

WHY THE LITTLE FRENCHMAN WEARS HIS HAND IN A SLING



IT'S ON MY wisiting cards sure enough (and it's them that's all o'pink satin paper) that innny gintleman that plases may behold the intheristing words, "Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, 39 Southampton Row, Russel Square, Parrish o' Bloomsbury." And shud ye be wanting to diskiver who is the pink of purliteness quite, and the laider of the hot tun in the houl city o' London—why it's jist meself. And the faith that same is no wonder at all at all, (so be plased to stop curling your nose,) for every inch o' the six wakes that I've been a gintleman, and left aff wid the bog-throthing to take up wid the Barronissy, it's Pathrick that's been living like a houly imperor, and gitting the iddication and the graces. Och! and wouldn't it be a blessed thing for your sperrits if ye cud lay your two peepers jist, upon Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, when he is all riddy drised for the hopperer, or stipping into the Brisky for the drive into the Hyde Park. But it's the iligant big figgur that I have, for the reason o' which all the ladies fall in love wid me. Isn't it my own swate self now that'll missure the six fut, and the three inches more nor that, in me stockings, and that am excadingly will proportioned all over to match? And is it really more than the three fut and a bit that there is, innny how, of the little ould furrener Frinchman that lives jist over the

way, and that's a oggling and a goggling the houl day, (and bad luck to him,) at the purty widdy Misthress Tracle that's my own nixt door neighbor, (God bliss her) and a most particuller frind and acquaintance? You percave the little spalpeen is summat down in the mouth, and wears his lift hand in a sling; and it's for that same thing, by yur lave, that I'm going to give you the good rason.

The thruth of the houl matter is jist simple enough; for the very first day that I com'd from Connaught, and showd my swate little silf in the strait to the widdy, who was looking through the windy, it was a gone case althegither wid the heart o' the purty Misthress Tracle. I percaved it, ye see, all at once, and no mistake, and that's God's thruth. First of all it was up wid the windy in a jiffy, and thin she threw open her two peepers to the itmost, and thin it was a little gould spy-glass that she clapped tight to one o' them, and divil may burn me if it didn't spake to me as plain as a peeper cud spake, and says it, through the spy-glass, "Och! the tip o' the mornin to ye, Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, mavourneen; and it's a nate gintleman that ye are, sure enough, and it's meself and me fortin jist that'll be at yur sarvice, dear, inny time o' day at all at all for the asking." And it's not meself ye wud have to be bate in the purliteness; so I made her a bow that wud have broken yur heart althegither to behold, and thin I pulled aff me hat with a flourish, and thin I winked at her hard wid both eyes, as much as to say, "Thrue for you, yer a swate little crature, Mrs. Tracle, me darlint, and I wish I may be drownthed dead in a bog, if it's not meself, Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, that'll make a houl bushel o' love to yur leddy-ship, in the twinkling o' the eye of a Londonderry purraty."

And it was the nixt mornin, sure enough, jist as I was making up me mind whither it wouldn't be the purlite thing to sind a bit o' writing to the widdy by way of a love-litter, when up cum'd the delivery sarvant wid an illigant card, and he tould me that the name on it (for I niver cud rade the copper-plate printing on account of being lift handed) was all about Mounseer, the Count, A Goose, Lookaisy, Maiter-di-dauns, and that the houl o' the divilish lingo was the spalpeen long name of the little ould furrener Frinchman as lived over the way.

And jist wid that in cum'd the little willain himself, and thin he made me a broth of a bow, and thin he said he had ounly taken the liberty of doing me the honor of the giving me a call, and thin he went on to palaver at a great rate, and divil the bit did I comprehend what he wud be afther the tilling me at all at all, excipting and saving that he said "pully-wou, wooly-wou," and tould me, among a bushel o' lies, bad luck to him, that he was mad for the love o' my widdy Misthress Tracle, and that my widdy Mrs. Tracle had a puncheon for *him*.

At the hearin of this, ye may swear, though, I was as mad as a grasshopper, but I remimbered that I was Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, and that it wasn't althegither gentaal to lit the anger git the upper hand o' the purliteness, so I made light o' the matter and kipt dark, and got quite sociable wid the little chap, and afther a while what did he do but ask me to go wid him to the widdy's saying he wud give me the feshionable introduction to her leddyship.

"Is it there ye are?" said I thin to meself—"and it's thrue for you, Pathrick, that ye're the fortunittest mortal in life. We'll soon see now whither it's your swate silf, dear, or whither it's little Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns, that Misthress Tracle is head and ears in the love wid."

Wid that we wint aff to the widdy's, next door, and ye may well say it was an illigant place; so it was. There was a carpet all over the floor, and in one corner there was a forty-pinny and a jews-harp and the divil knows what ilse, and in another corner was a sofy, the beautifulest thing in all natur, and sittin on the sofy, sure enough, there was the swate little angel, Misthress Tracle.

"The tip o' the morning to ye," says I, "Mrs. Tracle," and then I made such an iligant obaysance that it wud ha quite althegither bewildered the brain o' ye.

"Wully woo, pully woo, plump in the mud," says the little furrener Frinchman, "and sure enough Mrs. Tracle," says he, that he did, "isn't this gintleman here jist his riverence Sir Pathrick O' Grandison, Barronitt, and isn't he althegither and entirely the most purticular frind and acquaintance that I have in the houl world?"

And wid that the widdy, she gits up from the sofy, and makes the swatest curtchy nor iver was seen; and thin down she gits agin like an angel; and thin, by the powers, it was that little spalpeen Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns that plumped his self right down by the right side of her. Och hon! I ixpicted the two eyes o' me wud ha cum'd out of my head on the spot, I was so dispirate mad! Howiver, "Bait who!" says I, after a while. "It it there ye are, Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns?" and so down I plumped on the lift side of her leddyship, to be aven wid the willain. Botheration! it wud ha done your heart good to percave the illigant double wink that I gived her jist thin right in the face wid both eyes.

But the little ould Frinchman he niver began to suspect me at all at all, and desperate hard it was he made the love to her leddy-ship. "Wouully wou," says he, "Pully wou," says he, "Plump in the mud."

"That's all to no use, Mounseer Frog, mavourneen," thinks I; and I talked as hard and fast as I could all the while, and troth it was meself jist that divarted her leddyship completely and intirely, by rason of the illigant conversation that I kipt up wid her all about the swate bogs of Connaught. And by and by she giv'd me sich a swate

smile, from one ind of her mouth to the ither, that it made me as bould as a pig, and I jist took hould of the ind of her little finger in the most dillikittest manner in natur, looking at her all the while out o' the whites of my eyes.

And thin ounly to percave the cuteness of the swate angel, for no sooner did she obsarve that I was afther the squazing of her flipper, than she up wid it in a jiffy, and put it away behind her back, jist as much as to say, "Now thin, Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, there's a bitther chance for ye, mavourneen, for it's not althegither the gentaal thing to be afther the squazing of my flipper right full in the sight of that little furrenner Frinchman, Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns."

Wid that I giv'd her a big wink jist to say "lit Sir Pathrick alone for the likes o'them thricks," and thin I wint aisy to work, and you'd have died wid the divarsion to behould how cliverly I slipped my right arm betwane the back o' the sofy, and the back of her leddyship, and there, sure enough, I found a swate little flipper all a waiting to say, "the tip o' the mornin to ye, Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt." And wasn't it meself, sure, that jist giv'd the laste little bit of a squaze in the world, all in the way of a commincement, and not to be too rough wid her leddyship? and och, botheration, wasn't it the gentaalest and dilikittest of all the little squazes that I got in return? "Blood and thunder, Sir Pathrick, mavourneen," thinks I to meself, "faith it's jist the mother's son of you, and nobody else at all at all, that's the handsomnest and the fortunittest young bogthrotter that ever cum'd out of Connaught!" And wid that I giv'd the flipper a big squaze, and a big squaze it was, by the powers, that her leddyship giv'd to me back. But it wud ha split the seven sides of you wid the laffin to behould, jist thin all at once, the consated behaviour of Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns. The likes o' sich a jabbering, and a smirking, and a parly-wouing as he begin'd wid her leddyship, niver was known before upon arth; and divil may burn me if it wasn't my own very two peepers that cotch'd him tipping her the wink out of one eye. Och hon? if it wasn't meself thin that was as mad as a Kilkenny cat I shud like to be tould who it was!

"Let me infarm you, Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns," said I, as purlite as iver ye seed, "that it's not the gintaal thing at all at all, and not for the likes o' you inny how, to be after the oggling and a goggling at her leddyship in that fashion," and jist wid that such another squaze as it was I giv'd her flipper, all as much as to say, "isn't it Sir Pathrick now, my jewel, that'll be able to the proticting o' you, my darlint?" and then there cum'd another squaze back, all by way of the answer. "Thru for you, Sir Pathrick," it said as plain as iver a squaze said in the world, "Thru for you, Sir Pathrick, mavourneen, and it's proper nate gintelman ye are—that's God's thruth,"—and

wid that she opened her two beautiful peepers till I belaved they wud ha com'd out of her head althegither and intirely, and she looked first as mad as a cat at Mounseer Frog, and thin as smiling as all out o' doors at meself.

"Thin," says he, the willain, "Och hon! and a wouly-wou, pully-wou," and thin wid that he shoved up his two shoulders till the divil the bit of his head was to be diskivered, and thin he let down the two corners of his purraty-trap, and thin not the bit more of the satisfaction could I git out o' the spalpeen.

Belave me, my jewel, it was Sir Pathrick that was unreasonabe mad thin, sure enough and the more by token that the Frinchman kept on wid his winking and blinking at the widdy; and the widdy she kept on wid the squazing of my flipper, as much as to say, "At him again Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, mavourneen;" so I jist ripped out wid a big oath, and says I, sure enough—

"Ye little spalpeeny frog of a bog-throtting son of a bloody noun!"—and jist thin what d'ye think it was that her leddyship did? Troth she jumped up from the sofy as if she was bit, and made off through the door, while I turned my head round afther her, in a complate bewilderment and botheration, and followed her wid me two peepers. You percave I had a rason of my own for the knowing that she couldn't git down the stairs althegither and intirely—for I knew very well that I had hould of her hand, for divil the bit had I iver lit it go. And says I,

"Isn't it the laste little bit of a mistake in the world that ye've been afther the making, yer leddyship? Come back now, that's a darlint, and I'll give ye yur flipper." But aff she wint down the stairs like a shot, and then I turned round to the little French furrenner. Och hon! if it wasn't his spalpeeny little flipper that I had hould of in my own—why thin—thin it wasn't—that's all.

Maybe it wasn't meself that jist died then outright wid the laffin, to behould the little chap when he found out that it wasn't the widdy at all that he had houl of, but only Sir Pathrick O'Grandison. The ould divil himself niver behild such a long face as he pet on! As for Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, it wasn't for the likes of his riverence to be afther the minding a thrifle of a mistake. Ye may jist say, though (for it's God's thruth) that afore I lift hould of the flipper of the spalpeen, (which was not till afther her leddyship's futmen had kicked us both down the stairs,) I gived it such a nate little broth of a squaze, as made it all up into raspberry jam.

"Wouly-wou," says he, "pully-wou," says he—"Cot tam!"

And that's jist the thruth of the rason why he wears his lift hand in a sling.

[1837?–1839?]