SHAMUS O'BRIEN,

THE BOLD BOY OF GLINGALL,

A TALE OF '98.

By JAMES SHERIDAN LE FANU,

AUTHOR OF "UNCLE SILAS," "CHECKMATE," ETC.

AS RECITED BY SAMUEL LOVER, JOHN AND FRANK DREW, S. K. MURDOCH, EDWIN ADAMS, AND OTHER CELEBRATED ELOCUTIONISTS.

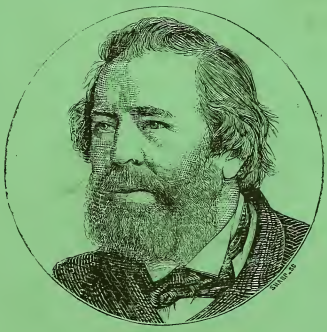
TO WHICH IS ADDED

FATHER ROACH,

A STORY FOUNDED ON FACT.

By SAMUEL LOVER.

WITH A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE, BY T. W. H.



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NOTICE.

"Shamus O'Brien," first known in the United States by the recitation of Samuel Lover, was written by James Sheridan Le Fanu, of Dublin, a popular novelist, grand-nephew of the Right Hon. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the illustrious orator and dramatist. In the present edition will be found several lines not previously published in this country.

R. S. M.

SAMUEL LOVER.

THE superiority of Irish melodies over those of England and Scotland is generally conceded. Those of the latter countries, though fuller and more numerous in metrical expression than those of Ireland, and having, perhaps, a more complete and attractive appearance to the general eye, have yet nothing that can be compared in high musical character with the best melodies of the sister island.

This superiority of Irish minstrelsy has, by some, been attributed to the distinct nature of the Celtic race — its greater fire and feeling; others again, with perhaps more justice, ascribe it to the higher order of its inspiration — that of sorrow, for sorrow is the most potent inspiration of song. "Sorrow," says Sir James Mackintosh, "seems to be the muse of song; and from Philomela to Mrs. Tighe, the most plaintive notes are the most melodious."

Whatever may be the cause, the acknowledged fact remains; and among those who deserve to be classed in the highest rank of the lyric bards of Ireland, there is not one more worthy of being remembered than SAMUEL LOVER, the subject of the following brief biographical notice, and the author of so many well-known poems.

From the earliest ages, minstrels were in the habit of traversing Ireland, singing its legends, its war-feats and hospitalities; and Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, and others, have acknowledged the poetical abilities of that class of men. In the last century, Carolan, his son, Kempson, Fanning, O'Neill, and other equally well-known bards, still practised the time-honored *clairseach;* and in the agitation and glow of national feeling which preceded and followed the parliamentary independence of 1782, the old

Irish bards seemed to have all come back again. In 1792, a grand musical festival of the harpists took place in Belfast, increasing the flushed hopes which had begun to warm the people's thoughts. But those hopes were, for a time, baffled, and the harpists have died out as a class; although the national spirit of bardism has shown itself still strong in Ireland whenever the old baffled hope renews itself there.

Samuel Lover was born in 1797, one year before the Irish rising of 1798, and died July 8, 1868. His father was a stock-broker in Dublin, and educated his son for commercial pursuits; but Lover soon quitted business, and devoted himself to painting. It was not very long, however, before he abandoned the brush for the pen, as many other artists have done before him. The principal reason for this change was that the peculiar branch of his profession which he had adopted — that of miniature-painting on ivory — was fast destroying his eyesight, and, of necessity, he was compelled to abandon it.

At that time there was published in Dublin a journal, which was the medium through which Carleton, Lever, as well as Lover, were first introduced to the literary world. This was the "Irish Penny Journal," in which Petrie's archæological papers also originally appeared.

Lover's first contributions to this journal — his "Legends and Tales Illustrative of Irish Character" — were received with great favor. He had an almost inexhaustible budget of witty anecdotes, and a particularly quaint, humorous manner of telling them.

It must be remembered that in Lover's day the Irish were very different, and more appropriate subjects of literature than they, unhappily, are at present. They were, at once, more prosperous and more picturesque; surrounded by the most extraordinary landlords and squires, who were frequently fighting duels with one another.

Lover's "Handy Andy," one of his most successful and best works, however fanciful and exaggerated it may seem to us nowadays, was not untrue in its leading incidents, and was almost literally true in its delinea-

tion of the principal characters, who were taken from the life. "Handy Andy" appeared originally in "Bentley's Miscellany," and created such a reputation for the author, that from that time Lover became a regular contributor to the leading London journals. His health, however, failed him, and to relieve the monotony of his work, he wrote, from time to time, the numerous graceful and pathetic songs which have justly earned him such a world-wide reputation. He had a fine, intuitive knowledge of certain touching intervals and minor cadences, which were fairly based upon old Irish airs. Even in his humorous ballads, the music had a tinge of melancholy, and a sad undertone. It was essentially popular music, and even to this day many of his ballads hold their ground, and in America are treated as tenderly and as lovingly as a piece of shamrock brought over from Old Ireland. In Ireland, one does not often hear Moore's songs sung, beautiful as some of them are. His songs have, if we may say, too much refinement, and too little pathos and simple heartiness, to be popularly cherished among his countrymen. The marble halls of the English aristocracy were bad places for anything like Irish inspiration, and Moore seems to have taken his old airs to make melodies for Anglo-Saxondom, as others took the stones of the old castles to make elegant modern houses — thinking they put them to very good use, too. The people of the cities and towns in Ireland, in their singing moments, usually choose others of a more racy order; and some of Lover's songs, such as "Rory O'More," "The Bold Soldier Boy," "Widow Machree," "The Low-backed Car," are heard twice as often as "Go where Glory waits thee," "The Meeting of the Waters," or "The Harp that once."

Lover was particularly happy in his choice of subjects. The loves of Patrick and Kathleen, the humors of the fairies, the warnings of the banshees, the wild and beautiful legends with which the Irish peasantry, when they had heart enough to tell stories, used to pass the Hallow Eve and the long winter nights, were all familiar to him, and were set by him with a

rare and delicate skill. He was very successful in his songs, and in his tales, in reproducing that peculiar and singular melancholy sentiment of Irish character and Irish scenery, so different from the melancholy of the Scotch, or the dull gravity to be found among the English peasantry. One of his latest — we are not sure but it was his latest novel — is replete with the feeling of this kind. The work we allude to — "Treasure Trove" — is one of the very best Irish novels extant. The character of "Phadrig na Phib," an old blind piper, who becomes mixed up with the fortunes of the Pretender, is brought out with amazing steadiness and power. It contains some charming lyrics, which have been reprinted in the late edition of Mr. Lover's poems.

His recollections went back to the period of the St. Omer priest, when Maynooth was not heard of, and when Dublin was a city of some social as well as national consequence. He had numberless anecdotes of those days, of the duels fought in the Park, of the Hell-fire Club, of the private theatricals at Kilkenny, where Miss O'Neill, the famous actress, first met her husband. He had a large stock of reminiscences connected with the famous County of Galway, its stone walls, the "Blazers," the heiresses with fortunes in Chancery, etc. It is to be regretted that his health did not allow of his giving us more than he has left us — a better record of those memories. What he has done, however, will not soon be forgotten by all who take an interest in the poetry of Ireland. He has performed no insignificant service for his countrymen in rendering familiar not a few of their sympathies and sentiments, which, coming in music and verse of a pleasing kind, are welcome guests. He deserves the proud name of a singer who was as faithful to his native instincts as any lyrical singer who ever wrote. Surely, there is a place for such a man among the many men who have been a credit to Ireland, and it would be a most deserving recognition of this if some memorial were erected to a writer whose songs will forever appeal so strongly and so feelingly to every true Irish heart.

T. W. H.

SHAMUS O'BRIEN,

THE BOLD BOY OF GLINGALL.

A TALE OF '98.

BY JAMES SHERIDAN LE FANU.

'TWAS afther the war, in the year '98,
As soon as the boys wor all scattered and bate,
'T was the custom, whenever a pisant was got,
To hang him by thrial — barrin' sich as was shot.
There was trial by jury goin' on by daylight,
And the martial-law hangin' the lavins by night.
It 's them was hard times for an honest gossoon:
If he missed in the judges — he 'd meet a dragoon;
An' whether the sodgers or judges gev sentence,
The divil a much time they allowed for repentance.
An' it 's many 's the fine boy was then on his keepin',
Wid small share iv restin', or atin', or sleepin',
An' because they loved Erin, an' scorned to sell it,
A prey for the bloodhound, a mark for the bullet —
Unsheltered by night, and unrested by day,
With the heath for their barrack, revenge for their pay;
An' the bravest an' hardiest boy iv them all
Was SHAMUS O'BRIEN, from the town iv Glingall.

His limbs were well set, an' his body was light,
An' the keen-fanged hound had not teeth half so white;
But his face was as pale as the face of the dead,
And his cheek never warmed with the blush of the red;
An' for all that he was n't an ugly young bye,
For the divil himself could n't blaze with his eye,
So droll an' so wicked, so dark and so bright,
Like a fire-flash that crosses the depth of the night!
An' he was the best mower that ever has been,
An' the illigantest hurler that ever was seen.
An' his dancin' was sich that the men used to stare,
An' the women turn crazy, he done it so quare;
An', by gorra, the whole world gev it into him there.
An' it 's he was the boy that was hard to be caught,
An' it 's often he run, an' it 's often he fought,
An' it 's many the one can remember right well
The quare things he done: an' it 's often I heerd tell
How he lathered the yeomen, himself agin' four,
An' stretched the two strongest on old Galtimore.
But the fox must sleep sometimes, the wild deer must rest,
An' treachery prey on the blood iv the best;
Afther many a brave action of power and pride,
An' many a hard night on the mountain's bleak side,
An' a thousand great dangers and toils overpast,
In the darkness of night he was taken at last.

Now, SHAMUS, look back on the beautiful moon,
For the door of the prison must close on you soon,
An' take your last look at her dim lovely light,
That falls on the mountain and valley this night:

One look at the village, one look at the flood,
An' one at the shelthering, far-distant wood;
Farewell to the forest, farewell to the hill,
An' farewell to the friends that will think of you still;
Farewell to the pathern, the hurlin' an' wake,
And farewell to the girl that would die for your sake.
An' twelve sodgers brought him to Maryborough jail,
An' the turnkey resaved him, refusin' all bail;
The fleet limbs wor chained, an' the sthrong hands wor bound,
An' he laid down his length on the cowld prison ground,
An' the dreams of his childhood kem over him there
As gentle an' soft as the sweet summer air;
An' happy remembrances crowding on ever,
As fast as the foam-flakes dhrift down on the river,
Bringing fresh to his heart merry days long gone by,
Till the tears gathered heavy and thick in his eye.
But the tears did n't fall, for the pride of his heart
Would not suffer one drop down his pale cheek to start;
An' he sprang to his feet in the dark prison cave,
An' he swore with the fierceness that misery gave,
By the hopes of the good, an' the cause of the brave,
That when he was mouldering in the cold grave
His enemies never should have it to boast
His scorn of their vengeance one moment was lost;
His bosom might bleed, but his cheek should be dhry,
For, undaunted he lived, and undaunted he 'd die.

Well, as soon as a few weeks was over and gone,
The terrible day iv the thrial kem on;

There was sich a crowd there was scarce room to stand,
An' sodgers on guard, an' dhragoons sword-in-hand;
An' the court-house so full that the people were bothered,
An' attorneys an' criers on the point iv bein' smothered;
An' counsellors almost gev over for dead,
An' the jury sittin' up in their box overhead;
An' the judge settled out so detarmined an' big,
With his gown on his back, and an illegant new wig;
An' silence was called, an' the minute it was said
The court was as still as the heart of the dead,
An' they heard but the openin' of one prison lock,
An' SHAMUS O'BRIEN kem into the dock.
For one minute he turned his eye round on the throng,
An' he looked at the bars, so firm and so strong,
An' he saw that he had not a hope nor a friend,
A chance to escape, nor a word to defend;
An' he folded his arms as he stood there alone,
As calm and as cold as a statue of stone;
And they read a big writin', a yard long at laste,
An' JIM did n't understand it, nor mind it a taste,
An' the judge took a big pinch iv snuff, and he says,
"Are you guilty or not, JIM O'BRIEN, av you plase?"

An' all held their breath in the silence of dhread,
An' SHAMUS O'BRIEN made answer and said:
"My lord, if you ask me, if in my life-time
I thought any treason, or did any crime
That should call to my cheek, as I stand alone here,
The hot blush of shame, or the coldness of fear,

Though I stood by the grave to receive my death-blow,
Before GOD and the world I would answer you, no!
But if you would ask me, as I think it like,
If in the rebellion I carried a pike,
An' fought for ould Ireland from the first to the close,
An' shed the heart's blood of her bitterest foes,
I answer you, yes; and I tell you again,
Though I stand here to perish, it 's my glory that then
In her cause I was willing my veins should run dhry,
An' that now for her sake I am ready to die."

Then the silence was great, and the jury smiled bright,
An' the judge was n't sorry the job was made light;
By my sowl, it 's himself was the crabbed ould chap!
In a twinklin' he pulled on his ugly black cap.
Then SHAMUS'S mother in the crowd standin' by,
Called out to the judge with a pitiful cry:
"Oh, judge! darlin', don't, oh, don't say the word!
The crathur is young, have mercy, my lord;
He was foolish, he did n't know what he was doin';
You don't know him, my lord — oh, don't give him to ruin!
He 's the kindliest crathur, the tendherest-hearted;
Don't part us forever, we that 's so long parted.
Judge, mavourneen, forgive him, forgive him, my lord,
An' GOD will forgive you — oh, don't say the word!"
That was the first minute that O'BRIEN was shaken,
When he saw that he was not quite forgot or forsaken;
An' down his pale cheeks, at the word of his mother,
The big tears wor runnin' fast, one afther th' other;

An' two or three times he endeavored to spake,
But the sthrong, manly voice used to falther and break;
But at last, by the strength of his high-mounting pride,
He conquered and masthered his grief's swelling tide,
"An'," says he, "mother, darlin', don't break your poor heart,
For, sooner or later, the dearest must part;
And GOD knows it 's betther than wandering in fear
On the bleak, trackless mountain, among the wild deer,
To lie in the grave, where the head, heart, and breast
From thought, labor, and sorrow, forever shall rest.
Then, mother, my darlin', don't cry any more,
Don't make me seem broken, in this, my last hour;
For I wish, when my head 's lyin' undher the raven,
No thrue man can say that I died like a craven!"
Then towards the judge SHAMUS bent down his head,
An' that minute the solemn death-sentince was said.

The mornin' was bright, an' the mists rose on high,
An' the lark whistled merrily in the clear sky;
But why are the men standin' idle so late?
An' why do the crowds gather fast in the street?
What come they to talk of? what come they to see?
An' why does the long rope hang from the cross-tree?
Oh, SHAMUS O'BRIEN, pray fervent and fast,
May the saints take your soul, for this day is your last;
Pray fast and pray sthrong, for the moment is nigh,
When, sthrong, proud, an' great as you are, you must die.
An' fasther an' fasther, the crowd gathered there,
Boys, horses, and gingerbread, just like a fair;

An' whiskey was sellin', an' cussamuck too,
An' ould men and young women enjoying the view.
An' ould TIM MULVANY, he med the remark,
There was n't sich a sight since the time of NOAH'S ark;
An' be gorry, 't was thrue for him, for divil sich a scruge,
Sich divarshin and crowds, was known since the deluge;
For thousands were gathered there, if there was one,
Waitin' till such time as the hangin' id come on.

At last they threw open the big prison-gate,
An' out came the sheriffs and sodgers in state,
An' a cart in the middle, an' SHAMUS was in it,
Not paler, but prouder than ever, that minute.
An' as soon as the people saw SHAMUS O'BRIEN,
Wid prayin' and blessin', and all the girls cryin',
A wild wailin' sound kem on by degrees,
Like the sound of the lonesome wind blowin' through trees.
On, on to the gallows the sheriffs are gone,
An' the cart an' the sodgers go steadily on;
An' at every side swellin' around of the cart,
A wild, sorrowful sound, that id open your heart.
Now under the gallows the cart takes its stand,
An' the hangman gets up with the rope in his hand;
An' the priest, havin' blest him, goes down on the ground,
An' SHAMUS O'BRIEN throws one last look round.
Then the hangman dhrew near, an' the people grew still,
Young faces turned sickly, and warm hearts turn chill;
An' the rope bein' ready, his neck was made bare,
For the gripe iv the life-strangling cord to prepare;
An' the good priest has left him, havin' said his last prayer.

But the good priest done more, for his hands he unbound,
And with one daring spring JIM has leaped on the ground;
Bang! bang! goes the carbines, and clash goes the sabres;
He 's not down! he 's alive still! now stand to him, neighbors!
Through the smoke and the horses he 's into the crowd,—
By the heavens, he 's free! — than thunder more loud,
By one shout from the people the heavens were shaken —
One shout that the dead of the world might awaken.
Your swords they may glitter, your carbines go bang,
But if you want hangin', it 's yourself you must hang.
To-night he 'll be sleepin' in Aherloe Glin,
An' the divil 's in the dice if you catch him ag'in.
The sodgers ran this way, the sheriffs ran that,
An' Father MALONE lost his new Sunday hat;
An' the sheriffs wor both of them punished severely,
An' fined like the divil, because JIM done them fairly.

He has mounted his horse, and soon he will be
In America, darlint, the land of the free.

FATHER ROACH.

This story is founded on fact, and exhibits a trial of patience that one wonders human nature could support. Passive endurance, we know, is more difficult than active, and that which is recorded in the following tale is strictly true. The main facts were communicated to me many years ago, in the course of one of many pleasant rambles through my native land, by a gentleman of the highest character, whose courtesy and store of anecdote rendered a visit to his house memorable, — I speak of the late Christopher Bellew, Esq., of Mount Bellew, County of Galway.

FATHER ROACH was a good Irish priest,
Who stood in his stocking-feet six feet, at least.
I don't mean to say he 'd six feet in his stockings;
He only had two — so leave off with your mockings —
I know that you think I was making a blunder:
If Paddy says lightning, you think he means thunder:
So I'll say, in his boots, Father Roach stood to view
A fine comely man, of six feet two.

Oh, a pattern was he of a true Irish priest,
To carve the big goose at the big wedding-feast,*

* The festivities attendant on the rustic wedding in Ireland are never considered complete without the presence of the priest, who holds presidential authority.

To peel the big *pratie*, and take the big can,
(With a very big picture upon it of "Dan,") *
To pour out the punch for the bridegroom and bride
Who sat smiling and blushing on either side,
While their health went around — and the innocent glee
Rung merrily under the old roof-tree.

Father Roach had a very big parish,
By the very big name of Knockdundherumdharish,
With plenty of bog, and with plenty of mountain: —
The miles he 'd to travel would trouble you countin'.
The duties were heavy — to go through them all —
Of the wedding and christ'ning, the mass and sick-call —†
Up early, down late, was the good parish pastor:
Few ponies than his were obliged to go faster.

* "Dan" signifies Daniel O'Connell, whose portraits, in the times alluded to, abounded throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom, and in Ireland very generally on drinking-vessels. The above diminutive of his potent name, was that by which the peasantry of Ireland loved to designate him. It was short, and could pass the more rapidly from lip to lip of the people whose principal theme of conversation he constituted; and as they loved as well as honored him, the familiarity of the term was more consonant with affection. It may be generally remarked, that great men are seldom designated in public parlance by their proper names. The great Napoleon was familiarly known to the French army under the title of "The Little Corporal." The great English Admiral, Lord St. Vincent, was called "Billy Blue" in the fleet; and the illustrious Irishman, Wellington, was endeared to his soldiers under the significant and rather comical name of "Nosey."

† This is not an overdrawn picture. In some of the wild districts of Ireland, the duties of the Roman Catholic priesthood are very onerous.

He'd a big pair o' boots, and a purty big pony,
The boots greased with fat — but the baste was but bony;
For the pride of the flesh was so far from the pastor,
That the baste thought it manners to copy his master;
And, in this imitation, the baste, by degrees,
Would sometimes attempt to go down on his knees;
But in his too great freedom the Father soon stopp'd him
With a dig of the spurs — or, if need be, he whopp'd him.

And Father Roach had a very big stick,
Which could make very thin any crowd he found thick;
In a fair he would rush through the heat of the action,
And scatter, like chaff to the wind, ev'ry faction.
If the *leaders* escap'd from the strong holy man,
He made sure to be down on the *heads* of the clan,
And the Blackfoot who courted each foeman's approach,
Faith, 'tis hot-foot he'd fly from the stout Father Roach.*

Father Roach had a very big mouth,
For the brave broad brogue of the beautiful South;
In saying the Mass, sure his fine voice was famous,
It would do your heart good just to hear his "OREMUS,"
Which brought down the broad-shoulder'd boys to their knees,
As *aisy* as winter shakes leaves from the trees:

* "Blackfoot" was the name of one of the many factions that disturbed public peace in Ireland some fifty years ago; and "hot-foot" is an Hibernian figure of speech denoting quick walking or running.

But the rude blast of winter could never approach
The power of the sweet voice of good Father Roach.

Father Roach had a very big heart,
And "a way of his own" * — far surpassing all art;
His joke sometimes carried reproof to a clown;
He could chide with a smile — as the thistle sheds down.
He was simple, tho' sage — he was gentle, yet strong;
When he gave good advice, he ne'er made it too long,
But just roll'd it up like a snowball, and pelted
It into your ear — where, in softness, it melted.

The good Father's heart in its unworldly blindness,
Overflow'd with the milk of human kindness,
And he gave it so freely, the wonder was great
That it lasted so long — for come early or late,
The unfortunate had it. Now some people deem
This milk is so precious, they keep it for cream;
But that's a mistake — for it spoils by degrees,
And, tho' exquisite milk, it makes very bad cheese.

You will pause to inquire, and with wonder, perchance,
How so many perfections are placed, at a glance

* "A way of his own" is an idiomatic phrase often heard in Ireland, and employed very much as the French use "*Je ne sais quoi.*" As for a joke carrying reproof, that is a common mode of fence in Ireland, and no one understands it better than the Irish priest, himself a Celt, and "to the manner born;" and many a tough fellow that would stand without flinching under a battery of serious rebuke, will wince under a witticism.

In your view, of a poor Irish priest, who was fed
On potatoes, perhaps, or, at most, griddle bread; *
Who ne'er rode in a coach, and whose simple abode
Was a homely thatched cot, on a wild mountain road;
To whom dreams of a mitre yet never occurr'd:
I will tell you the cause, then — and just in *one word.*

Father Roach had a MOTHER, who shed
Round the innocent days of his infant bed
The influence holy, which early inclined
In heav'nward direction the boy's gentle mind,
And stamp'd there the lessons its softness could take,
Which, strengthen'd in manhood, no power could shake;
In vain might the Demon of Darkness approach
The mother-made virtue of good Father Roach!

Father Roach had a brother beside:
His mother's own darling — his brother's fond pride;
Great things were expected from Frank, when the world
Should see his broad banner of talent unfurl'd.
But Fate cut him short — for the murderer's knife
Abridged the young dæyś of Frank's innocent life;
And the Mass for *his* soul was the only approach
To comfort now left for the fond Father Roach.

* The domestic utensil called "griddle" in Ireland, goes by the name of "girdle" in Scotland, and is so spelt in Johnson's Dictionary, with the definition "a round iron plate for baking." The griddle-bread of Ireland is a flat cake of about an inch and a half in thickness, generally made of whole wheaten meal mixed with water, and without yeast.

Father Roach had a penitent grim
Coming, of late, to confession to him;
He was rank in vice — he was steep'd in crime.
The reverend Father, in all his time,
So dark a confession had never known,
As that now made to th' Eternal Throne;
And when he ask'd was the catalogue o'er,
The sinner replied — "I 've a thrifle more."

"A trifle? — What mean you, dark sinner, say?
A trifle? — Oh, think of your dying day!
A trifle *more?* — What more dare meet
The terrible eye of the Judgment-seat
Than all I have heard? — The oath broken — the theft
Of a poor maiden's honor — 't was all she had left!
Say what have you done that worse could be?"
He whispered, "Your brother was murdered by me."

"O God!" groan'd the Priest, "but the trial is deep,
My own brother's murder a secret to keep,
And minister here to the murderer of mine —
But not *my* will, O Father, but *thine!*"
Then the penitent said, "You will not betray?"
"What? I, thy confessor? Away, away!"
"Of penance, good Father, what cup shall I drink?" —
"Drink the dregs of thy life — live on, and *think!*"

The hypocrite penitent cunningly found
This means of suppressing suspicion around.

Would the murderer of Frank e'er confess to his brother? *
He, surely, was guiltless; — it must be some other.
And years roll'd on, and the only record
'Twixt the murderer's hand and the eye of THE LORD
Was that brother — by rule of his Church decreed
To silent knowledge of guilty deed.

Twenty or more of years pass'd away,
And locks once raven were growing gray,
And some, whom the Father once christen'd, now stood
In the ripen'd bloom of womanhood,
And held at the font *their* babies' brow
For the holy sign and the sponsor's vow;
And grandmothers smiled by their wedded girls;
But the eyes, once diamond — the teeth, once pearls,
The casket of beauty no longer grace;
Mem'ry, fond mem'ry, alone might trace
Through the mist of years a dreamy light
Gleaming afar from the gems once bright.

* Here was a very crafty culprit; for while to the senses of the world in general it would appear impossible that the murderer would have chosen the brother of his victim for his confessor, yet that very act was the surest to paralyze the action of the person most interested in making a discovery, for even if any chance had afterwards thrown in the Priest's way a clue to the mystery, yet he, having been already entrusted with the fatal secret under "the solemn seal of confession," was precluded from making any use of it, as a word or a look of his, indicating or suggesting even a suspicion in the true direction, would have been a violation of the sacred trust reposed in him. The Priest was, in fact, as the last line of the stanza states, committed "To *silent* knowledge of guilty deed."

O Time! how varied is thy sway
'Twixt beauty's dawn and dim decay!
By fine degrees beneath thy hand,
Doth latent loveliness expand;
The coral casket richer grows
With its second pearly dower,
The brilliant eye still brighter glows
With the maiden's ripening hour:—
So gifted are ye of Time, fair girls,
But Time, while his gifts he deals,
From the sunken socket the diamond steals,
And takes back to his waves the pearls!

. . . . . .

It was just at this time that a man, rather sallow,
Whose cold eye burn'd dim in his features of tallow,
Was seen, at a cross-way, to mark the approach
Of the kind-hearted parish priest, good Father Roach.
A deep salutation he render'd the Father,
Who return'd it but coldly, and seem'd as he'd rather
Avoid the same track; — so he struck o'er a hill,
But the sallow intruder *would* follow him still.

"Father," said he, "as I'm going your way,
A word on the road to your reverence I'd say.
Of late so entirely I've alter'd my plan,
Indeed, holy sir, I'm a different man;
I'm thinking of wedding, and bettering my lot—"
The Father replied, "You had better not."

"Indeed, reverend sir, my wild oats are all sown."
"But perhaps," said the Priest, "they are not yet *grown* —
At least, they 're not *reap'd*," — and his look became keener;
"And ask not a woman to be your gleaner.
You have my advice!" The Priest strode on,
And silence ensued, as, one by one,
They threaded a deep defile, which wound
Through the lonely hills — and the solemn profound
Of the silence was broken alone by the cranch
Of their hurried tread on some wither'd branch.

The sallow man follow'd the Priest so fast,
That the setting sun their one shadow cast.
"Why press," said the Priest, "so close to me?"
The follower answer'd convulsively,
As, gasping and pale, through the hollow he hurried,
"'Tis here, close by, poor Frank is buried —"
"*What* Frank?" said the Priest — "*What* Frank!" cried the other;
"Why, he whom I slew — your brother — your brother!"

"Great God!" cried the Priest — "in Thine own good time,
THOU liftest the veil from the hidden crime.
Within the confessional, dastard, the seal
Was set on my lips, which might never reveal
What *there* was spoken, — but now the sun,
The daylight hears what thine arm hath done,*

* The moment the culprit made an *open declaration* of having committed murder, his words reached the ear of the priest under a new condition, and left him a free agent to publish the guilt.

And now, under Heaven, my arm shall bring
Thy felon neck to the hempen string!"

Pale was the murd'rer, and paler the Priest.
Oh, Destiny! — rich was indeed thy feast
In that awful hour! — The victim stood
His own accuser; — the Pastor good,
Freed from the chain of silence, spoke;
No more the confessional's terrible yoke
Made him run, neck and neck, with a murderer in peace,
And the villain's life had run out its lease.

The jail, the trial, conviction came,
And honor was given to the poor Priest's name,
Who held, for years, the secret dread
Of a murderer living — a brother dead;
And still, by the rule of his Church compell'd,
The awful mystery in silence held,
Till the murderer himself did the secret broach —
A triumph to justice and Father Roach.