McClure's Magazine

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The Swimming Hole. A humorous and reminiscent sketch of "the good old days." By Eugene Wood. Capitally 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 A full-page portrait (hitherto unpublished) of John D. Rockefeller as he appeared in 1880 — the time of his indictment for criminal conspiracy (the subject of this chapter) — will be a feature.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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"MY FRIEND PROSPERO"
A Beautiful and Romantic Love Story

BY HENRY HARLAND
Author of
"The Cardinal’s Snuff Box"

Begins publication in June and will run through six numbers

A delicious comedy of love, in a beautiful setting, an old castle in the wild and picturesque mountains of Northern Italy; rich in romantic situation, in fresh and alluring surprises at each turn of the plot; and pervaded with the joyous, undaunted spirit of the hero and lover, and the bewitching feminine charm of the lovely heroine. It is a masterpiece of romance.

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

HENRY HARLAND
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 Eileen 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 mithrayted 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 daystarts an' flooded roadway.

Howsoever, '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 mysterious 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 worruuld would the poor lad do to save himself?

At the rayalization of this sitiation 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 wouruds. "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' ather 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’ dry 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 drink 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 alsy enough to bolster up one’s heart with wise sayin’s an’ hayroic prayscepts when sitting commodious by one’s own fire; but talkin’ wise worruds to one’s self is mighty poor comfort when ye’re on the lonely high road of a Halloween night, with a churchyard 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 repitation for truth and voracity when 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 afeared 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 alway 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 unhappye 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 throubles ye, sir?’ or, ‘What’s amiss with ye, ma’am?’ An’ take my worrud for it," she says, "ye’ll find yourself a boneyfactor to them who you laste expect it," she says.

'Twas a quare idee, but not so onraysonable after all when 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 again he was sure he wouldn’t. For Darby O’Gill was one who hint quick undher throuble like a young three before a hurricane, but he only hint, 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’ meditatyn’, his foot shruck 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 mysterious 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 to-wards 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 spat 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 uthlephant. The persecuted 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 terrible visitor.

The first thing that began to take any shape in his bewildermed brain was Peggy O’Callaghan’s advise. He thried 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 foppin’ of whales, was coming nearer an’ nearer.

The splashin’ stopped not three feet away, an’ the han’ed man felt in the spine of his back an’ in the calves of his legs that a powerful unhownly monsther towered over him.

Why he didn’t swoon 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 intill his bones. At that friendly sound he opened his two dry 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 vexation. "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 extrarowner-ney throuncin', bekase as the angry man stopped to harken there flashed on him the rayalization that he was bating an' crool maulthraytin' a blessing in disguise, for this same Solomon had the repition of being the knowingist, sensiblist thing which walked on four legs in that parish. He was a fayorite with young an' old, especially with childber, an' Mrs. Kilcannon said she could talk to him

two pittful disthressioned 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' almosst strangled him. "Ye murrderin' big-headed imposture!" he gasped.

Half a minute after a brown hoot owl, which was sheltered 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 houlit 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 scans'ous.

"Ye murrderin' big-headed imposture!"

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 disthressioned 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 repition 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 last 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 crool 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 tuny 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

"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 confyndential 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 celebratin' its first Halloween as a ghost at the spot where he was kilt?"

You may believe me or believe me not, but at thim worruuds 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 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 for the wind or the rain.

There was little Ted Rogers, the hump-back, who drownded 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 disappointed in love, an' died of a dayclime; furder on sat Mrs Houlihan, who dayparted this life from aching of pizen musheroons; next to her sat—oh, a hunderd others!

Not that Darby saw thim, do ye mind. He had too good sense 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 toul 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' when 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 trouble. Three times Darby thried be main strength to hist his compagnon up the steps, but in wain, an' Solomon was clone 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 going to be trun, an' so began to twistit 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 for the middle of the road an' stood there wikey an' attentive, listening to the names flung at him from where his late comrade 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 after calling Solomon Kicannon 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 ungrateful 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 rayroachful brays after 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 toul him that his fears about the rise in McDonald's sthramle 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 sthramle 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' dhragged widly at the swayin' willows.

Be a narrow throw of light from McCarthy's side windy our thraveller could see the madden wather sthrvin' 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 sthramle, laving the two indls 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 turbile wicicous on Halloween!"

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

11

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.

Eileen lay on her side, her shining hair streathed 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 every worrud.

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

"Oh, it isn't death at all that I fear," Eileen was saying. "No, no, Cormac asthore, 'tis not that I'm misdoubtful of; but, ochnerone mavnrone, '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 sthraw in mind or thought to any other woman, but it's when I'm gone—when the lone-some 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 country-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 she hadn't in-therrupted 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 strhiving 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 under the grass or undher the snow up behind the church."

While she was sayin' thim last worruds, although Darby's heart was meltin' for Eileen, his mind began running over the colleens of that towland 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 ondacy 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' Eileen not yet cowld in her grave?" he says.

While he was sayin' them things to himself, McCarthy had been whispering fierce to his wife, but what it was the stone-cutter said the friend of the fairies couldn't hear. Eileen herself spoke clear enough in answer, for the favor 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 strong an' well an' sittin' happy as a meadow lark at your side, the same black shadow drifted 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 under 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."

"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 stopped him. "There'll come on ye by daygess 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," muttered Darby, looking around distressed. "I'll warn Father Cassidy of her an' of her intinctions the day after 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 falling, 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. Ather 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 undher the pillows.

A second cry folleyed 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 tremblin' like a hare's, stood looking in spite of himself at the black windy panes, expecting some frightful wison.

Aither 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 turrible worrud forever.

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

Darby was just wondherin' whether he himself wouldn't go mad with fright, whin he gaved 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 keepin' 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 stopped 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 have my stone-cutting tools, so little Eileen 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 dry 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 stop him, the stone-cutter flung open the door an' plunged out into the night. As he did so the song outside stopp'd. Suddenly a quick splashing of feet, hoarse cries and shouts gave tidings of a chase. The half-crazed gossoon had sharted the Banshee—of that there could be no manner of doubt. A raymembrane of the awful things that she might do to his friend paythrefled the heart of Darby.

Even aither 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 droved from his mind even the fear of the Banshee.

In that one second, an' before he ralized it, the lad was out under the drippin' trees, and running for his life toward the broken foot-bridge. The night was whirling an' beating above him like the flappin' 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 voice calling him.
The friend of the fairies stopped at the edge of the foot-bridge to listen. Although the storm had almost passed, a spiteful flare of lightning leapt up now and again out of the western hill, an' after 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, leaving uncovered that much of the black deep flood.

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 turned back, an' his two arums stretched out in front of him. A little above an' just out of reach of them, plain an' clear as Darby ever saw his wife Bridget, was the misty white figure of a woman. Her long waving hair strewed 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 worries fell back into his throat. Thin again came the stifling 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 struggling in the water. At the thought Darby, bracing himself,

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

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

Her plan was as plain as day, she meant to shrivd the stone-cutter. She had led the poor dayshattered 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 strame, back again up the path that led to the broken foot-bridge.

"Howld where you are!" he shouted, "She wants to dhrivd 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 day-ludhered 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 worries 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 end 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 children, 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 nostrils. Something white stopped 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 desperate 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, clapping 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 each 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 Eileen 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 raysens Darby raymained behind were two: first an' foremost, he was a bit vexed at the way his clothes were muddied an' dhragged, 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 shruck him all at once like a rap on the jaw—he had lost his foin 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, grum-blin' 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 pethwer, '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 foin singing woicce, bekase the comb is en-chanted," he says. "If that sayin' be thrie, it's the famous lad I am from this night. I'll travel 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 feminst 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 persecuted
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 boulf 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 knowl-
edgeable man, "unless in some way I can
beguile her." He was fishin' in his mind
for its civilist worrud, when the woman
spoke up, an' Darby's heart jumped with
gladness, as he ragnocized 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
under her hood. the two eyes of her glow-
ing like tallow candles. "Ain'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 told 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.
ain't I split with inkerdoolity to find
yourself mayandherin' in this lonesome
place on Halloween night."

Sheelah hobbled a step or two nearer
an whispered confyidential.

"I was wandherin' here abouts only
this morning," she says, "an' I lost from
me hair a goald 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 tan-
talizing man. "But maybe I did find some-
thing summarly, 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 en-
chantment in the air, will never be known:
but whatsoever she meant, the hayro
doubled his lists an' squared off. At that
she lowered the stick, an' broke into a
shril, cackling laugh.

"Ho ho!" she laughed, houldin' her
sides, "but aren't ye the bould distin-
guishable man. Becourse 'tis the Ban-
shee'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 unaearthly 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 betther."

This cleverness angered the fairy woman, so she set into abuse and to frighten Darby. She bally-raggled, she browbate, she trajoosed, she threatened, but 'twas no use. The bould man hilt 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 Eileen McCarthy."

Sheelah flushtered 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 sailling out of sight.

Darby was still gaping an' gawpin' at the darkness where she disappeared whin — whisk! she was back again an' dsmouthin' 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; uncross 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' murthering unpious worruds to himself, Darby started for the new bridge.

In less than no time after 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 Eileen was sleeping as sound as a child, with a sweet smile on her lips. Heavy pursperation headed her forehead, showing that the favor 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 stole 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, Mistress 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.