

THE STRANGE STORY OF POOR SHEMUS.

By SEUMAS MACMANUS.

Nancy and Shemus were man and wife, and they lived all alone together for forty years; but at length a good-for-nothing street of a fellow named Rory, who lived close by, thought what a fine thing it would be if Shemus would die, and he could marry Nancy, and get the house, the farm and all the stock. So he up and said to Nancy: "What a pity it is for such a fine-looking woman as you to be bothered with that old complainin' good-for-nothing covey of a man that's as full of pain and aches as an egg's full of meat. If you were free of him the morra the finest and handomest young man in the parish would be proud to have you for a wife."

"What's a Plaisham?" said Prince Connal. "Oh," says Nancy, "it's the most wonderful and most amusing thing in the world; it will keep your guests in hood humor for nine days, and nine nights after they have seen it." "Well," said Prince Connal, "that must have been a fine thing entirely, and I'm sure I would be mighty anxious to have it. But," says he, "where would I get it or how would I get it?" "Well," says Nancy, "that's easy: if you order Shemus to bring a Plaisham to your castle by supper time this night, and promise to have his life if he hasn't it, there, he'll soon get it for you."

as the ring went into it the cow began to kick and rear and create a great tendarry of a noise entirely. Then Shemus got in under some hay in the corner. It was no time at all until Nancy was out to find what was wrong but when she hit it her fist struck the cow with her fist to quiet it, but when she hit it her fist struck to the cow, and she could not get away. Rory had come runnin' out after Nancy to help her, and Nancy called: "Rory, Rory, pull me away from the cow." Rory got hold of her to pull her away, but as he did his hands stuck to Nancy, and he could not get away himself. Up then jumped Shemus from under the hay in the corner. "Hup! hup!" says Shemus, says he, "drive on the Plaisham." And out of the byre starts the cow with Nancy stuck to her and Rory stuck to that, and heads towards the castle, with the cow rearing and rowling, and Nancy and Rory yelling and hawling, and the cow terrible din entirely, and roused the whole country side, who flocked out to see what was the matter. Down past Rory's house the cow sticking to Nancy, ran out to pull him away; but when she laid her hand on Rory she stuck to him and "Hup! hup!" says Shemus, says he, "drive on the Plaisham."

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At moonrise that night, Shemus, as you may be well assured, was at the rockin' stone at the head of the glen of the fairies, and from under it he got a little white rod. He went to the hill where the prince's castle was to be built, and with the point of the rod he marked out the plan of the castle, and then he went back and left the rod where he got it. The next morning when Prince Connal got up out of his bed and went out of his little castle, but to take the air, his eyes were opened I tell you, to see the magnificent castle that was standing finished, and with the coping stones on it on the hill above. He lost no time till he went over to thank Shemus for building him such a beautiful castle, and when Nancy heard that the castle was finished, it was she that was the angry woman.

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REPUBLICAN RECORD.—The Boston "Republic" remarks: "There are 7 people still who regard the Irish as a nation of drunkards, yet it is a fact that less liquor is drunk by the Irish than by their English and Scotch neighbors. In 1900 England spent on drinks an average of \$20.79 per head of population. Scotland, \$16.58, and Ireland, \$14.50. The intoxicating liquors consumed averaged 2.46 gallons per head in England, 1.82 in Scotland, and 1.64 in Ireland."