

THE DAYS OF '47.

The history of the Irish people is a glorious, but a sorrowful one. It throws open to the astonished gaze of humanity at large, the records of a nation whose faith all the robbery and murder, systematic bloodshed and persecution of the mightiest of earthly kingdoms have in vain striven to shatter,—a faith, that, like the Rock of ages, is as immovable to day, as it was a thousand years ago. It also presents its gloomy picture, its tales of woe ; its pains and penalties ; its slaughtered priests and Bishops ; its drenched scaffolds ; its broken-hearted widows and forlorn orphans. But at no period does Ireland present a more sorrowful spectacle than in the horrible days of 1846 and ' 47. At the very moment, when the dark, lurking shadows of three centuries might be supposed to be about to disappear, an ominous cloud was seen, looming up in the horizon, spreading the sable curtains of death over the hill-side and the valley, bearing on its dark bosom, the dreadful Angel of destruction. The Famine came, with all its scenes of horror ; and it found the nation that had withstood the sword and cannon, unable to withstand the exterminating ravages of systematic starvation, and it sent millions of its victims to an early grave. The mighty O'Connell, at the sight of the awful Figure that swept over the land that he loved, sank, broken-hearted, into the tomb ; and the sun of Ireland's existence seemed to be fast sinking in the West. The field and the roadside were strewn with dying and with dead ; and in the midst of their universal despair and sorrow, they turned their eyes across the Atlantic to seek shelter in a foreign land. The Hand of Providence directed the mourning Irish to the shores of the Western World ; and, throughout the broad extent of America, thousands and hundreds of thousands of those sufferers are to be found to-day ;—from