

a distress in my stomach I'm afther usin' it now," says I. "Have ye anything aitable now?" says I, "to send down afther it?" "How would a feed of fish bones and tenpenny nails agree with ye?" says she. "I'd take that afore I'd take your temper for a gift, Kitty," says I. And I made my way to the dhresser where I seen four duck eggs. I whipped a pin out of the flap o' me coat, and while ye'd be sayin' "thrapsticks" I had the eggs sucked an' the shells tossed by Kitty's nose into the fire. I was on the bounce then to be off, becase the passengers was braken't to get off the car again and get something to relieve their hunger when they found the delay, and Mither Dillon I could hear threatenin' them, and callin' down ali manner of bad

out his accounts for a grand fill-up in Donegal. And as a good Providence would have it, he was the only man of the seven who didn't get a morsei. And when meself heard this, maybe it's me wasn't the well-plaised man in my own heart.

When McFeeters carried a countenance would sour crame, and a bark in his voice would frighten a badger, he was in his best humor, but on this night, goin' through the Gap of Barnesmore with an emp'y stomach that he had fetched forty mile, and would have to fetch, so, forty more, ye may pictur for yer-self what he was like, for it's more nor I can do for ye. And in throth, as ill-humored as the other passengers—and small wondher—had been, they couldn't help nudgin' and chucklin' and actially got gay, over

about me ieg of goose, or let on that I missed it.

Just a mile and a half farther on there lived Ned Nowlan, and Ned owned the most undherbred, onmanly whelp of a dog ye would meet in a week's walkin'—a dog that was never known to let coach or car pass without givin' them a warm reception. Of course, as I had expected, we didn't well come in sight of Ned's till the dog was comin' for us like a shtroke of lightnin' with his throat open. "Here's Ned Nowlan's onmanly dog comin' for us now," says wan of the passengers. "It's a mortal disgrace to dhrovers goin' this road that that dog hasn't met suddint daith years ago." "Plaise Heaven," says I, "it'll not be much longer a disgrace, for I've brought something in me pocket here, all the way from Donegal, especially for Ned Nowlan's dog." "Good for ye, Larry," says they; "what is it?" "A leg of a goose," says I, "steeped twenty-four hours in poison," and I dived me hand into me pocket to produce it. "It was a docthor travelin' from Darry on the coach give Corney McCabe the resait for puttin' Ned Nowlan's dog off the walk—where the devil did I hide it away, anyhow?—and Kitty Clery had it prepared and ready and stuck it, I thought, in that outside left pocket. In the name of wondher what have I done with it?" "Ye maybe dhropped it," says the lad who did know what happened to it. "I hope to Heaven no," says I, "for the Lord only knows what onfortunate poor hungry wratch's way ill fuck would throw it across." I was ransackin' every corner of me clothes like a man frantic. "It was a tasteless poison, purposely," says I, near a most cryin', "and it—as may God forbid—any misfortunate begger should pick it up, and ate it, thinkin' some traveller had lost his bite, it'll be a meracle if he isn't got in his last gasp, for there was a double dose for a dog in it. Bad scan to me if it isn't clean gone! Oh, masha, masha!"

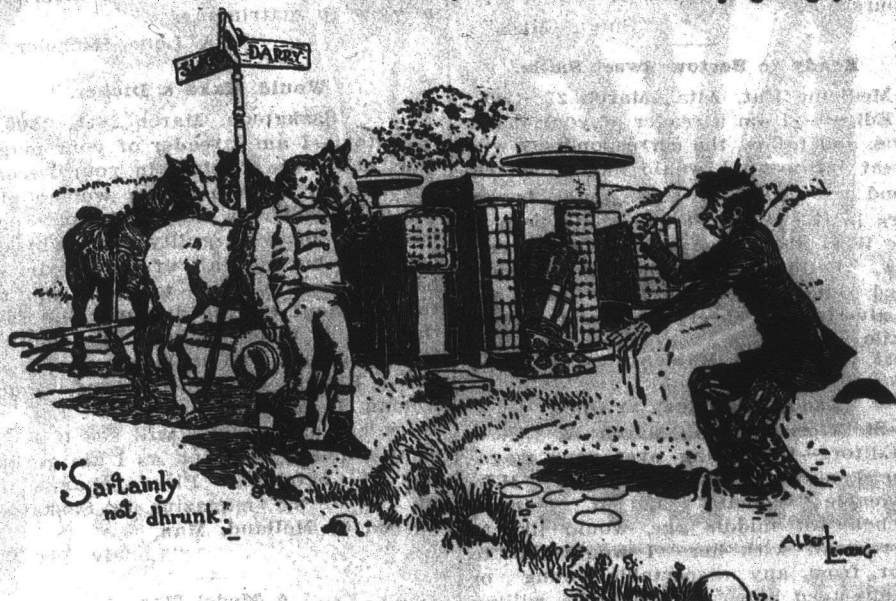
Curmudgeon McFeeters he was wriggin' on the car like an eel with a pin in its gizzard, and the color in the face of a three weeks' washed shirt; and he was peichin' and sighin' like a calf a-smotherin'. He had been thrying hard to groan inside of himself only, but in a couple of minutes he let a hard-pent wan escape him. Every wan on the coach turned to him; and, "Presarve us! Mr. McFeeters," says I, "is anything the matter?" "With me?" says he, jumpin'. "No, no; nothin' with me. A toothache!" then says he, and he give a groan would grind rocks. "Lord pity ye, poor man!" says I till

her mouth with the cowl well-water just when the tooth would be at its very ragin'est, an' the devil (as she used to say, poor woman!) dancin' in it—fill it then, she used, with the cowl well-water, and take her stand with her back to a good hot fire till the wather would boil in her mouth; then, she said, there wouldn't be a stoon of the toothache but 'ud be gone as complete as the snow in June. You should thry it, sir," says I. But he let another groan out of him, and, "Och, murderher!" he yells at me, "murderher!" and made every sowl on the coach jump. Says I: "In the name of ali that's sinible, sir, don't let a bad stoon of toothache dhrove ye out of yer wits. Didn't I tell ye for not to be lettin' the cowl night air intil yer mouth?" "Murderher!" he yells again. "I'm poison-ed! By you! And the poison's workin' in me already like a wee mill!" "Surely, surely," says I, "ye don't mane to tell me, Mr. McFeeters, that you have ate the leg of the goose?" "It's workin' in me! It's workin' in me!" says he, doublin' himself up again, "like a wee mill! Wather! Murderher! Murderher! Wather!"

"Bear witness," goes on McFeeters, "that if it kills me, if there's an inquest, this is my murderher—deliberate murderher—I reported him for bein' dhruke and tossin' the mail-coach wan time, and he swore he'd be revenged. He is, he is revenged—it's workin' in me like a wee mill! Oh! Oh! Murderher! Wather! Wather! Murderher!"

And there the feila was bawlin' like a bull, and disgracin' us, as we rattled into Darry in the early mornin'; dacint people throwin' up their windies, an' shovin' out night-capped heads to find who was a murderherin' on the public streets. I lost little time dumpin' myself and all of them at the Stag Inns, where I seen him disappear, bawlin' still, and groanin'.

But behoud ye! I hadn't me horses stabled till two polismen come in and tuk me pres'ner for the attempted poisonin' of Solomon McFeeters, they said, and marched me, like a turkey-cock for the spit, to the Stag Inns and to the bedroom where two docthors were examin' the groanin' Solomon, and quizzin' him regardin' how the pains was workin' him; and that minute in walks another polismen with a magistrate and the clerk of the petty sessions, to take the dyin' man's dispositions; and at the tail of that in was marched the other six passengers was on the coach. The docthors beseeched me to relent and to tell them what the name of the poison was till they'd give him a nimetic; meseif created a furore when I said that the only poison the man



prayers upon my head, without—I was on the bounce, I say, to be off when, as Heaven would have it, somethin' peepin' out from in under a dish on the dhresser took me eye. I jumped, and got off with a fine stout leg of a large goose she had hid past for herself. And I went off laughin' hearty at me good luck, and lickin' me lips at the thoughts of the fine feed I'd have of it afore mornin', as, wrapt in a bit of paper, I stuck it into the left pocket o' me big coat, and tore out and onto the coach and was away.

Now, of the seven lads I carried with me, if there was wan more than another that I hadn't a particular gradth for, it was an oul' curmudgeon named McFeeters, some sort of a Scotchman from the County Down; whether he was some sort of a missionary to the haythen in our parts, or what else, the sorra wan of me knows. But he had come and gone with me so often that I knew him to the hole in the heels of his stockin'; and, in throth, it was small good I knew of him. All the times ever I dhruv him the shine of his sixpenny bit niver crossed my palm; he was a sight reader wit his praichin' than his purse, and with his gab than his gift. Any time ever he was with me I couldn't swallow half a glass of whiskey in paice, but he'd nag and nag at me till the journey's en' afther. And to complait his viliany, and poison me out and out again him, there was wan day he was with me, about four months afore, and I mismanaged to give the coach an ugly upset into a sheuch at Grange; barrin' for a rowl in the mud McFeeters wasn't (I'm sorry to say) a pin point the worse, but for all that he reported me fer bein' dhruke and unfit for handlin' horses. Now I wasn't no more dhruke than (by yer laive) you yourself are. I had been at Patsy McCran's weddin' the night afore, and I had about as much dhruke in me as bothered me head a bit—but sartainly not dhruke. No matter for that, the oul' sinner sent in again' me a report would reach from here to Hallowday, that brought me an awful reprimand entirely, and fined me for the damages to the coach—and only me long good character saved me from bein' sent to the sarra about me business.

Now, McFeeters hadn't aiten from the left Stigy that day; and, for the same lad loved his stomach, had laid

his grumpiness; and grew into purty good humor.

Well and good, we got along our journey without anything shtrange till, afther we left Raphoe behind us I said to meself, "Now for yer leg of a goose, Larry." Into my left pocket I dives me arm, but behoud ye, there was ne'er a bone or a pick there. "Whew! That's shtrange," says I, in me own mind, "for I'm sartin that was the pocket I put it in." I sarched the right-hand pocket with the same luck. And then I didn't leave hole or bole in me garments I didn't ransack, all to as little purpose.

I was in a sweet temper, ye can take yer davy, and, "The curse o' the crows light upon yons boys, whichever of ye was the mane thief," says I in me own mind, for I was too wise to give them the satisfaction of lettin' on to them that I discovered they'd overreached me. "A mane thief he was that hangin's too good for," says I, still in me own mind, "whoever was so onprincipled!"

At the Cruiced Brae here every man got off to stretch their legs and to aise the bastes. And as I was joggin' alongsides the horses' heads, up to me comes wan o' the lads and says, "What was it ye had bundled in paper in yer pocket?" "What do ye think?" says I, short, that way to him. "Somethin' aitable, I'll be bound," says he. "Did it taste weel?" says meself, dhryly. "Faith, I'm sorry to say I don't know," says he. "Oul' McFeeters, though, can tell ye," says he, "for he's about finishin' up the rear of it there behind." I looked back down the hill, and in the gray twilight, sure enough, I seen McFeeters siinkin' up the hill aback of every wan else, and at that selfsame minute was throwin' from him a whack of paper, and brushin' down the breast of his coat. Says the lad was informin' me, "The end of it was stickin' out of the pocket of your coat, right by his leg, and he sneaked it out when he thought no wan was lookin'—but I seen him, and knowin' the poor devil was ready to dhrop with the dint of the hunger, I was loth to intherfair."

Meself was too mad to make answer. To the devil himself if he was hungry I wouldn't 'a' begridged it, but—God forgive me!—I begridged it to McFeeters with all me sowl.

All mounted again at the top of the hill, and not wan word did I say



"Where I seen him disappear."

him. "There isn't many has sympathy with a man in the toothache, but I have, for me poor mother (rest her sowl!) used to suffer ojious with it. De ye niver thry any cure at all, at all, for it, Mr. McFeeters?" But he give me no answer, only he met his knees and his nose together, like in a stoon of pain. "Ye do right, sir," says I, "not to open yer mouth in the cowl' air. Now," says I, "let me tell ye a good cure for toothache that me poor mother (the heavens be her bed this night!) used to thry, and she said it was the best she ever come across. She used to fill

was dyin' from was a stolen goose leg Kitty Clery had given me—and the pain that made him groan was a toothache in his conscience.

The peelers and the magistrate they could only tongue-bang him—and, in throth, they did that; but he had to pay the docthors with two goold sovereigns; and he give them as if they were his eye-teeth.

"Mither McFeeters," says I, then, "if ye stand a good dhruke for the company I'll not mind suin' ye for the leg o' me goose." An' it tuk three men to hould him whilst I got down the stairs.