

McCLURE'S MAGAZINE

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AN OCEAN GRAVEYARD. By P. T. McGrath. A splendid, stirring account of the wrecks and rescues on the terrible Newfoundland coast. Dramatically illustrated by M. J. Burns.

THE LOOKING GLASS. A love story by Alice Brown. Illustrated by Corwin Knapp Linson.

Another of **JOHN LA FARGE'S** important and delightful art essays—this one on Delacroix, Decamps, Diaz. Illustrations in tint.

A LITTLE MATTER OF REAL ESTATE. Another of Myra Kelly's stories of the public schools of the New York East Side. Illustrated by F. Y. Cory.

THE SWIMMING HOLE. A humorous and reminiscent sketch of "the good old days." By Eugene Wood. Capitably illustrated by A. B. Frost.

Another chapter in **MISS TARBELL'S** masterful **History of the Standard Oil Company.** A full-page portrait (hitherto unpublished) of John D. Rockefeller as he appeared in 1880—the time of his indictment for criminal conspiracy (the subject of this chapter)—will be a feature.

And many articles, stories and poems—all handsomely illustrated.

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A portrait of the heroine, drawn by Louis Loeb, will be reproduced in tint as frontispiece of the June number.



HENRY HARLAND



The Banshee's Halloween

BY
HERMINIE TEMPLETON

ILLUSTRATED BY GARTH JONES

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 better 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 shelter of his own eaves, an' thought of the dangers before, an' of the cheerful fire an' comfortable bed he was leaving behind, 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.

Howsomever, '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 raylless 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 situation 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 swords in their hands, march before an' beside an' after 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 afear'd?" 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 invisible 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 repitition 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 advised Darby that no one need ever be afear'd of ghosts if he only had the courage to face them.

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 trouble that's on their minds — a message they want sint, a saycret they're endayvorin' to unload. So, instead of flyin' from the on-happy things, as most people generally do," she said, "one should walk up bowld to the apparaytion, be it gentle or common, male or faymale, an' say, 'What troubles ye, sir?' or, 'What's amiss with ye, ma'am?' An' take my worruld 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 after all whin one comes to think of it, an' the knowledgeable man fell to day-liberatin' 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 trouble like a young three before a hurricane, but he only bint, the trouble 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' meditatyin', his foot sthruke 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 grave-stones, 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 full length, as if to ward off the turrible visitor.

The first thing that began to take any shape in his bewildhered brain was Peggy O'Callaghan's advise. He tried to folly it out, but a chatterin' of teeth was the only sound he med. An' all this time a thray-mendous 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 o'pended his two dhry lips an' stutthered this sayin' :

"Whoever you are, an' whatever shape ye come in, take heed that I'm not afear'd."

he says. "I command ye to tell me your troubles, an' I'll be your bonefactor. 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 waxation. "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

Although Darby couldn't understand what the owl was sayin', he was startled be the blood-curdlin' hoot, an' that same hoot saved Solomon from any exthrayornery throucin', bekase as the angry man sthopped to harken there flashed on him the royalization that he was bating an' crool maulthraytin' a blessing in dishguise, for this same Solomon had the repitation of being the knowngist, 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



"Ye murdherin' big-beaded imposture!"

two pittful distressed 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 aafter a brown hoot owl, which was shelled in a near-by black thorn tree, called out to his brother's fambly, which inhabited the belfry of the chapel above on the hill, that some black-minded spalpeen had houl 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.

as if he were a human, an' she was sure he understood. In the face of thim facts the knowledgeable man changed his chune, an' puttin' his arrum friendly around the distressed 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 conversation about all manner of things, just so that the ring of a human voice, even if 'twas only his own, would take a bit of the cool lonesomeness out of the dark hedges.

"Did you notice McDonald's sthrame as

dead still in his thracks, an' rayfused to go another step till Darby coaxed him on be 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-bridge. 'Tis within tuncy feet of the house. Oh, ye needn't be afeared" he says, again. "I've seen the cows cross it, so it'll surely hold the both of us."

A sudden raymembrance whipped into



"Fufty ghosts, all in their shrouds, sat cheek be jowl."

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

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 across 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 wonder they did.

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

There was little Ted Rogers, the hump-back, who dhrowneded 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 gamekeeper sat the poacher, with a jagged black hole in his forehead; there was Thady Finnegan, the scholar who was disappointed in love, an' died of a daycline; furdur on sat Mrs Houlihan, who dayparted this life from ateing of pizen musherrooms; 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 squeegeed shut. But something in his mind toulit 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 troubles.

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 hay-ro'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 arums, 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 boulded

for 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 on-grateful informer!" he says. "You go your way, an' I'll go mine; we're sundhers," says he. So sayin' the crippled man wint limp'in an' grumplin' down the borreen through the meadow, whilst this deserted 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 toulit 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' runed mill; but to-night it swept along, an angry, snarlin', growlin' river that overlept its banks an' dhraggged widly at the swayin' 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 mortal, there it stands. Oh, ain't the ghosts turrible wicious on Halloween!"

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

II

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 airtest that her whole life was in every worrud.

"God save all here," said Darby, takin' off his hat; but there was no answer. So deep were Cormac an' Eilleen in some conversation 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 sthooed, shifting from one foot to the other, watching thim, unable to day-part, an' not wishin' to obtrude.

"Oh, it isn't death at all that I fear," Eilleen was saying. "No, no, Cormac ashore, '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, ashore 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 sthiving 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 towmland 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 cowl'd 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, when I was sthrong an' well an' sittin' happy as a meadow lark at your side, the same black shadow dhripped 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 when 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



“ ‘Twas the Banshee! ”

my heart through all me life, an’ ax for no sweeter company.”

“Eileen,” says Cormac, listen’ his hand, an’ his voice 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 voice 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 disstressed. “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 Eileen wint on again, but her voice 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 churchyard 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 Eileen. “Oh, Cormac asthore, it’s come for me again.” With that, stiff with terror, she buried herself under 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 mortal 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 vision.

Afther that second cry the voice 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, when he gave a sudden jump at a hard-strained voice 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 foiné 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 chowlders. "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?"

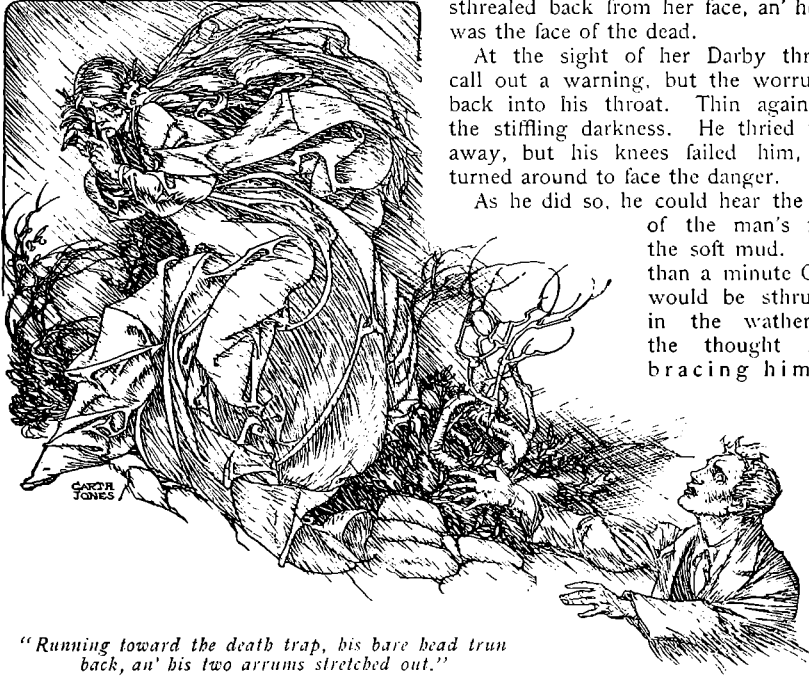
"Well, then," says Cormac, scowling, an' pushin' Darby to one side, "I'll face her myself—I'll face her an' choke that song in her throat if Sattin himself stood at her side."

With those worruds, an' before Darby could sthoph him, the stone-cutter flung open the door an' plumed 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 sthorted the Banshee—of that there could be no manner of doubt. A rayembrance 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 sowl's 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 ryalized 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 water and through the swish of the wind Cormac's voice 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.



"Running toward the death trap, his bare head trun back, an' his two arrums stretched out."

He stood sthraining his eyes an' ears in wondheration, for now the voice 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 murderhng scheme of the Banshee burst in his mind like a gunpowder explosion.

Her plan was as plain as day, she meant to dhrownd the stone-cutter. She had led the poor daysthtracted 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 sthreaded 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 stifflng 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 swords in their hands, march before an' beside an'

after 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 cowl'd dead air agin his face, an' caught a whiff of newly turned clay in his nostrils. 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 after 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 dash.

"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' steadyin' him there. The stone-cutter stared about like one stuned 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 after you in a minute," he says.

Without a worrud, meek now and bid-dable 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 muddled an' dhraggled, an' himself had been pounded an' hammered; and second, he wanted to think. He had a quare cowl'd 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 throwers 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' dhrropped 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 better to view it.

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

With these worruds he lifted his caubean 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 ferminst 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.



"A dark shadowy woman."

During a breath or two the parsecuted hayro lost his head completely, 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 sling 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 voice 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 boult; 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 splhit with inkerdoolity to find yourself mayandherin' in this lonesome place on Halloween night."

Sheelah hobbled a step or two nearer an' whupered confaydential.

"I was wandherin' hereabouts 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 lists 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 boult 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 worly goods, as the sayin' is, but she has what suits me better."

This cleverness angered the fairy woman, so she set into abuse and to frighten Darby. She bally-ragged, she browbate, she trajooiced, 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 flustered 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' ferrud on his toes.

"Bad scan 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 unpiious 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 persperation beaded her forehead, showing that the faver was broke.

Without disturbing either 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 worruld," he says.