

HRONICLE ATHOLIC

VOL. VIII.

FICTION CRUSHING.

No! Duncan of Scotland would have been safe in my best bed-room, (it is the only spare room in the house) in spite of all that Mrs. Smith (the wife of my bosom) could have urged difference—knew the hero of every novel for Smith (the wife of my bosom) could have urged difference—knew the hero of every novel for to be sacrifieed is only an old-fashioned incident story: to the contrary; and yet I feel all the confusion of mind and perplexity of purpose, which led the ambitious Thane to believe, "that nothing is but what is not !" What may be the exact meaning of this expression I have never seen explained by any commentator; and therehelplessness of Macbeth's mind.

The art of the divine William was admirably shown in this bewildered presentment of a feeble-minded individual, who had a dreadful tartar of a wife; and who, all of a sudden, finds an unaccountable propensity to cut his benefactor's throat. He had no such wish previous to the interview with the hideous Sisters; but in a moment all the landmarks of his previous life were thrown down by that frightful prophecy of the witches-all his loyalty to the gracious monarch -all his kindness to his trusted friend-all his reliance on the feminine tenderness of his wifeall his sweet sleeps and joyous wakings-all his self-respect and sinless ambition to excel and be promoted-all these had disappeared; there was nothing left by which to recognise his existence, to unite his past with his future; he could trust no man's evidence, not even the witness of his firm, grammatical, trenchant, and to the point own eyes and ears-and therefore he said, "All but with a tone; with a pragmatical conceit isn't, all is, all is, all isn't !"

Now, this is what Shakespeare makes a general, an earl, a murderer, a king, a tyrant, and think I hear still the remorseless "I big yer par-hen-pecked husband do; and it is strange that don" with which he solemnly prefaced his decircumstances perfectly different from Macbeth's, | molition of all your statements and rectification have produced the same effect on me; who am of all your errors; your favorite statements, neither a general, nor an earl, nor a murderer, your fondly cherished errors. What was to be nor a king, nor a tyrant, no even—except in a very modified degree—anything else by which the Scotchman was distinguished from other men. I do not wear a kilt, nor a feather in my bonnet s hore so the scotter of the as large as the central ornament of an alderman's hearse. In fact, I live at Clapham, and go every day by an omnibus into the City, transact-deniable as the income-tax. If you said Henry ing my business to the best of my ability (my address is at the printers of this publication);-and at four return to a nice little dinner-an the vast denial in his jaws, and propelled it with hour or two of music (Lucy certainly has a the vigor of a catapult, "I big yer par-r-don, voice), a not cup of tea, and then children being in bed, feet on fender, lamp on Prester John ;" and, when the big lips jerked small table at the left hand, don't I enjoy my themselves together again with a triumphant book? my novel? my biography? my voyages and travels? my history and antiquities ?- while Lady Macbeth mends the baby's frocks, knits rise again. me a new purse, adds up the household accounts, or reads-(she is a very little woman, and nobody would take her, even now, for more than nineteen)-the description of Dora in David Copperfield, for at least the hundredth time .--That's how I live-or lived I ought to say-for that's one of the "ises" which "isn't." No! I have shut up my book-shelves ; I have sent home | Regulus :-- was there no surrender on his own a barrowful of volumes to Mudie; I have taken to drinking in despair; and have serious thoughts of giving Mrs. S. a black eye: They would only fine me thirty shillings, or give me a fort-night of the mill if I trampled her nearly to death; and, would probably let me off for halfa-crown, for a mere poke in the organ of vision. But why should I do this? Why, to show my courage in the first place, and, in the next place, to prove beyond cavil and dispute that I am a lous, sceptic, sneering, proof-exacting little girl changed man; that I am not what I was; that I who despised Dora and began mathematics, live in a confusion of tenses distracting to a grammarian, and that all isn't, nothing is ? This is how the metamorphosis came to pass. On the 'bus for many consecutive mornings I sat next a man who lived in the other half of my Semi-detached, a good-looking man enough, with very broad cheek bones, light grey shiny eyes, yellow disordered hair, and lips that clutched together with a snap when he had made an observation, like the spring of a man-trap. But they were always valuable observations, and well worth holding fast. No nonsense, no joke, no frivolity; all solid heaps of truth and great crude forms of fact ; none of your mouldings, and ornaments, and flexibility of shape. A thing was a thing and nothing else. Vesuvius was an ele-vation of the ground near Naples, which occasionally gave forth smoke, and fire, and lava ;--but, as to the beauty of its lurid flame reflected in the Bay; as to its effect in brilliant sunshine; as to its ghost-like appearance when the moon held high court in Heaven-bah ! nobody ever thought of sunshine, or moonlight, or blue deep waves curling up and along golden sand who listened to Mr. M'Ritchie. I doubt whether these vention of after days; for he pulled out-other natural phenomena would have had the courage | people would have put a hand in their pocket for to exhibit themselves in his presence ; so no wonder nobody spoke of them. Weispoke of corn he merely opened a drawer in his inexhaustible and tallow, of lead and guano ; and the curious memory, and pulled out-a work written by an thing was, that he was a perfect miracle of information. There was not a spot on the face of the earth he did not know the shape of, and the made of what, is a citizen, would have been the natives; and the pleasantries of Kees the mon- many adventures as he likes. There is no one size of its market, and the whole of its history, most interesting part of the story-no summoning key; and the beautiful tenderness of the desert to say to him nay. He is the Robinson Crusoe

and Maunder's Treasury of Knowledge, and quence of the Queen. All these things, howtwenty years, believed in Gulliver's Travellers, in the midst of persons and manners with which and could say the Arabian Nights by heart. Of we have nothing to do, the effort at incredulity course, being so entirely opposite, we took a is not very difficult. I am prepared to take a fancy to each other. I asked him to tea.

My domestic peace was gone from that hour ! The wife I was so fond of, my Dora, my tiddly fore conclude, that the impenetrable obscurity of the sentence was meant to illustrate the chaotic me any more! All my little enjoyments, my dips into Shakespeare, my flights with Peter Wilkins, my courtships with the glums and glo-ries, she hated and despised. She cared for facts, facts only; the broader the bolder, the stupider the better. And there-opposite the fairy creature-sat the gaunt form of M'Ritchie, ejecting huge, deformed, repulsive, coagulated, realities, with the force and pertinacity of a twenty-four pounder, and shutting his mouth after the operation with the slam of a prison-door. She respected the wretch ! he was so exact, so reliable, and knew so much ! Did I say he was a Scotchman ? But if you had heard him cough, you would have known that those lungs had been filled with mountain winds and alcohol from their earliest years. His breath was Scotch, his walk was Scotch. He would have done for sentry at a tobacconist's shop ; his language was strong, firm, grammatical, trenchant, and to the point; with a pitiless precision, and regardlessness of other people's thoughts and feelings-ugh ! I But, he wouldn't let you quote from the poets the Fifth was a gallant fellow who talked of taking Prester John by the beard, M'Ritchie rolled Henry the Fifth was wrang there niver was crack, you felt that Prester John, beard and all, was buried in that impenetrable grave, never to

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in its bourse. In short he was Haydn's Dates, their necks-no obduracy of Edward, no elo-

sponge and pass it over all history, anecdote, and belief, previous to George the Third. But, when a fellow in mere reliance on his powers of denial, begins to interfere with my modern faith, and with one flop of his teeth annihilates the most recent records, as if they were moth-eaten with the rottenness of the Crusades, the thing becomes serious. Let Cleon, we cry, be a much-abused individual, and instead of the notorious demagogue we thought him, let him be a high-principled whig: let bloody Mary be beautiful into the perfect ensample of a lofty-minded, tender-hearted woman and justice-loving Queen ; let Henry the Eighth be the most patient of martyrs, and the most immaculate character of martyrs, and the most immaculate character of an Atlantis or Utopia, which he peopleu mini-recent times; let Jeffreys himself be the imper-sonation of equity and of the righteous firmness which gives the sword of justice all its value; which gives the dome of St. Paul's ! the roof of the roo like, but don't obliterate altogether I Make Shakespeare out an illiterate ass if you please, but don't deny that such a man really lived ! Tell us the Pyramids are round, but don't destroy them utterly ! Yet that is what the inexorable M'Ritchie has done ; not with regard to Shakespeare and Jeffreys, or the Pyramids; but about several things much more valuable to me than the English Justice or the Egyptian Cheops.

For instance: One night I said, but almost in a whisper (I am so subdued 1 seldom speak above my breath) that politics (it is thought quite a novel expression) were as irresistible as the vertex of the Maelstrom-and when I looked at the face of our guest (he had swallowed his ninth cup of tea, and walked into a heaped up plate of muffins till not a single one was left) I sincerely wished I was at that moment whirling round and round in the outer circles, gradually drawing nearer and nearer to the central pool, in company with a few howling bears and distracted boats performing the same dreadful revolution; for the mouth was opened, and from it proceeded the "I big yer par-r-don, there's no such thing as the Maelstrom."

tween the graceful savagery of a naturally gentle | his tame goat in Kees, and transcends all the nature, and the culture and elegance of European

A gentleman, whose name he gave, and whose character for truthfulness and honor would guarantee whatever he said as having occurred to himself, was engaged in a great commercial speculation in Paris shortly after the peace of eighteen hundred and fifteen. This business brought him often into contact with the members of the French government at the time, and with many of the men of science and literature .---Among these, the persons with whom he became most intimate was the celebrated John Anthony Chaptal, the great natural historian, chemist, and statesman. Like our own Sir Humphrey Davy, this man only not the first poet of his country, because he chose to be her first utilitarian philosopher. He lived, in fact, in two worlds : one consisting of the most plain matters | and Le Vaillant disappeared forever from the the barriers by which the statesman, peer of France, and former minister for trade and manufacture, had entrenched his dignity, and he said, "With this hand I wrote Le Vaillant's travels; I invented all his adventures. In some portions of the story I was assisted by a friend; but, in fact and substance, I am Le Vaillant, the slaughterer of the girafie, and lover of Narina." The story of the modern Frankenstein was antedated in the person of M. Chapal. The monster he created, overwhelmed him. Le Vaillant became a real existence, and the veritable Simon Pure sank rapidly into oblivion. Many mistakes he confessed to. He acknowledged the impossibility of the existence of Narina. He was ludicrously inexact in his description of the mo-tions of the cameleopard. All succeeding travellers had tried in vain to find evidence of his career ; but, with the sole exception of one who discovered an old woman who said she remembered him living in her kraal, there was no trace of his ever having been in Africa. Lichtenstein, a German explorer, began to smell a rat in eighteen bundred and nine, and has the following remarkable passage: "When Le Vaillant as-

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imaginings of the mariner of York in the creamaidenhood? All, all my pretty ones, at one tion of the matchless Narina. Looking at the fell swoop? But so it was; and here was his book with this light thrown upon it, it is an admirable natural history romance. He comes forgot-at La Noue, near Sezanne. Is there a tomb there to his memory? Did he leave a will? Is he in no old list of citizens? Twoand-thirty years are not so long a time as to have expunged the memory of so distinguished an author. Many must be alive who knew him, who spoke to him about his books. People of sixty were eight and twenty when he died. Did Thiers know him? or Guizot? or Mitchelet? or Lamartine? " Deed, no," concludes Mr. M'-Ritchie ; "and the reason's very plain ; the man never existed, body or soul; and was naething but the idolon or external image o' Maister Chaptal." Whereupon the lips closed with a clash, rolls of human kind.

REV. DR. CAHILL

ON CAPTAIN HELSHAM AND THE SOUPERS OF KILKENNY.

(From the Dublin Catholic Telegraph.) The Catholics of Kilkenny, and indeed of Ireland, owe to Captain Helsham a debt of gratitude, which, although we may not be able fullyto discharge, we shall always be prepared cheerfully to acknowledge. The readers of this journal recollect the association of Protestant gentlemen, formed in Kilkenny within the last two months, to protest against the unbecoming conduct of what is called " The Irish Mission" in that city. At a meeting of that association, representing the talent, the rank, the liberality of Protestant Kilkenny, Captain Helsham was moved to the chair : and on that occasion a respectful petition was forwarded to the Protestant Bishop of Kilkenny, calling on his lordship to remove this nuisance from amongst them : and the petition, signed by captain Helsham, as chairman of the meeting, and as the High Sheriff of the city, appeared thus before the Bishop, both as a private parochial communication and as a public official document. Nothing could surpass the respectful courtesy, the temperate language of this petition ; and the liberal feeling, and the cogent argument in which it was conveyed, cannot soon be forgotton by those who have read that remarkable production. The Bishop sent a reply, but no answer : he parried and avoided close conflict: and it is not denied by Dr. O'-Brien's friends, that the association outstripped the Diocesan in Christian sentiment, social feeling, and sound argument. Some few Kilkenny critics (not bad judges too) even add, that the composition of the Bishop fails, in a rigid comparison, with the polished style and the correct taste of the Sheriff : and that in polite literature the "Doctor of Laws" seems to have a decided advantage over "the Doctor of Divinity." The Association having obediently appealed to ecclesiastical authority : and finding their appeal rejected : and the nuisance still continued, the next move made by Protestant Kilkenny, on the 25 of last March, has been carried out in a letter from the same quarter to the present Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. This is a generous, a bold act: it is advancing in the scale of remonstrance: and it is a clear case that the Protestant gentlemen who have gone so far are not likely to stop even here, if their just request shall be refused. The determination which has urged them to go to the episcopal palace, which again has carried them to the Dublin Castlé, will (it is said), if again checked and baffled, lead them, with a renewed vigour and decision, to the Parliament house : and if they are to be conquered, the defeat will only be gained by "the Mission" British empire and the civilized world. Although the letter to Lord Eglinton has been already published in The Catholic Tclegraph, there is one paragraph in that communication which ought to be repeated, in order to renew, as it were, the horror, the public horror, against a souper conduct which has long afflicted the Catholics of Ireland, and which has awakened the generous indignation of the Protestants of Kilkenny: the passage referred to is as follows :---ings of the agents of the Irish Church Missions Society-one of the scenes which take place daily in are suffering from scarlatina. On yesterday after-ness of the ensuing Quarter Sessions. The firebrands of the Itish Church Missions planted themselves op-

Why should I go through the miserable list of all the cherished beliefs he scattered into air? Did Remus never jump over a wall? did Curtius never leap into a gulf? nor Mademoiselle Rachel never blow up that bandy-legged little Horatius in the colorless kilt? The Sabines :-was there no forcible abduction to Gretna Green ? recognisance? And farther down in history, was there no Rosamond's Bower ? No generous St. Pierre and the citizens of Calais receiving their pardon from the harsh-voiced king at the intercession of the sweep Philippa? Were all to be overthrown by that gigantic image of iconoclasm sitting starched and cold on the cosiest side of my fire-place, gazed on, open-lipped, by the once all-believing, but now utterly increduamusing herself in her gayest moments with a page or two of the statistics of crime or corn? I hated the man. He did not look like a person of 1856, but a skeleton of some dreadful and extinct pre-Adamite animal. Vastity of jaw,

breadth of countenance, boniness of structurewho could he be but the resuscitated body (and possibly mind too) of one of the antediluvian monsters on that melancholy island in the Crystal Palace garden-the iguanodon, or mastodon; or, more likely still, the megatherium, of which, I believe, the name means in English the great beast ? He was undoubtedly an English, or rather Scottish megatherium, and committed such devastations in the forests of history and romance, that, if long continued, not a green leaf would be left. Was there indeed no St. Pierre and the self-sacrificing six, as honorable in my eves as the three hundred Fabii (who never existed) or Codrus of Athens (who also is a mere imposition.)

"I big yer par-r-don," he began ; and before the flop of his closing jaws it was clear that the pretty story of that Calais surrender was an inthis purpose, and laid a volume on the table, but eye-witness, in which from hour to hour the course of the siege is detailed, and no mention

Come, come, I thought, this fellow will deny the existence of my mother-in-law next. I'll stand it no longer : wherefore I said, "Mr. M'-Ritchie, I think you go a little too far. The Maelstrom is in every geography book, and every school boy-

"I big yer par-r-don. Every school-boy is a perfit idyitt who believes in any such thing." And he condescended to proof. From the same repertory which he kept his authorities about Calais, he brought forward a certain official report, presented to the King of Denmark by a commission of scientific and naval men, who have been sent to verify the size and danger of the greatest whirlpool in the world. It was Bush. Who, then, was Le Vaillant? He is dated two or three years ago. It was very clear, mentioned in the Biographie Universelle, " was very conclusive ; and signed with all their names. They had searched night and day in the quarter where the awful Malestrom was supposed to be. Over and over, backward and forward, sailed the vessel of inquiry. There was no recoil, no eddy, no roar; there was nothing but smooth water, and a gradual tide. The philosophers taken from the prefaces and inductions to the examined divers of the fishermen and skippers; and all of them had heard of the Maelstrom, and believed in it, and prayed against it; but none of bitation and a name are given to this purely imathem had ever seen it. All the coast was traversed, from the mouth of the Baltic to the north of Norway. There was no Maelstrom! France, where a baptismal register might be ap-And the navigator may guide his bark in peace; pealed to, but at Paramaribo in Dutch Guyana; at the expense of exposure and shame before the the swimming bears may dread no suction; the there he devotes himself to study and the exploinadvertent whale may spout through its nose in safety; the stately ship may fear no irresistible and sixty-three he comes with his parents to twist and twirl, and may lazily float with fair France, but not to Paris or any traceable posiwind and tide across the dreaded spot. It is for ever extinguished, abolished, and done out of existence by act of the Danish parliament. The self up entirely to the chase. He comes by jubilant lips closed with a bang, and all my simile | chance to the capital in seventeen hundred and was overthrown.

acknowledged truths, was more interesting even forth. He will travel into the native land of than his expungement of the Northern Sylla and Charybdis; I commend the consideration of it to the erudite inquiries of the Notes and Queries. He was damming up for ever the sources of the dreadful doom was passed. "I big yer par-rdon; Le Vaillant never wrote the book !"-and what was the rate of exchange established of the interesting part of the story—no summoning key; and the beautiful tenderness of the desert to say to him nay. He is the Robinson Crusoe posite the door, and in stentorian voices should out and what was the rate of exchange established of the inhabitants—no procession with ropes about flower—the fair Narina—the connecting link be- of the desert, and finds his man Friday in Claas. I their vile and blasphemous ribaldry against the Ro-

serts that he has seen the giraffe trot, he spares me any further trouble in proving this animal never presented itself alive before him."

Then, who does not remember the ferocious colonies of the Houswanas; their courage, their size, and the influence they exercised over all the surrounding tribes? Who were these tremendous warriors, these assegayed Romans, founding a long-enduring dominion by self-control and stoic perseverance? They were our friends of the Egyptian Hall, London, the base Bosjesmen or Bushmen-the lowest type of human nature-but recommended to Chaptal by the vague uncertainty of the name which was current among the Dutch colonists of the Cape, the wild heroes of the forest, the Men of the born in seventeen hundred and fifty-three, and died in eighteen hundred and twenty-four; a quiet, retired, and unsocial man, devoting his whole time to the preparation of his travels and the publication of his essays on the Natural History of Birds." The whole of this biography is various editions of the travels. Nobody ever saw him. The ingenuity with which a local haginary individual is worthy of De Foe or Gulliver. He is born, not in any town or district of ration of wood and fell. In seventeen hundred tion, but to the wild parts of Lorraine and the Vosges. Here he shuns society, and gives himseventy-seven, and sees the royal cabinet of na-But, the next effort of this exterminator of tural history ; and the fire, long dormant, breaks forth. He will travel into the native land of those strange and captivating animals, and see them in their natural freedom; and at a time position in which this city is placed by the proceedwhen England and France are at war, when no rice was damming up for ever the sources of the record of his voyage could be possible in the the streets of our city. My Sub-Sheriff, a Protestant Nile, when I took courage to make a remark about the explorers of Africa, and named my favorite traveller Le Vaillant. In a moment the in safety; but the ship which brought him is record of his voyage could be possible in the sunk, burnt, or otherwise destroyed by an Eng- past in a delicate state of health and the children lish fleet; and alone out of all the crew-sole