

of the nostrils of him steam is pourin', an' Shaun wonders is it a horse a' all or only a steam engyne.

"The breath of his nostrils would scald ye to death," says she, "but here in me pocket—if I haven't left in me other skirt—is a bit of a bridle that'll make the bridlin' of him child's play, an' then you can pipe an' I'll dance for the rest of the day."

"So she hands him a little red bridle wid a sprig of shamrock in it, an' hand in hand they go to Lough Erne.

"There on the edge of the lake is a stallion as big as the hippopotamus in Central Park an' as graceful as a colt, but whenever he leaps in the air you'd think a freight train was runnin' over Brooklyn Bridge from the noise of him.

"WHEN he seen Shaun comin' toward him, he lowered his head an' blew a cloud of steam out of first one nostril an' then out of the other, in a way that was terrible to look at, an' his eyes gleamed wid fire. Oh, he was a horrible object, an' Fiona was near dead wid fear. But Shaun, bein' of the house of MacCulin, didn't know what fear was, an' he runs up to him empty handed an' was near kilt wid the breath of the steam. But his hand happened to touch the bridle in his pocket, an' he leaps in the air an' places it in the stallion's mouth, an' in a moment you'd think it was a pet lamb he was leadin' home to put to bed in the baby's cradle.

"Oh, the stallion was so gentle that Shaun took hold of his forelock the way he had taken hold of Fiona's hair an' pulled himself up, an' he rode between his ears. An', helpin' Fiona up, the two rode to the stable, where Shaun gev the stallion four bushels of oats an' a couple of tons of hay, an' then Fiona kisses Shaun good evenin', an' climbs up the twenty-five flights, wishin' the giant wasn't too stingy to put in an elevator.

"Pretty soon the giant comes home be himself, havin' left the double-headed cow in a pasture up Donegal way—so me mudder said—an' when he seen Shaun sittin' on a seat in front of the house tryin' to get a tune out of the pipes, he says, 'Did you get me stallion?'

"Sure an' I did," says Shaun. "An' child's play it was. It's a wonder you wouldn't ax him to come home every night be himself. I've a kitten at home that is fiercer."

"The giant goes into the stable to satisfy himself that Shaun is not lyin', an' when he comes out he says, 'Ye have seen my Fiona.'

"Oh, it's always Fiona," says Shaun. "The word means nothin' at all. Do ye think I have nothin' to do but to be seein' things. Where's me dinner?" says he.

"Wid that the giant puts his hand in his pocket an' chucks a bone to Shaun, an' that put the boy in such a rage an' fury that he trun the bone up at the giant an' blinded his left eye.

"That night Shaun sleeps in the hay as before, an' in the mornin' he finds more eggs an' ates them, an' there must be some special nourishment in the eggs, for he feels as strong as a horse, for all he'd had nothin' but a couple of dozen eggs since landin'.

"THAT mornin' the giant says, 'It's little ye'll have to do the day,' says he. 'All I want is me rent from the bottomless pit.'

"Do ye own the bottomless pit?" says Shaun.

"I do," says the giant.

"It's a wonder ye wouldn't be closin' it up then, for the good of the world, an' never mind the rent."

"But the giant only laughs, an' tells Shaun that when he has collected the rent, he can help himself to whatever he finds that's good to eat in the kitchen, but Shaun, remembering the copper soup, is leery, an' takes no stock in the giant's words.

"After the giant had gone to the pasture to get the double-headed cow, Shaun, feelin' the need of exercise, walks up the twenty-five flights to Fiona's room an' finds that she, thinkin' perhaps he might be hungry, has prepared him a bit of lunch—some foreign thing like you'd get in a delicatessen shop—I forget what me mudder said, but we'll call it blutwurst. Sure he did justice to it, an' then he tells her what it is—he has to do to-day, 'Go down to hell an' collect the rent,' says he.

"Fiona laughed at the funny words of him, but she soon stopped laughin', an' says, 'It's no slouch of a

job, ye have,' says she. 'It's as like as not ye'll never come out—wid no chance of purgatory at all,' says she.

"That made Shaun feel a little queer, because, although the MacCulins were afraid of nothin' on earth, hell's different.

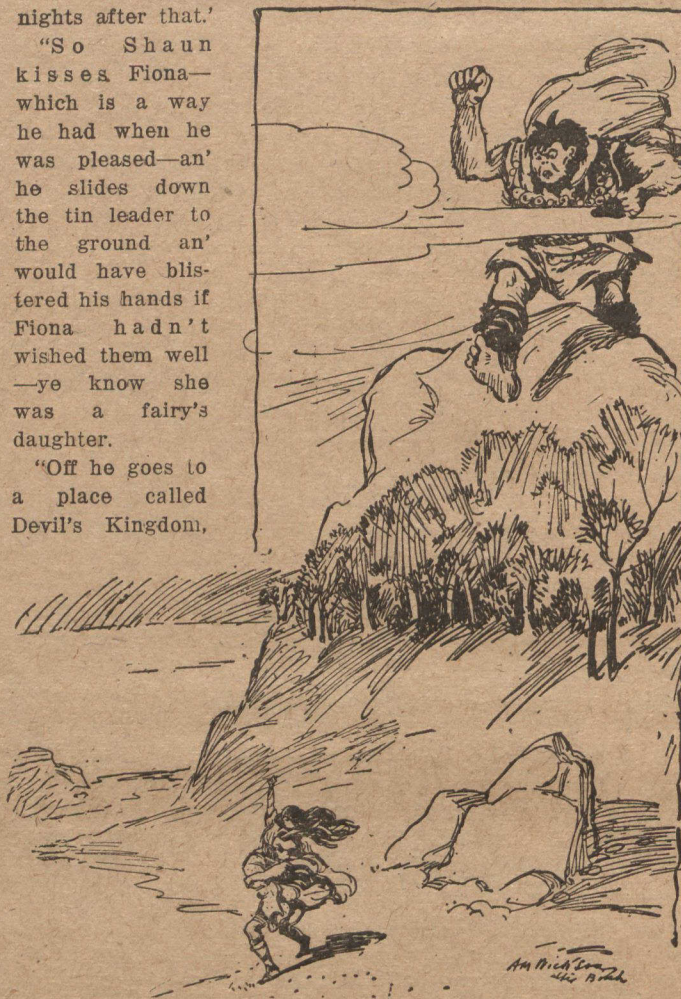
"An' what'll I do?" says he. 'I can't tell the giant I wasn't able to do his work.'

"Wid that she goes to a little closet an' she brings out a shillelah. 'There's the first one that ever was made,' says she. (Me mudder said it was a big club made out of blackthorn, an' worse than a night stick if ye'd be hit wid it.)

"Hit this three times on the gate of the bottomless pit," says Fiona, 'an' a red devil, streamin' fire at every joint, will come up an' ax ye what ye want. Be sure to tell him you're after the giant's rent, but you want only what you can get away wid, or he'll take you down an' your mudder'll never worry about your comin' home nights after that.'

"So Shaun kisses Fiona—which is a way he had when he was pleased—an' he slides down the tin leader to the ground an' would have blistered his hands if Fiona hadn't wished them well—ye know she was a fairy's daughter.

"Off he goes to a place called Devil's Kingdom,



"Fiona took the bullet of silver an' she threw it into the sea."

over Sligo way, an' a wild, rocky place it is, full of crags an' nothin' growin' on it but heather, me mudder said.

"When he got to the gate of the bottomless pit, which he knew because of the hot steam that was oozing up through the rocks, he strikes the ground three times an' a devil like the one on the beef cans comes up—sure I wish I might see one. Red as fire an' fiery as flame an' flamin' like a torch—that's the way me mudder said it.

"What do ye want?" says he.

"I have come for the giant's rent," says Shaun.

"And how much do ye want?"

"On'y what I can get away wid," says Shaun, rememberin' Fiona's advice.

"Bully for you," says the devil, 'there's some wants more'; an' wid that he leads Shaun down into a cavern which had Tiffany's beat to a pulp. Di'mon's was so thick that Shaun forgot to notice them before he was there a minute. An' what's this?—rubies an' emeral's an' onyxes—buckets an' buckets full, an' streamin' around like the ashes from a barrel on a windy day. Gee, if it was me that was there!

"Have ye such a thing as a potater bag?" asks Shaun, rememberin' to be polite, for a little further on he saw hot flames, an' he seen a lot of pitchforks stacked up in a corner.

"The devil opened a closet where he kep' potater bags an' he gives one to Shaun, an' the prince filled it wid nothin' but emeral's an' di'mon's, an' he on'y

took the emeral's because he was Irish—me mudder said—because for a fact they wasn't as valuable as di'mon's.

"Much obliged," says Shaun, ready to go. 'Come an' see me some day.'

"Mebbe I will," says the devil, grinnin'.

"Shaun was not long in returnin' to Fiona, an' he axed her how much was the giant's rent.

"Oh, the half of that! No one ever brought so much before. It's strong ye are."

"All the MacCulins is strong," says Shaun, squarin' his shoulders, as vain as an athlete.

"When the lowin' of the double-headed cow showed that the giant was comin' home, Shaun went down to the seat in front of the house, an' after cuttin' down the sack so it would look full—but he had left the most precious stones wid Fiona—he began to whistle, an' so the giant came on him.

"Have ye been to the bottomless pit to get me rent?" says the giant.

"Can't ye see I have?" says Shaun, for he was beginnin' to get tired of service an' thought he'd ask for a Thursday off next day.

"You have seen my Fiona," says the giant. 'It's not your brain thought of this.'

"An' what's the matter wid my brain?" says Shaun, risin' an' gazin' at the giant like a banty rooster.

"Ye'll see her to-morrow, that's what'll happen," said the giant, an' wid that he went in the house, leavin' the double-headed cow in the front yard, an' Shaun milked her an' had a good supper for the first time since he had come to the island.

"THE next mornin' the giant went off to take the cow back, but he was home before long, complaining of a headache.

"He goes up to Fiona's room an' he says to her, 'There's a gossoon down below that'll make good broth. Pop him into the kettle, an' when he's ready to serve, call me. Where's me headache powders?'

"Fiona goes to the closet an' takes out some powders that makes people sleep sound an' she gives them to the giant, who never notices the differ, an' soon he was sleepin' that hard that the house shook like it was in San Francisco.

"Downstairs Fiona hurries an' she finds Shaun wonderin' what to do next, an' she says to him quick, 'Help me to carry this log of wood in the house an' I've me prick your finger wid me needle.'

"Women is queer creatures," says Shaun, but he lets her draw three drops of blood from his finger and they drop on the log. Then she an' him heave it into the pot which was hangin' on nothin' at all, an' then they

filled the pot with door mats an' tablecloths an' pieces of oilcloth an' sink mops an' old shawls an' matten, an' what not.

"Gee!" says Shaun, 'but that's a soup that's not to my likin'.'

"Then Fiona leads Shaun through the three kitchens, an' wid a mold she had, she made a bullet of copper, a bullet of silver, and a bullet of gold.

"Life begins now," said Shaun. 'Of a Thursday,' says Fiona, an' they run away from the giant's house.

"Now the blood drops was enchanted, an' when the giant woke from his sleep, after ten or twelve hours, he calls out to Fiona, 'Is dinner ready?'

"Dear, no," says the first drop of blood. 'It's only just beginnin' to boil. There's somethin' the matter with the fire.'

"So the giant turns over an' goes to sleep again.

"In five or six hours he wakes once more. 'Is that dinner ready?' says he. 'I'm hungry as a hog,' says he.

"Half done," says the second drop of blood, with a wink at the other two drops.

"So the giant turns over again and sleeps so hard that the bedclothes tremble.

"In a couple of hours he wakes again an' says, 'Say, I'm comin', anyhow, whether dinner's ready or not. I'm afraid I'll eat me blanket.'

"Come along," says the third drop. 'It's ready this minute.'

"The giant never stopped to dress, but rushed into

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