

ANGLO-AMERICAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. VI.—TORONTO. FEBRUARY, 1855.—NO. II.

THE NEW GAUGER;
OR JACK TRAINER'S STORY.

BY JAMES MCCARROLL.

INTRODUCTION.

DURING the autumn of 1828, while on a visit to some of my friends in the west of Ireland, I had permission, through the kindness of the resident agent, to fish, for a few days, on the property of Sir Hugh Crofton, not far from the neat little town of Mohill, so remarkable for its cattle fairs, and the vast tracts of bog by which it is surrounded. While on one of my piscatorial excursions along the Clooncahar side of Wren Lough, towards the latter end of September, I had encountered a most terrific gale which came down on me with the velocity of a white squall, and, notwithstanding all my exertions, tore my frail bark from its moorings of bulrushes, and bore me off, together with the lad who accompanied me, far out on the face of the angry waters. For upwards of two long hours, I struggled with a single oar against the fury of the pitiless hurricane, having lost the other through the awkwardness of my guide, but all to no purpose, for we were still swept on towards Toomen, and were beginning to entertain serious apprehensions of our ultimate safety, when, to our unspeakable relief, as night was gathering around dark and dismal, we were driven in upon a low wooded island that had just peeped through the deepening gloom about half a mile from the Brooklyn shore. Here, to our utter surprise, we were surrounded by ten

or twelve stalworth fellows armed to the teeth, and each apparently the very reverse of being delighted at our escape, or gratified by our sudden arrival. I explained briefly the circumstances of my position, and was about to commit myself once more to the mercy of the elements, sooner than remain in such questionable hands, when I was accosted by a voice that was perfectly familiar to me, and which was indeed music to my ear at that peculiar moment. It was that of Jemmy MacHugh, the well-known runner between different points of the county Leitrim—a half simpleton whom I had the good fortune to oblige on one or two occasions at the residence of my uncle, where he was in the habit of calling frequently with letters. This, to me opportune recognition, seemed to re-assure all parties; and on being informed that, under any circumstance, it would be perilous in the last degree to quit the island, as the main shore was now nowhere visible, I determined to make the best of the matter, and take up my abode with the strangers until morning.

On being conducted through tangled briar and copsewood a few hundred yards into the interior, the warlike appearance of the temporary inhabitants was no longer a matter of mystery to me; for there, beneath the arches of what was once a castle and fortification of gigantic strength, I beheld, to my extreme gratification, two large stills in full operation, glowing, seething, and rumbling in all their illicit pride, and completing a scene which I fancied, at the moment, the most pictur-