Darby O'Gill and the Good People

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DARBY O'GILL
and the Good People

His misadventures among the good people and
Fairy folk of Knocknasheega,
also known as "leprechauns"

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Chapter 1

Darby Gill And The Good People

THIS HISTORY sets forth the only true account of the adventures of a daring Tipperary man named Darby O'Gill among the Fairies of Sleive-na-mon.

These adventures were first related to me by Mr. Jerry Murtaugh, a reliable car-driver, who goes between Kilcuny and Ballinderg. He is a first cousin of Darby O'Gill's own mother.

ALTHOUGH ONLY one living man of his own free will ever went among them there, still, any well-learned person in Ireland can tell you that the abode of the Good People is in the hollow heart of the great mountain Sleive-na-mon. That same one man was Darby Gill, a cousin of my own mother.

One night the Good People took the eldest of Darby's three fine pigs. The next week a second pig went the same way. The third week not a thing had Darby left for the Balinrobe fair. You may aisily think how sore and sorry the poor man was, an' how Bridget his wife an' the childher carried on. The rent was due, and all left was to sell his cow Rosie to pay it. Rosie was the apple of his eye; he admired and rayspected the pigs, but he loved Rosie.

Worst luck of all was yet to come. On the morning when Darby went for the cow to bring her into market, bad scrans to the hoof was there; but in her place only a wisp of dirty straw to mock him. Millia murther! What a howlin' and screechin' and cursin' did Darby bring back to the house!

Now Darby was a bould man, and a desperate man in his anger, as you soon will see. He shoved his feet into a pair of brogues, clapped his hat on his head, and gripped his stick in his hand.

"Fairy or no fairy, ghost or goblin, livin' or dead, who took Rosie'll rue this day," he says.

With those wild words he bolted in the direction of Sleive-na-mon.

All day long he climbed like an ant over the hill, looking for a hole or cave through which he could get at the prison of Rosie. At times he struck the rocks with his blackthorn, cryin' out challenge.

"Come out, you that took her," he called. "If ye have the courage of a mouse, ye murtherin' thieves, come out!"

No one made answer— at laste, not just then. But at night, as he turned, hungry and footsore, toward home, who should he meet up with on the

crossroads but the ould fairy doctor, Sheela Maguire. Well known she was as a spy for the Good People. She spoke up:

"Oh, then, you're the foolish, blundherin'-headed man to be saying what you've said, and doing what you've done this day, Darby Gill," says she.

"What do I care!" says he fiercely. "I'd fight the divil to-night for my beautiful cow."

"Then go into Mrs. Hagan's meadow beyant," says Sheela, "and wait till the moon is up. By-an'-by ye'll see a herd of cows come down from the mountain, and yer own'll be among them."

"What'll I do then?" asked Darby, his voice thrembling with excitement.

"Sorra a hair I care what ye do! But there'll be lads there, and hundreds you won't see, that'll stand no ill words, Darby Gill."

"I thank you kindly," says Darby, "and I bid you good-evening, ma'am." He turned away, leaving her standing there alone, looking after him; but he was sure he heard voices talkin' to her, and laughin' and tittherin' behind him.

It was dark night when Darby stretched himself on the ground in Hagan's meadow; the yellow rim of the moon just tipped the edge of the hills. The time passed mortal slow; and it was an hour later when a hundred slow shadows, stirring up the mists, crept from the mountain way toward him. First he must find was Rosie among the herd. To creep quiet as a cat through the hedge and reach the first cow was only a minute's work. Then his plan— to wait till cock-crow— with all other sober, sensible thoughts, went clean out of the lad's head before his rage; for, cropping eagerly the long sweet grass, the first baste he met was Rosie.

With a leap Darby was behind her, his stick falling sharply on her flanks. The ingratitude of that cow almost broke Darby's heart. Rosie turned fiercely on him, with a vicious lunge, her two horns aimed at his breast. There was no suppler boy in the parish than Darby, and well for him it was so, for the mad rush the cow gave would have caught any man the laste thrifle heavy on his legs, and ended his days right there. As it was, our hayro sprang to one side.

As Rosie passed, his left hand gripped her tail. When one of the Gills takes hould of a thing, he hangs on like a bull terrier. Away he went, rushing with her.

Now began a race the like of which was never heard of before or since. Ten jumps to the second, and a hundred feet to the jump. Rosie's tail standing straight up in the air, firm as an iron bar, and Darby floating straight out behind; a thousand furious fairies flying a short distance after, filling the air with wild commands and threatenings.

Suddenly the sky opened for a crash of lightning that shivered the hills, and a roar of thunder that turned out of their beds every man, woman, and child in

four counties. Flash after flash came the lightning, hitting on every side of Darby. If it wasn't for fear of hurting Rosie, the fairies would sartenly have killed Darby. As it was, he was stiff with fear, afraid to hould on and afraid to lave go, but flew, waving in the air at Rosie's tail like a flag.

As the cow turned into the long, narrow valley which cuts into the east side of the mountain, the Good People caught up with the pair, and what they didn't do to Darby, in the line of sticking pins, pulling whiskers, and pinching wouldn't take long to tell. In troth, he was just about to let go his hould, and take the chances of a fall, when the hillside opened and— whisk! The cow turned into the mountain. Darby found himself flying down a wide, high passage which grew lighter as he went along. He heard the opening behind shut like a trap, and his heart almost stopped beating, for this was the fairies' home in the heart of Sleive-na-mon. He was captured by them!

When Rosie stopped, so stiff were all Darby's joints, that he had great trouble loosening himself to come down. He landed among a lot of angry-faced little people, each no higher than your hand, everyone wearing a green velvet cloak and a red cap.

"We'll take him to the king," says a red-whiskered wee chap. "What he'll do to the murtherin' spalpeen'll be good and plenty!"

With that they marched our bould Darby, a prisoner, down the long passage, which every second grew wider and lighter, and fuller of little people.

Sometimes, though, he met with human beings like himself, only the black charm was on them, they having been stolen at some time by the Good People. He saw Lost People there from every parish in Ireland, both commoners and gentry. Each was laughing, talking, and divarting himself with another. Off to the sides he could see small cobblers making brogues, tinkers mending pans, tailors sewing cloth, smiths hammering horseshoes, everyone merrily to his trade, making a divarsion out of work. Down near the center of the mountain, was a room twenty times higher and broader than the biggest church in the world. As they drew near this room, there arose the sound of a reel played on bagpipes. The music was so bewitching that Darby, who was the gracefullest reel dancer in all Ireland, could hardly make his feet behave.

At the room's edge Darby stopped short and caught his breath, the sight was so entrancing. Set over the broad floor were thousands and thousands of the Good People, facing this way and that, and dancing to a reel; while on a throne in the middle of the room sat ould Brian Conners, King of the Fairies, blowing on the bagpipes. The little king, with a goold crown on his head, wearing a beautiful green velvet coat and red knee breeches, sat with his legs crossed, beating time with his foot to the music.

There were many from Darby's own parish; and what was his surprise to see there Maureen McGibney, his own wife's sister, whom he had supposed resting dacintly in her grave in holy ground these three years.

There she was, gliding back and forth, ferninst a little gray-whiskered, round-stomached fairy man, as though there was never a care nor a sorrow in the world.

As I told you before, I tell you again, Darby was the finest reel dancer in all Ireland; and he came from a family of dancers, though I say it who shouldn't, as he was my mother's own cousin. Three things in the world banish sorrow—love and whisky and music. So, when the surprise of it all melted a little, Darby's feet led him in to the thick of the throng, right under the throne of the king, where he flung care to the winds, and put his heart and mind into his two nimble feet. Darby's dancing was such that purty soon those around stood still to admire.

Backward and forward, sidestep and turn; cross over, then forward; a hand on his hip and his stick twirling free; sidestep and forward; cross over again; bow to his partner, and hammer the floor.

It wasn't long till half the dancers crowded around admiring, clapping their hands, and shouting encouragement. The ould king grew so excited that he laid down the pipes, took up his fiddle, came down from the throne, and standing ferninst Darby began a finer tune than the first.

The dancing lasted a whole hour, no one speaking a word except to cry out, "Foot it, ye divil!" "Aisy now, he's threading on flowers!" "More power to you!" "Play faster, king!" "Hooroo! Hooroo! Hooray!"

Then the king stopped and said:

"Well, that bates Banagher, and Banagher bates the world! Who are you, and how came you here?"

Then Darby up and tould the whole story.

When he had finished, the king looked sayrious. "I'm glad you came, an' I'm sorry you came," he says. "If we had put our charm on you outside to bring you in, you'd never die till the end of the world, when we here must all go to hell. But," he added quickly, "there's no use in worrying about that now. That's nayther here nor there! Those willing to come with us can't come at all, at all; and here you are of your own free act and will. Howsomever, you're here, and we daren't let you go outside to tell others of what you have seen, and so give us a bad name about— about taking things, you know. We'll make you as comfortable as we can; and so you won't worry about Bridget and the childher, I'll have a goold sovereign left with them every day of their lives. But I wish we had the come-ither on you," he says, with a sigh, "for it's aisy to see you're

great company. Now come up to my place an' have a noggin of punch for friendship's sake," says he.

That's how Darby Gill began his six months' stay with the Good People. Not a thing was left undone to make Darby contented and happy. A civiler people than the Good People he never met. At first he couldn't get over saying, "God keep all here," and "God save you kindly," and things like that, which was like burning them with a hot iron.

If it weren't for Maureen McGibney, Darby would be in Sleive-na-mon at this hour. Sure she was always the wise girl, ready with her crafty plans and warnings. On a day when they two were sitting alone together, she says to him:

"Darby, dear," says she, "it isn't right for a dacint man of family to be spending his days cavortin', and idlin', and fillin' the hours with sport and nonsense. We must get you out of here; for what is a sovereign a day to compare with the care and protection of a father?" she says.

"Thrue for ye!" moaned Darby, "and my heart is just splittin' for a sight of Bridget an' the childher. Bad luck to the day I set so much store on a dirty, ongrateful, threacherous cow!"

"I know well how you feel," says Maureen, "for I'd give the whole world to say three words to Bob Broderick, that ye tell me that out of grief for me has never kept company with any other girl till this day. But that'll never be," she says, "because I must stop here till the Day of Judgment, and then I must go to-" says she, beginning to cry, "but if you get out, you'n bear a message to Bob for me, maybe?" she says.

"It's aisy to talk about going out, but how can it be done?" asked Darby.

"There's a way," says Maureen, wiping her big gray eyes, "but it may take years. First, you must know that the Good People can never put their charm on any one who is willing to come with them. That's why you came safe. Then, again, they can't work harm in the daylight, and after cock-crow any mortal eye can see them plain; nor can they harm anyone who has a sprig of holly, nor pass over a leaf or twig of holly, because that's Christmas bloom. Well, there's a certain evil word for a charm that opens the side of the mountain, and I will try to find it out for you. Without that word, the armies of the world couldn't get out or in. But you must be patient and wise, and wait."

"I will so, with the help of God," says Darby.

At these words, Maureen gave a terrible screech.

"Cruel man!" she cried, "don't you know that to say pious words to one of the Good People, or to one under their black charm, is like cutting him with a knife?"

The next night she came to Darby again.

"Watch yerself now," she says, "for to-night they're goin' to lave the door of the mountain open, to thry you; and if you stir two steps outside they'll put the come-ither on you," she says.

Sure enough, when Darby took his walk down the passage, after supper, as he did every night, there the side of the mountain lay wide open and no one in sight. The temptation to make one rush was great; but he only looked out a minute, and went whistling back down the passage, knowing well that a hundred hidden eyes were on him the while. For a dozen nights after it was the same.

At another time Maureen said:

"The king himself is going to thry you hard the day, so beware!" She had no sooner said the words than Darby was called for, and went up to the king.

"Darby, my sowl," says the king, in a sootherin' way, "have this noggin of punch. A betther never was brewed; it's the last we'll have for many a day. I'm going to set you free, Darby Gill, that's what I am."

"Why, king," says Darby, putting on a mournful face, "how have I offended ye?"

"No offense at all," says the king, "only we're depriving you."

"No depravity in life!" says Darby.

"I have lashins and lavings to ate and to drink, and nothing but fun an' divarsion all day long. Out in the world it was nothing but work and throuble and sickness, disappointment and care."

"But Bridget and the childher?" says the king, giving him a sharp look out of half-shut eyes.

"Oh, as for that, king," says Darby, "it's aisier for a widow to get a husband, or for orphans to find a father, than it is for them to pick up a sovereign a day."

The king looked mighty satisfied and smoked for a while without a word.

"Would you mind going out an evenin' now and then, helpin' the boys to mind the cows?" he asked at last.

Darby feared to thrust himself outside in their company.

"Well, I'll tell ye how it is," replied my brave Darby. "Some of the neighbors might see me, and spread the report on me that I'm with the fairies, and that'd disgrace Bridget and the childher," he says.

The king knocked the ashes from his pipe. "You're a wise man besides being the hoight of good company," says he, "and it's sorry I am you didn't take me at my word; for then we would have you always, at laste till the Day of Judgment, when— but that's nayther here nor there! Howsomever, we'll bother you about it no more."

From that day they thrated him as one of their own.

It was one day five months after that Maureen plucked Darby by the coat and led him off to a lonely spot.

"I've got the word," she says.

"Have you, faith! What is it!" says Darby, all of a thremble.

Then she whispered a word so blasphemous, so irreligious, that Darby blessed himself. When Maureen saw him making the sign, she fell down in a fit, the holy emblem hurt her so, poor child.

Three hours after this me bould Darby was sitting at his own fireside talking to Bridget and the childher. The neighbors were hurrying to him, down every road and through every field, carrying armfuls of holly bushes, as he had sent word for them to do. He knew well he'd have fierce and savage visitors before morning.

After they had come with the holly, he had them make a circle of it so thick around the house that a fly couldn't walk through without touching a twig or a leaf. But that was not all.

You'll know what a wise girl and what a crafty girl that Maureen was when you hear what the neighbors did next. They made a second ring of holly outside the first, so that the house sat in two great wreaths, one wreath around the other. The outside ring was much the bigger, and left a good space between it and the first, with room for ever so many people to stand there. It was like the inner ring, except for a little gate, left open as though by accident, where the fairies could walk in.

But it wasn't an accident at all, only the wise plan of Maureen's; for nearby this little gap, in the outside wreath, lay a sprig of holly with a bit of twine tied to it. Then the twine ran along up to Darby's house, and in through the window, where its end lay convaynient to his hand. A little pull on the twine would drag the stray piece of holly into the gap, and close tight the outside ring.

It was a trap, you see. When the fairies walked in through the gap, the twine was to be pulled, and so they were to be made prisoners between the two rings of holly. They couldn't get into Darby's house, because the circle of holly nearest the house was so tight that a fly couldn't get through without touching the blessed tree or its wood. Likewise, when the gap in the outer wreath was closed, they couldn't get out again. Well, anyway, these things were hardly finished and fixed, when the dusky brown of the hills warned the neighbors of twilight, and they scurried like frightened rabbits to their homes.

Only one amongst them all had courage to sit inside Darby's house waiting the dreadful visitors, and that one was Bob Broderick. What vengeance was in store couldn't be guessed at all, at all, only it was sure that it was to be more terrible than any yet wreaked on mortal man.

Not in Darby's house alone was the terror, for in their anger the Good People might lay waste the whole parish. The roads and fields were empty and silent in the darkness. Not a window glimmered with light for miles around. Many a blaggard who hadn't said a prayer for years was now down on his marrow bones among the dacint members of his family, thumping his craw, and roaring his Pather and Aves.

In Darby's quiet house, against which the cunning, the power, and the fury of the Good People would first break, you can't think of half the suffering of Bridget and the childher, as they lay huddled together on the settle bed; nor of the sthrain on Bob and Darby, who sat smoking their dudeens and whispering anxiously together.

For some rayson or other the Good People were long in coming. Ten o'clock struck, then eleven, afther that twelve, and not a sound from the outside. The silence and the no sign of any kind had them all just about crazy, when suddenly there fell a sharp rap on the door.

"Millia murther," whispered Darby, "we're in for it. They've crossed the two rings of holly, and are at the door itself."

The childher begun to cry and Bridget said her prayers out loud; but no one answered the knock.

"Rap, rap, rap," on the door, then a pause.

"God save all here!" cried a queer voice from the outside.

Now no fairy would say, "God save all here," so Darby took heart and opened the door. Who should be standing there but Sheelah Maguire, a spy for the Good People. So angry were Darby and Bob that they snatched her within the threshold, and before she knew it they had her tied hand and foot, wound a cloth around her mouth, and rouled her under the bed. Within the minute a thousand rustling voices sprung from outside. Through the window, in the clear moonlight, Darby marked weeds and grass being trampled by invisible feet, beyond the farthest ring of holly.

Suddenly broke a great cry. The gap in the first ring was found. Signs were plainly seen of uncountable feet rushing through, and spreading about the nearer wreath. Afther that a howl of.madness from the little men and women. Darby had pulled his twine and the trap was closed, with five thousand of the Good People entirely at his mercy.

Princes, princesses, dukes, dukesses, earls, earlesses, and all the quality of Sleive-na-mon were prisoners. Not more than a dozen of the last to come escaped, and they flew back to tell the king.

For an hour they raged. All the bad names ever called to mortal man were given free, but Darby said never a word. "Pick-pocket," "sheep stayler," "murtherin' thafe of a blaggard," were the softest words trun at him.

By an' by, howsomever, as it begun to grow near to cock-crow, their talk grew a great dale civiler. Then came beggin', pladin', promisin', and enthratin', but the doors of the house still stayed shut an' its windows down.

Purty soon Darby's old rooster, Terry, came down from his perch, yawned, an' flapped his wings a few times. At that the terror and the screechin' of the Good people would have melted the heart of a stone.

All of a sudden a fine, clear voice rose from beyant the crowd. The king had come. The other fairies grew still, listening.

"Ye murtherin' thafe of the world," says he king grandly, "what are ye doin' wid my people?"

"Keep a civil tongue in yer head, Brian Connor," says Darby, sticking his head out the window, "for I'm as good a man as you, any day," says Darby.

At that minute Terry, the cock, flapped his wings and crowed. In a flash there sprang into full view the crowd of Good people— dukes, earls, princes, quality, and commoners, with their ladies, jammed thick together about the house; every one of them with his head thrown back bawling and crying, and tears as big as pigeons' eggs rouling down his cheeks.

A few feet away, on a straw pile in the barnyard, stood the king, his goold crown tilted on the side of his head, his long green cloak about him, and his rod in his hand, but thremblin' allover.

In the middle of the crowd, but towering high above them all, stood Maureen McGibney in her cloak of green an' goold, her purty brown hair fallin' down on her shoulders, an' she— the crafty villain— cryin, an' bawlin', an' abusin' Darby, with the best of them.

"What'll you have an' let them go?" says the king.

"First an' foremost," says Darby, "take yer spell off that slip of a girl there, an' send her into the house."

In a second Maureen was standing inside the door, her both arms about Bob's neck, and her head on his collarbone.

What they said to aich other, and what they done in the way of embracin' an' kissin' an' cryin' I won't take time in telling you.

"Next," says Darby, "send back Rosie and the pigs."

"I expected that," says the king. And at those words they saw a black bunch coming through the air; in a few seconds Rosie and the three pigs walked into the stable.

"Now," says Darby, "promise in the name of Ould Nick" ('tis by him the Good People swear) "never to moil nor meddle again with anyone or anything from this parish."

The king was fair put out by this. Howsomever, he said at last, "You ongrateful scoundhrel, in the name of Ould Nick, I promise."

"So far, so good," says Darby, "but the worst is yet to come. Now you must ralayse from your spell every soul you've stole from this parish; and besides, you must send me ten thousand pounds in goold."

Well, the king gave a roar of anger that was heard in the next barony.

"Ye high-handed, hard-hearted robber," he says, "I'll never consent!" he says.

"Plase yerself," says Darby. "I see Father Cassidy comin' down the hedge," he says, "an' he has a prayer for ye all in his book that'll burn ye up like wisps of sthraw ef he ever catches ye here," says Darby.

With that the roaring and bawling was pitiful to hear, and in a few minutes a bag with ten thousand goold sovereigns in it was trun at Darby's threshold; and fifty people, young an' some of them ould, flew over an' stood beside the king. Some of them had spent years with the fairies. Their relatives thought them dead an' buried. They were the Lost Ones from that parish.

With that Darby pulled the bit of twine again, opening the trap, and it wasn't long until every fairy was gone.

The green coat of the last one was hardly out of sight when, sure enough, who should come up but Father Cassidy, his book in his hand. He looked at the fifty people who had been with the fairies standin' there— the poor crathures— thremblin' an' wondherin', an' afeared to go to their homes.

Darby tould him what had happened. "Ye foolish man," says the priest, "you could have got out every poor prisoner that's locked in Sleive-na-mon, let alone those from this parish."

"Would yer Reverence have me let out the Corkoniens, the Connaught men, and the Fardowns, I ask ye?" he says hotly.

"When Mrs. Malowney there goes home and finds that Tiril has married the Widow Hogan, ye'll say I let out too many, even of this parish, I'm thinkin'."

"But," says the priest, "ye might have got ten thousand pounds for aich of us."

"If aich had ten thousand pounds, what comfort would I have in being rich?" asked Darby again. "To enjoy well being rich, there should be plenty of poor," says Darby.

"God forgive ye, ye selfish man!" says Father Cassidy.

"There's another rayson besides," says Darby. "I never got betther nor friendlier thratement than I had from the Good People. An' the divil a hair of their heads I'd hurt more than need be," he says.

Some way or other the king heard of this saying, an' was so mightily pleased that next night a jug of the finest poteen was left at Darby's door.

After that, indade, many's the winter night, when the snow lay so heavy that no neighbor was stirrin', and when Bridget and the childher were in bed,

Darby sat by the fire, a noggin of hot punch in his hand, argying an' getting news of the whole world. A little man, with a goold crown on his head, a green cloak on his back, and one foot thrown over the other, sat ferninst him by the hearth.

Chapter 2

How the Fairies Came to Ireland

THE ONLY TRUE HISTORY, as told by Brian Connors, the King of the Good People, to Father Cassidy, and afterwards related by Jerry Murtaugh a Reliable Car Driver, who goes between Kilcuny and Balinderg

THE most lonesome bridle-path in all Ireland leads from Tom Healy's cottage down the sides of the hills, along the edge of the valley, till it raiches the highroad that skirts the great mountain, Sleive-na-mon.

One blusthering, unaisy night, Father Cassidy, on his way home from a sick call, rode over that same path. It wasn't strange that the priest, as his horse ambled along, should be thinking of that other night in Darby O'Gill's kitchen—the night when he met with the Good People; for there, off to the left, towered and threatened Sleive-na-mon, the home of the fairies.

The dismal ould mountain glowered toward his Riverence, its dark look saying, plain as spoken words:

"How dare ye come here; how dare ye?"

"I wondher", says Father Cassidy to himself, looking up at the black hill, "if the Good People are fallen angels, as some do be saying.

"Why were they banished from heaven? It must have been a great sin entirely they committed, at any rate, for at the same time they were banished the power to make a prayer was taken from them. That's why to say a pious word to a fairy is like trowing scalding wather on him. 'Tis a hard pinnance that's put on the poor crachures. I wisht I knew what 'twas for," he says.

He was goin' on pondherin' in that way, while Terror was picking his steps, narvous, among the stones of the road, whin suddenly a frowning, ugly rock seemed to jump up and stand ferninst them at a turn of the path.

Terror shied at it, stumbled wild, and thin the most aggrewating of all bothersome things happened— the horse cast a shoe and wint stone lame.

In a second the priest had leaped to the ground and picked up the horseshoe.

"Wirra! Wirra!" says he, lifting the lame foot, "why did you do it, allannah? 'Tis five miles to a smith an' seven miles to your own warm stable."

The horse, for answer, raiched down an' touched with his soft nose the priest's cheek; but the good man looked rayproachful into the big brown eyes that turned sorrowful to his own.

With the shoe in his hand the priest was standin' fretting and helpless on the lonesome hillside, wondhering what he'd do at all at all, whin a sudden voice spoke up from somewhere near Terror's knees.

"The top of the avinin' to your Riverence," it said, "I'm sorry for your bad luck," says the voice.

Looking down, Father Cassidy saw a little cloaked figure, and caught the glint of a goold crown. 'Twas Brian Connors, the king of the fairies, himself, that was in it.

His words had so friendly a ring in them that the clargyman smiled in answering, "Why, thin, good fortune to you, King Brian Connors," says the good man, "an' save you kindly. What wind brought you here?" he says.

The king spoke back free an' pleasant. "The boys told me you were comin' down the mountainy way, and I came up just in time to see your misfortune. I've sent for Shaun Rhue, our own farrier— there's no betther in Ireland; he'll be here in a minute, so don't worry," says the king.

The priest came so near saying "God bless ye," that the king's hair riz on his head. But Father Cassidy stopped in the nick of time, changed his coorse, an' steered as near a blessing as he could without hurting the Master of the Good People.

"Well, may you never hear of throuble," he says, "till you're wanted to its wake," says he. "There's no throuble to-night at any rate," says the king, "for while Shaun is fixing the baste we'll sit in the shelter of that rock yonder; there we'll light our pipes and divart our minds with pleasant discoorsin' and wise convarsaytion."

While the king spoke, two green-cloaked little men were making a fire for the smith out of twigs. So quick did they work, that by the time the priest and the fairy man could walk over to the stone and sit themselves in the shelther, a thousand goold sparks were dancin' in the wind, and the glimmer of a foine blaze fought with the darkness.

Almost as soon, clear and purty, rang the cheerful sound of an anvil, and through the swaying shadows a dozen busy little figures were working about the horse. Some wore leather aprons and hilt up the horse's hoof whilst Shaun fitted the red hot shoe; others blew the bellows or piled fresh sticks on the fire; all joking, laughing, singing, or thrickin'; one couldn't tell whether 'twas playing or workin' they were.

Afther lighting their pipes and paying aich other an armful of complayments, the Master of Sleive-na-mon and the clargyman began a sayrious discoorse about the deloights of fox hunting, which led to the considheration of the wondherful wisdom of racing horses and the disgraceful day-ter-ray-roar-ation of the Skibberbeg hounds.

Father Cassidy related how whin Ned Blaze's steeplechasin' horse had been entered for the Connemarra Cup, an' found out at the last minute that Ned feared to lay a bet on him, the horse felt himself so stabbed to the heart with shame by his master's disthrust, that he trew his jockey, jumped the wall, an', head in the air, galloped home.

The king then tould how at a great hunting meet, whin three magisthrates an' two head excises officers were in the chase, that thief of the worruld, Let-Erin-Raymimber, the chief hound of the Skibberbeg pack, instead of follying the fox, led the whole hunt up over the mountain to Patrick McCaffrey's private still. The entire counthryside were dhry for a fortnit afther.

Their talk in that way dhrifted from one pleasant subject to another, till Father Cassidy, the sly man, says aisy 'an' careless "I've been tould," says he, "that before the Good People were banished from heaven yez were all angels," he says.

The king blew a long thin cloud from betwixt his lips, felt his whuskers thoughtful for a minute, and said:

"No," he says, "we were not exactly what you might call angels. A rale angel is taller nor your chapel."

"Will you tell me what they're like?" axed Father Cassidy, very curious.

"I'll give you an idee be comparison what they're like," the king says. "They're not like a chapel, and they're not like a three, an' they're not like the ocean," says he. "They're different from a goint— a great dale different— and they're dissembler to an aygle; in fact you'd not mistake one of them for anything you'd ever seen before in your whole life. Now you have a purty good ideeah what they're like," says he.

"While I think of it," says the fairy man, a vexed frown wrinkling over his forehead, "there's three young bachelors in your own parish that have a foolish habit of callin' their colleens angels whin they's not the laste likeness— not the laste. If I were you, I'd preach ag'in it," says he.

"Oh, I dunno about that!" says Father Cassidy, fitting a live coal on his pipe. "The crachures must say thim things. If a young bachelor only talks sensible to a sensible colleen he has a good chanst to stay a bachelor. An thin ag'in, a gossoon who'll talk to his sweetheart about the size of the petatie crop'll maybe bate her whin they're both married. But this has nothing to do with your historical obserwaytions. Go on, King," he says.

"Well, I hate foolishness, wherever it is," says the fairy. "Howsumever, as I was saying, up there in heaven they called us the Little People," he says; "millions of us flocked together, and I was the king of them all. We were happy with one another as birds of the same nest, till the ruction came on betwixt the black and the white angels.

"How it all started I never rightly knew, nor wouldn't ask for fear of getting implicayted. I bade all the Little People keep to themselves thin, because we had plenty of friends in both parties, and wanted throuble with nayther of them.

"I knew ould Nick well; a civiler, pleasanter spoken sowl you couldn't wish to meet— a little too sweet in his ways, maybe. He gave a thousand favors and civilities to my subjects, and now that he's down, the devil a word I'll say ag'in him."

"I'm ag'in him," says Father Cassidy, looking very stern; "I'm ag'in him an' all his pumps an' worruks. I'll go bail that in the ind he hurt yez more than he helped yez."

"Only one thing I blame him for," says the king; "he sajooced from the Little People my comrade and best friend, one Thaddeus Flynn be name. And the way that it was, was this. Thaddeus was a warm-hearted little man, but monsthrous high-spirited as well as quick- tempered. I can shut me eyes now, and in me mind see him thripping along, his head bent, his pipe in his mouth, his hands behind his back. He never wore a waistcoat, but kept always his green body-coat buttoned. A tall caubeen was set on the back of his head, with a sprig of green shamrock in the band. There was a thin rim of black whiskers undher his chin."

Father Cassidy, liftin' both hands in wondher, said: "If I hadn't baptized him, and buried his good father before him, I'd swear 'twas Michael Pether McGilligan of this parish you were dayscribin'," says he.

"The McGilligans ain't dacint enough, nor rayfined enough, nor proud enough to be fairies," says the king, wavin' his pipe scornful. "But to raysume and to continue," he says.

"Thaddeus and I used to frayquint a place they called the battlements or parypets— which was a great goold wall about the edge of heaven, and which had wide steps down on the outside face, where one could sit, pleasant avenings, and hang his feet over, or where one'd stand before going to take a fly in the fresh air for himself.

"Well, agra, the night before the great battle, Thady and I were sitting on the lowest step, looking down into league upon league of nothing, and talking about the world, which was suxty thousand miles below, and hell, which was tunty thousand miles below that ag'in, when who should come blusthering over us, his black wings hiding the sky, and a long streak of lightning for a spear in his fist, but Ould Nick.

"'Brian Connors, how long are you going to be downthrodden and thrajooced and looked down upon— you and your subjects?' says he.

"'Faix, thin, who's doing that to us?' asks Thady, standing up and growing excited.

"'Why,' says Ould Nick, 'were you made little pigmies to be the laugh and the scorn and the mock of the whole world?' he says, very mad; 'why weren't you made into angels, like the rest of us?' he says.

"'Musha,' cries Thady, 'I never thought of that.'

"'Are you a man or a mouse; will you fight for your rights?' says Sattin. 'If so, come with me and be one of us. For we'll bate them black and blue to-morrow,' he says. Thady needed no second axing.

"'I'll go with ye, Sattin, me dacent man,' cried he. 'Wirra! Wirra! To think of how downthrodden we are!' And with one spring Thady was on Ould Nick's chowlders, and the two flew away like a humming-bird riding on the back of an aygle.

"'Take care of yerself, Brian,' says Thady, 'and come over to see the fight; I'm to be in it. And I extind you the inwitation,' he says.

"In the morning the battle opened; one line of black angels stretched clear across heaven, and faced another line of white angels, with a walley between.

"Everyone had a spaking trumpet in his hand, like you see in the pictures, and they called aich other hard names across the walley. As the white angels couldn't swear or use bad langwidge, Ould Nick's army had at first in that way a great adwantage. But when it came to hurling hills and shying tunderbolts at aich other, the black angels were bate from the first.

"Poor little Thaddeus Flynn stood amongst his own, in the dust and the crash and the roar, brave as a lion. He couldn't hurl mountains, nor was he much at flinging lightning bolts, but at calling hard names he was ayquil to the best.

"I saw him take off his coat, trow it on the ground, and shake his pipe at a thraymendous angel. 'You owdacious villain,' he cried. 'I dare you to come half way over,' he says.

"My, oh my, whin the armies met together in the rale handy grips, it must have been an illigent sight," says Father Cassidy. "'Tis a wondher you kep' out of it," says he.

"I always belayved," says the king, "that if he can help it, no one should fight whin he's sure to get hurted, onless it's his juty to fight. To fight for the mere sport of it, I when a throuncin' is sartin, is wasting your time and hurtin' your repitation. I know there's plenty thinks different," he says, p'inting his pipe. "I may be wrong, an' I won't argyfy the matther. 'Twould have been betther for myself that day if I had acted on the other principle.

"Howsumever, be the time that everybody was sidestepping mountains and dodging tunderbolts, I says to myself, says I, 'This is no place fer you or the

likes of you.' So I took all me own people out to the battlements and hid them out of the way on the lower steps. We'd no sooner got placed whin— whish! A black angel shot through the air over our heads, and began falling down, down, and down, till he was out of sight. Then a score of his friends came tumbling over the battlements; imagetly hundreds of others came whirling, and purty soon it was raining black wings down into the gulf.

"In the midst of the turmile, who should come jumping down to me, all out of breath, but Thady.

"'It's all over, Brian; we're bate scandalous,' he says, swinging his arms for a spring and balancing himself up and down on the edge of the steps. 'Maybe you wouldn't think it of me, Brian Connors; but I'm a fallen angel,' says he.

"'Wait a bit, Thaddeus Flynn!' says I. 'Don't jump,' I says.

"'I must jump,' he says, 'or I'll be trun,' says he.

"The next thing I knew he was swirling and darting and shooting a mile below me.

"And I know," says the king, wiping his eyes with his cloak, "that when the Day of Judgment comes I'll have at laste one friend waiting for me below to show me the coolest spots and the pleasant places.

"The next minute up came the white army with presners— angels, black and white, who had taken no side in the battle, but had stood apart like ourselves.

"'A man,' says the Angel Gabriel, 'who, for fear of his skin, won't stand for the right when the right is in danger, may not desarve hell, but he's not fit for heaven. Fill up the stars with these cowards and throw the lavin's into the say,' he ordhered.

"With that he swung a lad in the air, and gave him a fling that sent him ten miles out intil the sky. Every other good angel follyed shuit, and I watched thousands go, till they faded like a stretch of black smoke a hundred miles below.

"The Angel Gabriel turned and saw me, and must confess I shivered.

"'Well, King Brian Connors,' says he, 'I hope you see that there's such a thing as being too wise and too cute and too ticklish of yourself. I can't send you to the stars, bekase they're fun, and I won't send you to the bottomless pit so long as I can help it. I'll send yez an down to the world. We're going to put human beans on it purty soon, though they're going to turn out to be blaggards, and at last we'll have to burn the place up. Afther that, if you're still there, you and yours must go to purdition, for it's the only place left for you.

"'You're too hard on the little man,' says the Angel Michael, coming up— St. Michael was ever the outspoken, friendly person— 'sure what harm, or

what hurt, or what good could he have done us? And can you blame the poor little crachures for not interfering?'

"'Maybe I was too harsh,' says the Angel Gabriel, 'but being saints, when we say a thing we must stick to it. Howsumever, I'll let him settle in any part of the world he likes, and I'll send there the kind of human beans he'd wish most for. Now, give your ordher,' he says to me, taking out his book and pencil, 'and I'll make for you the kind of people you'd like to live among.'

"'Well,' says I, 'I'd like the men honest and brave, and the women good.'

"'Very well,' he says, writing it down; 'I've got that— go on.'

"'And I'd like them fun of jollity and sport, fond of racing and singing and hunting and fighting, and all such innocent divarsions.'

"'You'll have no complaint about that,' says he.

"'And,' says I, 'I'd like them poor and parsecuted, bekase when a man gets rich, there's no more fun in him.'

"'Yes, I'll fix that. Thrue for you,' says the Angel Gabriel, writing.

"'And I don't want them to be Christians,' says I; 'make them Haythens or Pagans, for Christians are too much worried about the Day of Judgment.'

"'Stop there! Say no more!' says the saint. 'If I make as fine a race of people as that I won't send them to hell to plaze you, Brian Connors.'

"'At laste,' says I, 'make them Jews.'

"'If I made them Jews,' he says, slowly screwing up one eye to think, 'how could you keep them poor? No, no!' he said, shutting up the book; 'go your ways; you have enough.'

"I clapped me hands, and an the Little People stood up and bent over the edge, their fingers pointed like swimmers going to dive. 'One, two, three,' I shouted; and with that we took the leap.

"We were two years and tunty-six days falling before we raiched the world. On the morning of the next day we began our sarch for a place to live. We thraveled from north to south and from ayst to west. Some grew tired and dhropped off in Spain, some in France, and others ag'in in different parts of the world. But the most of us thraveled ever and ever till we came to a lovely island that glimmered and laughed and sparkled in the middle of the say.

"'We'll stop here,' I says; 'we needn't sarch farther, and we needn't go back to Italy or Swizzerland, for of all places on the earth, this island is the nearest like heaven; and in it the County Clare and the County Tipperary are the purtiest spots of all.' So we hollowed out the great mountain Sleive-na-mon for our home, and there we are till this day."

The king stopped a while, and sat houldin' his chin in his hands. "That's the thrue story," he says, sighing pitiful. "We took sides with nobody, we minded our own business, and we got trun out for it," says he.

So intherested was Father Cassidy in the talk of the king that the singing and hammering had died out without his knowing, and he hadn't noticed at all how the darkness had thickened in the valley and how the stillness had spread over the hillside. But now, whin the chief of the fairies stopped, the good man, half frightened at the silence, jumped to his feet and turned to look for his horse.

Beyond the dull glow of the dying fire a crowd of Little People stood waiting, patient and quiet, houlding Terror, who champed restless at his bit, and bate impatient with his hoof on the hard ground.

As the priest looked toward them, two of the little men wearing leather aprons moved out from the others, leading the baste slow and careful over to where the good man stood beside the rock.

"You've done me a favyer this night," says the clargyman, gripping with his bridle hand the horse's mane, "an' all I have to pay it back with'd only harry you, an' make you oncomfortable, so I'll not say the words," he says.

"No favyer at all," says the king, "but before an hour there'll be lyin' on your own threshold a favyer in the shape of a bit of as fine bacon as ever laughed happy in the middle of biling turnips. We borryed it last night from a magisthrate named Blake; who lives up in the County Wexford," he says.

The clargyman had swung himself into the saddle.

"I'd be loath to say anything disrayspectful," he says quick, "or to hurt sensitive feelings, but on account of my soul's sake I couldn't ate anything that was come by dishonest," he says.

"Bother and botheration, look at that now!" says the king. "Every thrade has its drawbacks, but I never rayalized before the hardship of being a parish priest. Can't we manage it some way? Couldn't I put it some place where you might find it, or give it to a friend who'd send it to you?"

"Stop a minute," says Father Cassidy. "Up at Tim Healy's I think there's more hunger than sickness, more nade for petaties than for physic. Now, if you sent that same bit of bacon-"

"Oh, ho!" says the king, with a dhry cough, "the Healy's have no sowls to save, the same as parish priests have."

"I'm a poor, wake, miserable sinner," says the priest, hanging his head; "I fall at the first temptation. Don't send it," says he.

"Since you forbid me, I'll send it," says the king, chucklin'. "I'll not be ruled by you. To-morrow the Healy's'll have five tinder-hearted heads of cabbage, makin' love in a pot to the finest bit of bacon in Tipperary— that is, unless you do your juty an' ride back to warn them. Raymember their poor sowls," says he, "an' don't forget your own," he says.

The priest sat unaisy in the saddle. "I'll put all the raysponsibility on Terror," he says. "The baste has no sowl to lose. I'll just drop the reins on his neck; if he turns and goes back to Healy's I'll warn them; if he goes home let it be on his own conscience."

He dhropped the reins, and the dishonest baste started for home imagetly.

But afther a few steps Father Cassidy dhrew up an' turned in the saddle. Not a sowl was in sight; there was only the lonely road and the lonesome hillside; the last glimmer of the fairy fire was gone, and a curtain of soft blackness had fallen betwixt him an' where the blaze had been. "I bid you good night, Brian Connors," the priest cried. From somewhere out of the darkness a woice called back to him, "Good night, your Riverence."

Chapter 3

Darby O' Gill and the Leprechaun

THE news that Darby O'Gill had spint six months with the Good People spread fast and far and wide. At fair or hurlin' or market he would be backed be a crowd agin some convaynient wall, and there for hours men, women, and childher, with jaws dhroppin', and eyes bulgin'd stand ferninst him listening to half frightened questions or to bould mystarious answers.

Alway, though, one bit of wise adwise inded his discoorge: "Nayther make nor moil nor meddle with the fairies," Darby'd say. "If you're going along the lonely boreen at night, and you hear, from some fairy fort, a sound of fiddles, or of piping, or of sweet woices singing, or of little feet pattering in the dance, don't turn your head, but say your prayers an' hould on your way. The pleasures the Good People'll share with you have a sore sorrow hid in them, an' the gifts they'll offer are only made to break hearts with."

Things went this a-way till one day in the market, over among the cows, Maurteen Cavanaugh, the school masther— a cross-faced, argifying ould man he was— contradicted Darby pint blank. "Stay a bit," says Maurteen, catching Darby by the coat collar.

"You forget about the little fairy cobbler, the Leprechaun," he says. "You can't deny that to catch the Leprechaun is great luck entirely. If one only fix the glance of his eye on the cobbler, that look makes the fairy a presner— one can do anything with him as long as a human look covers the little lad— and he'll give the favors of three wishes to buy his freedom," says Maurteen.

At that Darby, smiling high and knowledgeable, made answer over the heads of the crowd.

"God help your sinse, honest man!" he says. "Around the favors of thim same three wishes is a bog of thricks an' cajoleries and conditions that'll defayt the wisest.

"First of all, if the look be taken from the little cobbler for as much as the wink of an eye, he's gone forever," he says. "Man alive, even when he does grant the favors of the three wishes, you're not safe, for, if you tell anyone you've seen the Leprechaun, the favors melt like snow, or if you make a fourth wish that day, whiff! They turn to smoke. Take my adwice, nayther make nor moil nor meddle with the fairies."

"Thrue for ye," spoke up long Pether McCarthy, siding in with Darby. "Didn't Barney McBride, on his way to early mass one May morning, catch the fairy cobbler sewing an' workin' away under a hedge. 'Have a pinch of snuff, Barney agrah,' says the Leprechaun, handing up the little snuff-box. But, mind

ye, when my poor Barney bint to take a thumb an' finger full what did the little villain do but fling the box, snuff and all, into Barney's face. An' thin, whilst the poor lad was winkin' and blinkin', the Leprechaun gave one leap and was lost in the reeds.

"Thin again, there was Peggy O'Rourke, who captured him fair an' square in a hawthorn bush. In spite of his wiles she wrung from him the favors of the three wishes. Knowing, of course, that if she towldt anyone of what happened to her the spell was broken, and the wishes wouldn't come thrue, she hurried home, aching and longing to in some way find from her husband, Andy, what wishes she'd make.

"Throwing open her door, she said, 'What would ye wish for most in the world, Andy dear. Tell me an' your wish'll come true,' says she. A peddler was crying his wares out in the lane. 'Lanterns, tin lanterns!' cried the peddler. 'I wish I had one of thim lanterns,' says Andy, careless and bendin' over to get a coal for his pipe, when, lo and behold, there was a lantern in his hand.

"Well, so vexed was Peggy that one of her fine wishes should be wasted on a palthry tin lantern that she lost all patience with him. 'Why, thin, bad scran to you,' says she, not mindin' her own words, 'I wish the lantern was fastened to the ind of your nose.'

"The word wasn't well out of her mouth till the lantern was hung swinging from the ind of Andy's nose in a way that the wit of man couldn't loosen. It took the third and last of Peggy's wishes to relayse Andy."

"Look at that now," cried a dozen voices from the admiring crowd. "Darby said so from the first."

Well, after a time people used to come from miles around to see Darby, and sit under the straw stack beside the stable to adwise with our hayro about their most important business— what was the best time for the settin' of hins and what was good to cure colic in childher, an' things like that.

Any man so parsecuted with admiration an' hayrofication might aisily feel his chest swell out a bit, so it's no wondher that Darby set himself up for a knowledgeable man.

He took to talking slow an' shuttin' one eye whin he listened, and he walked with a knowledgeable twist to his chowldhers. He grew monsthrously fond of fairs and public gatherings, where people made much of him; and he lost every ounce of liking he ever had for hard worruk.

Things wint on with him in this way from bad to worse, and where it would have inded no man knows, if one unlucky morning he hadn't rayfused to bring in a creel of turf his wife Bridget had axed him to fetch her. The unfortunit man said it was no work for the likes of him.

The last word was still on Darby's lips whin he rayalized his mistake an' he'd have give the worruld to have the sayin' back agin.

For a minute you could have heard a pin dhrop. Bridget, instead of being in a hurry to begin at him, was crool dayliberate. She planted herself at the door, her two fists on her hips an' her lips shut.

The look Julius Sayser'd trow at a sarvant girl he'd caught stealing sugar from the rile cupboard was the glance she waved up and down from Darby's toes to his head and from his head to his brogues agin.

Thin she began an' talked steady as a fall of hail that has now an' then a bit of lightning an' tunder mixed in it.

The knowledgeable man stood purtendin' to brush his hat and tryin' to look brave, but the heart inside of him was meltin' like butther.

Bridget began aisily be carelessly mentioning a few of Darby's best known wakenesses. Afther that she took up some of them not so well known, being ones Darby himself had sayrious doubts about having at all. But on these last she was more savare than on the first. Through it all he daren't say a word—he only smiled lofty and bitther.

'Twas but natural next for Bridget to explain what a poor crachure her husband was on the day she got him, an' what she might have been if she had married aither one of the six others who had axed her. The step for her was a little one thin to the shortcomings and misfortunes of his blood relaytions, which she follyed back to the blaggardisms of his fourth cousin, Phelim McFadden.

Even in his misery poor Darby couldn't but marvel at her wondherful memory.

By the time she began talking of her own family, and especially about her Aunt Honoria O'Shaughnessy, who had once shook hands with a bishop, and who in the rebellion of ninety-eight had trun a brick at a Lord Liftinant, whin he was riding by, Darby was as wilted and as forlorn as a roosther caught out in the winther rain.

He lost more pride in those few minutes than it had taken months to gather an' hoard. It kept falling in great drops from his forehead.

Just as Bridget was lading up to what Father Cassidy calls a pur-roar-ration— that being the part of your wife's discoorse whin, afther telling you all that she's done for you, and all she's stood from your relaytions, she breaks down and cries, and so smothers you entirely— just as she was coming to that, I say, Darby scrooged his caubeen down on his head, stuck his fingers in his two ears, and making one grand rush through the door, bolted as fast as his legs could carry him down the road toward the Sleive-na-mon Mountains.

Bridget stood on the step looking after him too surprised for a word. With his fingers still in his ears, so that he couldn't hear her commands to turn back, he ran without stopping till he came to the willow tree near Micky Doolan's forge. There he slowed down to fill his lungs with the fresh, sweet air.

'Twas one of those warm-hearted, laughing autumn days which steals for a while the bonnet and shawl of the May. The sun from a sky of feathery whiteness laned over, telling jokes to the worruld an' the goold harvest-fields and purple hills, lazy and contínted, laughed back at the sun. Even the black-bird flying over the haw tree looked down an' sang to those below, "God save all here," an' the linnet from her bough answered back quick an' sweet, "God save you kindly, sir."

With such pleasant sights and sounds an' twitterings at every side, our hayro didn't feel the time passing till he was on top of the first hill of the Sleive-na-mon Mountains, which, as every one knows, is called the Pig's Head.

It wasn't quite lonesome enough on the Pig's Head, so our hayro plunged into the valley an' climbed the second mountain— the Divil's Pillow— where 'twas lonesome and desarted enough to shuit anyone.

Beneath the shade of a three, for the day was warm, he sat himself down in the long, sweet grass, lit his pipe, and let his mind go free. But, as he did, his thoughts rose together, like a flock of frightened, angry pheasants, an' whirred back to the owdacious things Bridget had said about his relations.

Wasn't she the mendageous, humbrageous woman, he thought, to say such things about as illigant stock as the O'Gills and the O'Gradys?

Why, Wullum O'Gill, Darby's uncle, at that minute was head butler at Castle Brophy, and was known far an' wide as being one of the foinest scholars an' as having the most beautiful pair of legs in all Ireland.

This same Wullum O'Gill had tould Bridget in Darby's own hearing, on a day when the three were going through the great picture gallery at Castle Brophy, that the O'Gills at one time had been kings in Ireland.

Darby never since could raymember whether this time was before the flood or after the flood. Bridget said it was durin' the flood, but surely that sayin' was nonsinse.

Howsumever, Darby knew his Uncle Wullum was right, for he often felt in himself the signs of greatness. And now, as he sat alone on the grass, he said out loud:

"If I had me rights I'd be doing nothing all day long but sittin' on a throne, an' playin' games of forty-five with me Lord Liftinant an' some of me generals. There never was a lord that liked good ateing or dhrinking betther nor I or who hates worse to get up airly in the morning. That last disloike, I'm tould, is a great sign entirely of gentle blood the worruld over," says he.

As for his wife's people, the O'Hagans and the O'Shaughnessys, well— they were no great shakes, he said to himself, at laste so far as looks were consarned. All the handsomeness in Darby's childher came from his own side of the family. Even Father Cassidy said the childher took afther the O'Gills.

"If I were rich," says Darby to a lazy ould bumble bee who was droning an' tumbling in front of him, "I'd have a castle like Castle Brophy, with a great picture gallery in it. On one wall I'd put the pictures of the O'Gills and the O'Gradys, and on the wall ferninst thim I'd have the O'Hagans an' the O'Shaughnessys."

At that idea his heart bubbled in a new and fierce delight. "Bridget's people," he says again, scowling at the bee, "would look four times as common as they raylly are, whin they were compared in that way with my own relations. An' whenever Bridget got rampageous, I'd take her in and show her the difference betwixt the two clans, just to punish her, so I would."

How long the lad sat that way warming the cowld thoughts of his heart with drowsy pleasant dhrames an' misty longings he don't rightly know, whin— tack, tack, tack, tack, came the busy sound of a little hammer from the other side of a fallen oak.

"Be jingo!" he says to himself with a start, "'tis the Leprechaun that's in it."

In a second he was on his hands an' knees, the tails of his coat flung across his back, an' he crawling softly toward the sound of the hammer. Quiet as a mouse he lifted himself up on the mossy log to look over, and there, before his two popping eyes, was a sight of wondheration.

Sitting on a white stone, an' working away like fury, hammering pegs into a little red shoe, half the size of your thumb, was a bald-headed ould cobbler of about twice the height of your hand. On the top of a round snub nose was perched a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles, an' a narrow fringe of iron-grey whiskers grew under his stubby chin. The brown leather apron he wore was so long that it covered his green knee-breeches an' almost hid the knitted grey stockings.

The Leprechaun— for 'twas he indade— as he worked, mumbled an' mutthered in great discontent.

"Oh, haven't I the hard, hard luck!" he said. "I'll never have thim done in time for her to dance in to-night. So thin, I'll be kilt intirely," says he. "Was there ever another quane of the fairies as wearing on shoes an' brogues an' dancin' slippers? Haven't I the-" Looking up, he saw Darby.

"The top of the day to you, dacint man," says the cobbler, jumpin' up. Giving a sharp cry, he pinted quick at Darby's stomach. "But, wirra, wirra, what's that woolly ugly thing you have crawlin' an' creepin' on your weskit?" he said, purtendin' to be all excited.

"Sorra thing on my weskit," answered Darby, cool as ice, "or anywhere else, that'll make me take my two bright eyes off'n you— not for a second," says he.

"Well! Well! Will you look at that, now!" laughed the cobbler. "Mark how quick an' handy he took me up. Will you have a pinch of snuff, clever man?" he axed, houlding up the little box.

"Is it the same snuff you gave Barney McBride awhile ago?" axed Darby, sarcastic. "Lave off your foolishness," says our hayro, growin' fierce, "and grant me at once the favors of the three wishes, or I'll have you smoking like a herring in my own chimney before nightfall," says he.

At that the Leprechaun, seeing he but wasted time on so knowledgeable a man as Darby O'Gill, surrendered and granted the favors of the three wishes.

"What is it you ask?" says the cobbler, himself turning on a sudden very sour an' sullen.

"First an' foremost," says Darby, "I want a home of my ansisthers, an' it must be a castle like Castle Brophy, with pictures of my kith an' kin on the wall, and then facing them pictures of my wife Bridget's kith an' kin on the other wall."

"That favor I give you; that wish I grant ye," says the fairy, making the shape of a castle on the ground with his awl.

"What next?" he grunted.

"I want goold enough for me an' my generations to enjoy in grandeur the place forever."

"Always the goold," sneered the little man, bending to dhraw with his awl on the turf the shape of a purse.

"Now for your third and last wish. Have a care!"

"I want the castle set on this hill— the Divil's Pillow— where we two stand," says Darby. Then sweeping with his arm, he says, "I want the land about to be my demesne."

The Leprechaun struck his awl on the ground. "That wish I give you; that wish I grant you," he says. With that he straightened himself up, and, grinning most aggravatin' the while, he looked Darby over from top to toe. "You're a foine knowledgeable man, but have a care of the fourth wish," says he.

Bekase there was more of a challenge than friendly warning in what the small lad said, Darby snapped his fingers at him an' cried:

"Have no fear, little man! If I got all Ireland ground for making a fourth wish, however small, before midnight, I'd not make it. I'm going home now to fetch Bridget an' the childher, and the only fear or unaisiness I have is that you'll not keep your word, so as to have the castle here ready before us when I come back."

"Oho! I'm not to be thrusted, amn't I?" screeched the little lad, flaring into a blazing passion. He jumped upon the log that was betwixt them an' with one fist behind his back, shook the other at Darby.

"You ignorant, auspicious-minded blaggard," says he. "How dare the likes of you say the likes of that to the likes of me?" cried the cobbler. "I'd have you to know," he says, "that I had a repitation for truth an' voracity ayquil, if not shuperior, to the best before you were born," he shouted. "I'll take no high talk from a man that's afraid to give words to his own wife whin she's in a tantrum," says the Leprechaun.

"It's aisy to know you're not a married man," says Darby, mighty scornful, "bekase if you-"

The lad stopped short, forgetting what he was going to say in his surprise an' aggaytation, for the far side of the mountain was waving up an' down before his eyes like a great green blanket that is being shook by two women; while at the same time high spots of turf on the hillside toppled sidewise to level themselves up with the low places. The enchantment had already begun to make things ready for the castle. A dozen foine threes that stood in a little groove bent their heads quickly together, and thin by some inwisible hand they were plucked up by the roots an' dhropped aside, much the same as a man might grasp a handful of weeds an' fling them from his garden.

The ground undher the knowledgeable man's feet began to rumble an' heave. He waited for no more. With a cry that was half of gladness an' half of fear, he turned on his heel an' started on a run down into the walley, leaving the little cobbler standing on the log, shouting abuse after him an' ballyraggin' him as he ran.

So excited was Darby that, going up the Pig's Head, he was nearly run over by a crowd of great brown building stones which were moving down slow an' ordherly like a flock of driven sheep; but they moved without so much as bruising a blade of grass or bendin' a twig, as they came.

Only once, and that at the top of the Pig's Head, he trew a look back.

The Divil's Pillow was in a great commotion; a whirlwind was sweeping over it, whether of dust or of mist he couldn't tell.

After this, Darby never looked back agin, or to the right or the left of him, but kept straight on till he found himself, panting and puffing, at his own kitchen door. 'Twas tin minutes before he could spake, but at last, whin he tould Bridget to make ready herself and the childher to go up to the Divil's Pillow with him, for once in her life that raymarkable woman, without axing, How comes it so? What rayson have you or why should I do it? Set to work washing the childher's faces.

Maybe she dabbed a little more soap in their eyes than was needful, for 'twas a habit she had; though this time, if she did, not a whimper broke from the little hayros. For the matther of that, not one word, good, bad, or indifferent, did herself spake till the whole family were trudging down the lane two by two, marching like sojers.

As they came near the first hill, along its sides, the evening twilight turned from purple to brown, and at the top of the Pig's Head the darkness of a black night swooped suddenly down on them. Darby hurried on a step or two ahead, an' resting his hand upon the large rock that crowns the hill, looked anxiously over to the Divil's Pillow. Although he was ready for something foine, yet the greatness of the foineness that met his gaze knocked the breath out of him.

Across the deep walley, and on top of the second mountain, he saw lined against the evening sky the roof of an imminse castle, with towers an' parrypets an' battlements. Undher the towers a thousand sullen windows glowed red in the black walls. Castle Brophy couldn't hould a candle to it.

"Behold!" says Darby, flinging out his arms and turning to his wife, who had just come up, "Behold the castle of my ansisthers, who were my forefathers!"

"How," says Bridget, quick and scornful, "How could your aunt's sisters be your four fathers?"

What Darby was going to say to her he don't just raymember, for at that instant, from the right hand side of the mountain, came a cracking of whips, a rattling of wheels, an' the rush of horses, and, lo and behold! a great dark coach with flashing lamps, and drawn by four coal-black horses, dashed up the hill and stopped beside them. Two shadowy men were on the driver's box.

"Is this Lord Darby O'Gill?" axed one of them in a deep, muffled voice. Before Darby could reply, Bridget took the words out of his mouth.

"It is," she cried, in a kind of a half cheer, "an' Lady O'Gill an' the childher."

"Then hurry up," says the coachman, "your supper's gettin' cowld."

Without waiting for anyone, Bridget flung open the carriage door, an' pushin' Darby aside, jumped in among the cushins. Darby, his heart sizzlin' with vexation at her audaciousness, lifted in one after another the childher, and then got in himself. He couldn't understand at all the change in his wife, for she had always been the odherliest, modestist woman in the parish.

Well, he'd no sooner shut the door than crack went the whip, the horses gave a spring, the carriage jumped, and down the hill they went. For fastness there was never another carriage ride like that before nor since. Darby hildt tight with both hands to the window, his face pressed against the glass. He couldn't tell whether the horses were only flying, or whether the coach was falling down the hill into the walley. By the hollow feel in his stomach he thought they were falling. He was striving to think of some prayers when there

came a terrible joult, which sint his two heels against the roof, an' his head betwixt the cushins. As he righted himself the wheels began to grate on a graveled road, an' plainly they were dashing up the side of the second mountain.

Even so, they couldn't have gone far whin the carriage dhrew up in a flurryan' he saw through the gloom a high iron gate being slowly opened.

"Pass on," said a woice from somewhere in the shadows, "their supper's getting cowld."

As they flew undher the great archway Darby had a glimpse of the thing which had opened the gate, and had said their supper was getting cowld. It was standing on its hind legs; in the darkness he couldn't be quite sure as to its shape, but it was ayther a bear or a loin.

His mind was in a pondher about this when, with a swirl an' a bump, the carriage stopped another time; an' now it stood before a broad flight of stone steps which led up to the main door of the castle. Darby, half afraid, peering out through the darkness, saw a square of light high above him which came from the open hall door. Three sarvents in livery stood waiting on the thrashol.

"Make haste, make haste," says one in a doleful voice, "their supper's gettin' cowld."

Hearing these words, Bridget imagetly bounced out an' was half way up the steps before Darby could ketch her an' hould her till the childher came on.

"I never in all my life saw her so audacious," he says, half cryin' and linkin' her arm to keep her back; an' thin, with the childher follying, two by two, according to size, the whole family payraded up the steps till Darby, with a gasp of deloight, stopped on the thrashol of a splendid hall. From a high ceiling hung great flags from every nation an' domination, which swung an' swayed in the dazzlin' light.

Two lines of men and maid servants, dhressed in silks an' satins an' brocades, stood facing aich other, bowing an' smiling an' wavin' their hands in welcome. The two lines stretched down to the go old stairway at the far ind of the hall. For half of one minute, Darby, every eye in his head as big as a tay cup, stood hesitaytin'. Thin he said, "Why should it flutther me? Arrah, ain't it all mine? Aren't all these people in me pay? I'll engage it's a pritty penny all this grandeur is costing me to keep up this minute." He trew out his chest. "Come on Bridget!" he says, "let's go into the home of my ansisthers."

Howandever, scarcely had he stepped into the beautiful place, whin two pipers with their pipes, two fiddlers with their fiddles, two flute players with their flutes, an' they dhressed in scarlet an' goold, stepped out in front of him, and thus to maylodious music the family proudly marched down the hall,

climbed up the goolden stairway at its ind, an' thin turned to enter the biggest room Darby had ever seen.

Something in his sowl whuspered that this was the picture gallery.

"Be the powers of Pewther," says the knowledgeable man to himself, "I wouldn't be in Bridget's place this minute for a hatful of money. Wait, oh just wait, till she has to compare her own relations with my own foine people! I know how she'll feel, but I wondher what she'll say," he says.

The thought that all the unjust things, all the unraysonable things Bridget had said about his kith an' kin were just going to be disproved and turned against herself made him proud an' almost happy.

But wirrasthrue! He should have raymembered his own adwise not to make nor moil nor meddle with the fairies, for here he was to get the first hard welt from the little Leprechaun.

It was the picture gallery sure enough, but how terribly different everything was from what the poor lad expected. There on the left wall, grand an' noble, shone the pictures of Bridget's people. Of all the well-dhressed, handsome, proud-appearing persons in the whole worruld the O'Hagans an' the O'Shaughnessys would compare with the best. This was a hard enough crack, though a crushinger knock was to come. Ferninst them, on the right wall, glowered the O'Gills and the O'Gradys, and of all the ragged, sheepstealing, hangdog looking villains one ever saw, in jail or out of jail, it was Darby's kindred.

The place of honor on the right wall was given to Darby's fourth cousin, Phelem McFadden, an' he was painted with a pair of handcuffs on him. Wullum O'Gill had a squint in his right eye, and his thin legs bowed like hoops on a barrel.

If you have ever at night been groping your way through a dark room, and got a sudden hard bump on the forehead from the edge of the door, you can understand the feelings of the knowledgeable man.

"Take that picture out!" he said hoarsely, as soon as he could speak. "An' will some one kindly inthrojuice me to the man who med it. Bekase," he says, "I intend to take his life. There was never a crass-eyed O'Gill since the world began," says he.

Think of his horror an' surprise whin he saw the left eye of Wullum Gill twist itself slowly over toward his nose and squint worse than the right eye.

Purtending not to see this, an' hoping no one else did, Darby fiercely led the way over to the other wall.

Fronting him stood the handsome picture of Honoria O'Shaughnessy, an' she dhressed in a shuit of tin clothes, like the knights of ould used to wear—armor I think they calls it.

She hildt a spear in her hand, with a little flag on the blade, an' her smile was proud and high.

"Take that likeness out too," says Darby, very spiteful. "That's not a dacint shuit of clothes for any woman to wear." The next minute you might have knocked him down with a feather, for the picture of Honoria O'Shaughnessy opened its mouth and stuck out its tongue at him.

"The supper's getting cowld, the supper's getting cowld," some one cried at the other ind of the picture gallery.Two big doors were swung open, an' glad enough was our poor hayro to folly the musicianers down to the room where the ateing an' drinking were to be thransacted.

This was a little room with lots of looking glasses, and it was bright with a thousand candles, and white with the shiningest marble. On the table was biled beef an' reddishes an' carrots an' roast mutton an' all kinds of important ateing an' drinking. Beside these stood fruits an' sweets an'— but sure what is the use in talkin'?

A high-backed chair stood ready for aich of the familly, an' 'twas a lovely sight to see them all whin they were sitting there, Darby at the head, Bridget at the foot, the childher— the poor little paythriarchs— sitting bolt upright on aich side, with a bewigged and befrilled serving man standing haughty behind every chair.

The ateing and dhrinkin' would have begun at once— in troth there was already a bit of biled beef on Darby's plate— only that he spied a little silver bell beside him. Sure, 'twas one like those the quality keep to ring whin they want more hot wather for their punch, but it puzzled the knowledeable man, and 'twas the beginning of his misfortune.

"I wondher," he thought, "if 'tis here for the same raison as the bell is at the Curragh races— do they ring this one so that all at the table will start ateing an' drinking fair, an' no one will have the advantage; or is it." he says to himself agin, "to ring whin the head of the house thinks every one has had enough? Haven't the quality quare ways! I'll be a long time learning them," he says.

He sat silent and puzzling an' staring at the biled beef on his plate, afeared to start in without ringing the bell, an' dhreading to risk ringing it. The grand servants towered cowldly on every side, their chins tilted, but they kep' throwing over their chowlders glances so scornful and haughty that Darby shivered at the thought of showing any uncultivaytion.

While our hayro sat thus in unaisy contimplaytion an' smouldhering mortification an' flurried hesitaytion, a powdhered head was poked over his chowlder, and a soft beguiling woice said, "Is there anything else you'd wish for?"

The foolish lad twisted in his chair, opened his mouth to spake, and gave a look at the bell; shame rushed to his, cheeks, he picked up a bit of the biled beef on his fork, an' to consale his turpitaytion gave the misfortunit answer,

"I'd wish for a pinch of salt, if you plaze," says he.

'Twas no sooner said than came the crash. Oh, tunderation an' murdheration, what a roaring crash it was! The lights winked out together at a breath, an' left a pitchy, throbbing darkness. Overhead and to the sides was a roaring, smashing, crunching noise, like the ocean's madness when the winthry storm breaks agin the Kerry shore; an' in that roar was mingled the tearing and the splitting of the walls and the falling of the chimneys. But through all this confusion could be heard the shrill laughing voice of the Leprechaun. "The clever man med his fourth grand wish," it howled.

Darby— a thousand wild woices screaming an' mocking above him— was on his back, kicking and squirming and striving to get up, but some load hilt him down an' something bound his eyes shut.

"Are you kilt, Bridget asthore?" he cried. "Where are the childher?" he says.

Instead of answer, there suddenly flashed a fierce an' angry silence, an' its quickness frightened the lad more than all the wild confusion before.

'Twas a full minute before he dared to open his eyes to face the horrors which he felt were standing about him; but when courage enough to look came, all he saw was the night-covered mountain, a purple sky, and a thin new moon, with one trembling goold star a hand's space above its bosom.

Darby struggled to his feet. Not a stone of the castle was left, not a sod of turf but what was in its ould place; every sign of the little cobbler's work had melted like April snow. The very threes Darby had seen pulled up by the roots that same afternoon now stood a waving blur below the new moon, an' a nightingale was singing in their branches. A cricket chirped lonesomely on the same fallen log which had hidden the Leprechaun.

"Bridget! Bridget!" Darby called agin an' agin. Only a sleepy owl on a distant hill answered.

A shivering thought jumped into the boy's bewildered sowl— maybe the Leprechaun had stolen Bridget and the childher.

The poor man turned, and for the last time darted down into the night-filled walley.

Not a pool in the road he waited to go around, not a ditch in his path he didn't leap over, but ran as he never ran before, till he raiched his own front door.

His heart stood still as he peeped through the window. There were the childher croodled around Bridget, who sat with the youngest asleep in her lap

before the fire, rocking back an' forth, an' she crooning a happy, contínted baby song.

Tears of gladness crept into Darby's eyes as he looked in upon her. "God bless her," he says to himself. "She's the flower of the O'Hagans and the O'Shaughnessys, and she's a proud feather in the caps of the O'Gills an' the O'Gradys."

'Twas well he had this happy thought to cheer him as he lifted the door latch, for the manest of all the little cobbler's spiteful thricks waited in the house to meet Darby— naythér Bridget nor the childher raymembered a single thing of all that had happened to them during the day. They were willing to make their happydavitts that they had been no farther than their own petatie patch since morning.

Chapter 4

The Convarsion of Father Cassidy

"I TOULD you how on cowld winther nights, whin Bridget and the childher were in bed, ould Brian Connors, King of the Fairies, used to sit visitin' at Darby O'Gill's own fireside. But I never tould you of the wild night whin the King faced Father Cassidy there."

That was the way Jerry Murtaugh, my car driver, begun this story:

DARBY O'GILL sat at his own kitchen fire the night afther Mrs. Morrisey's burying, studyin' over a gr-r-reat daybate that was at her wake.

Half-witted Red Durgan begun it be asking loud an' sudden of the whole company, "Who was the greatest man that ever lived in the whole worruld?"

"I want to know purtic'lar, an' I'd like to know at once," he says.

At that the dayliberations started.

Big Shaun O'Hea, the smith, hildt for Julius Sayser, bekase Sayser had throunced the widdy woman Clayopathra.

Maurteen Cavanaugh, the crass-faced schoolmaster, stood up for Bonyparte, an' wanted to fight Dinnis Moriarty for disputin' agin the Frenchman.

Howsumever, the starter of the rale excitement was ould Mrs. Clancy. She was not what you'd call a great historian, but the parish thought her a fine, sensible woman. She said that the greatest man was Nebbycodnazer, the King of the Jews, who ate grass like a cow and grew fat on it.

"Could Julius Sayser or Napoleon Bonyparte do as much?" she axed.

Well, purty soon everyone was talking at once, hurling at aich other, as they would pavin' stones, the names of poets and warriors an' scholars.

But, afther all was said an' done, the mourners wint away in the morning with nothing settled.

So this night, while Darby was warming his shins before the turf fire in deep meditaytion and wise cogitaytion and ca'm contemplaytion over these high conver- saytions, the Master of the Good People flew ragin' into the kitchen.

"Darby O'Gill, what do you think of your wife, Bridget?" he cried. "Wait till you hear what she's done this day," says he fiercely.

"Faix, I don't know what particular thing she's done," says Darby; rubbing his shins and lookin' troubled, "but I can guess it's something mighty disagrayable. She wore her blue petticoat and her brown shawl whin she went away this morning, and I always expect ructions whin she puts on that shuit of clothes. Thin, agin, she looked so sour and so satisfied whin she came back that

I'm worried bad in my mind; you don't know how uncomfortable she can make things sometimes, quiet as she looks," says he.

"And well you may be worried, dacint man!" says the ruler of Sleive-na-mon; "you'll rage and you'll roar whin ye hear me. She wint this day to Father Cassidy and slandhered me outraygeous," he says. "She tould him that you and Maurteen were colloguing with a little ould wicked thieving fairy man, and that if something wasn't done at once agin him the sowls of both of ye would be disthroyed entirely."

Whin Darby found 'twas not himself that was being bothered, but only the King, he grew aisier in his feelings. "Sure you wouldn't mind women's talks," says he, waving his hand in a lofty way. "Many a good man has been given a bad name by them before this, and will be agin— you're not the first by any mains," says he. "If Bridget makes for you a bad rapitation, think how many years you have to live it down in. Be sinsible, King!" he says.

"But I do mind, and I must mind," bawled the little fairy man, every hair and whusker bristling," for this minute Father Cassidy is putting the bridle and saddle on his black hunter, Terror; he has a prayer book in his pocket, and he's coming to read prayers over me, and to banish me into the say. Hark! listen to that," he says.

As he spoke a shrill little voice broke into singing outside the window:

"Oh, what'll you do if the kittle biles over,
Sure, what'll you do but fill it agin;
Ah, what'll you do if you marry a sojer,
But pack up your clothes and go marchin' with him."

"That's the signal," says the King, all excited, "he's coming; and I'll face him here at this hearth, but sorrow fut he'll put over that threshol till I give him lave. Then we'll have it out face to face like men ferninst this fire."

When Darby heard those words a great fright struck him.

"If a hair of his Reverence's head be harmed," he says, "'tis not you but me and my generation'll be blamed for it. Plaze go back to Sleive-na-mon this night for pace and quietness sake," he begged.

While Darby spoke the fairy man was fixing one stool on top of another undher the window. "I'll sit at this window," says the Master of the Good People, wagging his head threateningly, "and from there I'll give my ordhers. The throuble he's thrying to bring on others is the throuble I'll throuble him with. If he comes dacint, he'll go dacint; if he comes bothering, he'll go bothered," says he.

Faith, thin, your honor, the King spoke no less than the truth, for at that very minute Terror, as fine a horse as ever followed hounds, was galloping down the starlit road to Darby's house, and over Terror's mane bent as fine a horseman as ever took a six-bar gate— Father Cassidy.

On and on through the moonlight they clattered, till they came in sight of Darby's gate, where, unseen and invisible, a score of the Good People, with thorns in their fists, lay sniggering and laughing, waiting for the horse. Of course, the fairies couldn't harm the good man himself, but Terror was complately at their mercy.

"We'll not stop to open the gate, Terror," says his Reverence, patting the baste's neck; "I'll give you a bit of a lift with the bridle rein and a touch like that on the flank and do you clear it, my swallow bird."

Well, sir, the priest riz in his stirrups, lifted the rein, and Terror crouched for the spring, whin, with a sudden snort of pain, the baste whirled round and started, like the wind, back up the road.

His Reverence pulled the horse to its haunches and swung him round once more, facing the cottage. Up on his hind feet went Terror, and stood crazy for a second pawing the air; then, with a cry of rage and pain in its throat, the baste turned, made a rush for the hedge at the roadside, and cleared it like an arrow. Now, just beyant the hedge was a bog so thin, that the geese wouldn't walk on it, and so thick that the ducks couldn't swim in it. Into the middle of that cowld pond Terror fell with a splash and a crash.

That minute the King climbed down from the window splitting with laughter. "Darby," he says, slapping his knees, "Father Cassidy is floundhering about in the bog outside. He's not hurt, but he's mighty cowld and uncomfortable. Do you go and make him promise not to read any prayers this night, then bring him in. Tell him that if he don't promise, by the piper that played before Moses, he may stay reading his prayers in the bog till morning, for he can't get out unless some of my people go in and help him," says the King.

Darby's heart began hammerin' agin his ribs as though it were making heavy horseshoes.

"If that's so I'm a ruined man," he says. "I'd give tunty pounds rayther than face him now," says he. The distracted lad put on his hat to go out, an' thin he took it off to stay in. He let a groan out of him that shook all his bones.

"You may save him or lave him," says the King, turning to the window. "I'm going to lave the priest see in a minute what's bothering him. If he's not out of the bog be that time, I'd adwise you to lave the counthry. Maybe you'll only have a pair of cow's horns put on ye, but I think you'll be kilt," he says; "my own mind's aisy. I wash my hands of him.

"That's the great comfort and adwantage of having our sowl's salwation fixed and sartin one way or the other," says the King, peering out. "Whin you do a thing, bad as it is or good as it may be, your mind is still aisy bekase-" He turned from the window to look at Darby, but the lad was gone out into the moonlight and was shrinking an' cringin' up toward the bog as though he were going to meet and talk with the ghost of a man he'd murthered. 'Twas a harsher an' angrier woice than that of any ghost that came out of a great flopping and splashin' in the bog.

Father Cassidy sat with his feet dhrawn up on Terror and the horse was half sunk in the mire. At times he'd urge Terror over to the bank, an' just as the baste was raising to step out, with a snort it'd whirl back agin.

He'd thry another side, but spur as he might and whip as he would, the horse'd turn shivering back to the middle of the bog.

"Is that you, Darby O'Gill, you vagabone?" cried his Riverence. "Help me out of this to the dhry land so as I can take the life of you," he cries.

"What right has anyone to go threspassin' in my bog, mussing it all up an' spiling it?" says Darby, purtendin' not to raycognize the priest; "I keep it private for my ducks and geese, and I'll have the law of you, so I will— oh, be the powers of pewther, 'tis me own dear Father Cassidy," he cries.

Father Cassidy, as an answer, raiched for a handful of mud, which he aimed and flung so fair an' thrue that tree days afther Darby was still pulling bits of it from his whiskers.

"I have a whip I'll keep private for your own two fine legs whin I get out of here," cried his Riverence. "I'll taich you to tell lies to the counthry side about your being with the fairies and for deluddherin' your own poor wife. I came down this night to eggspose you. But, now, that's the laste I'll do to you."

"Faith," says Darby, "if I was with the fairies, 'tis no less than you are this minute, an' if you eggspose me, I'll eggspose you." With that Darby up and tould what was the cause of the whole botheration.

His Riverence, afther the telling, waited not a minute, but kicked the spurs into Terror, and the brave horse headed once more for the shore. 'Twas no use. The poor baste turned at last with a cry and floundhered back agin into the mire.

"You'll not be able to get out, Father, acushla," says Darby, "till you promise fair an' firm not to read any prayers over the Good People this night, and never to hurt or molest meself on any account. About this last promise the King is very particular entirely."

"You dunderheaded Booligedhaun," says Father Cassidy, turning all the blame on Darby; "you mayandhering Mayrauder of the Sivin Says," he says;

"you big-headed scorpion of the worruld with the bow legs," cries he— an' things like that.

"Oh my! Oh my! Oh my!" says Darby, purtendin' to be shocked, "to think that me own pasture should use sich terrible langwidge; that me own dear Father Cassidy could speak blaggard's words like thim. Every dhrop of blood in me is biling with scandalation. Let me beg of you and implore your Riverence never agin to make use of talk like that. It breaks my heart to hear you," says Darby.

For a few minutes afther that Darby was doin' nothing but dodging handfuls of mud. While this was going on, a soft red glow, like that which hangs above the lonely raths an' forts at night when the fairies are dancin' in them, came over the fields. So whin Father Cassidy riz in his stirrup the soft glow was resting on the bog, and there he saw two score little men in green jackets and brown caps waiting in the reeds about the pond's edge, and everyone houlding a switch in his hands.

The little lads knew well 'twas too dark for the clargyman to read from his book any banishing prayers, and barring having too much fun, the divil a thing they had to fear.

'Twas fresh anger that came to Father Cassidy afther the first rush of surprise and wondher. He thried now to get at the Good People to lay his hand on them. A dozen charges at the bank his Riverence made, and as many times a score of the little people flew up to meet him, and sthruck the poor baste over the soft nose with their wands, till he was welted back.

Long afther the struggle was proved hopeless, it wint on till at last the poor baste, thrembling and disheartened, rayfused to mind the spur.

At that, Father Cassidy gave up.

"I surrender," he said, "an' I promise for the sake of my horse," said he.

The baste himself undherstood the words, for with that he waded ca'm an' quiet to the dry land, and stood shaking himself there among the pack of fairies.

Mighty few words were passed betwix' Darby and the Terror's rider, as the whole party went up to Darby's stable— the little people follying behind quiet and ordherly.

It wasn't long till Terror was nibbling comfortably in a stall, Father Cassidy was dhrying himself before the kitchen fire, the King and Darby were sitting by the side of the hearth, and two score of the green-cloaked little people were scatthered about the kitchen waiting for the great debate, which was sure to come betwixt his Riverence and the head man of the Good People, now that the two had met.

So full was the room that some of the Good People sat on the shelves of the dhresser; others lay on the table, their chins in their fists; little Phelim Beg perched on a picture above the hearth. He'd no sooner touched the picture frame than he let a howl out of him and jumped to the floor. "I'm burned to the bone," says he.

"No wondher," says the King, looking up; "'twas a picture of St. Pathrick you were sitting on."

Phadrig Oge, swinging his heels, balanced himself on the edge of a churn filled with butthermilk; but every one of them kept wondhering eyes fastened on the priest.

And to tell the truth Father Cassidy at first was more scornful and unpolite than need be.

"I suppose," says his Riverence, "you do be worrying a good deal about the place you're going to afther the day of Judgment," he says, kind of mocking.

"Arrah, now," says the King, taking the pipe from his mouth and staring hard at the clargyman, "there's more than me ought to be studying that question. There's a parish priest I know, and he's not far from here, who ate mate on a fast day three years ago come next Michaelmas, who should be a good lot intherested in that same place," says the King.

The laughing and titthering that follyed this hit lasted a minute.

Father Cassidy turned scarlet. "When I ate it I forgot the day," he cried.

"That's what you tould," says the King, smiling sweet, "but that saying don't help your chanst much. Maybe you failed to say your prayers a year ago last Ayster Monday night for the same rayson," asked the King, very cool.

At this the laughing broke out again, uproarious, some of the little men houlding their sides and tears rowling down their cheeks; two lads begun dancing together before the chiny dishes upon the dhresser. But at the height of the merriment there was a cry and a splash, for Phadrig Oge had fallen into the churn.

Before anyone could help him, Phadrig had climbed bravely up the churn dash, hand over hand, like a sailor man, and clambered out all white and dripping. "Don't mind me," he says, "go on wid the discoorse," he cried, shaking himself. The Ruler of the Good people looked vexed.

"I marvel at yez, and I'm ashamed of yez," he says; "if I'm not able alone for this dayludhered man, yer shoutin' and your gallivantin'll do me no good. Besides, fair play's a jewel, even two an' one ain't fair," says the King. "If I hear another word from one of yez, back to Sleive-na-mon he'll go, an' lay there on the broad of his back with his heels in the air for a year and tin days.

"You were about to obsarve, Father Cassidy," says his Majesty, bowing, "your most obaydient, sir."

"I was about to say," cried his Riverence, "that you're a friend of Sattin."

"I'll not deny that," says the King. "What have you to say agin him?"

"He's a rogue and a rapscallion and the inemy of mankind," thundered Father Cassidy.

"Prove he's a rogue," cries the King, slapping one hand on the other, "and why shouldn't he be the inemy of mankind? What has mankind ever done for him except to lay the blame for every mane, cowardly thrick, of its own on his chowldhers. Wasn't it bekase of them he spint sivin days and sivin nights in the belly of a whale, wasn't it-"

"Stop there now," says Father Cassidy, pinting his finger, "hould where you are— that was Jonah."

"You're working meracles to make me forget," shouted the King.

"I'm not," cried the priest, "and what's more, if you'll agree not to use charms of the black art to help yerself I'll promise not to work meracles agin you."

"Done! I'll agree," says the King, "and with that bargain I'll go on first and I'll prove that mankind is the inemy of Sattin."

"Who begun the enmity?" intherrupted his Riverence; "who started in be tempting our first parents?"

"Not wishing to make little of a man's relations in his own house or to his own face, but your first parents were a poor lot," said the King. "Didn't your first parent turn queen's evidence agin his own wife? Answer me that."

"Undher the sarcumstances, would you have him tell a lie whin he was asked?" says the priest, right back.

Well, the argyment got hotter and hotter until Darby's mind was in splinthers. Sometime he sided with ould Nick, sometimes he was agin him. Half what they said he didn't undherstand. They talked tayology, conchology, and distrology; they hammered aich other with jayography, orthography, and misnography; they welted aich other with hylosophy, philosophy, and thrigmosophy. They bounced up and down in their sates, they shouted and got purple in the face. But every argyment brought out another nearly as good and twist as loud.

Through all this time the follyers of the King sat upon their perches or lay upon the table motionless, like little wooden images with painted green cloaks and brown caps.

Darby, looking from one to the other of them for help to undherstand the thraymendous argyment that was goin' on, felt his brain growin' numb. At last it balked like Shamus Frees's donkey, and urge as he would, the devil a foot his mind'd stir afther the two hayros. It turned at last and galloped back to Mrs. Morrisey's wake.

Now the thought that came into Darby's head as he sat there ferninst Father Cassidy an' the King was this:

"The two wisest persons in Ireland are this minute shouting and disputing before my own turf fire. If I ax them those questions I'll be wiser than Dicky Burke, the schoolmaster, an' twist as wise as any other man in this parish. I'll do it," he says to himself.

He raised the tongs and struck them so loud and quick against the hearth that the two daybaters stopped short in their talk to look at him.

"Tell me," he says, "lave off and tell me, who was the greatest man that ever lived?" says he.

At that a surprising thing happened. Brian Connors and Father Cassidy, aich striving to speak first, answered in the same breath and gave the same name.

"Dann'le O'Connell," says they. There was that instant's silence an' stillness which follys a great explosion of gunpowder.

Thin every subject of the King started to his feet. "Three cheers for Dann'le O'Connell," cried little Roderick Dhu. Every brown cap was swung in the air. "Hurray, Hooray, Hooroo," rang the cheers.

His Riverence and the Fairy Chief turned sharp about and stared at aich other, delighted and wondhering.

Darby sthruck agin with the tongs: "Who was the greatest poet?" says he.

Again the two spoke together: "Tom Moore," says they. The King rubbed his hands and gave a glad side look at the priest. Darby marked the friendly light that was stealing into Father Cassidy's brown eyes. There was great excitement among the Good People up on the cupboard shelves.

On the table little Nial, the wise, was thrying to start three cheers for Father Cassidy, when Darby said again, "Who was the greatest warrior?" he says.

The kitchen grew still as death, aich of the two hayros waiting for the other.

The King spoke first. "Brian Boru," says he.

"No," says Father Cassidy, half laughing, "Owen Roe O'Nale."

Phadrig Oge jumped from the churn. "Owen Roe forever. I always said it," cries he. "Look at this man, boys," he says, pinting up to the priest. "There's the makings of the finest bishop in Ireland."

"The divil a much differ betwixt Owen Roe an' Brian Boru; 'tis one of them two anyway an' I don't care which," says the King.

The priest and the King sank back on their chairs, eyeing aich other with admayration.

Darby powered something out of a jug into three brown stone noggins, and then turned hot wather from the kittle on top of that agin.

Says the King to the clargyman, "You're the cleverest and the knowingest man I've met in five thousand years. That joult you gave me about Jonah was a terror."

"I never saw your ayquil," says Father Cassidy. "If we could only send you to Parliament you'd free Ireland," he says. "To think," says he, "that I once fully believed there was no such thing as fairies."

"That was bekase you were shuperstitious," says the King. "Every one is so, more or less. I am meself— a little," says he.

Darby was stirrin' spoons of sugar in the three steaming noggins, and Father Cassidy was looking throubled.

What would his flock say to see him dhrinking punch with a little ould pagin who was the friend of ould Nick.

"Your health," says the King, houlding up a cup.

His Riverence took a bow of the punch for daycencies' sake and stood quiet a minute. At last he says, "Happiness to you and forgiveness to you, and my heart's pity folly you," says he, raising the noggin to his lips. He drained the cup thoughtful and solemn, for he didn't know rightly whether 'twas a vayniol sin or a mortal sin he'd committed by the bad example he was giving Darby.

"I wisht I could do something for yez," he says, putting on his cloak, "but I have only pity and kind wishes."

He turned agin whin his hand was on the doorknob, and was going to say something else, but changed his mind and went out to where Darby was houlding the horse.

Wullum Fagin, the poacher, was sneakin' home that night about one o'clock with a bag full of rabbits undher his arm, whin, hearing behind him the bate of horse's hoofs and the sound of most maylodious music, he jumped into the ditch and lay close within the shadow.

Who should come canthering up the starlit road but Father Cassidy on his big hunter Terror.

Wullum looked for the musicianers who were singing and playing the enthrancing music, but sorra one could he see, and what was more, the sounds came from the air high above Father Cassidy's head.

"Tis the angels guarding the good man home," says Wullum.

Sure 'twas the Good People escorching his Riverence from Darby O'Gill's house, and to cheer him on his way, singing the while, "Believe me, if all those endearing young charms."

Chapter 5

The Banshee's Halloween

HALLOWEEN night to all unhappy ghosts is about the same as St. Patrick's day is to you or to me— 'tis a great holiday in every church-yard. An' no one knew this betther or felt it keener than did Darby O'Gill that same Halloween night as he stood on his own door-step, with the paper of black tay for Eilleen McCarthy safely stowed away in the crown of his top hat.

No one in that Barony was quicker than he at an act of neighborly kindness. But now, as he huddled himself together in the shelther of his own eaves, an' thought of the dangers before, an' of the cheerful fire an' comfortable bed he was leaving behint, black raybellion rushed shouting across his heart.

"Oh my, oh my, what a perishin' night to turn a man out into," he says, "It'd be half a comfort to know I was goin' to be kilt before I got back, just as a warnin' to Bridget," says he.

The misthrayted lad turned a sour eye on the chummultuous weather, an' groaned deep as he pulled closer about his chowldhers the cape of his great coat, an' plunged into the daysarted an' flooded roadway.

Howsumever, 'twas not the pelting rain, nor the lashing wind, nor yet the pitchy darkness that bothered the heart out of him as he wint splashing an' stumbling along the road. A thought of something more raylentless than the storm, more mystarious than the night's blackness, put pounds of lead into the lad's unwilling brogues, for somewhere in the shrouding darkness that covered McCarthy's house the Banshee was waiting this minute, perhaps, ready to jump out at him as soon as he came near her.

And oh, if the Banshee nabbed him there, what in the wide worruld would the poor lad do to save himself?

At the rayalization of this sitiwation the goose flesh crept up his back, an' settled on his neck an' chowldhers. He began to cast about in his mind for a bit of cheer or a scrap of comfort, as a man in such sarcumstances will do. So, grumblin' an' sore-hearted, he turned over Bridget's parting worruds. "If one goes on an errant of marcy," Bridget had said, "a score of God's white angels, with swoords in their hands, march before an' beside an' afther him, keeping his path free from danger."

He felt anxious in his hat for the bit of charitable tay he was bringin', an' was glad to find it there safe an' dhry enough, though the rest of him was drenched through an' through.

"Isn't this an act of charity I'm doin', to be bringin' a cooling dhrink to a dyin' woman?" he axed himself aloud. "To be sure it is. Well, then, what rayson

have I to be afeared?" says he, pokin' his two hands into his pockets. Arrah, it's aisy enough to bolster up one's heart with wise sayin's an' hayroic praycepts when sitting commodious by one's own fire; but talkin' wise worruds to one's self is mighty poor comfort whin you're on the lonely high road of a Halloween night, with a church-yard waitin' for ye on the top of the hill not two hundred yards away. If there was only one star to break through the thick sky an' shine for him, if there was but one friendly cow to low or a distant cock to break the teeming silence, 'twould put some heart into the man. But not a sound was there, only the swish and wailing of the wind through the inwisible hedges.

"What's the matter with the whole worruld? Where is it wanished to?" says Darby. "If a ghost were to jump at me from the church-yard wall, where would I look for help? To run is no use," he says, "an' to face it is-"

Just then the current of his misdoubtings ran whack up against a sayin' of ould Peggy O'Callaghan. Mrs. O'Callaghan's repitation for truth and voracity whin it come to fairy tales or ghost stories, be it known, was aquil if not shuparior to the best in Tipperary. Now Peggy had towld Ned Mullin, an' Ned Mullin had towld Bill Donahue the tinker, an' the tinker had adwised Darby that no one need ever be afeared of ghosts if he only had the courage to face thim.

Peggy said, "The poor crachures ain't roamin' about shakin chains an' moanin' an' groanin' just for the sport of scarin' people, nor yet out of maneness. 'Tis always a throuble that's on their minds— a message they want sint, a saycret they're endayvoring to unload. So, instead of flyin' from the onhappy things, as most people generally do," she said, "one should walk up bowld to the apparraytion, be it gentle or common, male or faymale, an' say, 'What throubles ye, sir?' or, 'What's amiss with ye, ma'am?' An' take my worrud for it," says she, "ye'll find yourself a boneyfactor to them whin you laste expect it," she says.

'Twas a quare idee, but not so onraysonable afther all whin one comes to think of it, an' the knowledgeable man fell to dayliberatin' whether he'd have the hardness to folly it out if the chanst came. Sometimes he thought he would, then agin he was sure he wouldn't. For Darby O'Gill was one who bint quick undher throuble like a young three before a hurrycane, but he only bint, the throuble never broke him. So, at times, his courage wint down to a spark like the light of a candle in a gust of wind, but before you could turn on your heel 'twas blazing up strong and fiercer than before.

Whilst thus contimplatin' an' meditaytin', his foot sthruck the bridge in the hollow just below the berringround, an' there, as the boy paused a minute, churning up bravery enough to carry him up the hill an' past the mystarious gravestones, there came a short quiver of lightning, an' in its sudden flare he

was sure he saw not tin yards away, an' comin' down the hill towards him, a dim shape that took the breath out of his body.

"Oh, be the powers!" he gasped, his courage emptying out like wather from a spilt pail.

It moved, as low, gray, formless thing, without a head, an', so far as he was able to judge, it might be about the size of an ulephant. The parsecuted lad swung himself sideways in the road, one arrum over his eyes, an' the other stretched out at lull length, as if to ward off the turrible wisitor.

The first thing that began to take any shape in his bewildhered brain was Peggy O'Callaghan's adwise. He thried to folly it out, but a chatterin' of teeth was the only sound he med. An' all this time a thraymendous splashin', like the floppin' of whales, was coming nearer an' nearer.

The splashin' sthopped not three feet away, an' the han'ted man felt in the spine of his back an' in the calves of his legs that a powerful unhowly monsther towered over him.

Why he didn't swoonge in his thracks is the wondher. He says he would have dhropped at last if it weren't for the distant bark of his own good dog Sayser, that put a throb of courage intil his bones. At that friendly sound he opened his two dhry lips an' stutthered this sayin':

"Whoever you are, an' whatever shape ye come in, take heed that I'm not afeared," he says. "I command ye to tell me your throubles, an' I'll be your boneyfactor. Then go back dacint an' rayspectable where you're buried. Spake, an' I'll listen," says he.

He waited for a rayply, an' getting none, a hot splinther of shame at bein' so badly frightened turned his sowl into wexation. "Spake up," he says, "but come no furder, for if you do, be the hokey, I'll take one thry at ye, ghost or no ghost," he says. Once more he waited, an', as he was lowering the arrum from his eyes for a peek, the ghost spoke up, an' its answer came in two pittiful disthressed roars. A damp breath puffed acrost his face, an' openin' his eyes, what should the lad see but the two dhrooppin' ears of Solomon, Mrs. Kilcannon's gray donkey. Foive different kinds of dishgust biled up into Darby's throat an almost sthrangled him. "Ye murdherin' big-headed imposture!" he gasped.

Half a minute afther a brown hoot owl, which was shelthered in a near-by black thorn three, called out to his brother's fambly, which inhabited the belfry of the chapel above on the hill, that some black-minded spalpeen had hoult of Solomon Kilcannon be the two ears an' was kickin' the ribs out of him, an' that the langwidge the man was usin' to the poor baste was worse than scan'lous.

Although Darby couldn't understhand what the owl was sayin', he was startled be the blood-curdlin' hoot, an' that same hoot saved Solomon from

any exthrayornery throuncin', bekase as the angry man sthopped to harken there flashed on him the rayalization that he was bating an' crool maulthraytin' a blessing in dishguise, for this same Solomon had the repitation of being the knowingist, sensiblist thing which walked on four legs in that parish. He was a fayvorite with young an' old, especially with childher, an' Mrs. Kilcannon said she could talk to him as if he were a human, an' she was sure he understhood. In the face of thim facts the knowledgeable man changed his chune, an' puttin' his arrum friendly around the disthressed animal's neck he said,

"Aren't ye ashamed of yerself, Solomon, to be payradin' an' mayandherin' around the church-yard Halloween night, dishguisin' yerself this a-way as an outlandish ghost, an' you havin' the foine repitation for dacincy an' good manners?" he says, excusin' himself. "I'm ashamed of you, so I am, Solomon," says he, haulin' the baste about in the road an' turning him till its head faced once more the hill-side. "Come back with me now to Cormac McCarthy's, avourneen. We've aich been in worse company, I'm thinkin'; at laste you have, Solomon," says he.

At that, kind an' friendly enough, the forgivin' baste turned with him, an' the two, keeping aich other slithering company, went stumblin' an' scramblin' up the hill toward the chapel. On the way Darby kept up a one-sided conwersation about all manner of things, just so that the ring of a human woice, even if 'twas only his own, would take a bit of the crool lonesomeness out of the dark hedges.

"Did you notice McDonald's sthrame as you came along the night, Solomon? It must be a roarin' torrent be this, with the pourin' rains, an' we'll have to cross it," says he. "We could go over McDonald's stone bridge that stands ferninst McCarthy's house, with only Nolan's meadow betwixt the two, but," says Darby, laying a hand confaydential on the ass's wet back, "'tis only a fortnit since long Faylix, the blind beggar man, fell from the same bridge and broke his neck, an' what more natural," he axed, "than the ghost of Faylix would be celebraytin' its first Halloween as a ghost at the spot where he was kilt?"

You may believe me or believe me not, but at thim worruds Solomon sthopped dead still in his thracks, an' rayfused to go another step till Darby coaxed him on by sayin':

"Oh, thin, we won't cross it if you're afeared, little man," says he; "but we'll take the path through the fields on this side of it, and we'll cross the sthrame by McCarthy's own wooden foot-bridige. 'Tis within tunty feet of the house. Oh, ye needn't be afeared" he says, again, "I've seen the cows cross it, so it'll surely hould the both of us."

A sudden raymembrance whipped into his mind of how tall the stile was ladin' into Nolan's meadow, an' the boy was puzzling deep to know how was Solomon to climb acrost that stile, whin all at once the gloomy western gate of the grave-yard rose quick be their side.

The two shied to the opposite hedge, an' no wondher they did.

Fufty ghosts, all in their shrouds, sat cheek be jowl along the church-yard wall, never caring a ha'porth tor the wind or the rain.

There was little Ted Rogers, the hump-back, who dhrownded in Mullin's well four years come Michelmas; there was black Mulligan, the game-keeper, who shot Ryan, the poacher, sittin' with a gun on his lap, an' he glowerin'; beside the game-keeper sat the poacher, with a jagged black hole in his forehead; there was Thady Finnegan, the scholar who was disappinted in love, an' died of a daycline; furder on sat Mrs Houlihan, who dayparted this life from ateing of pizen musherooms; next to her sat— oh, a hundhred others!

Not that Darby saw thim, do ye mind. He had too good sinse to look that way at all. He walked with his head turned out to the open fields, an' his eyes squeeged shut. But something in his mind toult him they were there, an' he felt in the marrow of his bones that if he gave them the encouragement of one glance two or three'd slip off the wall an' come moanin' over to tell him their throubles.

What Solomon saw an' what Solomon heard as the two wint shrinkin' along'll never be known to living man. But once he gave a jump, an' twice Darby felt him thrimblin, an' whin they raiched at last the chapel wall, the baste broke into a swift throt. Purty soon he galloped, an' Darby wint galloping with him, till two yallow blurs of light across in a field to the left marked the windys of the stone-cutter's cottage.

'Twas a few steps only thin to the stile over into Nolan's meadow, an' there the two stopped, lookin' helpless at aich other. Solomon had to be lifted, and there was the throuble. Three times Darby thried be main strength to hist his compagnon up the steps, but in wain, an' Solomon was clane dishgusted.

Only for the tendher corn on our hayro's left little toe, I think maybe that at length an' at last the pair would have got safe over. The kind-hearted lad had the donkey's two little hoofs planted on the top step, an' whilst he himself was liftin' the rest of the baste in his arrums, Solomon got onaisy that he was goin' to be trun, an' so began to twisht an' squirm. Of course, as he did, Darby slipped, an' wint thump on his back agin the stile, with Solomon sittin' comfortable on top of the lad's chist. But that wasn't the worst of it. For as the baste scrambled up he planted one hard little hoof on Darby's left foot, an' the knowledgeable man let a yowl out of him that must have frightened all the ghosts within miles.

Seein' he'd done wrong, Solomon boulted fur the middle of the road an' stood there wirey an' attentive, listening to the names flung at him from where his late comerade sat on the lowest step of the stile nursin' the hurted foot.

'Twas an excited owl in the belfry that this time spoke up an' shouted to his brother down in the black thorn.

"Come up, come up quick!" it says. "Darby O'Gill is just afther calling Solomon Kilcannon a malayfactor."

Darby rose at last, an' as he climbed over the stile he turned to shake his fist toward the middle of the road.

"Bad luck to ye for a thick-headed ongrateful informer!" he says. "You go your way, an' I'll go mine; we're sundhers," says he. So sayin' the crippled man wint limpin' an' grumplin' down the borreen through the meadow, whilst this desarted friend sint rayproachful brays afther him that would go to your heart.

The throbbin' of our hayro's toe banished all pity for the baste, an' even all thoughts of the Banshee, till a long gurgling, swooping sound in front toult him that his fears about the rise in McDonald's sthrame were undher rather than over the actwil conditions.

Fearin' that the wooden foot-bridge might be swept away, as it had been the year purvious, he hurried on.

Most time this sthrame was only a quiet little brook that ran betwixt purty green banks, with hardly enough wather in it to turn the broken wheel in Chartres' rulled mill; but to-night it swept along, an angry, snarlin', growlin' river that overlept its banks an' dhragged widly at the swaying willows.

Be a narrow throw of light from McCarthy's side windy our thraveller could see the maddened wather sthrivin' an' tearin' to pull with it the props of the little foot-bridge, an' the boards shook an' the center swayed undher his feet as he passed over. "Bedad, I'll not cross this way goin' home at any rate," he says, looking back at it.

The worruds were no sooner out of his mouth that there was a crack, an' the middle of the foot-bridge, lifted in the air, twishted round for a second, an' then hurled itself into the sthrame, laving the two inds still standing in their place on the banks.

"Tunder an' turf!" he cried, "I musn't forget to tell the people within of this, for if ever there was a thrap set by evil spirits to dhrownd a poor unwary mortial, there it stands. Oh, ain't the ghosts turrible wicious on Halloween!"

He stood dhrippin' a minute on the threshold, listening; thin, without knockin', lifted the latch an' stepped softly into the house.

Two candles burned above the blue and white chiney dishes on the table, a bright fire blazed on the hearth, an' over in the corner where the low bed was set. The stone-cutter was on his knees beside it.

Eilleen lay on her side, her shining hair sthrealed out on the pillow. Her purty, flushed face was turned to Cormac, who knelt, with his forehead hid on the bed covers. The Colleen's two little hands were clasped about the great fist of her husband, an' she was talking low, but so airnest that her whole life was in eyery worrud.

"God save all here," said Darby, takin' off his hat; but there was no answer. So deep were Cormac an' Eilleen in some conwersation they were having together that they didn't hear his coming. The knowledgeable man didn't know what to do. He rayalized that a husband and wife about to part forever were lookin' into aich other's hearts for maybe the last time. So he just sthood, shifting from one foot to the other, watching thim, unable to daypart, an' not wishin' to obtrude.

"Oh, it isn't death at all that I fear," Eilleen was saying. "No, no, Cormac asthore, 'tis not that I'm misdoubtful of; but, ochone mavrone, 'tis you I fear!"

The kneeling man gave one swift upward glance, and dhrew his face nearer to the sick wife. She wint on thin, speaking tindher an' half smiling an' sthrokin' his hand.

"I know, darlint, I know well, so you needn't tell me, that if I were to live with you a thousand years you'd never sthray in mind or thought to any other woman, but it's when I'm gone— when the lonesome avenings folly aich other through days an' months, an' maybe years, an' you sitting here at this fireside without one to speak to, an' you so han'some an' grand, an' with the penny or two we've put away-"

"Oh, asthore machree, why can't ye banish thim black thoughts?" says the stone-cutter. "Maybe," he says, "the Banshee will not come again: Ain't all the counthry-side prayin' for ye this night, an' didn't Father Cassidy himself bid you to hope? The saints in Heaven couldn't be so crool," says he.

But the colleen wint on as though she hadn't heard him or as if he hadn't intherupted her.

"An, listen," says she, "they'll come urging ye, the neighbors, an' raysonin' with you. Your own flesh an' blood'll come, an' no doubt me own with them, an' they all sthriving to push me out of your heart, an' to put another woman there in my place. I'll know it all; but I won't be able to call to you, Cormac machree, for I'll be lying silent undher the grass or undher the snow up behind the church."

While she was sayin' thim last worruds, although Darby's heart was meltin' for Eilleen, his mind began running over the colleens of that townland to pick out the one who'd be most likely to marry Cormac in the ind. You know how far-seeing an' quick-minded was the knowledgeable man. He settled sudden

on the Hanlon girl, an' daycided at once that she'd have Cormac before the year was out. The ondacincy of such a thing made him furious at her.

He says to himself, half crying, "Why then, bad cess to you for a shameless, red-haired, forward baggage, Bridgeen Hanlon, to be runnin' after the man, an' throwing yourself in his way, an' Eilleen not yet cowld in her grave?" he says.

While he was saying them things to himself, McCarthy had been whuspering fierce to his wife, but what it was the stone-cutter said the friend of the fairies couldn't hear. Eilleen herself spoke clear enough in answer, for the faver gave her onnatural strength.

"Don't think," she says, "that it's the first time this thought has come to me. Two months ago, whin I was sthrong an' well an' sittin' happy as a meadow lark at your side, the same black shadow dhrifted over me heart. The worst of it an' the hardest to bear of all is that they'll be in the right, for what good can I do for you whin I'm undher the clay?" says she. "It's different with a woman. If you were taken, an' I left, I'd wear your face in my heart through all me life, an' ax for no sweeter company."

"Eilleen," says Cormac, liften' his hand, an' his woice was hoarse as the roar of the say, "I swear to you on me bendid knees-"

With her hand on his lips she sthopped him. "There'll come on ye by daygress a great cravin' for sympathy, a hunger an' a longing for affection, an' you'll have only the shadow of my poor wanished face to comfort you, an' a recollection of a woice that is gone forever. A new warm face'll keep pushin' itself betwixt us-"

"Bad luck to that red-headed hussy," mutthered Darby, looking around disthressed. "I'll warn Father Cassidy of her an' of her intintions the day afther the funeral."

There was silence for a minute; Cormac, the poor lad, was sobbing like a child. By-an'-by Eilleen wint on again, but her woice was failing, an' Darby could see that her cheeks were wet.

"The day'll come when you'll give over," she says. "Ah, I see how it'll all ind. Afther that you'll visit the church-yard be stealth, so as not to make the other woman sore-hearted."

"My, oh my, isn't she the far-seein' woman!" thought Darby.

"Little childher'll come," she says, "an' their soft warm arrums will hould you away. By-an'-by you'll not go where I'm laid at all, an' all thoughts of these few happy months we've spent together— Oh! Mother in heaven, how happy they were-"

The girl started to her elbow, for sharp an' sudden a wild, wailing cry just outside the windy startled the shuddering darkness. 'Twas a long cry of terror

and of grief, not shrill, but peircing as a knife thrust. Every hair on Darby's head stood up an' pricked him like a needle. 'Twas the Banshee!

"Whist, listen!" says Eilleen. "Oh, Cormac asthore, it's come for me again." With that, stiff with terror, she buried herself undher the pillows.

A second cry follyed the first, only this time it was longer, and rose an' swelled into a kind of a song, that broke at last into the heart-breakingest moan that ever fell on mortial ears. "Ochone!" it sobbed.

The knowledgeable man, his blood turned to ice, his legs thremblin' like a hare's, stood looking in spite of himself at the black windy panes, expecting some frightful wision.

Afther that second cry the woice balanced itself up an' down into the awful death keen. One worrud made the whole song, and that was the turruble worrud forever.

"Forever an' forever, oh, forever," swung the wild keen, until all the deep meaning of the worrud burned itself into Darby's sowl, thin the heart-breakin' sob, "Ochone!" inded always the varse.

Darby was just wondherin' whether he himself wouldn't go mad with fright, whin he gave a sudden jump at a hard-sthrained woice which spoke up at his very elbow.

"Darby O'Gill," it said, and it was the stone-cutter who spoke, "do you hear the death keen? It came last night; it'll come to-morrow night at this same hour, an' thin— Oh, my God!"

Darby tried to answer, but he could only stare at the white set face an' the sunken eyes of the man before him.

There was, too, a kind of fierce quiet in the way McCarthy spoke that made Darby shiver.

The stone-cutter wint on talkin' the same as though he was goin' to dhrive a bargain. '"They say you're a knowledgeable man, Darby O'Gill," he says, "an' that on a time you spint six months with the fairies. Now I make you this fair, square offer," he says, laying a forefinger in the palm of the other hand. "I have fifty-three pounds that Father Cassidy's keeping for me. Fifty-three pounds," he says agin. "An' I have this good bit of a farm that me father was born on, an' his father was born on, too, an' the grandfather of him. An' I have the grass of seven cows. You know that. Well, I'll give it all to you, all, every stiver of it, if you'll only go outside an' dhrive away that cursed singer." He threw his head to one side an' looked anxious up at Darby.

The knowledgeable man racked his brain for something to speak, but all he could say was, "I've brought you a bit of tay from the wife, Cormac."

McCarthy took the tay with unfeeling hands, an' wint on talking in the same dull way. Only this time there came a hard lump in his throat now an' then that he sthopped to swally.

"The three cows I have go, of course, with the farm," says he. "So does the pony an' the five pigs. I have a good plow an' a foine harrow; but you must lave me my stone-cutting tools, so little Eilleen an' I can earn our way wherever we go, an' it's little the crachure ates the best of times."

The man's eyes were dhry an' blazin', no doubt his mind was cracked with grief. There was a lump in Darby's throat, too, but for all that he spoke up scolding-like.

"Arrah, talk rayson, man," he says, putting two hands on Cormac's chowldhers. "If I had the wit or the art to banish the Banshee, wouldn't I be happy to do it an' not a fardin' to pay?"

"Well, then," says Cormac, scowling, an' pushin' Darby to one side, "I'll face her myself— I'll face her an' choke that song in her throat if Sattin himself stood at her side."

With those worruds, an' before Darby could sthop him, the stone-cutter flung open the door an' plunged out into the night. As he did so the song outside sthopped. Suddenly a quick splashing of feet, hoarse cries and shouts gave tidings of a chase. The half-crazed gossoon had stharted the Banshee— of that there could be no manner of doubt. A raymembrance of the awful things that she might do to his friend paythrefied the heart of Darby.

Even afther these cries died away he stood listening a full minute, the sowls of his two brogues glued to the floor. The only sounds he heard now were the deep ticking of a clock an' a cricket that chirped slow an' solemn on the hearth, an' from somewhere outside came the sorrowful cry of a whippoorwill. All at once a thought of the broken bridge an' of the black treacherous wathers caught him like the blow of a whip, an' for a second drove from his mind even the fear of the Banshee.

In that one second, an' before he rayalized it, the lad was out undher the dhripping trees, and running for his life toward the broken foot-bridge. The night was whirling an' beating above him like the flapping of thraymendous wings, but as he ran Darby thought he heard above the rush of the wather and through the swish of the wind Cormac's woice calling him.

The friend of the fairies sthopped at the edge of the foot-bridge to listen. Although the storm had almost passed, a spiteful flare of lightning lept up now an' agin out of the western hills, an' afther it came the dull rumble of distant thunder; the water splashed spiteful against the bank, and Darby saw that seven good feet of the bridge had been torn out of its center, laving uncovered that much of the black deep flood.

He stood sthraining his eyes an' ears in wondheration, for now the woice of Cormac sounded from the other side of the sthrame, and seemed to be floating toward him through the field over the path Darby himself had just thravelled. At first he was mightily bewildered at what might bring Cormac on the other side of the brook, till all at once the murdhering schame of the Banshee burst in his mind like a gun-powdher explosion.

Her plan was as plain as day, she meant to dhrownd the stone-cutter. She had led the poor daysthracted man straight from his own door down to and over the new stone bridge, an' was now dayludherin' him on the other side of the sthrame, back agin up the path that led to the broken foot-bridge.

In the glare of a sudden blinding flash from the middle of the sky Darby saw a sight he'll never forget till the day he dies. Cormac, the stone-cutter, was running toward the death trap, his bare head trun back, an' his two arrums stretched out in front of him. A little above an' just out of raich of them, plain an' clear as Darby ever saw his wife Bridget, was the misty white figure of a woman. Her long waving hair sthrealed back from her face, an' her face was the face of the dead.

At the sight of her Darby thried to call out a warning, but the worruds fell back into his throat. Thin again came the stiffling darkness. He thried to run away, but his knees failed him, so he turned around to face the danger.

As he did so, he could hear the splash of the man's feet in the soft mud. In less than a minute Cormac would be sthruggling in the wather. At the thought Darby, bracing himself, body and sowl, let a warning howl out of him.

"Howld where you are!" he shouted, "She wants to dhrownd ye, the bridge is broke in the middle!" But he could tell from the rushing footsteps an' from the hoarse swelling curses which came nearer an' nearer every second that the dayludhered man, crazed with grief, was deaf an' blind to everything but the figure that floated before his eyes.

At that hopeless instant Bridget's parting worruds popped into Darby's head.

"When one goes on an errant of marcy, a score of God's white angels, with swoords in their hands, march before an' beside an' afther him, keeping his path, free from danger."

How it all came to pass he could never rightly tell, for he was like a man in a dhrame; but he recollects well standing on the broken ind of the bridge, Bridget's worruds ringing in his ears, the glistening black gulf beneath his feet, an' he swinging his arrums for a jump. Just one thought of herself and the childher, as he gathered himself for a spring, an' then he cleared the gap like a bird.

As his two feet touched the other side of the gap a terrific screech— not a screech ayther, but an angry, frightened shriek— almost split his ears. He felt a rush of cowld dead air agin his face, an' caught a whiff of newly turned clay in his nosthrils. Something white sthopped quick before him, an' then with a second shriek it shot high in the darkness, an' disappeared. Darby had frightened the wits out of the Banshee.

The instant afther the two men were clinched an' rowling over an' over aich other down the muddy bank, their legs splashing as far as the knees in the dangerous wather, an' McCarthy raining wake blows on the knowledgeable man's head an' breast.

Darby felt himself going into the river. Bits of the bank caved undher him, splashing into the current, an' the lad's heart began clunking up an' down like a churn dasn.

"Lave off, lave off!" he cried, as soon as he could catch his breath. "Do you take me for the Banshee?" says he, giving a dusperate lurch an' rowling himself on top of the other.

"Who are you then? If you're not a ghost you're the divil at any rate," gasped the stone-cutter.

"Bad luck to ye!" cried Darby, clasping both arrums of the hanted man. "I'm no ghost, let lone the divil. I'm only your friend Darby O'Gill."

Lying there breathing hard, they stared into the faces of aich other a little space, till the poor stone-cutter began to cry.

"Oh, is that you, Darby O'Gill? Where is the Banshee? Oh, haven't I the bad fortune?" he says, sthriving to raise himself.

"Rise up," says Darby, lifting the man to his feet an' steadying him there. The stone-cutter stared about like one stunned be a blow.

"I don't know where the Banshee flew; but do you go back to Eilleen as soon as you can," says the friend of the fairies. "Not that way, man alive," he says, as Cormac started to climb the foot-bridge— it's broke in the middle— go down an' cross the stone bridge. I'll be afther you in a minute," he says.

Without a worrud, meek now and biddable as a child, Cormac turned, an' Darby saw him hurry away into the blackness.

The raysons Darby raymained behind were two: first an' foremost, he was a bit vexed at the way his clothes were muddied an' dhraggled, an' himself had been pounded an' hammered; and second, he wanted to think. He had a quare cowld feeling in his mind that something was wrong— a kind of a foreboding, as one might say.

As he stood thinking a rayalization of the caylamity sthruck him all at once like a rap on the jaw— he had lost his foine briar pipe. The lad groaned as he began the anxious sarch. He slapped furiously at his chist an' side pockets, he

dived into his throwsers an' great coat, and at last, sprawlin' on his hands an' feet like a monkey, he groped savagely through the wet stickey clay.

"This comes," says the poor lad, grumblin' an' gropin', "of pokin' your nose into other people's business. Hallo, what's this?" he says, straightening himself. "'Tis a comb. Be the powers of pewther, 'tis the Banshee's comb!"

An' so indade it was. He had picked up a goold comb the length of your hand an' almost the width of your two fingers. About an inch of one ind was broken off, an' dhropped into Darby's palm. Without thinkin' he put the broken bit into his weskit pocket, an' raised the biggest half close to his eyes the betther to view it.

"May I never see sorrow," he says, "if the Banshee mustn't have dhropped her comb. Look at that now. Folks do be sayin' that 'tis this gives her the foine singing woice, bekase the comb is enchanted," he says. "If that sayin' be thrue, it's the faymous lad I am from this night. I'll thravel from fair to fair, an' maybe at the ind they'll send me to parliament."

With these worruds he lifted his caubeen an' stuck the comb in the top tuft of his hair.

Begor, he'd no sooner guv it a pull than a sour, singing feelin' begun at the bottom of his stomick, an' it rose higher an' higher. When it raiched his chist, he was just going to let a bawl out of himself, only that he caught sight of a thing ferninst him that froze the marrow in his bones.

He gasped short an' jerked the comb out of his hair, for there, not tin feet away, stood a dark shadowy woman, tall, thin, an' motionless, laning on a crutch.

During a breath or two the parsecuted hayro lost his head complately, for he never doubted but that the Banshee had changed her shuit of clothes to chase back afther him.

The first clear aymotion that rayturned to him was to fling the comb on the ground an' make a boult for it. On second thought he knew that 'twould be aisier to bate the wind in a race than to run away from the Banshee.

"Well, there's a good Tipperary man done for this time," groaned the knowledgeable man, "unless in some way I can beguile her." He was fishing in his mind for its civilist worrud, when the woman spoke up, an' Darby's heart jumped with gladness, as he raycognized the cracked woice of Sheelah McGuire, the spy for the fairies.

"The top of the avenin' to you, Darby O'Gill," says Sheelah, peering at him from undher her hood, the two eyes of her glowing like tallow candles. "Amn't I kilt with a-stonishment to see you here alone this time of the night," says the ould witch.

Now the clever man knew as well as though he had been tould when Sheelah said thim worruds that the Banshee had sent her to look for the comb, an' his heart grew bould; but he answered her polite enough, "Why, thin, luck to ye, Misthress McGuire, ma'am," he says, bowing grand. "Sure, if you're kilt with a-stonishment, amn't I sphlit with inkerdoolity to find yourself mayandherin' in this lonesome place on Halloween night."

Sheelah hopbled a step or two nearer an whuspered confaydential.

"I was wandherin' here abouts only this morning," she says, "an' I lost from me hair a goold comb— one that I've had this forty years. Did ye see such a thing as that, agra?" An' her two eyes blazed.

"Faix, I dunno," says Darby, putting his two arrums behind him. "Was it about the length of ye're hand an the width of ye're two fingers?" he axed.

"It was," says she, thrusting out a withered paw.

"Thin I didn't find it," says the tantalizing man. "But maybe I did find something summillar, only 'twasn't yours at all, but the Banshee's," he says, chuckling.

Whether the hag was intentioned to welt Darby with her staff, or whether she was only liftin' it for to make a sign of enchantment in the air, will never be known; but whatsomever she meant, the hayro doubled his fists an' squared off. At that she lowered the stick, an' broke into a shrill, cackling laugh.

"Ho ho!" she laughed, houldin' her sides, "but aren't ye the bould distinguishable man. Becourse 'tis the Banshee's comb; how well ye knew it! Be the same token I'm sint to bring it away, so make haste to give it up, for she's hiding an' waiting for me down at Chartres' mill.

Aren't you the courageous blaggard, to grabble at her, an' thry to ketch her. Sure, such a thing never happened before since the worruld began," says Sheelah.

The idea that the banshee was hiding an' afeared to face him was great news to the hayro. But he only tossed his head an' smiled shuparior as he made answer.

"'Tis yourself that knows well, Sheelah McGuire, ma'am," answers back the proud man, slow an' dayliberate, "that whin one does a favor for an unearthly spirit, he may daymand for pay the favors of three such wishes as the spirit has power to give. The worruld knows that. Now I'll take three good wishes, such as the Banshee can bestow, or else I'll carry the goolden comb straight to Father Cassidy. The Banshee hasn't goold nor wor'ly goods, as the sayin' is, but she has what suits me betther."

This cleverness angered the fairy woman, so she set into abuse and to frighten Darby. She bally-ragged, she browbate, she trajooced, she threatened,

but 'twas no use. The bould man hildt firm, till at last she promised him the favors of the three wishes.

"First an' foremost," says he, "I'll want her never to put her spell on me or any of my kith an' kin."

"That wish she gives you, that wish she grants you, though it'll go sore agin the grain," snarled Sheelah.

"Then." says Darby, "my second wish is that the black spell be taken from Eilleen McCarthy."

Sheelah flusthered about like an angry hin. "Wouldn't something else do as well?" she says.

"I'm not here to argify," says Darby, swingin' back an' forrud on his toes.

"Bad scran to you," says Sheelah. "I'll have to go an' ask the Banshee herself about that. Don't stir from that spot till I come back."

You may believe it or not, but with that sayin' she bent the head of her crutch well forward, an' before Darby's very face she trew— savin' your presence— one leg over the stick as though it had been a horse, an' while one might say Jack Robinson the crutch riz into the air an' lifted her, an' she wint sailing out of sight.

Darby was still gaping an' gawpin' at the darkness where she disappeared whin— whisk! she was back again an' dismountin' at his side.

"The luck is with you," says she, spiteful. "That wish I give, that wish I grant you. You'll find seven crossed rushes undher McCarthy's door-step; un-cross them, put them in fire or in wather, an' the spell is lifted. Be quick with the third wish, out with it!"

"I'm in a more particular hurry about that than you are," said Darby. "You must find me my briar pipe," says he.

"You Omadhaun," sneered the fairy woman, "'tis sthuck in the band of your hat, where you put it when you left your own house the night. No, no, not in front," she says, as Darby put up his hand to feel. "It's sthuck in the back. Your caubeen's twishted," she says.

Whilst Darby was standing with the comb in one hand an' the pipe in the other, smiling daylighted, the comb was snatched from his fingers, and he got a welt in the side of the head from the crutch. Looking up he saw Sheelah tunty feet in the air, headed for Chartres' mill, an' she cacklin' an' screechin' with laughter. Rubbing his sore head an' muthering unpious worruds to himself, Darby started for the new bridge.

In less than no time afther he had found the seven crossed rushes undher McCarthy's door-step, an' had flung them into the sthrame. Thin without knocking he pushed open McCarthy's door an' tiptoed quietly in.

Cormac was kneelin' beside the bed with his face buried in the pillows, as he was when Darby first saw him that night. But Eilleen was sleeping as sound as a child, with a sweet smile on her lips. Heavy pursperation beaded her forehead, showing that the faver was broke.

Without disturbing aither of them our hayro picked up the package of tay from the floor, put it on the dhresser, an' with a glad heart sthole out of the house an' closed the door softly behind him.

Turning towards Chartres' mill he lifted his hat an' bowed low. "Thank you kindly, Misthress Banshee," he says. "'Tis well for us all I found your comb this night. Public or private, I'll always say this for you, you're a woman of your worrud," he says.

Chapter 6
The Ashes of Old Wishes

ALL day long big flakes of soft, wet snow had flurried and scurried and melted about Darby O'Gill's cottage, until, by twilight, the countryside was neither more nor less than a great white bog. Then, to make matters worse, as the night came on that rapscallion of an east wind waked up, and came sweeping with a roar through the narrow lanes and over the desolate fields, gleefully buffeting and nipping every living thing in its way. It fairly tore the fur cap off Maurteen Cavanaugh's head, and gaily tossed that precious relic into the running ditch; it shrieked mockingly as it lifted poor old Mrs. Maloney's red cloak and swirled that tattered robe over the good woman's bewildered head; then, after swooping madly around and around Darby O'Gill's cottage, it leaped to the roof and perched itself on the very top of the chimney, where for three mortal hours it sat shouting down boisterous challenge to the discontented man who crouched moody and silent before his own smoky hearth.

Darby heard the challenge well enough but wasted little heed. A shapeless worry darkened the lad's mind. Ever since supper, when Bridget and the children went to bed— the better to get an early start for midnight Christmas Mass— Darby and Malachi, the yellow cat, sat opposite each other in the glow of the smouldering turf.

Lately Darby had taken great comfort in talking to Malachi. The cat proved to be a splendid listener— never contradicting any statement however bold, but receiving all his master's confidences with a blinking gravity which was as respectful as it was flattering.

"This is Christmas Eve, Malachi. I suppose ye know that; and be all tokens I'd ought to be the happy man, But I'm goin' to tell ye something: I amn't. Have ye noticed anything quare about the taste of the bacon lately, Malachi? Or the petaties? Or the butthermilk? No, to be sure; how could ye!" Darby scratched his head and heaved a deep sigh. "As far as I'm consarned nothin' I put in me mouth has the right smack to it." The good man pointed his pipe impressively at the cat. "There's something or other I want bad, Malachi; I dunno' rightly what it is, but whatever it may be, I'll never be rale happy till I get it."

Visibly impressed by this secret, Malachi turned his back to the fire and began thoughtfully stroking his left ear. While the cat was thus engaged, the peaceful quiet of the hearth was rudely broken by a sudden shaking of the door and a rattling of the latch, as though nervous fingers were striving to lift

it. Darby in alarm threw back his head to listen. Could it be a wraith? No! It was only the wind. Baffled in its attempt to open the door the ruffian gale then began flinging white dabs of soft snow at the black window-panes— for all the world like a blackguard boy. At last, with an exultant shout, it leaped to the cottage roof again and, whoop! Down the chimney it came,

"Poof! Bad cess to the smoke an' bad luck to the wind! If they have n't the two eyes stung out of me head. I'd wind the clock, and you and me'd go to bed this minute, so we would, Malachi, if I didn't know that Brian Connors, the King of the Fairies, would surely pay us a wisit the night." Malachi's back stiffened immediately, and with quick switches of his tail he swept the hearthstone where he sat.

"Oh, I know ye don't like the Good People, me lad! And you may have ye're raisons. But you must admit that the little man has never failed to bring us some token for Christmas since first I met him. Though to tell the truth," he added, a sudden scowl furrowing his face, "for a man who has the whole wurruld in his pocket the Fairy gives— Oh, be the powers, Malachi! I came near forgetting to tell ye me dhrame. I dhramed last night I was picking up goold suvereigns till me back ached. So maybe the King'll bring me some traymendous present— Oh, millia murdher, me sight's gone entirely this time. Conshumin' to the minute longer I'll stay up— phew! Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!"

The great puff of bitter pungent smoke which blinded the lad's eyes also sent him off into a fit of coughing. He was still choking and gasping and sweeping the water from his swimming lids when, happening to look up, who should he spy through the blue smoke, calmly sitting on his favorite stool on the opposite side of the hearth, but the little Master of the Fairies himself. As usual the King's gold crown was tilted rakishly to one side, his green velvet cloak was flung back from his shoulders, and he sat with one short, pipe-stem of a leg dangling carelessly over the other.

"The top of the avenin' to ye, Darby O'Gill," piped he, "an' the complyments of the sayson to you an' yours."

At the first sound of the fairy's voice Malachi, with tail erect, trotted out of the kitchen.

"The same to yerself," coughed Darby, rubbing his eyes, "an' if it isn't axing ye to go out of yer way too much, King, I'll thank ye afther this to come in be the dure or the windy, and not be takin' thim short cuts down through the chimbley. You nearly put the two eyes out of me head, so ye did."

"Oh, faith, Darby me sowl," laughed the King good-naturedly, "the Christmas present I've brought ye'll put the two eyes back again, and brighter than ever."

The discontented look on Darby's face changed at once to a red glow of pleasure. He expected a bag of diamonds or a crock of gold at the very least. Still he strove hard to conceal his delight, and said as carelessly as he could:

"What is it, King darlint. I'll go bail your present's a grand one this time at any rate."

"You may well say that, me lad, for I've brought ye," chuckled the King, clasping his knee and leaning back comfortably against the chimney corner— "I've brought ye a jug of the foinest potteen in all Ireland ground."

Darby's jaw dropped to his chest. If ever hope took a cropper it was then. "Th-thank-ye kindly, King," he stuttered; and to hide his bitter disappointment the poor fellow began poking viciously at the smouldering turf.

The evident chagrin of his friend was not lost on the Master of the Good people, and the quick-tempered little King flared up instantly.

"Why, thin, bad manners to you, what ails you the night— you and your sour looks? So my present isn't grand enough for you, and the loikes of you. Maybe it's the py-losopher's stone or maybe it's riches or-"

Darby himself was thoroughly aroused. He felt slighted and belittled. Hammering out each word on the hearthstone, he replied:

"You're right, King, it's riches I want! It's riches; an' that's the laste ye might be afther givin' me."

The fairy's eyes snapped threateningly. "Have n't I tould ye ag'in and ag'in that I'd never rune ye an' spile ye by givin' ye riches? Have n't-"

"We hear ducks talkin'! No sinsible man, King, was ru'ned or spiled be riches. Besides there's other things ye might give me."

The little King's lip curled. "Oh, ye ongrateful omadhaun! Just to punish ye I've a mind to-" He hesitated and looked steadily at Darby. "By jayminie I will— I'll give ye any three wishes you make this night, barrin' riches. I won't break me wurrud on that score."

So great and so sudden was the offer that for a moment Darby's mind floundered helplessly. Meekly subsiding to his stool again he peered from under anxious brows, and asked doubtingly, "Do you mane it, King?"

The King frowned. "I do mane it; but the consequences'll be on your own sore head."

Darby thoughtfully regarded the fairy. Then putting the poker carefully back in the corner said:

"Don't be vexed with me, King agra; sure I've lots of throuble. I'm a very onhappy man. I don't know why it is, but I'm feelin' turrible. So by your lave, if it's parfectly convaynient, I'll take the favors of the three wishes."

"Out with them then! What do ye want?"

"Well, first an' foremost, King, I want the he-licks-her of life, that Maurteen Cavanaugh the school masther was readin' about. I want to live forever."

The old King reeled and almost fell off the stool.

"Be the four fires of Fingal, Darby O'Gill, if you don't flog the worruld. But go on man alive what'll ye be wantin' next?"

"Well afther that, if it's not too much throuble, ye may make me as comfortable an' as well off as the rich Lord Killgobbin." By putting the wish this way Darby cleverly avoided a direct request for riches.

The King shut his lips in a grim smile, and slowly wagged his head.

"I will that! I'll make ye as well off an as comfortable as Lord Killgobbin—with every vein of me heart. Go on!"

"The third wish, King, is the easiest of all to grant. Make me happy."

"That I will! You won't know yerself. Wait till I'm done with ye," said the King, getting up and drawing his cloak about his shoulders. "An' we'll lose no time about it aither. We've a good dale of thrayellin' to do the night, so put on you're great-coat."

Nothing loath the lad did as he was bid, and then waited expectantly.

"We're goin' into sthrange places, me bould Trojan," the King went on, "an' I think it best we go unwisible. Come nearer to me."

With much impressiveness the little King of the Good People raised his hand and touched his companion lightly on the arm.

On the moment a strange tingling chill swept over Darby, and he began to grow invisible. First his feet faded into thin air; and even as he stared open-mouthed at the place they had been, his knees disappeared; and the next second the lad felt himself snuffed out like a tallow dip.

The King also was gone, but presently the familiar voice of the little fairy sounded from its place on the stool:

"We're goin' out now' avourneen."

"But how can I go out," wailed Darby in great distress. "Where are me two foine legs? What's become of me I'd like to know?"

"Be aisy! Man, you'll not nade yer legs for a while. I'll put ye asthride a horse the night the loike of which you never rode afore. You're goin' to ride the wind, Darby. Listen! D'ye hear it callin' us?"

Darby was still looking for some traces of his vanished legs when, without realizing the slightest sense of motion, he found himself in the open. There was a flash of black sky, a glimpse of wet weather and the astonished man was three miles from home standing beside the King in old Daniel Delaney's kitchen. It was all so sudden; he could scarcely believe his eyes. And to make matters more confusing, although Darby had known old Dan'l's kitchen since

childhood, there was a certain weirdness and unreality about it now that chilled the unseen intruder's blood.

The room was almost dark, and filled with fitful fire-shadows which danced and wavered and dimmed upon the walls.

"Mark well what ye see and hear, Darby O'Gill, for this is but a shadow of your first wish— the wish to live forever. This is the ashes of long life." The King's voice was so solemn that Darby cowered half-frightened from it.

Before the lonely hearth sat old Daniel Delaney and his wife Julia. Half the county knew their desolate history. Ninety-two years had passed over their heads, and seventy years they had lived together as man and wife. Of all the old couples in that parish— and there were many of them— Daniel Delaney and his wife were the very oldest, and the loneliest. Twenty years ago their last child had died in America, an old man. Long before that, Teddy, Michael and Dan, soldier lads, fell before Sebastopol. And now, without chick or child, indeed without one of their blood that bore their name, the old couple waited patiently each night, mumbling the hope that maybe the morrow might bring to them the welcome deliverance.

As Darby gazed, a comprehension of the desolation, the loneliness, and the ceaseless heartaches of the old people came to him like an inspiration, and his heart melted with pity.

He understood, as never before, how utterly old Dan'l's and Julia's world was gone— faded into vague memories. The new voices and strange young faces which kept constantly crowding into and filling the old fond nooks, gave to the couple a cruel sense of being aliens in an unsympathetic land. The winding lanes, the well-remembered farms and the crowded chapel were filled, for them, with dim specters. They were specters themselves, and the quiet waiting church-yard called ever and ever, with passionate insistence to their tired, empty hearts. Darby's eyes filled with hot tears.

"Will I be like Dan'l Delaney?" he whispered fearfully to the King.

"Worse. You'll be all alone; Bridget'll be gone from you. Hist! Dan'l is talking. Listen!"

"Is that you, Julia mathree?" an old voice quavered. "Ah, so it is; so it is! I thought it was me father sittin' there an'— an' I was a little gossoon again at his knee— just like our little Mickey. Where's Mickey? Oh, to be sure! Oh, thin was n't me father the handsome man— and grand! Six feet two in his stockin's! Six feet two. An' to think, agra, to think, that now, in all this wide, wide worruld, only you and me are left who ever set eyes on him; isn't it a quare worruld entirely, Julia! A quare worruld! Only you and me left, all dead, all dead!" The old man's voice fell to a whimper, and he wiped a tear from his cheek with shaking fingers.

"Aye, they're all gone from us, Dan'l, me lad. I was just thinkin', your father's father built this house and sthrangers'll have it soon— I could n't sleep last night for worrying over it. All me foine boys and tendher beautiful colleens! All, all gone. An' one gray day follys another gray day, an' nothing happens, nothing ever happens for us. Is n't this Christmas Eve, Dan'l? Little Norah's birthday?"

The old man lifted his trembling hands in an agony of regret. "Christmas Eve! Oh, Mother of Heaven! Oh, the merrymakin' an' the happiness of the childher! Marcyful Father, why can't we go to them?"

"Hush, Dan'l! For shame, man. Think how good God has been to us. Has n't He kept us together! Might n't He have taken you an' left me here alone? See how gentle He is with ould people. First, He crowds Heaven with their friends to prepare a welcome; then He fills the worruld so full of pains, an' aches, an' sorrow, that 'tis no throuble at all to lave it, No throuble at all."

God help them, thought Darby. The bitterness of their sorrows filled his own heart, and the weight of all their years pressed down on him.

"King," he asked, "isn't it quare that we can't always be young and live forever?"

"It's bekase you've no knowledge of Heaven that you ax so foolish a question as that," sighed the King.

Meanwhile old Dan'l would not be comforted, but was fretting, and whimpering, like a child three years old.

"Come away, come away, King," urged Darby hoarsely. "When Bridget an' the childher are in the churchyard I want to lie with them. Yez may keep the he-licks-her, King. I want none of it."

"I thought so. Now for your second wish," said the King.

The words were n't out of his mouth till Darby found himself standing with the fairy in the window recess of a large and brilliantly lighted bedroom in Killgobbin Castle. Soft, moss-green carpets an inch thick covered the floor. Slender shepherds and dainty shepherdesses, beautiful dames and stately knights smiled and curtsied from the priceless tapestries on the wall. In a far corner of the room stood a canopied mahogany bed, lace-draped and with snowy pillows. Gilded tables and luxurious easy-chairs were scattered here and there, while a great tiger skin, which gleamed yellow and black from the center of the floor, gave Darby a catch in his breath. It might have been the bed-chamber of a king. No sound of the storm reached here.

Before a bright, hot fire of fine sea-coals, sat the rich and powerful Lord Killgobbin, gray-haired and shaggy-browed. His lordship's right leg, bandaged and swollen, rested upon a low chair piled high with cushions. On a fur rug

near him lay Fifi, her ladyship's old spaniel— the fattest, ugliest dog Darby had ever seen.

"Darby," whispered the King, "yonder is Lord Killgobbin, and remember I was to make you as comfortable, and as well off as he!"

The fairy was still speaking when the nobleman let a roar out of him that rattled the fire-irons. "My supper! Where's my supper? Get out of that you red-legged omahdaun," he bellowed to a crimson liveried servant who waited cowering just inside the door. "Bring up my supper at once or I'll have your heart's blood. No puling bread and milk, mind you, but a rousing supper for Christmas Eve. Be off!"

The footman disappeared like a flash, leaving the room door ajar. Sweet sounds of flute, violin and harp, mingled with gay laughter, floated up the wide staircase. Lord Killgobbin's only son was giving a Yule party to his young friends. At the sound of the music the old nobleman uttered a moan that would wring one's heart. "Oh, dear, oh, dear, will ye listen to that. Dancing and cavorting an' enjoying themselves down there, an' me sitting, up here suffering the torments, an' nobody caring a ha'porth whether I'm living or dead. Oh my, oh my! Sitting here trussed up like an ould roosther-" His lordship's eye roved around the room in a vain quest for sympathy; alas! The smug-faced Fifi was the only living thing to be seen.

"Bad scran to you! You 're as hard- hearted as your misthress." Lord Killgobbin threatened the dog with his cane. But as if to show her disdain Fifi yawned in a bored way, turned wearily over and went to sleep again. It was the last straw. His lordship boiled with furious resentment, and leaning far over made a savage stroke at the dog with his cane. That was the unlucky blow! Instead of hitting the placid, unconscious Fifi, the furious old lord lost his balance, missed his aim, and gave himself a terrific whack on the gouty leg. There was the row!

Never since that day at Ballinrobe fair, when Teddy McHale cracked his poor old father over the head with a blackthorn (mistaking the old gentleman for Peter Maloney, the family foe), had Darby heard such deafening roars, and such blood-curdling maledictions. Whether by accident or in an effort to drown Lord Killgobbin's voice the orchestra down-stairs played with redoubled vigor.

In the midst of the tumult, hurrying footsteps were heard upon the stairs, and presently, three wild-eyed footmen entered the room each bearing a silver tray. The first servant carried a bowl of thin gruel, the second a plate of dry toast and the salt, while the third footman stepped cautiously along bearing aloft a small pot of weak tea, without cream or sugar. The quiet, grim look which Lord Killgobbin threw at his terrified servants sent a shiver down Darby's back.

With eyes half shut his lordship spoke slowly and deliberately through clenched teeth:

"What's that ye have in the bowl, ye divil's limb ye?"

"The docthor, your Lordship— an'— her ladyship, sir, seein' as it's ChristmasEve, thought that you'd like— that you'd like a— a— little change, so instead of bread an'— an' milk, they sent ye a little thin gruel, sir."

Lord Killgobbin grew ominously quiet. "Bring it over to me, my good man, don't be afraid," he said.

The three footmen each keeping a wary eye on his lordship's stick, advanced timidly in a row. Nothing was said or done until the gruel was within easy grip of him, and then in one furious sweep of his left arm, his lordship sent the tray and gruel half way up to the ceiling, while with his right hand he managed to bring the cane down with a resounding whack on the head of the unfortunate footman who carried the toast and salt.

Instantly all was confusion. While the frightened servants were scrambling after the scattered trays and dishes, Lord Killgobbin reached quickly around for the coal-scuttle which stood near his hand, and began a furious bombardment. Two of the footmen managed to escape from the room. The third, however, by an unlucky stumble over the rug went to the floor on his back in the corner. There he lay cowering, and with the tray, shielding his head from the furious rain of coal.

"The curse of the crows on ye all," shouted Killgobbin, "you'd starve me, would yez?"

"Yes, sir— I— I mane no, your Lordship!" roared the terrified servant.

"Christmas Eve and a bowl of gruel!" (Bang, bang, bang rattled the coals on the tray.) "Christmas Eve with a sliver of toast and tay." (Bang, bang, bang.)

"Yes, sir" (bang). "Oh, me head, sir! Ow! Wow! I'm kilt entirely, sir!"

"Me wife'd starve me-"

"Yes, sir, ow! ouch! I mane no, sir."

"Me son's in conspiracy with the docthor-"

"Yes, sir," (bang, bang, bang).

"Take that! Beef tay and dhry toast. I hayen't had a meal fit for a dog in six weeks; six weeks, d'ye hear me, ye sniveling rapscallion?"

"No, sir— I— I mane yes, sir!"

"You're killing me by inches, so ye are! Ye murdherin' ringleaders ye."

"Yes, sir. Ouch! I mane no, sir!"

Darby turned a disappointed face to the Master of the Fairies. "Thanks be we're unvisible, King. I would n't have that leg of Killgobbin's for all the money in the four provinces."

"Bah! Everybody's bread is butthered with trouble to about the same thickness. This is the ashes of foine living. His lordship'd thrade his castle an' all his grandeur for your pair of legs. But you've seen only his gout. The rale botherin' trouble is comin' up the stairs now." Even as the King spoke, Darby heard the rustle of a lady's dress upon the landing.

"Come away! Come away, King," he urged excitedly. "It is n't dacint to be listening to family saycrets. I forgive ye me fust two wishes, an' I'll ax only for the third: Make me happy— it's all I'll ax."

"Oh, aye, the happiness! Sure enough! Truth I almost forgot the happiness. But never fear it'll have ye dancin' an' jumpin' along the road before ye raich home."

One may get a good idea of how quickly the pair shifted from place to place that night when one learns, that this last saying of the King was begun in Lord Killgobbin's bed-chamber and finished so far away down the road that all which remained of the castle was a faint twinkle of lights on the distant hill.

And now the east wind, weary of mischief, had traveled on out over the sea leaving behind flattened hedge-rows, twisted thatches, and desolate highways.

To Darby's great surprise he found himself and the King huddled together under the dripping eaves of a low, thatched building which crouched by the wayside.

"By Gar, King, that was a long jump we med. I'm onfy halfa mile from home. This is Joey Hooligan's smithy."

"Thrue for ye, Darby me bouchal," answered the King. "I've brought ye here to show ye the only ralely thruly happy man in this townland. Ye may take a look at him, he's sittin' within." Darby drew back thoughtfully. This was to be the last of the three wishes; and the fate of the other two made him hesitate.

"Tell me first, King, before I look; is he a married man? I dunno."

"He is not," said the King.

"Of course," sighed Darby, "careless and free. Well, is he rich? But sure I nade n't ax. He must be— very."

"He has n't a penny," replied the King, "nor chick nor child. He cares for nobody, an' nobody cares for him."

"Well, now look at that! Is n't that quare! What kind of a man is he? I'm almost afeard to look at him."

"Sthop yer blatherin' man alive, an' come over to the windy and do as I bid ye."

As he was bidden, Darby took a peep through the grimy panes, and there on a pile of turf, alone before the dying forge-fire, sat an old man. His head was

bare and he swayed back and forth as he nodded and gabbled and smiled to the graying embers. With an exclamation of deep disgust Darby jumped back.

"Why," he spluttered indignantly, "you're making game of me, King! That's only Tom the child— the poor innocent who never had an ounce of wit since the day he was born!"

"I know it," said the King, "that's the rayson he's perfectly happy. He has no regret for yesterday nor no fear for to-morrow. He's had his supper, there's a fire ferninst him, a roof over his head for the night, so what more does he want."

For a moment Darby could n't answer. He stood humped together ready to cry with vexation and disappointment.

"There goes the last of me three grand wishes," he complained bitterly. "I'm chated out of all of them, an' all you've left me for me night's throuble, is the ashes of me wishes, a cowld in my chist from me wet brogues, an' a croak in me talk, so that I wouldn't know me own voice if I was in the next room. If you've done wid me now, King, I'll thank ye to make me wisible ag'in so that I can go home to me own dacint fambly."

There was no reply. Darby waited a moment in silence and then the horrible realization flashed over him that he was alone. Doubtless the quick-tempered little fairy had taken offense at his words and had left him to his fate, invisible and helpless, on the high-road. The poor fellow groaned aloud:

"Ochone mavrone, have n't I the misfortune!" he wailed. "I'm fairly massacreed, so I am. What'll Bridget say to have a poor, hoarse voice goin' croaking about the house instid of the foine lookin' man I was. Oh, vo! Vo!" he roared. "I wondher if I can ate me vittles! What'll I do with the new shuit of clothes? What'll I say to-"

"Hould on to what ever's botherin' ye, Darby me friend. Don't be afeard, I'm comin' to ye!" It was the King's voice high in the air above Darby's head. The next instant our hero felt a touch upon the arm, and he and the King popped into clear visibility again.

Darby heaved a chest-splitting sigh of relief. "I thought you'd desarted me, King"

"Foolish man" piped the fairy, "I was loathe to have ye go home disappointed and empty-handed, but to save me life I didn't know what ye naded that'd do you any good. So I flew off with meself to your house, and Malachi, the cat, tould me that ye naded something; ye did n't know exactly what it was, but whatever it was ye 'd never be happy till ye got it!"

"It's thrue for ye, thim were me very worruds." "Well, I'll lave ye here now, Darby," the king went on, seriously but not unkindly, "and do you hurry along your way. Look nayther to the right nor to the left an' somewhere on the road

betwixt this, an' your own thrashol', the thing that'll do ye most good in the worruld'll catch up with ye. I'm off."

"Good-night, King," and Darby left alone sploshed along the slushy road toward home. The lad whistled anxiously a bit of a tune as he went, all the time keeping wary eyes and ears strained for the first glimpse or sound of the expected gift.

"I wondher what it'll be like," he said to himself over and over again. He had reached the tall hedge of Hagan's meadow and was already laughing and chuckling to himself over a sudden remembrance of Lord Killgobbin's butler roaring in the corner, when suddenly, something happened which brought him to a dead stop in the road.

Swift as lightning there darted through the lad's jaw a pain like the twang of a fiddle- string. At first Darby couldn't understand the agony, for never until that unhappy hour had one of the O'Gills been afflicted with the toothache. However, he was not left long in doubt as to its character, for the next twang brought him up to his tiptoes with both hands grasping the side of his face.

"Oh-h murdher in Irish, what's come over me! Be the powers of Moll Hagan's cat't is the toothache." He danced round and round in his tracks, groan following groan; but whichever way he turned there was neither pity nor comfort in the dark sighing hedges, nor in the gloomy star- less canopy.

Then a fiercer twang than all the others put together took the lad up into the air. Faster and faster they came, throb, throb, throb, like the blows of a hammer.

At last the poor man broke into a run as if to escape from the terrible pain, but as fast as he went the throb in his jaw kept time and tune to his flying feet.

"Oh, am n't I the foolish man to be galivantin' around this blessed night pryin' into other people's business. It's a punishment. I wish I had that rapscallion of a King here now," he moaned as he reached the stile leading into his own field.

"That wish is granted at any rate, Darby asthore! What's your hurry?"

There on the top of the stile, quizzical, cheery and expectant, waited the little fairy.

"Ow— um! Is this pain in the tooth the bliggard present you promised me, Brian Connors?"

"It is. I came to the conclusion that you wor actually blue-molded for want of a little rale throuble, so I gave it to ye. Ye naded a joult or two to make ye appreciate how well off ye wor before."

"Well, small thanks to ye for your present, King. If a man nades throuble he don't have to go thrampin' round all night lookin' for it with the loikes of you."

"You are like all the rest of the worruld, Darby O'Gill. You never appreciate what you have till you lose it. A man spinds his happiest days, grunting and groaning, but tin years afther they're over an' gone, he says to himself, 'Oh, wer' n't thim the happy, happy times?' If I take away the toothache will ye be raisonably happy, Darby? I dunno."

The persecuted man's spirit rose in unreasoning rebellion. "No, I won't," he shouted.

"Thin kape it. Please yerself. Good-night." And the place where the friendly little king had been sitting was empty. He had vanished utterly.

"Come back, come back, King!" howled Darby. "I was a fool. Ouch! Oh, the top of me head went that time. If you'll only take away this murdherin' pain, King, I'll be the happiest man in Ireland ground, so I will."

The appeal was no sooner uttered than the pain left him, and a soft, friendly laugh floated down through the darkness.

"You'll find the jug of potteen snug be the dure, avick, and all the happiness any mortal man's entitled to waiting for ye beyant the thrashol'— an' that is nothing more nor less than peace and plenty, and a warm-hearted, clear-headed woman for a wife and eight of the purtiest childher in the country of Tipperary. Go into thim. Don't be fretting yourself any more over aymayaginary throubles; for as sure as ye do, the toothache 'll take a hammer or two at your gooms just to kape ye swate-minded an' cheerful. The complyments of the sayson to you an' yours. I'm off."

The King's voice, lifted in a song, floated farther and farther away:

" If you've mate whin you're hungry,
And dhrink whin you're dhry,
Not too young whin you're married,
Nor too ould whin you die -
Thin go happy, go lucky;
Go lucky, go happy;
Poor happy go lucky,
Good-bye, good-bye.
Bould happy go lucky
Good-bye."

The song died away like a sigh of the wind in the hedges. Then clear and sweet broke the chapel bell across the listening fields, calling the parish, young and old, to midnight Mass. As Darby turned he saw every window in his cottage ablaze with cheerful light, and his own face glowed in warm response. With his hand on the door he paused and murmured:

"Why thin, afther this night I'll always say that the man who can't find happiness in his own home naden't look for it elsewhere."

Finis