

Judy Madigan's Boots

(By Canon Langbridge, in the Daily News and Leader, London.)

In the old days Ireland smelt of whiskey from end to end. I used to fancy that, as the steamer felt her way to her moorings, there came to one's nostrils a soft spirituous welcome. That is all over now. Not that an advertisement might not discover a red nose or two; but the ramp and riot of bibulosity are still. No longer after dinner does the company grow steamy with punch. No longer is the casual caller beckoned to the sideboard, come at what hour he may. Saturday night no longer howls and staggers with the husband's homeward steps. When the races are over you may find sober fares and even sober jarveys. A man who drinks is no longer loved for an amiable weakness. The good days of tipsiness are done.

Now a few years ago we had in the town that I know best a priest in a high degree pervasive and persuasive. To him was confided the guidance of a great confraternity of women. He was a delicate man, and he wasted like a candle in the flame; yet he never burnt out. Now drink is not, like the vote, a privilege of the thinking sex; the public house is open to all. Any woman can get drunk. Some of Father Tim's women did. His singular gift, however, was an inexhaustible patience. He never gave anyone up. No failure daunted or disheartened him. When he was told of a conversion where tittle trod on the heels of tears, "Ah, well!" he would say, "how long did she hold out?" "Not two hours itself, your Reverence, and she protested she had her last taste tuk."

"Never mind," was the answer, "two hours is better than nothing. Where is the creature now?" And he would take up the burden again.

I could narrate many lofty tales of the converts of Father Tim. To-day, however, I am thinking of a funny one—the story of Judy Josey Madigan. Judy has been dead at least a dozen years; I hope I shall not hurt her ghostly feelings.

I remember her in the morning—a large, shambling woman with ash-colored hair and huge livid feet. The rest of her had only one expression—a gentle endurance; a resigned wait. She was possessing her soul in patience; it was too early to begin.

I remember her in the afternoon—a genial person, whose clasping hand it was hard to evade; who nudged you in unlikely places; who laughed a good deal at very little, and was usually wiping her mouth.

I remember her in the evening—a blast of whiskey, a storm of evil words, a tangle of mad hair, a threatening fist, a girdle of rejoicing boys; sooner or later, a policeman on either hand; a more or less triumphal march to one of her two seats—the cellar or the strong room.

In the long run Judy was introduced to Father Tim; in the longer run she was introduced to the pledge; in the longest run she kept it. She was to be seen at wild hours incredibly sober, wearing that unusual ornament a hat, and carrying an umbrella. They were the outward expression of a solemn change. Respectability can go only one step farther than a hat—an umbrella. Judy's umbrella had one little failing—it wouldn't shut. But that was no great matter. 'You would hardly have time for the likes o' that,' she said, 'betune the show-ers.' In spite of the transfiguration Judy's arresting feet still padded bare upon the muddy pavements. Boots were still beyond her. 'I have the right foot waiting on me,' she would say: 'I do be looking around to see where I'd pick up its fella.'

After a while Judy got a little charring, hiring boots for her days of infrequent service, and returning them to the pawnshop when the day was done. 'I'd like them for a constancy,'

she said, 'but how would I sink two-and-four in a luxury like that?'

One day in Lent there came to Judy a glorious, a dazzling and inconceivable surprise. It came from Father Tim and a few admiring friends of Judy's. She had fought a good fight she was worthy of the crown. There it was—an order for an outfit—an outfit up to two pounds.

Think of Judy at the Monster House, fitting out! How the shopwalkers had to run; how everything unrollable was unrolled; how every counter looked like a lost battle! It took her two hours, and when all was done, millinery and haberdery were glad to stagger to bed.

That night Judy tried everything on, gazing at herself in her fragment of looking glass. She drew back as from a vision of angels—a curly hat, with a blue feather, a green veil, a pink blouse, and a brown skirt with a little yellow in it; it was high and wonderful; it was the eternal dream come true.

Then obeying the guidance of a swift suspicion, she looked at her feet. They were larger than ever, more conspicuous than ever—and they were bare. Two pounds won't stretch all over a woman when she soars to the heights and peaks of fashion.

Heaven had flung wide its gates to Judy Madigan, and she hadn't the boots to walk in with. It was late on Easter eve. Even if she had not spent her last penny, nothing could be bought or hired. Her house of joy was falling at its foundations. What could be done?

At ten o'clock Judy was in her place. She arrived early, and every new comer received a separate electric shock. She was Paris in gay elegance, and Limerick in modest propriety. She did not move more than could be helped, and at every movement she pulled her skirt down. A boy sat behind Judy, and his eyes followed her when she knelt. Judy's feet were black, but the boy was not satisfied. Appearances are deceitful. The boy was a searcher for the truth.

There was a cry—half-shriek, half-laugh—the cry of one who has been tickled. Then Judy Madigan, red and furious, arose, and having boxed the boys ears, walked quickly down the aisle. Her feet were dark and dull, and they fell with a thin thud.

There was wonder, and there was whisper, "What's up at all with Judy?"

Then, rubbing his ear, the boy explained, "I felt the feet of her," he said, "tis black-leaded they are."

SHIPPING IN GUNS.

Excitement over the Home Rule situation has been greatly increased by the surreptitious landing on the night of April 24th of twenty-five thousand Mauser rifles and over 200,000 rounds of ammunition at Larne, Bangor, Ballywalter and Donaghadee. Each of these towns was encircled by a cordon of volunteers. Their signalling corps were in communication with each landing place and with their headquarters at Belfast. On Friday night a steamer sailed into Larne, tied up at the dock, and was guarded by volunteer pickets and unloaded fifteen thousand rifles, packed five in a case, with five hundred rounds of ammunition in each case. Ten thousand more rifles, with a proportionate amount of ammunition were split up between Donaghadee and Ballywalter, while the rest was landed long after dawn had broken at Bangor, under the eyes of the coast guards, who were kept prisoners in their cabin. The audacity of Ulster's gun-running coup causes the most gloomy anticipations as to the future. The consensus of opinion is that the event accentuates an already acute situation, amounting to open revolt. Sir Edward Carson, speaking of the matter, said: "We have not deviated one

iota from the policy laid down two and a half years ago. Guns have been coming in for a long time, but Saturday's measures were necessarily on a large scale, because we are getting nearer to the crisis." The government press demand some assurance that every person will be punished who took part in this act of rebellion, while the Unionist press fear the country is slipping into civil war, doing a little towards fanning the flame at the same time. Meanwhile Mr. Asquith has assured the House of Commons that "in view of this grave and unprecedented outrage the government will take, without delay, appropriate steps to vindicate the authority of the law and protect the officers of the King in the exercise of their duties and the enjoyment of their rights." While discussing the situation in the House of Commons on Tuesday night, Mr. Winston Churchill made a statement which has led to the impression that the government would be willing to make the exclusion of Ulster from the Home Rule Bill indefinite pending the institution of a federal scheme for the United Kingdom. While Mr. Churchill spoke for himself, it is recognized that he was also speaking for the government. It is stated that Mr. Asquith is firmly convinced that Ulster's opposition to union with the rest of Ireland is bound eventually to collapse.

PIG'S SQUEAL USEFUL.

It is said that down at the P. Burns plant in Alberta that all parts of the pig have been found useful except the squeal, and scientists have for years tried to evolve a use for the squeal. These people may get some comfort from the words of Rev. Jas. A. Dillard, pastor of the Delmar Avenue Baptist Church, St. Louis. Mr. Dillard says that even the bray of a mule and the buzz of a fly possess musical qualities and can be used to tune a piano. Hence the squeal of a pig may soon send the present methods of tuning a piano into the discard along with the tuning fork. "All animals have a musical cry," said Mr. Dillard. "For instance, as I run the scale on the piano I can strike a certain note that is in harmony with that carried by the dog, and he will answer with a howl in the same note."

EXCLUSION OF SHRUBS.

In pursuance of an order just issued by Mr. Thomas-Cunningham, inspector of fruit pests, after May 15, 1914, no more fruit trees or shrubs will be allowed to enter British Columbia until October 1st, 1914. This closed season, established by the Dominion Department of Agriculture, commences May 1, and the fifteen days' grace has been allowed to enable the stock which arrived before that date to reach its destination. This order does not include soft, herbaceous plants, bulbs and tubers, which will be inspected in Vancouver or Victoria on the premises of the transportation companies conveying them.

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