D., of the Catholic University at Washington, in a recent lecture on "Ideal Americanism," before the Boston Foot and Shoe Club, spoke as follows:

I recognize that this represents a prominent business element, while I represent a religious organization. I am sensible that I represent a religion and a race which at times has been deemed hostile to ideal Americanism. I am glad of your invitation to come as a priest, which proves the strongest refutation of such a charge.

It is a difficult matter to define what it is that makes us the Americans we wish to be. We might select one character from history, or make a composite, but I prefer to study out the distinctive character that arises on the pages of American history.

Edward Everett said that independence of itself meant little, but when found in the individual it represented distinctive character full of purpose, and bore with it strong responsibility. Let me take that thought for my subject this evening.

"Every people has its national ideal. The Greeks had art, the Romans had government, the Americans have liberty. To America was reserved the idea of man possessing liberty as an inherent right because he was a man. The state was built upon the individual, the individual did not derive his power from the state.

"It has come to us at a tremendous cost, as everything does which has value. But only he who has been a slave can estimate liberty at its true value.

"Our national idea is the idea of individual freedom. We have just passed through a great conflict, many have looked upon it with misgivings, but as Samuel Adams said, the people can be trusted, and they have asserted and proved their right to be trusted.

"The individual unit is the spring of American government, and whatever injures that corrupts the whole stream of life. Monopoly, and especially the monopoly of rum, is the greatest danger that threatens our people.

"One more thought. There used to be a saying 'as dead as Know-Nothingism.' If there is one place more than another in which Know-Nothingism should not appear it is in America. The first who came here, as the last who have come, did so for the sake of their conscience and religion, and no one has a right to say that a man who follows his conscience is an enemy of American institutions. The pilgrim in Massachusetts and the pilgrim in Maryland sought an asylum here and built up a free country.

"Let not our prejudices cloud our intelligence. We who have come from the other side work and live here, and have become the children of America, and we would protect this country from the dangers which threaten it. The Church which I serve has not a fiber of hostility to liberty, because it preaches Christ, who first proclaimed the individual liberty of men."

Beautiful Theodora.

Theodora, the wife of the famous Justinian, was beautiful, crafty and unscrupulous. She is said to have been tall, dark and "with power of conversation superior to any woman in the empire."

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