

SKETCHES FROM MEMORY.

BY A PEDESTRIAN.

NO. II.

WE present to our readers a few more of the loose sketches from our friend's portfolio, which, we think, will, more clearly than those of the last month, shew the truth of our remark, that, like the careless drawings of a master-hand, they shadow forth a power and beauty, that might be visibly embodied into life-like forms on the canvass. 'The Afternoon Scene' and 'The Night Scene' will, we trust, suggest subjects to our landscape painters. 'The former, which has the mellow richness of a Claude, might be exquisitely done by Doughty; and young Brown, whose promise is as great as the hopes of his friends, could employ his glowing pencil upon no subject better adapted to call forth all his genius, than the latter.

THE CANAL-BOAT.

I was inclined to be poetical about the Grand Canal. In my imagination, De Witt Clinton was an enchanter, who had waved his magic wand from the Hudson to lake Erie, and united them by a watery highway, crowded with the commerce of two worlds, till then inaccessible to each other. This simple and mighty conception had conferred inestimable value on spots which nature seemed to have thrown carelessly into the great body of the earth, without foreseeing that they could ever attain importance. I pictured the surprise of the sleepy Dutchmen when the new river first glittered by their doors, bringing them hard cash or foreign commodities, in exchange for their hitherto unmarketable produce. Surely, the water of this canal must be the most fertilizing of all fluids; for it causes towns—with their masses of brick and stone, their churches and theatres, their business and hubbub, their luxury and refinement, their gay dames and polished citizens—to spring up, till, in time, the wondrous stream may flow between two continuous lines of buildings, through one thronged street, from Buffalo to Albany. I embarked about thirty miles below Utica, determining to voyage along the whole extent of the canal, at least twice in the course of the summer.

Behold us, then, fairly afloat, with three horses harnessed to our vessel, like the steeds of Neptune to a huge scallop-shell, in mythological pictures. Bound to a distant port, we had neither chart nor compass, nor cared about the wind, nor felt the heaving of a billow, nor dreaded shipwreck, however fierce the tempest, in our adventurous navigation of an interminable mud-puddle—for a mud-puddle it seemed, and as dark and turbid as if every

kennel in the land paid contribution to it. With an imperceptible current, it holds its drowsy way through all the dismal swamps and unimpressive scenery, that could be found between the great lakes and the sea-coast. Yet there is variety enough, both on the surface of the canal and along its banks, to amuse the traveler, if an overpowering todium did not deaden his perceptions.

Sometimes we met a black and rusty-looking vessel, laden with lumber, salt from Syracuse, or Genessee flour, and shaped at both ends like a square-toed boot, as if it had two sterns, and were fated always to advance backward. On its deck would be a square hut, and a woman seen through the window at her household work, with a little tribe of children, who perhaps had been born in this strange-dwelling and knew no other home. Thus, while the husband smoked his pipe at the helm, and the eldest son rode one of the horses, on went the family, traveling hundreds of miles in their own house, and carrying their fireside with them. The most frequent species of craft were the 'line boats,' which had a cabin at each end, and a great bulk of barrels, bales, and boxes in the midst; or light packets, like our own, decked all over, with a row of curtained windows from stem to stern, and a drowsy face at every one. Once, we encountered a boat, of rude construction, painted all in gloomy black, and manned by three Indians, who gazed at us in silence and with a singular fixedness of eye. Perhaps these three alone, among the ancient possessors of the land, had attempted to derive benefit from the white man's mighty projects, and float along the current of his enterprise. Not long after, in the midst of a swamp and beneath a clouded sky, we overtook a vessel that seemed full of mirth and sunshine. It contained a little colony of Swiss, on their way to Michigan, clad in garments of strange fashion and gay colors, scarlet, yellow and bright blue, singing, laughing, and making merry, in odd tones and a babble of outlandish words. One pretty damsel, with a beautiful pair of naked white arms, addressed a mirthful remark to me; she spoke in her native tongue, and I retorted in good English, both of us laughing heartily at each other's unintelligible wit. I cannot describe how pleasantly this incident affected me. These honest Swiss were an itinerant community of jest and fun, journeying through a gloomy land and among a dull race of money-getting drudges, meeting none to understand their mirth and only one to sympathize with it, yet still retaining the happy lightness of their own spirit.

Had I been on my feet at the time, instead of sailing slowly along in a dirty canal-boat, I should often have paused to contemplate the diversified panorama along the banks of the canal. Sometimes the scene was a forest, dark, dense, and impervious, breaking away occasionally and receding from a lonely tract, covered with dismal black stumps, where, on the verge of the canal,

might be seen a log-cottage, and a sallow-faced woman at the window. Lean and aguish, she looked like Poverty personified, half clothed, half fed, and dwelling in a desert, while a tide of wealth was sweeping by her door. Two or three miles further would bring us to a lock, where the slight impediment to navigation had created a little mart of trade. Here would be found commodities of all sorts, enumerated in yellow letters on the window-shutters of a small grocery-store, the owner of which had set his soul to the gathering of coppers and small change, buying and selling through the week, and counting his gains on the blessed Sabbath. The next scene might be the dwelling-houses and stores of a thriving village, built of wood or small gray stones, a church-spire rising in the midst, and generally two taverns, bearing over their piazzas the pompous titles of 'hotel,' 'exchange,' 'tontine,' or 'coffee-house.' Passing on, we glide now into the unquiet heart of an inland city — of Utica, for instance — and find ourselves amid piles of brick, crowded docks and quays, rich warehouses and a busy population. We feel the eager and hurrying spirit of the place, like a stream and eddy whirling us along with it. Through the thickest of the tumult goes the canal, flowing between lofty rows of buildings and arched bridges of hewn stone. Onward, also, go we, till the hum and bustle of struggling enterprise die away behind us, and we are threading an avenue of the ancient woods again.

This sounds not amiss in description, but was so tiresome in reality, that we were driven to the most childish expedients for amusement. An English traveler paraded the deck with a rifle in his walking-stick, and waged war on squirrels and woodpeckers, sometimes sending an unsuccessful bullet among flocks of tame ducks and geese, which abound in the dirty water of the canal. I, also, pelted these foolish birds with apples, and smiled at the ridiculous earnestness of their scrambles for the prize, while the apple bobbed about like a thing of life. Several little accidents afforded us good-natured diversion. At the moment of changing horses, the tow-rope caught a Massachusetts farmer by the leg, and threw him down in a very indescribable posture, leaving a purple mark around his sturdy limb. A new passenger fell flat on his back, in attempting to step on deck, as the boat emerged from under a bridge. Another, in his Sunday clothes, as good luck would have it, being told to leap aboard from the bank, forthwith plunged up to his third waistcoat button in the canal, and was fished out in a very pitiable plight, not at all amended by our three rounds of applause. Anon, a Virginia schoolmaster, too intent on a pocket Virgil to heed the helmsman's warning — 'bridge! bridge!' — was saluted by the said bridge on his knowledge-box. I had prostrated myself, like a pagan before his idol, but heard the dull leaden sound of the contact, and

fully expected to see the treasures of the poor man's cranium scattered about the deck. However, as there was no harm done, except a large bump on the head, and probably a corresponding dent in the bridge, the rest of us exchanged glances and laughed quietly. Oh, how pitiless are idle people! * * *

The table being now lengthened through the cabin, and spread for supper, the next twenty minutes were the pleasantest I had spent on the canal — the same space at dinner excepted. At the close of the meal, it had become dusky enough for lamplight. The rain pattered unceasingly on the deck, and sometimes came with a sullen rush against the windows, driven by the wind, as it stirred through an opening of the forest. The intolerable dullness of the scene engendered an evil spirit in me. Perceiving that the Englishman was taking notes in a memorandum-book, with occasional glances round the cabin, I presumed that we were all to figure in a future volume of travels, and amused my ill-humor by falling into the probable vein of his remarks. He would hold up an imaginary mirror, wherein our reflected faces would appear ugly and ridiculous, yet still retain an undeniable likeness to the originals. Then, with more sweeping malice, he would make these caricatures the representatives of great classes of my countrymen.

He glanced at the Virginia schoolmaster, a Yankee by birth, who, to recreate himself, was examining a freshman from Schneckady college, in the conjugation of a Greek verb. Him, the Englishman would portray as the scholar of America, and compare his erudition to a schoolboy's Latin theme, made up of scraps, ill-selected and worse put together. Next, the tourist looked at the Massachusetts farmer, who was delivering a dogmatic harangue on the iniquity of Sunday mails. Here was the far-famed yeoman of New-England; his religion, writes the Englishman, is gloom on the Sabbath, long prayers every morning and eventide, and illiberality at all times; his boasted information is merely an abstract and compound of newspaper paragraphs, Congress debates, caucus harangues, and the argument and judge's charge in his own lawsuits. The bookmonger cast his eye at a Detroit merchant, and began scribbling faster than ever. In this sharp-eyed man, this lean man, of wrinkled brow, we see daring enterprise and close-fisted avarice combined; here is the worshipper of Mammon at noonday; here is the three-times bankrupt, richer after every ruin; here, in one word, (Oh, wicked Englishman to say it!) here is the American! He lifted his eye-glass to inspect a western lady, who at once became aware of the glance, reddened, and retired deeper into the female part of the cabin. Here was the pure, modest, sensitive, and skinking woman of America; shrinking when no evil is intended; and sensitive like diseased flesh, that thrills if you but point at it; and strangely modest, without

confidence in the modesty of other people ; and admirably pure, with such a quick apprehension of all impurity.

In this manner, I went all through the cabin, hitting everybody as hard a lash as I could, and laying the whole blame on the infernal Englishman. At length, I caught the eyes of my own image in the looking-glass, where a number of the party were likewise reflected, and among them the Englishman, who, at that moment, was intently observing myself. * * *

The crimson curtain being let down between the ladies and gentlemen, the cabin became a bed-chamber for twenty persons, who were laid on shelves, one above another. For a long time, our various incommodities kept us all awake, except five or six, who were accustomed to sleep nightly amid the uproar of their own snoring, and had little to dread from any other species of disturbance. It is a curious fact, that these snorers had been the most quiet people in the boat, while awake, and became peace-breakers only when others cease to be so, breathing tumult out of their repose. Would it were possible to affix a wind instrument to the nose, and thus make melody of a snore, so that a sleeping lover might serenade his mistress, or a congregation snore a psalm-tune ! Other, though fainter sounds than these, contributed to my restlessness. My head was close to the crimson curtain—the sexual division of the boat—behind which I continually heard whispers and stealthy footsteps ; the noise of a comb laid on the table, or a slipper dropt on the floor ; the twang, like a broken harp-string, caused by loosening a tight belt ; the rustling of a gown in its descent ; and the unlacing of a pair of stays. My ear seemed to have the properties of an eye ; a visible image pestered my fancy in the darkness ; the curtain was withdrawn between me and the western lady, who yet disrobed herself without a blush.

Finally, all was hushed in that quarter. Still, I was more broad awake than through the whole preceding day, and felt a feverish impulse to toss my limbs miles apart, and appease the unquietness of mind by that of matter. Forgetting that my berth was hardly so wide as a coffin, I turned suddenly over, and fell like an avalanche on the floor, to the disturbance of the whole community of sleepers. As there were no bones broken, I blessed the accident, and went on deck. A lantern was burning at each end of the boat, and one of the crew was stationed at the bows, keeping watch, as mariners do on the ocean. Though the rain had ceased, the sky was all one cloud, and the darkness so intense, that there seemed to be no world, except the little space on which our lanterns glimmered. Yet, it was an impressive scene.

We were traversing the 'long level,' a dead flat between Utica

and Syracuse, where the canal has not rise or fall enough to require a lock for nearly seventy miles. There can hardly be a more dismal tract of country. The forest which covers it, consisting chiefly of white cedar, black ash, and other trees that live in excessive moisture, is now decayed and death-struck, by the partial draining of the swamp into the great ditch of the canal. Sometimes, indeed, our lights were reflected from pools of stagnant water, which stretched far in among the trunks of the trees, beneath dense masses of dark foliage. But generally, the tall stems and intermingled branches were naked, and brought into strong relief, amid the surrounding gloom, by the whiteness of their decay. Often, we beheld the prostrate form of some old sylvan giant, which had fallen, and crushed down smaller trees under its immense ruin. In spots, where destruction had been riotous, the lanterns showed perhaps a hundred trunks, erect, half overthrown, extended along the ground, resting on their shattered limbs, or tossing them desperately into the darkness, but all of one ashy-white, all naked together, in desolate confusion. Thus growing out of the night as we drew nigh, and vanishing as we glided on, based on obscurity, and overhung and bounded by it, the scene was ghost-like — the very land of unsubstantial things, whither dreams might betake themselves, when they quit the slumberer's brain.

My fancy found another emblem. The wild Nature of America had been driven to this desert-place by the encroachments of civilized man. And even here, where the savage queen was throned on the ruins of her empire, did we penetrate, a vulgar and worldly throng, intruding on her latest solitude. In other lands, Decay sits among fallen palaces; but here, her home is in the forests.

Looking ahead, I discerned a distant light, announcing the approach of another boat, which soon passed us, and proved to be a rusty old scow — just such a craft as the 'Flying Dutchman' would navigate on the canal. Perhaps it was that celebrated personage himself, whom I imperfectly distinguished at the helm, in a glazed hat and rough great-coat, with a pipe in his mouth, leaving the fumes of tobacco a hundred yards behind. Shortly after, our boatman blew a horn, sending a long and melancholy note through the forest-avenue, as a signal for some watcher in the wilderness to be ready with a change of horses. We had proceeded a mile or two with our fresh team, when the tow-rope got entangled in a fallen branch on the edge of the canal, and caused a momentary delay, during which I went to examine the phosphoric light of an old tree, a little within the forest. It was not the first delusive radiance that I had followed.

The tree lay along the ground, and was wholly converted into a mass of diseased splendor, which threw a ghastliness around.

Being full of conceits that night, I called it a frigid fire : a funeral light, illumining decay and death : an emblem of fame, that gleams around the dead man without warming him ; or of genius, when it owes its brilliancy to moral rottenness ; and was thinking that such ghost-like torches were just fit to light up this dead forest, or to blaze coldly in tombs, when, starting from my abstraction, I looked up the canal. I recollected myself, and discovered the lanterns glimmering far away.

‘Boat ahoy !’ shouted I, making a trumpet of my closed fists.

Though the cry must have rung for miles along that hollow passage of the woods, it produced no effect. These packet-boats make up for their snail-like pace by never loitering day nor night, especially for those who have paid their fare. Indeed, the captain had an interest in getting rid of me, for I was his creditor for a breakfast.

‘They are gone ! Heaven be praised !’ ejaculated I ; ‘for I cannot possibly overtake them ! Here am I, on the ‘long level,’ at midnight, with the comfortable prospect of a walk to Syracuse, where my baggage will be left ; and now to find a house or shed, wherein to pass the night.’ So thinking aloud, I took a flambeau from the old tree, burning, but consuming not, to light my steps withal, and, like a Jack-o'-the-lantern, set out on my midnight tour.

THE INLAND PORT.

It was a bright forenoon, when I set foot on the beach at Burlington, and took leave of the two boatmen, in whose little skiff I had voyaged since daylight from Peru. Not that we had come that morning from South America, but only from the New-York shore of lake Champlain. The highlands of the coast behind us stretched north and south, in a double range of bold, blue peaks, gazing over each other's shoulders at the Green Mountains of Vermont. The latter are far the loftiest, and, from the opposite side of the lake, had displayed a mere striking outline. We were now almost at their feet, and could see only a sandy beach, sweeping beneath a woody bank, around the semi-circular bay of Burlington. The painted light-house, on a small green island, the wharves and warehouses, with sloops and schooners moored alongside, or at anchor, or spreading their canvass to the wind, and boats rowing from point to point, reminded me of some fishing town on the sea-coast.

But I had no need of tasting the water to convince myself that lake Champlain was not an arm of the sea ; its quality was evident, both by its silvery surface, when unruffled, and a faint, but unpleasant and sickly smell, forever steaming up in the sunshine. One breeze from the Atlantic, with its briny fragrance, would be

worth more to these inland people than all the perfumes of Arabia. On closer inspection, the vessels at the wharves looked hardly sea-worthy — there being a great lack of tar about the seams and rigging, and perhaps other deficiencies, quite as much to the purpose. I observed not a single sailor in the port. There were men, indeed, in blue jackets and trowsers, but not of the true nautical fashion, such as dangle before slop-shops; others wore tight pantaloons and coats preponderously long-tailed — cutting very queer figures at the mast-head; and, in short, these fresh-water fellows had about the same analogy to the real ‘old salt,’ with his tarpaulin, pea-jacket and sailor-cloth trowsers, as a lake fish to a Newfoundland cod.

Nothing struck me more, in Burlington, than the great number of Irish emigrants. They have filled the British provinces to the brim, and still continue to ascend the St. Lawrence, in infinite tribes, overflowing by every outlet into the States. At Burlington, they swarm in huts and mean dwellings near the lake, lounge about the wharves, and elbow the native citizens entirely out of competition in their own line. Every species of mere bodily labor is the prerogative of these Irish. Such is their multitude, in comparison with any possible demand for their services, that it is difficult to conceive how a third part of them should earn even a daily glass of whiskey, which is doubtless their first necessary of life — daily bread being only the second. Some were angling in the lake, but had caught only a few perch, which little fishes, without a miracle, would be nothing among so many. A miracle there certainly must have been, and a daily one, for the subsistence of these wandering hordes. The men exhibit a lazy strength and careless merriment, as if they had fed well hitherto, and meant to feed better hereafter; the women strode about, uncovered in the open air, with far plumper waists and brawnier limbs, as well as bolder faces, than our shy and slender females; and their progeny, which was innumerable, had the reddest and the roundest cheeks of any children in America.

While we stood at the wharf, the bell of a steamboat gave two preliminary peals, and she dashed away for Plattsburgh, leaving a trail of smoky breath behind, and breaking the glassy surface of the lake before her. Our next movement brought us into a handsome and busy square, the sides of which were filled up with white houses, brick stores, a church, a court-house, and a bank. Some of these edifices had roofs of tin, in the fashion of Montreal, and glittered in the sun with cheerful splendor, imparting a lively effect to the whole square. One brick building, designated in large letters as the custom-house, reminded us that this inland village is a port of entry, largely concerned in foreign trade, and holding daily intercourse with the British empire. In this border country, the Canadian bank-notes circulate as freely as our own,

and British and American coin are jumbled into the same pocket, the effigies of the king of England being made to kiss those of the goddess of liberty. Perhaps there was an emblem in the involuntary contact. There was a pleasant mixture of people in the square of Burlington, such as cannot be seen elsewhere, at one view : merchants from Montreal, British officers from the frontier garrisons, French Canadians, wandering Irish, Scotchmen of a better class, gentlemen of the south on a pleasure-tour, country 'squires on business ; and a great throng of Green Mountain boys, with their horse-wagons and ox-teams, true Yankees in aspect, and looking more superlatively so, by contrast with such a variety of foreigners.

ROCHESTER.

The gray, but transparent evening, rather shaded than obscured the scene — leaving its stronger features visible, and even improved, by the medium through which I beheld them. The volume of water is not very great, nor the roar deep enough to be termed grand, though such praise might have been appropriate before the good people of Rochester had abstracted a part of the unprofitable sublimity of the cascade. The Genessee has contributed so bountifully to their canals and mill-dams, that it approaches the precipice with diminished pomp, and rushes over it in foamy streams of various width, leaving a broad face of the rock insulated and unwashed, between the two main branches of the falling river. Still it was an impressive sight, to one who had not seen Niagara. I confess, however, that my chief interest arose from a legend, connected with these falls, which will become poetical in the lapse of years, and was already so to me, as I pictured the catastrophe out of dusk and solitude. It was from a platform, raised over the naked island of the cliff, in the middle of the cataract, that Sam Patch took his last leap, and alighted in the other world. Strange as it may appear — that any uncertainty should rest upon his fate, which was consummated in the sight of thousands — many will tell you that the illustrious Patch concealed himself in a cave under the falls, and has continued to enjoy posthumous renown, without foregoing the comforts of this present life. But the poor fellow prized the shout of the multitude too much not to have claimed it at the instant, had he survived. He will not be seen again, unless his ghost, in such a twilight as when I was there, should emerge from the foam, and vanish among the shadows that fall from cliff to cliff. How stern a moral may be drawn from the story of poor Sam Patch ! Why do we call him a madman or a fool, when he has left his memory around the falls of the Genessee, more permanently than if the letters of his name had been hewn into the forehead of the precipice ? Was the

leaper of cataracts more mad or foolish than other men who throw away life, or misspend it in pursuit of empty fame, and seldom so triumphantly as he? That which he won is as invaluable as any, except the unsought glory, spreading, like the rich perfume of richer fruit, from virtuous and useful deeds.

Thus musing, wise in theory, but practically as great a fool as Sam, I lifted my eyes and beheld the spires, warehouses, and dwellings of Rochester, half a mile distant on both sides of the river, indistinctly cheerful, with the twinkling of many lights amid the fall of evening. * * * *

The town had sprung up like a mushroom, but no presage of decay could be drawn from its hasty growth. Its edifices are of dusky brick, and of stone that will not be grayer in a hundred years than now; its churches are Gothic; it is impossible to look at its worn pavements, and conceive how lately the forest-leaves have been swept away. The most ancient town in Massachusetts appears quite like an affair of yesterday, compared with Rochester. Its attributes of youth are the activity and eager life with which it is redundant. The whole street, sidewalks and centre, was crowded with pedestrians, horsemen, stage-coaches, gigs, light wagons, and heavy ox-teams, all hurrying, trotting, rattling, and rumbling, in a throng that passed continually, but never passed away. Here, a country wife was selecting a churn, from several gaily-painted ones on the sunny sidewalk; there, a farmer was bartering his produce; and, in two or three places, a crowd of people were showering bids on a vociferous auctioneer. I saw a great wagon and an ox-chain knocked off to a very pretty woman. Numerous were the lottery-offices—those true temples of Mammon—where red and yellow bills offered splendid fortunes to the world at large, and banners of painted cloth gave notice that the ‘lottery draws next Wednesday.’ At the ringing of a bell, judges, jurymen, lawyers, and clients, elbowed each other to the court-house, to busy themselves with cases that would doubtless illustrate the state of society, had I the means of reporting them. The number of public houses benefitted the flow of temporary population; some were farmers’ taverns—cheap, homely, and comfortable; others were magnificent hotels, with negro waiters, gentlemanly landlords in black broadcloth, and foppish bar-keepers in Broadway coats, with chased gold watches in their waistcoat pockets. I caught one of these fellows quizzing me through an eye-glass. The porters were lumbering up the steps with baggage from the packet-boats, while waiters plied the brush on dusty travelers, who, meanwhile, glanced over the innumerable advertisements in the daily papers.

In short, everybody seemed to be there, and all had something to do, and were doing it with all their might, except a party of drunken recruits for the western military posts, principally Irish

and Scotch, though they wore uncle Sam's gray jacket and trousers. I noticed one other idle man. He carried a rifle on his shoulder and a powder-horn across his breast, and appeared to stare about him with confused wonder, as if, while he was listening to the wind among the forest boughs, the hum and bustle of an instantaneous city had surrounded him. * * *

AN AFTERNOON SCENE.

There had not been a more delicious afternoon than this, in all the train of summer — the air being a sunny perfume, made up of balm and warmth and gentle brightness. The oak and walnut trees, over my head, retained their deep masses of foliage, and the grass, though for months the pasturage of stray cattle, had been revived with the freshness of early June, by the autumnal rains of the preceding week. The garb of Autumn indeed resembled that of Spring. Dandelions and buttercups were sprinkled along the roadside, like drops of brightest gold in greenest grass; and a star-shaped little flower, with a golden centre. In a rocky spot, and rooted under the stone-wall, there was one wild rose-bush, bearing three roses, very faintly tinted, but blessed with a spicy fragrance. The same tokens would have announced that the year was brightening into the glow of summer. There were violets, too, though few and pale ones. But the breath of September was diffused through the mild air, whenever a little breeze shook out the latent coolness.

A NIGHT SCENE.

The steamboat in which I was passenger for Detroit, had put into the mouth of a small river, where the greater part of the night would be spent in repairing some damages of the machinery. As the evening was warm, though cloudy and very dark, I stood on deck, watching a scene that would not have attracted a second glance in the day-time, but became picturesque by the magic of strong light and deep shade. Some wild Irishmen were replenishing our stock of wood, and had kindled a great fire on the bank, to illuminate their labors. It was composed of large logs and dry brushwood, heaped together with careless profusion, blazing fiercely, spouting showers of sparks into the darkness, and gleaming wide over lake Erie — a beacon for perplexed voyagers, leagues from land. All around and above the furnace, there was total obscurity. No trees, or other objects, caught and reflected any portion of the brightness, which thus wasted itself in the immense void of night, as if it quivered from the expiring embers of the world, after the final conflagration. But the Irishmen were continually emerging from the dense gloom, passing through the lurid glow, and vanishing into the gloom on the other

side. Sometimes a whole figure would be made visible, by the shirt-sleeves and light-colored dress ; others were but half seen, like imperfect creatures ; many flitted, shadow-like, along the skirts of darkness, tempting fancy to a vain pursuit ; and often, a face alone was reddened by the fire, and stared strangely distinct, with no traces of a body. In short, these wild Irish, distorted and exaggerated by the blaze, now lost in deep shadow, now bursting into sudden splendor, and now struggling between light and darkness, formed a picture which might have been transferred, almost unaltered, to a tale of the supernatural. As they all carried lanterns of wood, and often flung sticks upon the fire, the least imaginative spectator would at once compare them to devils, condemned to keep alive the flame of their own torment.