

## WILLIE-THE-WISP.

BY SEUMAS McMANUS. (MAC)

N the grand old times, long, long ago, there was wanst a blacksmith, and his name was Willie—and he was notorious over all Ireland for the drinkin', sportin' way he spent all of his life—and it was often and often prophesied for him that he'd never come till a good ending. He had come of good family, and besides his thrade—which was in them days, a profession for a gentleman—his people had left to him great properties both in houses and in lands. But all these properties Willie very soon drunk and sported away,—and all melted like snow in summer. When it come to that he had only his, trade Willie had purty hard times of it; for he didn't like to work, and he didn't care to starve,—and he found it purtikularly hard to have no money to sport and spend, as he was used to do. He worked as little as he could, but he wanted as much as ever; so things went on from bad to worse, and his chances of thrade even was laivin' him, for no man could be sartin whether he'd oblige them or refuse them (accordingly as the mood was on him) when they'd bring a horse to shoe or a plough to mend. And at long and at last, wan mornin' that he got no breakfast, bekase he had neither money nor means, he was standin' leanin' against his own forge door with his heart in his boots, and he wonderin' what was he ever born for anyhow—an' debatin' with himself whether dhrowndin' or hangin' would be the laist throublesome daith, when all at wanst he hears the noise of hoofs, and up there rides a grand gentleman entirely, mounted on a great black charger. "Helloa, Willie," says he, "what are you so down in the mouth about this mornin'? Ye look as lorn as a March graveyard." "Small wonder I would," says Willie. "And if you had the same raison, it's not such a spruce jaunty lookin' gentleman you'd be this mornin'." "I'm mortal sorry for ye Willie," says the gentleman, "Can I help ye?" "I dar'say ye could; but I don't expect ye would," says Willie. "Don't be so sartin of that," says the gentleman—"What is it ye need?" "Money," says Willie, "an' plenty of it." "How much of it?" says the gentleman. "Och, a