

THE BIT O' WRITIN'.

BY THE O'HARA FAMILY.

Continued from our last Number.—(Conclusion.)

CHAPTER X.

DEAREST reader, there was ——— but how can we bring ourselves to say the words? to shape them so as that the avowal they must contain shall meet thy severe eye in the form best calculated to win thy forgiveness? Hast thou ever, when a school-boy, been called in from the play-ground to account, before thy master's face, for some abominable act of riotousness, observed by him while haply taking his breakfast at a—by thee—forgotten window? In similar feelings to those thou mayest have experienced on such an occasion, do we now hang down our head before thee ———. And yet, dearest reader, why should we hang down our head? Thou mayest complain, doubtless, when the murder is out—as out it must surely come—that we have been guilty of an unwarrantable imposition upon thy good sense, or have descended into clap-trap to produce, for an instant, “a thrilling interest,” or brought so closely together the extremes of the pathos and the bathos, or of the picturesque and the burlesque, or of the plausible and the ridiculous, that the contact is insufferable—is—in one damning word, is “in bad taste.” Some of this, or all of this, thou mayest say; but could we have avoided the plain truth, for the mere purpose of writing on, according to the best approved rules of poetical propriety? That is our first point of defence. Our next is a solemn declaration that we never intended to impose on your sense, good, bad, or indifferent, as it may be, but merely to give you a faithful account, just as we got it ourselves, of how poor little Moya Moore and her athletic lover were imposed upon, in a state of feeling which left them, at least, few claims, for the time, to sense or rationality of any kind. Thirdly, we plead an inherent, hearty, healthy, abhorrence of clap-trap. Fourthly, we beg to ask thee, do not such extremes as thou wouldst object to, sometimes nay often, meet, in the quick succession and incongruous linking together of the most real events of this strange life. Hast thou never known pathos whine itself down into a provocation to its own laughter? or the absurd, in some curious, whimsical, arabesque way, dovetail itself, in any instance, with the awful?

“For our own parts, we know of an elopement which, had it taken place, must have left to the

world's pity—that is, scorn—a father and his six legal sons and daughters—hindered, and for ever hushed up, by a noise heard by the lady in her dressing-room, as she was putting on her bonnet, in the dark, to steal down the back stairs, because she believed it to be a supernatural noise—a warning, sent to awaken her conscience, (or else her husband :) and it proved, after all, to be caused only by a mouse gnawing at her rouge-box. We know of another proposed elopement—a less improper one—one, in fact, between two devoted lovers, also frustrated by the sudden appearance in their path of a very harmless poor fellow, Billy Taylor by name, who could never have dreamed of intercepting them or pursuing them; but who was so generally voted a pest in conversation, that appear wherever or whenever he did, merely in the hope of addressing a word to his fellow-creatures, the established usage was for all who saw him approach to turn their backs, and crying out, “But here's Billy Taylor!” run away from him; and so it happened in the case of the lovers we speak of; they, too, fled from Billy, retracing a good portion of the road they had come from the house of the lady's father to their carriage, until they ran plump against that very latter named gentleman, so that the lady was taken home again, and locked up. Nay—we have heard of a downright murderer frightened away from his victim's throat by the entrance upon the midnight scene of a witness in the shape only of a little black terrier. But why, dearest reader, overpower thee with pleas in extenuation of the admission we are about to make? To the following instance of a running-in upon one another, and a blurring together of the very distinct lines of solemn and absurd, we were witnesses.

Late upon a winter's evening a maiden lady was alluding, in her niece's presence, as well as ours, to an early attachment, gloomed for ever by the death of her lover. After his death, his spirit appeared to her, and she went on, bringing before us, with much effect, the appalling circumstances, when suddenly her nervous niece, strangely—and for ourselves laughably, though for herself, painfully excited—suddenly sprang from her chair, just at the spirit's appearance, and, with a sharp, and, we thought, spiteful tap of her extended palm, broke the spectacles on her aunt's respected nose into shivers.

And so, dearest reader, hoping to have now pro-