

NOTES ON IRISH LITERATURE.

"THE BELL FOUNDER."

(BY A SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR.)

In a previous issue the readers had a brief synopsis, told in rugged prose, of the interesting story of the "Bell Founder." This week we will take the first section of that story and tell it, as nearly as is possible, in the words of Denis Florence McCarthy. Should any error, or omission creep in, we beg to be excused from memory, and it is now more than fifteen years since last we read the poem. As stated last week, the poet commences by asking Erin to pardon him, if, in the midst of the famine years, he leaves his own Isle to seek a subject in another land; in so doing, however, he paints a vivid picture of the situation in Ireland and laments the disunion that is destroying the national cause. It is thus the story runneth:—

"Oh, Erin! thou desolate mother,
The heart in thy bosom is sore,
And wringing thy hands with despair,
Thou dost roam 'round a plague-stricken shore!
Thy children are dying, or flying,
Thy great ones are laid in the dust,
And those who survive are divided,
While those who control are unjust.
Wilt thou blame me, dear mother, if
I look through the night of our
wretchedness,
Back to some bright vanished day;
When, through sorrow, which ever is
with us,
Was heavy and dark on the land,
Hope twinkled and shone like a
planet,
And Faith was a sword in the hand?"

"Not now rings the song like a bugle,
'Midst the clashing and splintering
of spears,
Or the heart-piercing keening of the
mourner
O'er the grave of green Erin of
tears;
Not to strengthen the young arm of
freedom,
Or melt off old slavery's chain—
But to flow through the soul, in its
calmness,
Like a stream o'er the breast of
the plain,
Changing, though calm, be its cur-
rent,
From its source to its haven of
rest,
Flowing on through Italy's vine-
yards,
To the emerald fields of the West,
A picture of life and its pleasures,
Its troubles, its cradle, its shroud,
Now bright with the glow of the
sunshine,
Now dark with the gloom of the
cloud."

Such then is aspect of the story's
current, from Italy to Ireland.
Mark the apostrophe to that sunny
land when the poet transports us,
to the banks of the Arno.
"In that land where the heaven-tinted
pencil
Giveth shape to the splendor of
dreams;
Near Florence, the fairest of cities,
And by Arno, the sweetest of
streams,
Lived Paolo, the young campanero,
The pride of his own native vale;
Hope changed the hot breath of his
furnace
As into a sea-wafted gale,
Peace, the child of employment, was
with him,
With prattle so soothing and sweet;
And Love, while revealing the future,
Strewed her sweet roses under his
feet."

We will not here reproduce the
grand tribute to labor, which has so
often been quoted in those columns,
and which thus closes:—
"He the true ruler and conqueror,
He the true lord of his race,
Who nerves his arm for life's com-
bat,
And looks a strong world in the
face."

Moreover the lines that we skip,
for sake of brevity, may be found in
several collections of Irish ballads,
as well as in many school-books—
we prefer to give what is almost
absolutely unknown. The story then
goes on:—
"And such was young Paolo;
The morning, ere yet the faint star-
light had gone,
To the loud-ringing workshop beheld
him
More joyfully, lightfooted on:
In the glare and the roar of the fur-
nace,
He toiled till the evening star
burned;
And then back again through that
valley,
As glad, but more weary, returned.
One moment, at morning, he lingers
By the cottage that stands by the
stream:
Many moments, at evening, he
tarries,
By the casement that woos the
moon's beam:
For the light of his life and his
labor,
Like a lamp from that casement
shines,
In the glorious eyes that look out
From the purple-clad trellis of
vines."

What a picture the following:
"Francesca sweet, innocent maiden,
'Tis not that thy young cheeks are
fair,
Or thy eyes shine like stars at even-
ing,
Through the curls of thy wind-
woven hair;

'Tis not for thy rich lips of coral,
Or even thy whiteness of snow,
That my song shall recall thee,
Francesca,
But more for thy good heart below.
Goodness is beauty's best portion—
A dower-right no time can reduce;
A wand of enchantment and happi-
ness,
Brightening and strengthening with
use."
"Francesca and Paolo are plighted—
And they wait but a few happy
days,
'Till uniting the hearts of each other,
They walk through life's mystical
ways;
'Till joining their hands together,
They move through the stillness and
noise,
Dividing the cares of existence,
But doubling his hopes and its
joys.
Sweet days of betrothment that
lengthen
So slowly to love's burning noon,
Like the days of spring that grow
longer
The nearer the fulness of June;
You stir o'er the lives of the lovers,
And pass with a slow-moving wing,
You are lit with the light of the
morning,
And decked with the beauties of
spring."

The days of betrothment are over;
And now, when the evening-star
shines,
Two faces look lovingly out
From that purple-clad trellis of
vines.
The merry-laughter is doubled,
Two voices steal forth on the air,
And blend in the soft tones of song,
Or the sweet, solemn cadence of
prayer."

The lines descriptive of the children
that, with years, came to enliven
the cottage, have escaped our
memory—they are only four in all.
Now we are taken to the workshop
to witness the labors of Paolo.
"In the heat of the rich-glaring
chamber
The proud master anxiously moves,
And the quick, and the skillful he
praises,
And the dull and the laggard re-
proves;
And the heart in his bosom expand-
eth,
As the hot-bubbling metal up-
swells—
For, like to the birth of his children,
He watcheth the birth of his bells."

"But Paolo is pious and grateful,
And he vows, as he kneels at her
shrine,
To offer some token of labor
To Mary, the Mother benign.
Eight silver-toned bells will he offer,
To toll for the quick and the dead,
From the tower of the church of Our
Lady,
That stands on the cliff over-
head."

"'Tis for this that the bellows are
blowing,
That the workmen their sledge-
hammers wield,
That the iron-sanded moulders are
broken,
And the dark-shining bells are re-
vealed,
That the cars with their streamers
are ready,
And the flowery-harnessed necks of
the steers,
And the bells, from the cold silent
workshop,
Are borne amidst blessings and
tears—
By the sweet-scented bowers of
myrtle,
By the olive-trees fringing the
plain,
By the orchards and vineyards are
wending
The gift-bearing, festival train;
And the sounds of music are blend-
ing
With the joyousness now on the
gale—
As they wend to the church of Our
Lady
That stands at the head of the
vale."

Only a Catholic could pen such a
description as the following:—
"Now they enter, and now more
divine
The Saints' painted effigies smile;
Now the acolytes, bearing lit tapers,
Move solemnly down through the
aisle;
Now the thurifer swings the rich
censer,
And the white-curling vapor up-
floats,
And hangs round the deep-pealing
organ,
And blends with the tremulous
notes,
In a white-shining alb comes the
Abbot;
He circles the bells round about,
And with oil, and with salt, and
with water,
They are purified inside and out;
They are marked with Christ's mys-
tical symbol,
While the priests and the chorists
sing;
And are blessed in the name of that
God
To whose honor they ever shall
ring."
Then comes an intimation of the
bells:—
"Toll! toll! with a rapid vibration,
With a melody silvery and strong;
The bells from the sound-shaken
belfry,
Are singing their first maiden song
Not now for the dead, or the living,
For triumphs of peace or of strife,
But a quick, joyous outburst of
jubilee,
Full of a newly-felt life.
Rapid, more rapid the clapper
Resounds to the sounds of the bells,

THE TRUE WITNESS AND CATHOLIC CHRONICLE

Far and more far o'er the valley,
The star-twined melody twells;
Quivering and broken the atmos-
phere
Trembles and twinkles around,
Like the eyes and the hearts of the
hearers,
That glisten and beat to the
sound."

This is followed by a description
of the effect of the bells at morning
on Paolo:—
"At that sound he awoke and arose,
And went forth on the bead-bear-
ing grass;
At that sound, with his darling
Francesca,
He piously knelt at the Mass!"

"And at noon, as he lay in the sul-
triness,
Under his broad-leafy limes,
For sweeter than murmuring waters
Came the toll of the Angelus
chimes—
At that sound he piously arose,
And uncovered his reverent head,
And thrice was the Ave Maria,
And thrice was the Angelus said.
Sweet custom the South still retain-
eth,
To turn for a moment away,
From the troubles and cares of ex-
istence,
From the troubles and cares of ex-
day,
From the sorrows, without and with-
in,
To the peace that abideth on high,
When sweet, solemn tones of the
bells
Come down like a voice from the
sky."

"And thus round the heart of the old
man,
At morning, at noon, and at eve,
The bells, with their rich woof of
melody,
The net-work of happiness weave.
But age will come on with its win-
dow-
Though happiness hideth its
snows—
And if youth has its duty of labor,
The birth-right of age is repose.
May no harsh-grating sounds of the
bell
With such love and happiness
blend!
Sure, evening so calm and so fair
Will glide peacefully on to end!
Sure the current of a river must be,
Flowing down through a valley of
flowers,
To its home in the far distant
sea!"

This closes the first chapter of the
Bell Founder's story. But no such
peaceful ending is in store for the
"Bell Founder."

ON THE SHANNON.

Athlone, in addition to its topo-
graphical fame as the central cap-
ital of Ireland, has many other in-
teresting associations, connected
with it. The very derivation, or,
rather, the origin of its name, takes
us back to a remote period of Irish

history. It is told that in the days
of Con of the Hundred Battles, who
flourished about the year A.D. 130,
a house of entertainment—a tyosda,
as it was called—was kept close by
the waters of the Shannon, where
a bridge of Athlone the hospitable
proprietor's name was Luah, which,
being familiarly coupled with the
Celtic word ath, meaning ford, gave
rise to the name of Athlone, or the
"Ford of Luah." From the position
of Athlone, as guarding the pass be-
tween the two divisional kingdoms
of Ireland—Leinster and Connaught,
it was from immemorial times a
point of military defence. The origi-
nal fortress was no doubt a Dun
or Cathair of earthwork, disposed in
the manner of so many of those fort-
s to be met with in Ireland. The im-
portance of Athlone at a very early
period made it the centre of relig-
ious foundations, around which a
population quickly gathered, and
built their homes. As with so many
cities and towns in Europe, the present
Athlone owes its origin to the
monasteries, whose sites here lay on
each side of the River Shannon. As
many of our readers are aware, the
town is partly situated in two prov-
inces, in two dioceses, in two coun-
ties and baronies, and necessarily in
two parishes. Both portions are
connected by a fine viaduct, which
replaced, in 1844, the interesting
and historic bridge constructed in
the days of Elizabeth, and on which
a monument stood commemorative
of its erection, and bearing the es-
cutcheon of the Virgin Queen. While,
from an antiquarian point of view,
we regret the disappearance of this
venerable memorial, it is not like-
ly—with the student of Irish history,
at least—that the existence of the
former Bridge of Athlone will
ever be quite forgotten. It was not
"a Bridge of Fancies," but one of
greater interest than many Irish
cities or towns. Its normal popula-
tion is some 10,000 inhabitants but
its importance as a military station
often swells this aggregate. This
latter circumstance gives a very dis-

tinct feature to Athlone. The town
is generally bright and joyous with
parade of military, and gay with
the strains of martial music, while
ever and anon the volley practice of
artillery keep the echoes of the Shan-
non busy recalling the stirring mem-
ories of the warful past. Athlone
gives the traveller all the charac-
teristic impressions of some of the for-
tress towns of the Rhine or the Me-
selle, for it was long a frontier town
between a civilized and a barbarian
and under the regime of the Con-
queror, it became and continues to be
the central citadel of a conquered
land. The Castle is the most strik-
ing feature of the place. Seven hun-
dred years ago its bastions towers
and towers were erected by the
John de Grey, Bishop of Norwich.
Lord Judiciary of Ireland in the
reign of King John. It stands on
the site of the Celtic fort, for which
the O'Connors, the O'Kellys and the
McLaughlins of Meath, many a time
fought fierce and hard. During its
erection we learn from our records
that Lord Richard Tuit, the founder
of the Cistercian Abbey of Granard,
the towers. The site of the Castle
was part of the Abbey Lands of St.
Peter's—style the Abbey of Inno-
centia—for which the Abbot received
in recompense a grant of estates in
County Westmeath. However, it ac-
quired a strange commemoration in
the way of history, its steeple be-
ing one of the devices—shown on a
medal struck by order of King Wil-
liam III., to commemorate the fall
of Athlone. This border-castle
of the Shannon has been the theatre
of many a struggle. At times the
native Irish held it; again the
successors of its alien builders took
turn in getting possession of it. Its
tenancy seems to have been submit-
ted to a continuous process of mili-
tary evictions down to the time of
the Wars of the Roses, when Eng-
land was too busy with her home
troubles to look after Ireland, and
the Norman settlers becoming "more
Irish than the Irish themselves," the
part by common consent was held by
successive commanders in the native
interest. In the days of Elizabeth,
Athlone Castle became the seat of
the Presidency of Connaught, where
the residence of the Governor was
established. Within its walls, the
O'Connor Don of that day was im-
prisoned as a hostage for his clan,
but romantically effected his escape.
On the abolition of the Presidency
with all its appurtenances was gra-
nted to the grandson of Lord Pen-
nagh, its last governor. The siege
of Athlone (1690-91) has invested
this fortress with a long-lived his-
toric fame. It is needless here to
dwell on this too well-known chap-
ter of Irish history. The attack was
held for King James II. by Colonel
Grace, and after one of the bravest
defences on record, was successfully
stormed by De Ginkle, the Dutch
General of the Prince of Orange. The
magnitude of the feat, and the
somewhat realized from the fact that
the besiegers expended upwards of
fifty tons of powder, six hundred
shells, twelve hundred cannon balls,
and innumerable tons of stone shot.
The Castle was completely shatter-

ed and the Roscommon side of the
town wholly swept away. On in-
vesting Athlone, William repaired
the castle, and had good mural
defences of the town. The shuckly
citadel, however, experienced another
stroke of fate on October 27, 16-
97, when in a lightning storm the
magazine was fired, and 1,000 hand-
grenades and some three hundred
barrels of powder exploded, causing
immense loss of life and laying al-
most the whole town in ruins. In
1827 the Castle was mainly recon-
structed on the principles of modern
warfare. All the ancient features
were preserved—the water-gate, the
turret walls and the ancient keep
still distinctly traceable. This makes
Athlone Castle the most interesting
of Ireland's military remains. The
view obtained from the lofty keep,
now used as a soldier's band-room,
is singularly fine. All the defences
of the town, the walls, the gates,
the outpost towers, have disappear-
ed. The earthworks of the besiegers
of 1691 are however, still in evi-
dence, the grass-grown lines of hil-
locks and deep trenches lying be-
tween them suggesting a sad pictur-
esqueness of the idea when we reflect,
as we clamber up the verdant knolls
or stray beneath their quiet shad-
ows, that in every tread our step is
on a foeman's dust! Years may roll
on and centuries of summer sun-
shine and autumn shadows pass
away, but as long as the grey old
Castle frowns upon the lordly Shan-
non, and the green grass waves over
the silent ramparts, the muse of his-
tory will not fold her scroll, and the
story of the siege of Athlone will be
told. The modern barracks, situ-
ated in the immediate vicinity of the
Castle, on the north side, are amongst
the finest buildings of the kind in
the kingdom. They occupy an area
of fifteen acres, comprising an ar-
mory usually containing musketry for
15,000 men, quarters for infantry,
cavalry and artillery, with the nec-
essary stores, hospitals, parade
ground, etc.—London New Era.

THE STORY OF A NOVENA.

Travelling on a railroad train,
alone, the other day, the autumn
scenery attracted my attention and
the gorgeous colors of the woods—
purple and scarlet and brown, green
and yellow and pink—thrilled me
with delight. What infinite variety
of hues! What bewildering beauty of
scene, as one picture after another
frames itself in the car-windows!
I occupied a seat near the middle
of the coach. There were only five
other passengers in it, although the
rest of the train was crowded—two
men in the seat just back of me, and
two ladies with a boy in the rear
seats.
As we rushed onward, drawn by
the clamorous locomotive, past field
and village and town, past meadow
and mountain, past orchard and for-
est, and from one side to the other
of a turbulent mill-stream, my mind
withdrew from the outside world to
ponder the mystery of life and to
marvel at the test to which our
faith is often put when we pray and
pray for what seems to be a neces-
sary grace, yet apparently get no
answer.
"Singularly enough, as a coinci-
dence, just as my thoughts reached
that perplexity, one of my neigh-
bors who had been listening, with
little to say himself, to his more
talkative companion, said, in a fair-
ly low but clear and penetrating
tone, and as if in reply to some
statement that had been made by the
other:—
"Well, I never did. Never! I don't
remember ever getting anything im-
mediately as a direct response to
prayer."
"Oh," thought I to myself, "I'm
not the only one that's cried, and
he's worse off than I am, for I cer-
tainly have received, from above,
light and grace and guidance in an-
swer to appeals."
My cogitations were cut short by
the other neighbor, who spoke up:—
"Let me relate an incident in my
own experience.
"You know I'm a marble-worker
with considerable skill in designing
altars and building fine monu-
ments. About a year ago I lost my
position. After paying some small
bills, I returned home on Saturday
night with sixteen dollars in my
pocket. That money was my total
possession outside of a wife, five
children, some clothes and a few
sticks of furniture. At the house, a
poor sewing-woman was waiting for
three dollars due her. I owed rent,
a grocery bill, a doctor, etc., etc."
"After my last wages were all
gone, I obtained credit for some
time in all the near-by stores that
would trust me. Meanwhile I tried
in every possible way to get em-

ployment. But I had no success.
Everywhere that I sought a job, the
reply was 'No!' First I became
down-hearted, next I lost courage,
and finally I was almost frantic. I
couldn't eat any more, and, to tell
the truth, there wasn't much on the
table to tempt one to gluttony. I
couldn't sleep at night. I grew to
look haggard, but my anxiety was
more for my poor wife and children
than for myself. When I was just
about to despatch my good wife, to
whom God has given the faith since
our marriage, suggested that we
make together a novena to the Sacred
Heart, for whom I'm not
given to piety, by inclination, but I
couldn't refuse her since the novena
couldn't do any harm, and, besides,
I do believe in God and I do
believe that He answers prayer:—
and I did have faith that He could
grant us what we asked and that He
would do so if it was best for us,
according to His plan.
"We began the novena, hoping by
a resolute act of the will against
the doubt and darkness and despair
that encompassed us. We prayed
fervently, and strove to cheer each
other up.
"On the third day a young wo-
man who was then a comparative
stranger to us but who is now a
cherished friend, came unexpectedly
to my wife and volunteered the loan
of fifty dollars that she had saved
up, saying that she knew that I was
out of work and that she would be
pleased if we could use the money."
"It seemed to me like a godsend
dropped straight from the heavens."
"But what was that to our need?
I handed it all over to the landlady,
who was threatening to put us out,
for I thought that it was best to
keep a shelter over our heads, even
though we had to go hungry."
"Well, the novena went on day
after day, but the first answer seem-
ed to be the only one that we were
to receive—I couldn't get anything
to do at any kind of employment
and the grocery were dunning us
with their bills. The outlook was
certainly discouraging.
"The last day of the nine came.
We both felt low-spirited, but we
went to Holy Communion together
and said the final prayers.

"Don't lose hope," pleaded my
wife, "we may yet get something in
a day or two."
"Shortly after breakfast I started
out as usual to look for a job, but
first been told the prices, selected
went by the church to pay a visit
to the Blessed Sacrament in thank-
sgiving for my Communion.
"While I was kneeling in a pew
near the door, with my face hid in
my hands and my heart in the tab-
ernacle pleading for my suffering
children, a gentleman touched me on
the arm and I looked up. I was ac-
quainted with him only by reputa-
tion as one of the prominent and
wealthy Catholics of the city, and
he knew me only by sight, as the
son of my father, who had once
done some marble-work for him.
He whispered to me:
"Can you come to my office
some time to-day?"
"Yes, sir," I answered, and out
he went. In a dull sort of way I
wondered what he wanted with me,
but my mind was so taken up with
the misery that haunted me, that I
could not think about it. So I re-
sumed my prayer and finished it as
best I could. Then I left the church,
and proceeded to the gentleman's of-
fice.
"I want you to fix the marble-
steps at my house," he said; "they're
our of order. And, by the way, I'd
like to get a neat but simple tomb-
stone for my uncle. About what
would it cost me?"
"I made a rough outline of several
styles of headstones, and he, having
first been told the prices, selected
one of them. Then he inquired in an
off-hand way:
"How's business?"
"When I replied that I was not in
any business, he seemed so surprised
that I had to make some explana-
tion and then he seemed so sympa-
thetic that one remark or inquiry of
his, after another, drew out from
me pretty much the whole story.
"How much money would you
need to get a start?" he asked ab-
ruptly.
"I told him," said he, with a
glance at me of astonishment; and
without another word he turned
around to his desk and wrote me out
a cheque for the amount. Handing
it to me, he remarked:
"Pay me when you can well af-
ford it, and if that isn't enough,
come back for more."
How I got out of his office, I don't
know to this day. I was just
completely overwhelmed with emotion
and wanted to cry and to
laugh. But I couldn't utter a word.
He offered me his hand and my grasp
of it spoke more than words.
"Well, I went back to the church
for one good minute and then I
rushed home to my wife. I won't
say a word about what happened
when I told her the good news, ex-
cept that she fell on her knees and
called down God's blessing on our
benefactor in words that gushed
from an affectionate and grateful
heart.
"So I hired a shop, moved my
family into rooms above it, paid the
most pressing debts, procured some
stones and began work on the gen-
tleman's orders.
"I wasn't through with them be-
fore other commissions commenced
to come in.
"But that wasn't all my good for-
tune. To provide the capital neces-
sary to carry on and develop the
business, two kinsmen of mine, rela-
tives by marriage, seeing that I had
a start in my old line, came in of
their own accord, and, each not
knowing what the other had done,
offered me financial assistance. With
their aid I have been enabled to pay
back the first two loans, wipe out
all other outside indebtedness, sup-
port my family and carry out all
work entrusted to me, involving
thousands of dollars' worth of cred-
it. To-day I have a fairly flourish-
ing business. I attribute it all to
the Sacred Heart and to that nove-
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ing business. I attribute it all to
the Sacred Heart and to that nove-
na."
"Well, if that isn't as good as a
story!" observed the other man. "It
has put new faith into me."
The train had reached its terminus
by this. My neighbors and I got off
together, but they were soon lost to
me in the crowds that surged out of
the other cars. There and then they
dropped out of my life most prob-
ably for ever, but the story that
the one told and the other listened
to, abides with me yet. Whenever I
recall it, I remember also the com-
ment of the other man and I echo it
with equal fervor and conviction,
saying, as he did:
"It has put new faith into me!"—
L. W. Reilly, in Donahoe's Maga-
zine.

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REV. P. J. O'Donnell
Pastor of St. M
Counsel Dr

Dear Priest, p
O'Donnell
Pure was that
bond at the
The marked his
Charity, piety,
his brov

On tablets of e
engrave
The gratitude
orphans he
A deep spirit c
mate his l
No ostentation
as a child
Nor stranger, f
ever break
To Our Lady
loved to n

No doubt, it w
did his mi
And radiate h
beams of l
The children l
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They ga; like
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And for Christ
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Oh children of
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The sinner's h
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His cheered up
Oh, Lord! upon
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"As citizen, a c
Ever honored
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Shed lustre
He loved his gl
loved his h
No-son of dea
lover her m

Now he his hol
dear-loved
Sweet Mother o
his heart
Sons and daug
will off the
Enshrine the to
with gems
Keep him in
while life's
A friend in h
O'Donnell

THE WEARING

A Leaf From th
Irish

"Will my soul
On its way to
Just outside t
England, the
burg's Convent
quaint old hous
ant price may
Tudor times. N
the aged poor—
those who have
sitory.
Among the de
is an aged dame
had spent its fur
side the world.
erine Maloney; a
days come rou
up and says: "I
road to Tim, fat
me mind Tim."
And I tell her
is never forgotte
bered at the alt
en of by one o
whom God had
I turn to my
it piece together
When Catheri
among us she w
was bright
kind and steady
dy boy.

Mike, her hu
layer's laborer,
dark winters, wh
ed, the Maloney
hard time of it
Catherine's indu
good God can b
though Maloney's
common earthen
the honey of ha
ed, "Shure—the
"There's no strang
and Mike is will
a little robin re
py woman I am
in old Ireland, h
ed, the fisher-w
the song in the
shawls on the
paradise afore
Catherine often
Then came the
in it.
Mike told his
trying to save a
compelled by dr
make what he c
water." And wh
had been laid to
lic part of the
about finding a
market for the
son.
Our Irish peopl
I may say mit
tant chairs, and
received Catheri
up with a mang
eral store. Littl
errand boy in a
ers' factory, a
threads were un
Young as he w