

Tales and Sketches.

The Victim's Story.

BY ISAAC ROBERTS.

[The incident referred to in the following verses was described by General Clinton B. Fisk in his speech at the great Prohibition meeting held in the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, in October, 1884.]

A widow clad in mourning to the noble soldier came,  
She sought his aid in trouble, for she knew his splendid fame,  
How in war he served his country and for freedom drew his sword,  
How in peace he loved his fellow-men, and through them served his Lord.

A sad, sad face she lifted to the general's pitying look,  
His hand with grateful pressure in both of hers she took;  
Then spoke in faltering accents and in such a voice of woe  
As only God's good angels and suffering women know.

"I want to thank you, general, and to call God's blessing down  
On your noble life and efforts; oh! may His victory crown  
Your conflict now for freedom, for God, and home, and right!  
May he grant you strength and wisdom to carry on this fight!"

"I've suffered so, dear general: aye, more than words can tell,  
Do you see on yonder corner that glittering palace-hell?"  
"Yes, madam, I've been watching," the soldier sadly said,  
"How it tempts the weak to pleasure, and gives them death instead."

"Oh! how I hate it, general! For through that open door  
Have gone my hopes of happiness, though I could do no more  
To stop the woe of manhood than, with bitter, blinding tears,  
Weep, plead, and pray against the fate that realized my fears.

"It robbed me of my husband, for it blasted years of life,  
And dragged him to the drunkard's grave—the grave with horrors rife.  
Through him it stole my property; now it robs me of all joy,  
For to fill my cup of bitterness, it now has seized my boy.

"My boy, my well-beloved! How my heart goes out in prayer  
To the Father of all mercies that His life will spare!  
But what are women's prayers when all the powers of State  
Are leagued with Death and Satan to make the worst his fate?"

"I'm but a woman, general; I am ignorant and weak;  
I can only bear and suffer; I can only pray and speak.  
Is my weakness then the reason why the State should make me bear  
All this agony of sorrow, all this weight of grief and care?"

"I think of other women, bearing equal weight of woe:  
How they weep, and pray, and suffer! How dark the way they go!  
What have we done, we women? Are we traitors to the State,  
That it crushes all our hopes, to earth at so merciless a rate?"

"We have no power to change the laws, to close that open door.  
We cannot vote; our hands are tied, we're led as slaves before  
That fearful power that blights our lives, enthroned by will of man.  
Why will not men who own themselves overthrow it while they can?"

The Christian soldier listened, and his eyes were filled with tears,  
As he spoke some cheering words of hope and sought to calm her fears.  
"Our God has not forgotten all your years of grief," he said;  
"Though the night be dark and stormy, lo, the eastern sky is red."

"The day that now is breaking will see the wrong overthrow,  
And those who made it possible shall reap as they have sown.  
God's Spirit now is calling on His children to obey—  
To work for truth and righteousness, and He will lead the way."

God pity all the stricken ones whose burdened spirits know  
The suffering and the sorrow that from this evil flow;  
His Comforter be with them and bless them with His peace,  
And from their awful bondage may He grant them quick release!

God bless our noble leader!—the brave, true-hearted man!  
Who dares be true to conscience in spite of party ban.  
God give him strength and wisdom, and grant him length of days,  
That he may see the victory for which his spirit prays!

Billy Mulloy and the Fairies.

BY THE REV. JOHN VALLANCEY.

That! That's a fine specimen of the old square towers, or "castles," of this part of Ireland. It is a noble looking, graceful, yet massive, building. Every bit of it is in harmony. It is placid looking, yet possesses amazing strength. It is solid from foundation to battlement; yet it is light and airy. It is a beautiful building. It is graceful, yet imposing.

That! That ruin? Oh! that is certainly the remains of a very ancient building. We have three periods of time distinctly marked in this small place. Look beyond the ruin and the castle. That mound is one of our "forts," they go by the name—"raths," or "ris," sometimes "his," hereabouts. Some suppose them to be Danish, but the Danes never defiled this part of Ireland. You must look up General Vallancey's works on the origin of these "forts," in his "Irish Antiquities."

But a funny thing happened in that fort one night. Oh! years ago. You know the people hold two ideas concerning these forts. One is that they are always haunted by the "good people," or fairies; the other is that they contain hidden treasures. These superstitions arise from the idea that the chiefs of former days were buried in the centre of these forts. The fairies are connected with their spirits, and the treasure with their bodies. And yet these mounds are never disturbed. Dire calamities will overtake any one who breaks in upon those circular defences. I have known one to be planted, within the bounds, and a beautiful and luxuriant orchard formed, but oven then the circles were left intact.

Look at that farm-house a little to the left. In that house lived a character in my young days. Now I'll tell you what happened. This character, William Mulloy, alias Billy Mulloy, Billy Mulloo, Lord Mulloo, Crith Mulloo, was a hunchback; hence the name "Crith," a hump; hence the title, "Lord," proud, from Crith's stately walk, produced by the poor man's calamity.

Now you must remember that the afflicted are genuine objects of pity in Ireland. Not a disrespectful word is ever spoken about them. But Crith Mulloo was a drinking, quarrelsome, grasping, ill-natured fellow, and all respect and pity for him had vanished.

My father held all that land from the road back to the sea, and that point where the fort stands, Rath Rue, or the red fort. It is a lovely spot in summer, and a grand, wild, place in winter. How the sun shines upon the short, sweet, herby grass! How the wild thyme smells! And how the bees hum! Look at that stretch of salt marsh all colored with the gay sea-pink. I've lain upon that level often, and let the great tide waves carry me far out, and roll me back again, wallowing like a porpoise. See that cliff? The great waves have thundered against that old head, and have rushed ten times higher, sending the spray in great showers far inland. I've been obliged to lie down there and crawl along to gain the edge. The wind, the wild, joyous west wind, has so buffeted me, and laughed at me unpropitiously when it made me feel so weak, so powerless, in its great strong hands.

You need not wonder that the old fort was a favorite haunt for us. It was a favorite haunt of Billy Mulloo, too, when he was drunk. He had got a couple of notions in his head. One was that his "ancestors" possessed all the country far and wide. The other was that he would some day find the "crock o' gold," which lay hidden—somewhere. When Billy was sober, he gave very little heed to these enticing fables, but when he was drunk they led him sadly astray. They led him sadly astray every Saturday night regularly. So sure as Saturday came Billy was drunk. Then his mania took possession of him. At these times Billy would march off to the fort, rant and rave, warn every one off, and give chase to us with his great stick elevated. Now we began to resent all this, and did not lament the check which Billy received one fine night. Indeed we chuckled for weeks over it.

Wormented Billy's interference with our favorite spot, and frequently complained to the Pater about it, but hasty, hot, and proud, as he was, bless him! he would let Billy alone. He would say, "No, boys, that is not the best thing to do. He is a poor unhappy creature, much needing pity.

The root of all his badness is the drink. Now if we could make him sober you would have no more trouble. He never rambles in there until he gets too much drink. If we could make him sober what a good thing! I wonder how it can be done." We saw no way, for every means had been tried in vain. So things went on. Billy was allowed to have his way; and we, growing more and more indignant that a drunken, quarrelsome fellow was allowed to have his way so much, were not sorry when Billy's perambulations of the fort were stopped suddenly, seriously, and effectually.

One fine dark night in the autumn, Billy, drunk as usual, marched off to the fort. He stumped along a stony bit of shore, then stoutly and painfully mounted the steepish side of the little hill upon which the fort stood, rumbled round the base of the outer circle, and was lost to sight on the other side.

Hours passed and he did not return. His usual bed time arrived, but he did not "turn up," much less "turn in." Then a consultation was held in the family circle, and after much demur, Billy's wife and a couple of the sons ventured to take a cautious look round, and if they found Billy perambulating, and gesticulating, in the usual way they would beat a hasty and secret retreat, and live in hope that he would soon get tired, and waddle home to bed.

All was quiet, dark, and, to the superstitious, fearful. Billy's voice was silent, his ungraceful form was not visible. After long and painful search they found him sitting fast asleep with his back against a big grey stone.

While they deliberated whether it would be prudent to wake him Billy opened his eyes, and enquired where he was. This he did in a weak, subdued voice. Oh! the horror conveyed in those mild tones. The truth flashed across wife and sons—Billy had seen the fairies. Slowly and sadly they led the stricken hunchback home. Not an oath escaped his lips. That was a bad sign. Not once did he attempt to raise his shillelagh; his favorite old black thorn. It was listlessly hanging in his limp hand. That was a worse sign. "Oh! wirra, wirra sthrow!" moaned the broken-hearted wife; "he's sthrukk wid the good people. Oh! I allays thought his rampagin' ud ind badly. Ho med too free intirely, intirely. They're not to be tamperd wid, thin same fairies."

Billy was half carried, and half dragged, homewards, and put to bed. There he lay for a couple of days in a sullen state. At last he condescended to give an account of his adventure in the fort. A messenger was despatched for my father, begging that his honor would be pleased to hear the dying deposition, or confession, of Billy Mulloo. Thither the father went with all speed, and this is the account Billy gave of himself.

On Saturday evening last, he had returned from the market "much the worse for liquor," as was his wont. After taking a "bit o' supper" he rambled into the fort, or island (the people generally called the place the island for the simple reason that it never was surrounded by water); and there he "met wid an accident," he'd "seen the fairies." "Sorra a word o' he in it, yer honor," said his wife. "I seen the state he was in, glory be to goodness, an yer honor, never seen a man so sthrukk as he was, wid fairies or anything else."

These comments we listened to, and heard the full tale of Billy's woes, as my father proceeded with grave deliberation to eat his luncheon. This deliberation was the certain indication of his being in what he termed a "quandary," and, at other times, it boded no good for evil doers.

Billy had taken his rounds as usual, and was about to turn his crabbed face homewards, when a startling sight made him quail, and "he thrimblel in ivry limb." "Furninst him wor siven lamps o' fire, an' all the fairies—ough! yer honor niver seen so many—wor dancin' an caperin' all over the place. Ivry one o' them wid a blazin' fire on his head."

Billy's story, when translated into somewhat better English, was this:—The fairies appeared at the bend of the fort, and barred his way homewards. There was a multitude of those little, frolicsome, mischievous creatures. The whole fort was alight with their lamps, candles, torches, and flambeaus. The air was resounding with their shouts and laughter. They danced and skipped, and plucked poor Billy by the coat, and the flying ribbons of his breeches. They sat upon his hat, and crushed it down over his eyes. Even his sacred hump did not escape. A dozen of them at a time squatted on it. They twirled him about, they tripped him up. There was not a thing in the long list of assaults and battery which they did not commit. And then they added insult to injury—"they swore him on the Gospels never to taste a drop more of intoxicating drink during the whole tenor of his natural life."

The legality of the latter act was what Billy now wished to test; and chiefly for this purpose he had sent for "his honor." This was the "quandary" which puzzled my father. To say that Billy was bound by an oath, taken in the court of the fairies, was somewhat opposed to the conscience of a man who would walk through a million of fairies "with his hands in his pockets," as the neighboring superstitious peasants used to say. But on the other hand, here was a chance to bind Billy to sobriety. Billy had sent for him in the best hope of finding his honor inclined to scoff at such follies as fairies, and ready to give him absolution from any obligations to them. Judge, if you can, of Billy's astonishment when he found that my father was not so complying as he had hoped.

"Musha, yer honor," exclaimed Billy in much indignation, "I thought you were jist the gentleman who would say, 'Now, Billy, that's no oath at all, at all, taken to fairies. Shure it was an dour compression ye tuck it, an' under the inference of drink; and now yer honor won't howl out a word o' hope to a poor man that he may take a thrillo o' drink iver agam. Faix, I allays found yer honor jist an' fair ontill this time."

After lunch my father walked out to the garden, deeply pondering. Billy was in a corner, but was it right to keep him there, considering the way he had got into it—through the diseased imaginations of a drunken brain? Superstition was to be abhorred, and driven out; drunkenness was to be abhorred, and driven out. Here was a fix.

My mother sat down and wrote a short note. That was despatched to the priest. I pretty well guessed what that was for. The priest either believed in the fairies; or, he never had said that he did not. He might refuse to release Billy from his spiritual obligations to the "good people." At all events the priest was seen to wend his way to the "snug" house of Billy Mulloo, and Billy was not released from his obligations to the fairies.

So matters rested for a few weeks. Billy was sober, much to the comfort of Billy's wife and family, but much to the uneasiness of Billy's internal arrangements. He went half-way to the town a dozen times a week, and as often returned grumbling and growling at fairies, priests, and Protestants. It would appear that the priest had spoken seriously to Billy on the doctrine of "intinshuns."

We had had a room given to us for all our odds and ends; our carpenter's work; and our rubbish. It pleased my father one day to visit us in this den. Perhaps the hammering had been a little too loud, and too constant, for human forbearance, and he wished to check it slightly by his presence. But that as it may, he came at an unlucky time. In the corner lay seven bits of wood, roughly resembling cricket bats, but much smaller, each with a burnt hole in the broad end. Having taken a general, and by no means a disapproving, look round our sanctum, the eyes of the head parent rested on the seven pieces of wood. He said nothing, but pensively walked out. I gazed at my brother, and he gazed at me. I shook my head, and he shook his. I said, "Done for," and he said, ditto. In a very short time a message came to the effect that we were wanted in the "big parlor." Hither we proceeded with heavy hearts.

"Bring those seven sticks which I saw in the corner," said my father. We retired, gathered up our "sticks," and again proceeded to the presence. "Lay them on the floor," said my father.

We did so, and I protest th' then, as now, I was proud of our handiwork. The "sticks," as my father chose to call the ingenious implements, were cut away neatly for the hands to grasp with firmness, though not clumsily. The broad ends were bored in a sloping manner so that the lower side of the hole was smaller than the top side. This was done by means of a red hot poker. It was at once apparent that one side of each "stick" might be called the upper sides, and these upper sides we carefully placed upward and laid them on the carpet. Thus placed the "sticks" presented some greasy spots, and one or two exhibited the stumps of "dipped" candles.

When the candlesticks (I will drop the opprobrious term "stick," and give our contrivances their proper appellation of candle sticks); when the candlesticks were neatly arranged, my father said, in a low quiet tone, "Now tell me all about it." This was sudden.

We began, after a few short and difficult coughs, by prefacing our statement with the assurances that our great desire was to make Billy sober.

an opportunity of, "doing good to Billy Mulloo. The plan we approved of after much deliberation was as follows.

To watch Billy going to his evening walk, to cross by a shorter way, to be ready on his return to light candles, already placed; and to try to luck to frighten him as much as we could. We had our midnight garments with us to slip over our clothes at the proper time. We had also paper caps, and masks most horrible. Thus attired, with shoutings, and the waving of the candles, so far as the evening air would allow, we had much hope that Billy would never take a drop of liquor again. The sweating was an afterthought and naturally followed upon the marvellous impression which was made upon Billy's mind by our costume, antics, and fire works.

"Now," said my father, still very grave, "one word more, what did you swear him on, and what words did you use?"

"We swore him on an old volume of 'Moore's Melodies,' and we said, 'I, Bill Mulloo or Mulloy, as the case may be, I do solemnly swear that I'll never take a drop of liquor again, and that I'll never set foot on the Island of Red fort, or this Rue, again; and I'll keep my word, or else all the fairies will take me away for ever and for ever. Amen.' He repeated that, and then he was sworn."

"Well," said my father, "what happened next?"

We could not tell. We blow out the candles and went one way, while Billy went another. We thought he'd gone home.

"That will do," said my father, "you may go."

In our haste we forgot to close the door, and as we went down the long passage we heard peals of laughter. Billy "broke out" once or twice, but he always declared that the whisky "niver agreed wid him sines the night the fairies tuck him in hand. Wan 'cropper' was as much as he could well hold now, it wint agin him, 'Twas mighty queer, but 'was throo, an' faix, there was a dab o' money saved."

The true story of the fairies leaked out. Billy was black about it for a very long time, but he learned to bear the joke in as good humored a way as could be expected; and, finally, said that the fairies of the old fort were the "good people" after all.

KITCHEN RECIPES.

How to Clean Stoves.

Every woman who has been obliged to spend half a day several times during the winter cleaning the mica in her coal stove, usually taking them out and washing in soap-suds, will rejoice to know that there is an easier way to clean them, and that there is no need to take them out or let the fire burn very low in order to do it successfully. Take a little vinegar and water and wash the mica carefully, the acid removes all the stains, and if a little pains is taken to thoroughly clean the corners and to wipe them dry, the mica will look as good as new. If the stove is very hot, tie the cloth to a stick, and so escape the danger of burning your hand. It is a great care to see that stoves are kept in proper order, and not many servants can be trusted to do it as it should be done. The task might be made somewhat easier by choosing stoves which are not too highly ornamented, unless the trimmings are kept absolutely spotless and bright, which is a very difficult thing to accomplish, they cannot the least claim to be ornamental. Indeed, a stove, which, by reason of its excessive decoration, is rendered the most prominent feature of the room, demanding the attention the moment one enters, is certainly in bad taste. A clean, well polished stove, with graceful shape, which fulfills the end of its being by heating the house, is all that a stove should be. The fire may be, as it has been said, the soul of the room, but ought not to ask too much attention to its body.

Baked Fish.

Take two slices of halibut, one inch thick between them put cracker crumbs, pepper, salt, and fat pork chopped fine, put the same on top, using butter instead of pork. Lay them on a small pan turned upsidedown in a larger pan, and put a cup of boiling water into the large pan. As the dripping runs down bake the fish with it. Bake till well done and the crust is brown.

Potatoes and Corn Muffins.

Two cups of cold mashed potato: two cups of sweet milk, two eggs, well beaten, two cups cornmeal or enough for a batter. Soften the potato with the milk, working out all the lumps, then stir in cornmeal till the batter is just thick enough to drop easily from the spoon, add the whipped eggs and beat hard. Drop into the greasy pans, oiled and hot, and bake in an even oven from twenty to thirty minutes.