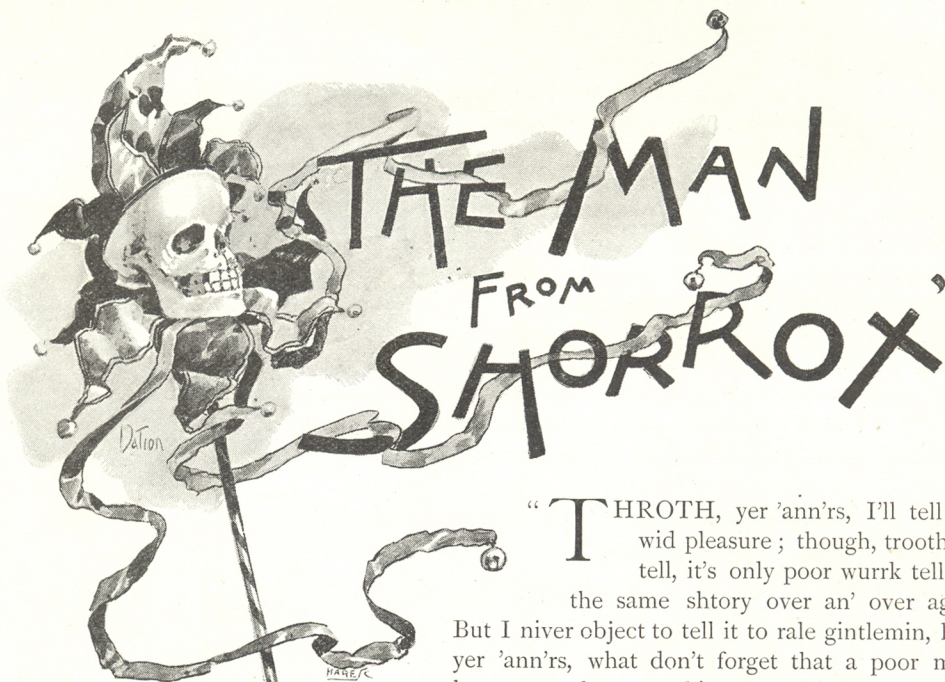




"The Widdy Byrne."



“T HROTH, yer ’ann’rs, I’ll tell ye wid pleasure ; though, trooth to tell, it’s only poor wurrk telling the same shtory over an’ over agin.

But I niver object to tell it to rale gintlemin, like yer ’ann’rs, what don’t forget that a poor man has a mouth on to him as much as Creeshus himself has.

“The place was a market-town in Kilkenny—or maybe King’s County or Queen’s County. At all evints, it was wan of them counties what Cromwell—bad cess to him! —gev his name to. An’ the house was called after him that was the Lord Liftinint an’ invinted the polis—God forgive him! It was kep’ be a man iv the name iv Misther Mickey Byrne an’ his good lady—at laste it was till wan dark night whin the bhoys mistuk him for another gintleman, an unknown man, what had bought a contagious property—mind ye the impidence iv him. Mickey was comin’ back from the Curragh Races wid his skin that tight wid the full of the whisky inside of him that he couldn’t open his eyes to see what was goin’ on, or his mouth to set the bhoys right afther he had got the first tap on the head wid wan of the blackthorns what they done such jobs wid. The poor bhoys was that full of sorra for their mishap whin they brung him home to his widdy that the crather hadn’t the heartt to be too sevaré on thim. At the first iv course she was wroth, bein’ only a woman afther all, an’ weemin not bein’ gawe to rayson like min is. Millia murdher! but for a bit she was like a madwoman, and was nigh to have cut the heads from aff av thim wid the mate chopper, till, seein’ thim so white and quite, she all at wance flung down the chopper an’ knelt down be the corp.

“‘Lave me to me dead,’ she sez. ‘Oh min! it’s no use more people nor is needful bein’ made unhappy over this night’s terrible wurrk. Mick Byrne would have no man worse for him whin he was living, and he’ll have harm to none for his death! Now go; an’, oh bhoys, be dacent and quite, an’ don’t thry a poor widdied sowl too hard!’

“Well, afther that she made no change in things ginerally, but kep’ on the hotel jist the same; an’ whin some iv her friends wanted her to get help, she only sez:

“‘Mick an’ me run this house well enough; an’ whin I’m thinkin’ of takin’ help I’ll tell yez. I’ll go on be meself, as I mane to, till Mick an’ me comes together agin.’

"An', sure enough, the ould place wint on jist the same, though, more betoken, there wasn't Mick wid his shillelagh to kape the pace whin things got pretty hot on fair nights, an' in the gran' ould election times, when heads was bruk like eggs—glory be to God!

"My! but she was the fine woman, was the Widdy Byrne! A gran' crathur intirely: a fine upshtandin' woman, nigh as tall as a modherate-sized man, wid a form on her that'd warrm yer heart to look at, it sthoo'd out that way in the right places. She had shkin like satin, wid a warrm flush in it, like the sun shinin' on a crock iv yestherday's crame; an' her cheeks an' her neck was that firm that ye couldn't take a pinch iv thim—though sorra wan iver dar'd to thry, the worse luck! But her hair! Begor, that was the finishing touch that set all the min crazy. It was jist wan mass iv red, like the heart iv a burnin' furze-bush whin the smoke goes from aff iv it. Musha! but it'd make the blood



"'Lave me to me dead,' she sez."

come up in yer eyes to see the glint iv that hair wid the light shinin' on it. There was niver a man, what was a man at all at all, iver kem in be the door that he didn't want to put his two arms round the widdy an' giv' her a hug immadiate. They was fine min too, some iv thim—and warrm men—big graziers from Kildare, and the like, that counted their cattle be scores, an' used to come ridin' in to market on huntin' horses what they'd refuse hundhreds iv pounds for from officers in the Curragh an' the quality. Begor, but some iv thim an' the dhrovers was rare min in a fight. More nor wance I seen them, forty, maybe half a hundred, strong, clear the market-place at Banagher or Athy. Well do I remimber the way the big, red, hairy wrists iv thim'd go up in the air, an' down'd come the springy ground-ash saplins what they carried for switches. The whole lot iv thim wanted to come coortin' the widdy; but sorra wan iv her'd look at thim. She'd flirt an' be coy an' taze thim and make thim mad for love iv her, as weemin

likes to do. Thank God for the same! for mayhap we min wouldn't love thim as we do only for their thricky ways; an' thin what'd become iv the counthry wid nothin' in it at all except single min an' ould maids jist dyin', and growin' crabbed for want iv childher to kiss an' tache an' shpank an' make love to? Shure, yer 'ann'rs, 'tis childher as makes the heartt iv man green, jist as it is fresh wather that makes the grass grow. Divil a shtep nearer would the widdy iver let mortal man come. 'No,' she'd say; 'whin I see a man fit to fill Mick's place, I'll let yez know iv it; thank ye kindly'; an' wid that she'd shake her head till the beautiful red hair iv it'd be like shparks iv fire—an' the min more mad for her nor iver.

"But, mind ye, she wasn't no shpoil-shport; Mick's wife knew more nor that, an' his widdy didn't forgit the thrick iv it. She'd lade the laugh herself if 'twas anything a dacent woman could shmile at; an' if it wasn't, she'd send the girrls aff to their beds, an' tell the min they might go on talkin' that way, for there was only herself to be insulted; an' that'd shut thim up pretty quick I'm tellin' yez. But av any iv thim'd thry to git affectionate, as min do whin they've had all they can carry, well, thin she had a playful way iv dalin' wid thim what'd always turn the laugh agin' thim. She used to say that she larned the beginnin' iv it at the school an' the rest iv it from Mick. She always kep by her on the counther iv the bar wan iv thim rattan canes wid the curly ends, what the soldiers carries whin they can't borry a whip, an' are goin' out wid their cap on three hairs, an' thim new oiled, to scorch the girrls. An' thin whin any iv the shuitors'd get too affectionate she'd lift the cane an' swish them wid it, her laughin' out iv her like mad all the time. At first wan or two iv the min'd say that a kiss at the widdy was worth a clip iv a cane; an' wan iv thim, a warrm horse-farmer from Poul-a-Phoka, said he'd compleate the job av she was to cut him into ribbons. But she was a handy woman wid the cane—which was shtrange enough, for she had no childer to be practisin' on—an' whin she threw what was left iv him back over the bar, wid his face like a gridiron, the other min what was laughin' along wid her tuk the lesson to heartt. Whiniver afther that she laid her hand on the cane, no matther how quietly, there'd be no more talk iv thryin' for kissin' in that quarter.

"Well, at the time I'm comin' to there was great divarshuns intirely goin' on in the town. The fair was on the morra, an' there was a power iv people in the town; an' cattle, an' geese, an' turkeys, an' butther, an' pigs, an' vegetables, an' all kinds iv divilment, includin' a berryin'—the same bein' an ould attorneyman, savin' yer prisince; a lone man widout friends, lyin' out there in the gran' room iv the hotel what they call the 'Queen's Room.' Well, I needn't tell yer 'ann'rs that the place was pretty full that night. Musha, but it's the fleas themselves what had the bad time iv it, wid thim crowded out on the outside, an' shakin', an' thrimblin' wid the cowl. The widdy, av coorse, was in the bar passin' the time iv the day wid all that kem in, an' keepin' her eyes afore an' ahint her to hould the girrls up to their wurk an' not to be thriflin' wid the min. My! but there was a power iv min at the bar that night; warrm farmers from four counties, an' graziers wid their ground-ash plants an' big frieze coats, an' plinty iv commercials, too. In the middle iv it all, up the shstreet at a hand gallop comes an Athy carriage wid two horses, an' pulls up at the door wid the horses shmokin'. An' begor', the man in it was smokin' too, a big cygar nigh as long as yer arm. He jumps out an' walks up as bould as brass to the bar, jist as if there was niver a livin' sowl but himself in the place. He chucks the widdy undher the chin at wanst, an', taking aff his hat, sez:

"I want the best room in the house. I travel for Shorrox', the greatest long-

cotton firm in the whole worl'd, an' I want to open up a new line here! The best is what I want, an' that's not good enough for me!'

"Well, gintlemin, ivery wan in the place was spacheless at his impidence; an', begor! that was the only time in her life I'm tould whin the widdy was tuk back. But, glory be, it didn't take long for her to recover herself, an' sez she quietly:

"'I don't doubt ye, sur! The best can't be too good for a gentleman what makes himself so aisy at home!' an' she shmiled at him till her teeth shone like jools.

"God knows, gintlemin, what does be in weemin's minds whin they're dalin' wid a man! Maybe it was that Widdy Byrne only wanted to kape the pace wid all thim min crowdin' roun' her, an' thim clutchin' on tight to their shticks an' aiger for a fight wid any man on her account. Or maybe it was that she forgive him his impidence; for well I know that it's not the most modest man, nor him what kapes his distance, that the girrls, much less the widdies, likes the best. But anyhow she spake out iv her to the man from Manchesther:—

"'I'm sorry, sur, that I can't give ye the best room—what we call the best—for it is engaged already.'

"'Then turn him out!' sez he.

"'I can't,' she says—'at laste not till to-morra; an' ye can have the room thim iv ye like.'

"There was a kind iv a sort iv a shnicker among some iv the min, thim knowin' iv the corp, an' the Manchesther man tuk it that they was laughin' at him; so he sez:

"'I'll shleep in that room to-night; the other gintleman can put up wid me iv I can wid him. Unless,' sez he, oglin' the widdy, 'I can have the place iv the masther iv the house, if there's a priest or a parson handy in this town—an' sober,' sez he.

"Well, tho' the widdy got as red as a Claddagh cloak, she jist laughed an' turned aside, sayin':

"'Throth, sur, but it's poor Mick's place ye might have, an' welkim, this night.'

"'An' where might that be now, ma'am?' sez he, lanin' over the bar; an' him would have chucked her under the chin agin, only that she moved her head away that quick.

"'In the churchyard!' she sez. 'Ye might take Mick's place there, av ye like, an' I'll not be wan to say ye no.'

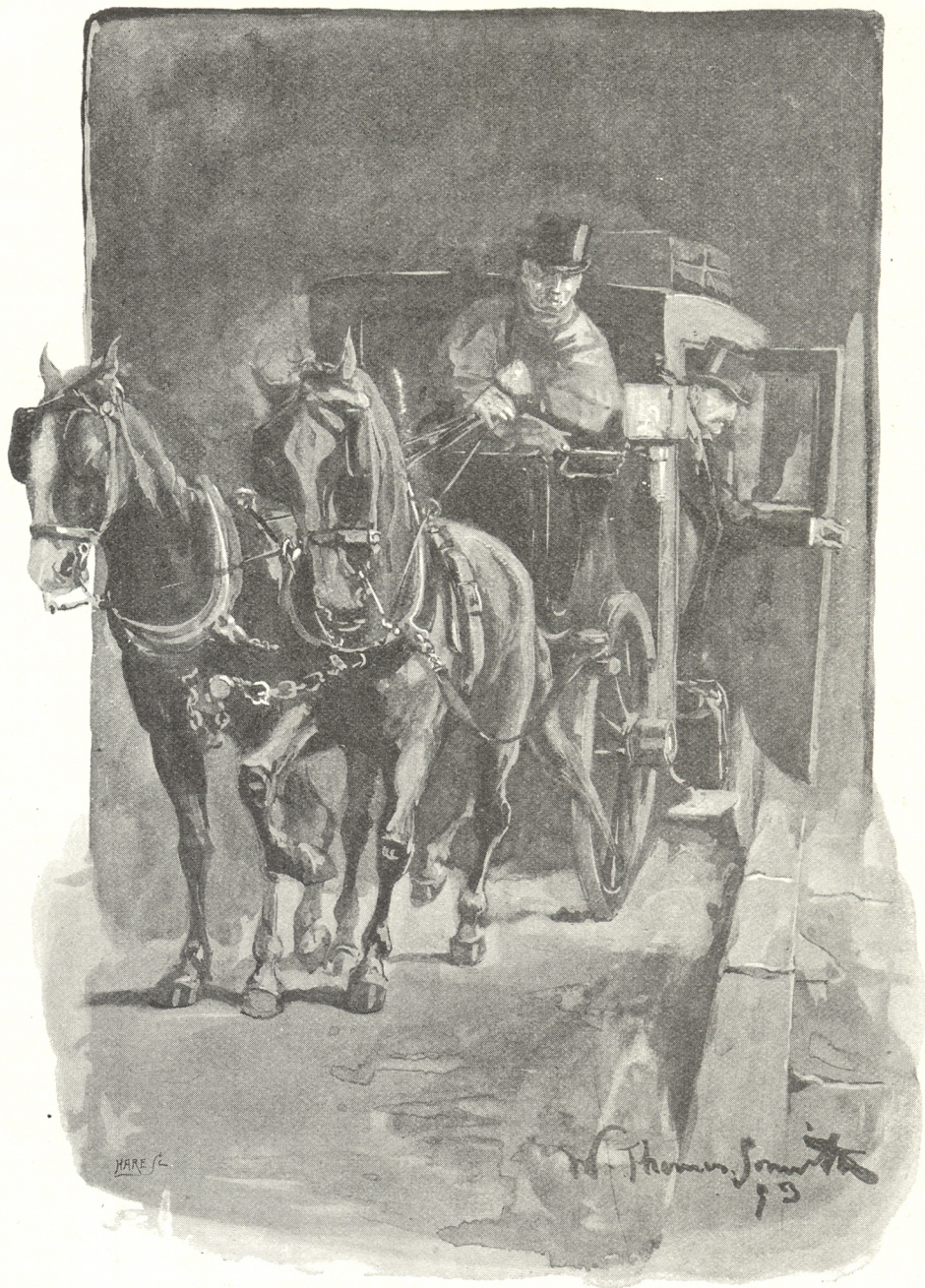
"At that the min round all laughed, an' the man from Manchesther got mad, an' shpoke out, rough enough too it seemed:

"'Oh, he's all right where he is. I daresay he's quiter times where he is than whin he had my luk out. Him an' the devil can toss for choice in bein' lonely or bein' quite.'

"Wid that the widdy blazes up all iv a suddint, like a live sod shtuck in the thatch, an' sez she:

"'Who are ye that dares to shpake ill iv the dead, an' to couple his name wid the divil, an' to his widdy's very face? It's aisy seen that poor Mick is gone!' an' wid that she threw her apron over her head an' sot down an' rocked herself to and fro, as widdies do whin the fit is on thim iv missin' the dead.

"There was more nor wan man there what'd like to have shtud opposite the Manchesther man wid a bit iv a blackthorn in his hand; but they knew the widdy too well to dar to intherfere till they were let. At length wan iv thim—Mr. Hogan, from nigh Portarlington, a warm man, that'd put down a thousand pounds iv dhry money any day in the week—kem over to the bar an' tuk aff his hat, an' sez he:



"Pulls up at the door wid the horses shmokin'."

"Mrs. Byrne, ma'am, as a friend of poor dear ould Mick, I'd be glad to take his quarrel on meself on his account, an' more than proud to take it on his widdy's, if, ma'am, ye'll only honour me be saying the wurrd."

"Wid that she tuk down the apron from aff iv her head an' wiped away the tears in her jools iv eyes wid the corner iv it."

"'Thank ye kindly,' sez she; 'but, gintlemin, Mick an' me run this hotel long together, an' I've run it alone since thin, an' I mane to go on runnin' it be meself, even if new min from Manchesther itself does be bringin' us new ways. As to you, sur,' sez she, turnin' to him, 'it's powerful afraid I am that there isn't accommodation here for a gintlemin what's so requireful. An' so I think I'll be askin' ye to find convanience in some other hotel in the town.'"

"Wid that he turned on her an' sez, 'I'm here now, an' I offer to pay me charges. Be the law ye can't refuse to resave me or refuse me lodgmint, especially whin I'm on the promises.'"

"So the Widdy Byrne drewed herself up, an' sez she, 'Sur, ye ask yer legal rights; ye shall have them. Tell me what it is ye require.'"

"Sez he sthaight out: 'I want the best room.'"

"'I've tould you already,' sez she, 'there's a gintleman in it.'"

"'Well,' sez he, 'what other room have ye vacant?'"

"'Sorra wan at all,' sez she. 'Every room in the house is tuk. Perhaps, sur, ye don't think or remimber that there's a fair on to-morra.'"

"She shpoke so polite that ivery man in the place knew there was somethin' comin'—later on. The Manchesther man felt that the laugh was on him; but he didn't want for impidence, so he up, an' sez he:

"'Thin, if I have to share wid another, I'll share wid the best! It's the Queen's Room I'll be shleepin' in this night.'"

"Well, the min shtandin' by wasn't too well plazed wid what was going on; for the man from Manchesther he was plumin' himself for all the worl'd like a cock on a dunghill. He laned agin over the bar an' began makin' love to the widdy hot an' fast. He was a fine, shtout-made man, wid a bull neck on to him an' short hair, like wan iv thim 'two-to-wan-bar-wans' what I've seen at Punchestown an' Fairy House an' the Galway races. But he seemed to have no manners at all in his coortin', but done it as quick an' business-like as takin' his commercial ordhers. It was like this: 'I want to make love; you want to be made love to, bein' a woman. Hould up yer head!'"

"We all could see that the widdy was boilin' mad; but, to do him fair, the man from Manchesther didn't seem to care what any wan thought. But we all seen what he didn't see at first, that the widdy began widout thinkin' to handle the rattan cane on the bar. Well, prisintly he began agin to ask about his room, an' what kind iv a man it was that was to share it wid him."

"So sez the widdy, 'A man wid less wickedness in him nor you have, an' less impidence.'"

"'I hope he's a quite man,' sez he."

"So the widdy began to laugh, an' sez she: 'I'll warrant he's quite enough.'"

"'Does he shnore? I hate a man—or a woman ayther—what shnores.'"

"'Throth,' sez she, 'there's no shnore in him'; an' she laughed agin."

"Some iv the min round what knew iv the ould attorney-man—saving yer prisince—began to laugh too; and this made the Manchesther man suspicious. When the likes iv him gets suspicious he gets rale nasty; so he sez, wid a shneer:

"'You seem to be pretty well up in his habits, ma'am!'"

"The widdy looked round at the graziers, what was clutchin' their ash plants hard, an' there was a laughin' divil in her eye that kep' thim quite; an' thin she turned round to the man, and sez she :

" 'Oh, I know that much, anyhow, wid wan thing an' another, begor !'

"But she looked more enticin' nor iver at that moment. For sure the man from Manchester thought so, for he laned nigh his whole body over the counther, an' whispered somethin' at her, puttin' out his hand as he did so, an' layin' it on her neck to dhraw her to him. The widdy seemed to know what was comin', an' had her hand on the rattan ; so whin he was draggin' her to him an' puttin' out his lips to kiss her—an' her first as red as a turkey-cock an' thin as pale as a



" 'Hands off, Mистер Impidence !' sez she."

sheet—she ups wid the cane and gev him wan skelp across the face wid it, shpringin' back as she done so. Oh jool ! but that was a skelp ! A big wale iv blood riz up as quick as the blow was shtruck, jist as I've seen on the pigs' backs whin they do be prayin' aloud not to be tuk where they're wanted."

" 'Hands off, Mистер Impidence !' sez she. The man from Manchester was that mad that he ups wid the tumbler forninst him an' was goin' to throw it at her, whin there kem an odd sound from the graziers—a sort of "Ach !" as whin a man is workin' a sledge, an' I seen the ground-ash plants an' the big fists what held thim, and the big hairy wrists go up in the air. Begor, but polis themselves wid bayonets wouldn't care to face thim like that ! In the half of two twos the

man from Manchesther would have been cut in ribbons, but there came a cry from the widdy what made the glasses ring :

“‘Shtop ! I’m not goin’ to have any fightin’ here ; an’ besides, there’s bounds to the bad manners iv even a man from Shörrox’. He wouldn’t dar to shtrike me—though I have no head ! Maybe I hit a thought too hard ; but I had rayson to remimber that somethin’ was due on Mick’s account too. I’m sorry, sur,’ sez she to the man, quite polite, ‘that I had to defin’ meself ; but whin a gintleman claims the law to come into a house, an’ thin assaults th’ owner iv it, though she has no head, it’s more restrainful he should be intirely !’

“‘Hear, hear !’ cried some iv the min, an’ wan iv thim sez ‘Amen,’ sez he, an’ they all begin to laugh. The Manchesther man he didn’t know what to do ; for begor he didn’t like the look of thim ash plants up in the air, an’ yit he was not wan to like the laugh agin’ him or to take it aisy. So he turns to the widdy an’ he lifts his hat an’ sez he wid mock politeness :

“‘I must compliment ye, ma’am, upon the shtrngth iv yer arm, as upon the mildness iv yer disposition. Throth, an’ I’m thinkin’ that it’s misther Mick that has the best iv it, wid his body lyin’ peaceful in the churchyard, anyhow ; though the poor sowl doesn’t seem to have much good in changin’ wan devil for another !’ An’ he looked at her rale spiteful.

“Well, for a minit her eyes blazed, but thin she shmiled at him, an’ made a low curtsey, an’ sez she—oh ! mind ye, she was a gran’ woman at givin’ back as good as she got—

“‘Thank ye kindly, sur, for yer polite remarks about me arm. Sure me poor dear Mick often said the same ; only he said more an’ wid shuparior knowledge ! “Molly,” sez he—“I’d mislike the shtrngth iv yer arm whin ye shtrike, only that I forgive ye for it whin it comes to the huggin’ !” But as to poor Mick’s prisint condition I’m not goin’ to argue wid ye, though I can’t say that I forgive ye for the way you’ve shpoke iv him that’s gone. Bedad, it’s fond iv the dead y’are, for ye seem onable to kape thim out iv yer mouth. Maybe ye’ll be more respectful to thim before ye die !’

“‘I don’t want no sarmons !’ sez he, wery savage. ‘Am I to have me room to-night, or am I not ?’

“‘Did I undherstand ye to say,’ sez she, ‘that ye wanted a share iv the Queen’s Room ?’

“‘I did ! an’ I demand it.’

“‘Very well, sur,’ sez she very quitely, ‘ye shall have it !’ Jist thin the supper war ready, and most iv the min at the bar thronged into the coffee-room, an’ among thim the man from Manchesther, what wint bang up to the top iv the table an’ sot down as though he owned the place, an’ him niver in the house before. A few iv the bhoys shtayed a minit to say another word to the widdy, an’ as soon as they was alone Misther Hogan up, an’ sez he :

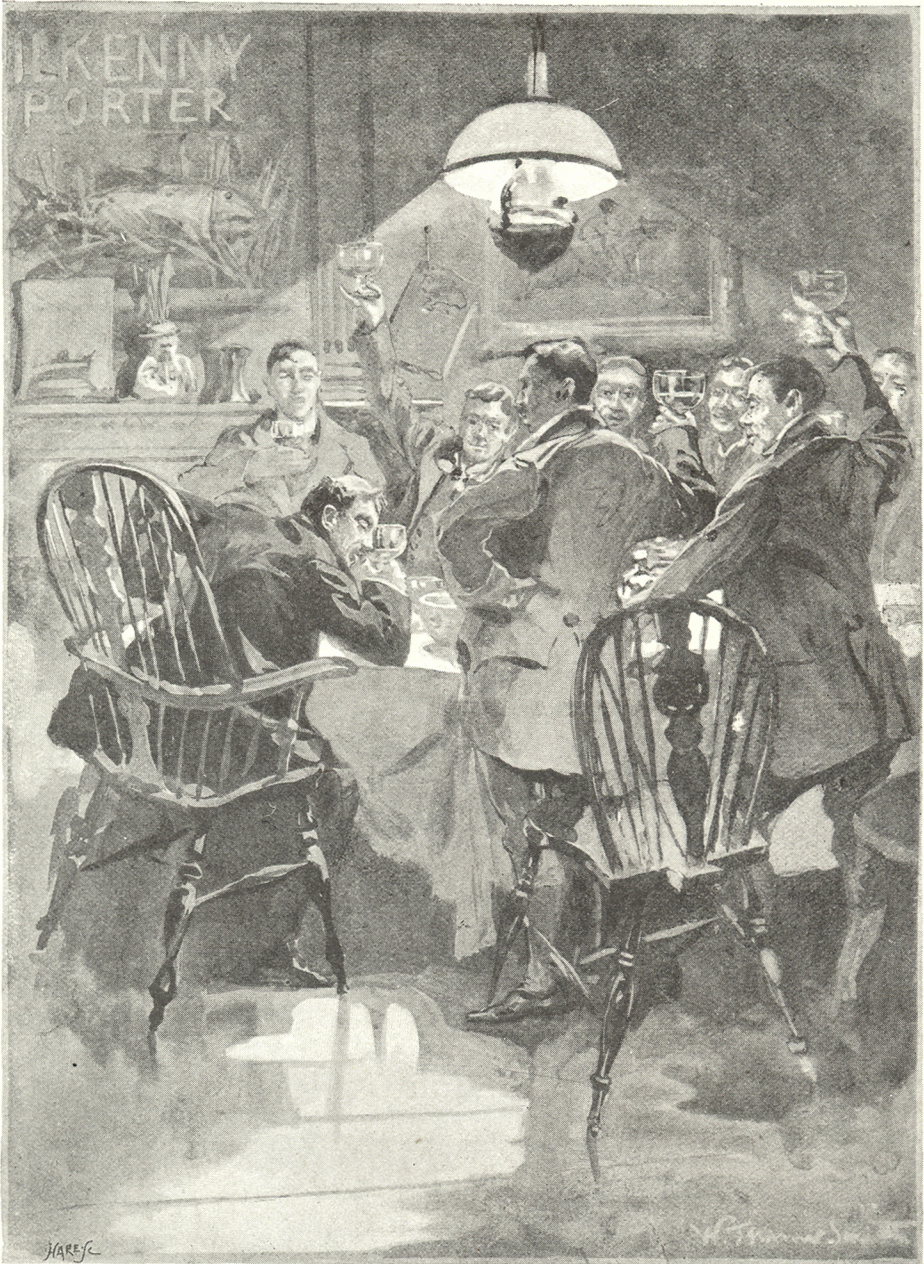
“‘Oh, darlint ! but it’s a jool iv a woman y’ are ! Do ye raly mane to put him in the room wid the corp ?’

“‘He said he insisted on being in that room !’ she says, quite sarious ; an’ thin givin’ a look undher her lashes at the bhoys as made thim lep, sez she :

“‘Oh ! min, an’ ye love me give him his shkin that full that he’ll tumble into his bed this night wid his sinses obscurified. Dhrink toasts till he misremimbers where he is ! Whist ! Go, quick, so that he won’t suspect nothin’ !’

“That was a warm night, I’m telling ye ! The man from Shorrox’ had wine galore wid his mate ; an’ afther, whin the plates an’ dishes was tuk away an’ the

nuts was brought in, Hogan got up an' proposed his health, an' wished him prosperity in his new line. Iv coorse he had to dhrink that; an' thin others got up, an' there was more toasts dhrunk than there was min in the room, till the man, him



"The man from Shorrox' had wine galore."

not bein' used to whisky punch, began to git onsartin in his shpache. So they gev him more toasts—"Ireland as a nation," an' "Home Rule," an' "The mimory iv 'Dan O'Connell,' an' 'Bad luck to Boney,' an' 'God save the Queen,' an'

'More power to Manchesther,' an' other things what they thought would plaze him, him bein' English. Long hours before it was time for the house to shut, he was as dhrunk as a whole row of fiddlers, an' kep shakin' hands wid ivery man an' promisin' thim to open a new line in Home Rule, an' sich nonsense. So they tuk him up to the door iv the Queen's Room an' left him there.

"He managed to undhress himself all except his hat, and got into bed wid the corp iv th' ould attorney-man, an' thin an' there fell asleep widout noticin' him.

"'Well, prisintly he woke wid a cowl'd feelin' all over him. He had lit no candle, an' there was only the light from the passage comin' in through the glass over the door. He felt himself nigh fallin' out iv the bed wid him almost on the edge, an' the cowl'd shtrange gintleman lyin' shlap on the broad iv his back in the middle. He had enough iv the dhrink in him to be quarrelsome.

"'I'll throuble ye,' sez he, 'to kape over yer own side iv the bed—or I'll soon let ye know the rayson why.' An' wid that he give him a shove. But iv coorse the ould attorney-man tuk no notice whatsumiver.

"'Y'are not that warrm that one'd like to lie contagious to ye,' sez he. 'Move over, I say, to yer own side!' But divil a shtir iv the corp.

"Well, thin he began to get fightin' angry, an' to kick an' shove the corp; but not gittin' any answer at all at all, he turned round an' hit him a clip on the side iv the head.

"'Git up,' he sez, 'iv ye're a man at all, an' put up yer dooks.'

"Then he got more madder shtill, for the dhrink was shtirrin' in him, an' he kicked an' shoved an' grabbed him be the leg an' the arm to move him.

"'Begor!' sez he, 'but ye're the cowldest chap I iver kem anigh iv. Musha! but yer hairs is like icicles.'

"Thin he tuk him be the head, an' shuk him an' brung him to the bedside, an' kicked him clane out on to the flure on the far side iv the bed.

"'Lie there,' he sez, 'ye ould blast furnace! Ye can warrm yerself up on the flure till to-morra.'

"Be this time the power iv the dhrink he had tuk got ahoul't iv him agin, an' he fell back in the middle iv the bed, wid his head on the pilla an' his toes up, an' wint aff ashleep, like a cat in the frost.

"By-an'-by, whin the house was about shuttin' up, the watcher from th' undher-taker's kem to sit be the corp till the mornin', an' th' attorney him bein' a Protestan' there was no candles. Whin the house was quite, wan iv the girrls, what was coortin' wid the watcher, shtole into the room.

"'Are ye there, Michael?' sez she.

"'Yis, me darlint!' he sez, comin' to her; an' there they shtood be the door, wid the lamp in the passage shinin' on the red heads iv the two iv thim.

"'I've come,' sez Katty, 'to kape ye company for a bit, Michael; for it's crool lonesome worrk sittin' there alone all night. But I mustn't shtay long, for they're all goin' to bed soon, when the dishes is washed up.'

"'Give us a kiss,' sez Michael.

"'Oh, Michael!' sez she: 'kissin' in the prisince iv a corp! It's ashamed iv ye I am.'

"Sorra cause, Katty. Sure, it's more respectful than any other way. Isn't it next to kissin' in the chapel?—an' ye do that whin ye're bein' married. If ye kiss me now, begor but I don't know as it's mortal nigh a weddin' it is! Anyhow, give us a kiss, an' we'll talk iv the rights an' wrongs iv it aftherwards.'

"Well, somehow, yer ann'rs, that kiss was bein' gave—an' a kiss in the prisince

iv a corp is a sarious thing an' takes a long time. Thim two was payin' such attintion to what was going on betune thim that they didn't heed nothin', whin suddint Katty stops, and sez :

" 'Whist ! what is that ? '

" Michael felt creepy too, for there was a quare sound comin' from the bed. So they grabbed one another as they shtud in the doorway an' looked at the bed almost afraid to breathe till the hair on both iv thim began to shtand up in horror ; for the corp rose up in the bed, an' they seen it pointin' at thim, an' heard a hoarse voice say,—

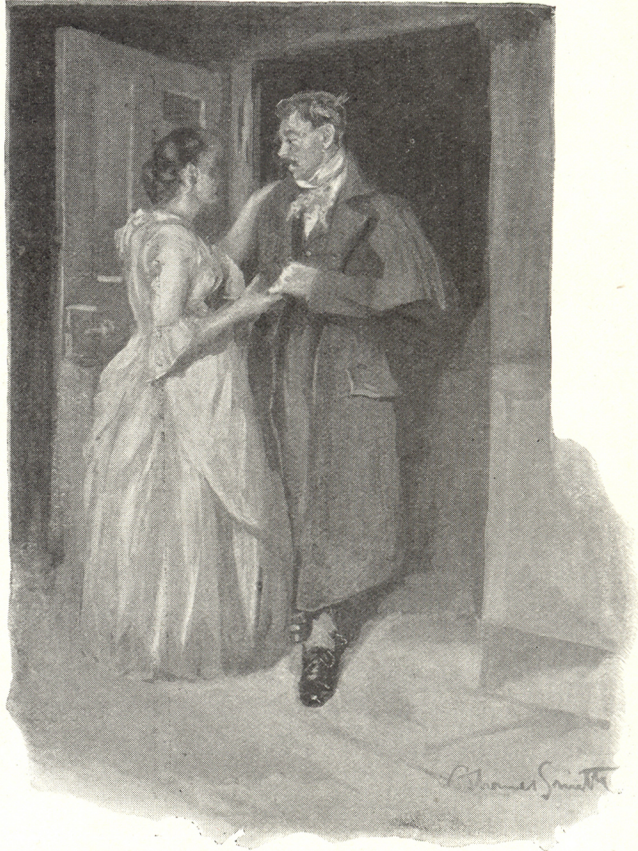
" 'It's in hell I am !—Divils around me ! Don't I see thim burnin' wid their heads like flames ? an' it's burnin' I am too—burnin', burnin', burnin' ! Me throat is on fire, an' me face is burnin' ! Wather ! wather ! Give me wather, if only a dhrop on me tongue's tip ! '

" Well, thin Katty let one screech out iv her, like to wake the dead, an' tore down the passage till she kem to the shtairs, and tuk a flyin' lep down an' fell in a dead faint on the mat below ; and Michael yelled 'murdher' wid all his might.

" It wasn't long till there was a crowd in that room, I tell ye ; an' a mighty shtrange thing it was that sorra wan iv the graziers had even tuk his coat from aff iv him to go to bed, or laid by his shtick. An' the widdy too, she was as nate an' tidy as iver, though seemin' surprised out iv a sound shleep, an' her clothes onto her, all savin' a white bedgown, an' a candle in her hand. There was some others what had been in bed, min an' wimin

wid their bare feet an' slippers on to some iv thim, wid their bracers down their backs, an' their petticoats flung on anyhow. An' some iv thim in big nightcaps, an' some wid their hair all screwed up in knots wid little wisps iv paper, like farden screws iv Limerick twist or Lundy Foot snuff. Musha ! but it was the ould weemin what was afraid iv things what didn't alarm the young wans at all. Divil resave me ! but the sole thing they seemed to dhread was the min—dead or alive it was all wan to thim—an' 'twas ghosts an' corpses an' mayhap divils that the rest was afeard iv.

" Well, whin the Manchester man seen thim all come tumblin' into the room he began to git his wits about him ; for the dhrink was wearin' aff, an' he was thryin' to remimber where he was. So whin he seen the widdy he put his hand up to his face where the red welt was, an' at wance seemed to undhershtand, for he got mad agin an' roared out :



"An' there they sthooed be the door."

"'What does this mane? Why this invasion iv me chamber? Clear out the whole kit, or I'll let yez know!' Wid that he was goin' to jump out of bed, but the moment they seen his toes the ould weemin let a screech out iv thim, an' clung to the min an' implored thim' to save thim from murdher—an' worse. An' there was the Widdy Byrne laughin' like mad; an' Misther Hogan shteped out, an' sez he:

"'Do jump out, Misther Shorrox! The boys has their switches, an' it's a mighty handy costume ye're in for a leatherin'!'

So wid that he jumped back into bed an' covered the clothes over him.

"'In the name of God,' sez he, 'what does it all mane?'

"'It manes this,' sez Hogan, goin' round the bed an' draggin' up the corp an' layin' it on the bed beside him. 'Begorra! but it's a cantankerous kind iv a scut



"'Why this invasion iv me chamber?'"

y'are. First nothin' will do ye but sharin' a room wid a corp; an' thin ye want the whole place to yerself.'

"'Take it away! Take it away,' he yells out.

"'Begorra,' sez Mister Hogan, 'I'll do no such thing. The gentleman ordhered the room first, an' it's he has the right to ordher you to be brung out!'

"'Did he shnore much, sur?' says the widdy; an' wid that she burst out laughin' an' cryin' all at wanst. 'That'll tache ye to shpake ill iv the dead agin!' An' she flung her petticoat over her head an' run out iv the room.

"Well, we turned the min all back to their own rooms; for the most part iv thim had plenty iv dhrink on board, an' we feared for a row. Now that the fun was over, we didn't want any unplisintness to follow. So two iv the graziers wint into wan bed, an' we put the man from Manchester in th' other room, an' gev him a screechin' tumbler iv punch to put the heartt in him agin.

"I thought the widdy had gone to her bed ; but whin I wint to put out the lights I seen one in the little room behind the bar, an' I shteppeed quite, not to dishturb her, and peeped in. There she was on a low shtool rockin' herself to an' fro, an' goin' on wid her laughin' an' cryin' both together, while she tapped wid her fut on the flure. She was talkin' to herself in a kind iv a whisper, an' I heerd her say :

"'Oh, but its the crool woman I am to have such a thing done in me house—an' that poor sowl, wid none to weep for him, knocked about that a way for shport iv dhrunken min—while me poor dear darlin' himself is in the cowl'd clay!—But oh! Mick, Mick, if ye were only here! Wouldn't it be you—you wid the fun iv ye an' yer merry hearrt—that'd be plazed wid the doin's iv this night!'"

BRAM STOKER.

