

THE LAMENT OF THE IRISH EMIGRANT.

BY LADY DUFFERIN.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE "Lament" is a very simple and touching poem. The language of the Irish Emigrant is in keeping with his plain, manly character. His bereavement of everything he holds dear—his wife, and child, and home—moves our sympathy very strongly. If the pupils commit the poem to memory, and are able to read it with appreciation of the sad story it reveals, the teacher's work will be accomplished.

THE LESSON.

It seems undesirable to submit this poem, because of its emotional character, to any analytical inquiry as to its rhythmical or rhetorical structure. Let us simply try, line by line, to find what sad events cloud the life of the Emigrant. What a story we can gather from his few words, that give utterance to his sorrow, when he had no thought of anyone else knowing it or hearing it.

One May morning the young Irishman and his sweetheart, Mary, were married. How bright everything was to him that day, sitting on the stile with his Mary! The corn was fresh and green, the lark was singing high in the air, and Mary's eyes beamed with love and happiness. They began their married life full of hope,—trusting, helping and cheering each other. But suddenly a terrible famine came—how terrible we cannot imagine.* Hunger and want seized the little family. The man's strength gave way, and with that his hope and faith in God. But Mary's brave heart kept up its trust. She had ever a kind look, a word of cheer, and a pleasant smile, though her heart was fit to break with grief and the hunger-pain that gnawed there. Gradually, however, her woman's strength failed. She was overcome by hunger and sickness, and at last she and her baby died. The man recovered, bereft of everything but his great sorrow and the

* Ireland has been called a land of famines. Every two or three years, from 1811 to 1845, there was a potato blight, leaving the people without food. In the famine of '22, due to the potato not ripening, it is said that typhus and dysentery followed the use of the unwholesome potatoes and slew thousands. In some parts the living could not bury the dead.