

WHY THE LITTLE FRENCHMAN WEARS
HIS HAND IN A SLING

IT'S on my visiting cards sure enough (and it's them that's all o' pink satin paper) that inny gintleman that plases may behold the intheristhin' words, "Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, 39 Southampton Row, Russell Square, Parish o' Bloomsbury." And shud ye be wantin' to diskiver who is the pink of purliteness quite, and the laider of the hot tun in the houl city o' Lonon—why it's jist mesilf. And fait that same is no wonder at all at all (so be plased to stop curlin' your nose), for every inch o' the six wakes that I've been a gintleman, and left aff wid the bog-throthing to take up wid the Barronissy, it's Pathrick that's been living like a houly imperor, and gitting the iddication and the graces. Och! and wouldn't it be a blessed thing for your spirrits if ye cud lay your two peepers jist upon Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, when he is all riddy drissed for the hopperer, or stiping into the Brisky for the drive into the Hyde Park. But it's the illegant big figgur that I 'ave, for the rason o' which all the ladies fall in love wid me. Isn't it my own swate silf now that'll missure the six fut, and the three inches more nor that, in me stockings, and that am excadingly will proportioned

(104)

all over to match? And is it ralelly more than three fut and a bit that there is, inny how, of the little ould furrenner Frinchman that lives jist over the way, and that's a-ogglin' and a-gogglin' the houl day (and bad luck to him), at the purty widdy Misthress Tracle that's my own nixt-door neighbor (God bliss her!) and a most particuler frind and acquaintance? You percave the little spalpeen is summat down in the mouth, and wears his lift hand in a sling; and it's for that same thing, by yur lave, that I'm going to give you the good rason.

The truth of the houl matter is jist simple enough; for the very first day that I com'd from Connaught, and show'd my swate little silf in the strait to the widdy, who was looking through the windy, it was a gone case althegither wid the heart o' the purty Misthress Tracle. I percaved it, ye see, all at once, and no mistake, and that's God's truth. First of all it was up wid the windy in a jiffy, and thin she threw open her two peepers to the itmost, and thin it was a little gould spy-glass that she clapped tight to one o' them, and divil may burn me if it didn't spake to me as plain as a peeper cud spake, and says it, through the spy-glass: "Och! the tip o' the mornin' to ye, Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, mavourneen; and it's a nate gintleman that ye are, sure enough, and it's mesilf and me fortin jist that'll be at yur sarvice, dear, inny time o' day at all at all for the asking." And it's not mesilf ye wud have to be

that wud ha' broken yur heart althegither to bebate in the purliteness; so I made her a bow that wud ha' broken yur heart althegither to behould, and thin I pulled aff me hat with a flourish, and thin I winked at her hard wid both eyes, as much as to say: "True for you, yer a swate little crature, Mrs. Tracle, me darlint, and I wish I may be drownthed dead in a bog, if it's not mesilf, Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, that'll make a houl bushel o' love to yur leddyship, in the twinkling o' the eye of a Londonderry purraty."

And it was the nixt mornin', sure, jist as I was making up me mind whither it wouldn't be the pur-lite thing to sind a bit o' writin' to the widdy by way of a love-litter, when up com'd the delivery servant wid an illegant card, and he tould me that the name on it (for I niver could rade the copper-plate printin' on account of being left-handed) was all about Mounseer, the Count, A Goose, Look-aisy, Maiter-di-dauns, and that the houl of the devilish lingo was the spalpeeny long name of the little ould furrenner Frinchman as lived over the way.

And jist wid that in cum'd the little willain himself, and thin he made me a broth of a bow, and thin he said he had ounly taken the liberty of doing me the honor of the giving me a call, and thin he went on to palaver at a great rate, and divil the bit did I comprehend what he wud be afther the tilling me at all at all, excepting and saving that he said "pully

wou, woolly wou," and tould me, among a bushel o' lies, bad luck to him, that he was mad for the love o' my widdy Misthress Tracle, and that my widdy Mrs. Tracle had a puncheon for *him*.

At the hearin' of this, ye may swear, though, I was as mad as a grasshopper, but I remimbered that I was Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, and that it wasn't althegither gentaal to lit the anger git the upper hand o' the purliteness, so I made light o' the matter and kipt dark, and got quite sociable wid the little chap, and afther a while what did he do but ask me to go wid him to the widdy's, saying he wud give me the feshionable inthroduction to her leddyship.

"Is it there ye are?" said I thin to mesilf, "and it's throe for you, Pathrick, that ye're the fortunitest mortal in life. We'll soon see now whither it's your swate silf, or whither it's little Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns, that Misthress Tracle is head and ears in the love wid."

Wid that we wint aff to the widdy's, next door, and ye may well say it was an illegant place; so it was. There was a carpet all over the floor, and in one corner there was a forty-pinny and a jews-harp, and the divil knows what ilse, and in another corner was a sofy, the beautifullest thing in all natur, and sitting on the sofy, sure enough, there was the swate little angel, Misthress Tracle.

"The tip o' the mornin' to ye," says I, "Mrs.

Tracle," and thin I made sich an illegant obaysance that it wud ha quite althegither bewildered the brain o' ye.

"Wully woo, pully woo, plump in the mud," says the little furrenner Frinchman, "and sure Mrs. Tracle," says he, that he did, "isn't this gentleman here jist his reverence Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, and isn't he althegither and entirely the most purticular frind and acquaintance that I have in the houl world?"

And wid that the widdy, she gits up from the sofy, and makes the swatest curthchy nor iver was seen; and thin down she sits like an angel; and thin, by the powers, it was that little spalpeen Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns that plumped his silf right down by the right side of her. Och hon! I ixpicted the two eyes 'o me wud ha cum'd out of my head on the spot, I was so disperate mad! Howiver, "Bait who!" says I, after awhile. "Is it there ye are, Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns?" and so down I plumped on the lift side of her leddyship, to be aven with the willain. Botheration! it wud ha done your heart good to percave the illegant double wink that I gived her jist thin right in the face wid both eyes.

But the little ould Frinchman he niver beganened to suspect me at all at all, and disperate hard it was he made the love to her leddyship. "Wouully wou," says he, "Pully wou," says he, "Plump in the mud," says he.

"That's all to no use, Mounseer Frog, mavourneen," thinks I; and I talked as hard and as fast as I could all the while, and throth it was mesilf jist that divarted her leddyship complatly and intirely, by rason of the illegant conversation that I kipt up wid her all about the dear bogs of Connaught. And by and by she gived me such a swate smile, from one ind of her mouth to the ither, that it made me as bould as a pig, and I jist took hould of the ind of her little finger in the most dilikittest manner in natur, looking at her all the while out o' the whites of my eyes.

And then ounly percave the cuteness of the swate angel, for no sooner did she obsarve that I was afther the squazing of her flipper, than she up wid it in a jiffy, and put it away behind her back, jist as much as to say, "Now thin, Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, there's a bitther chance for ye, mavourneen, for it's not altogether the gentaal thing to be afther the sqazing of my flipper right full in the sight of that little furrenner Frinchman, Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns."

Wid that I giv'd her a big wink jist to say, "lit Sir Pathrick alone for the likes o' them thricks," and thin I wint aisy to work, and you'd have died wid the divarsion to behould how cliverly I slipped my right arm betwane the back o' the sofy, and the back of her leddyship, and there, sure enough, I found a swate little flipper all a-waiting to say, "the

tip o' the mornin' to ye, Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt." And wasn't it mesilf, sure, that jist giv'd it the laste little bit of a squaze in the world, all in the way of a commincement, and not to be too rough wid her leddyship? and och, botheration, wasn't it the gentaalest and dilikittest of all the little squazes that I got in return? "Blood and thunder, Sir Pathrick, mavourneen," thinks I to myself, "fait it's jist the mother's son of you, and nobody else at all at all, that's the handsomest and the fortunittest young bog-trotter that ever cum'd out of Con-naught!" And wid that I giv'd the flipper a big squaze, and a big squaze it was, by the powers, that her leddyship giv'd to me back. But it would ha split the seven sides of you wid the laffin' to behold, jist then all at once, the consated behavior of Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns. The likes o' sich a jabbering, and a smirking, and a parley-wouing as he begin'd wid her leddyship, niver was known before upon arth; and divil may burn me if it wasn't me own very two peepers that cotch'd him tipping her the wink out of one eye. Och, hon! if it wasn't mesilf thin that was mad as a Kilkenny cat I shud like to be tould who it was!

"Let me infarm you, Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns," said I, as purlite as iver ye seed, "that it's not the gintaal thing at all at all, and not for the likes o' you inny how, to be afther the oggling and a-goggling at her leddyship in that fashion," and jist wid that

such another squaze as it was I giv'd her flipper, all as much as to say: "Isn't it Sir Pathrick now, my jewel, that'll be able to the protectin' o' you, my darlint?" and then there cum'd another squaze back, all by way of the answer. "Thru for you, Sir Pathrick," it said as plain as iver a squaze said in the world, "thru for you, Sir Pathrick, mavourneen, and it's a proper nate gentleman ye are—that's God's truth," and with that she opened her two beautiful peepers till I belaved they wud ha com'd out of her hid althegither and intirely, and she looked first as mad as a cat at Mounseer Frog, and thin as smiling as all out o' doors at mesilf.

"Thin," says he, the willain, "Och hon! and wolly-wou, pully-wou," and then wid that he shoved up his two shoulders till the devil the bit of his hid was to be diskivered, and then he let down the two corners of his purraty-trap, and thin not a haporth more of the satisfaction could I git out o' the spalpeen.

Belave me, my jewel, it was Sir Pathrick that was unreasonable mad thin, and the more by token that the Frinchman kipt an wid his winking at the widdy; and the widdy she kept an wid the squazing of my flapper, as much as to say: "At him again, Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, mavourneen." So I just ripped out wid a big oath, and says I:

"Ye little spalpeeny frog of a bog-throtting son of a bloody noun!"—and jist thin what d'ye think it was that her leddyship did? Troth she jumped

up from the sofy as if she was bit, and made off through the door, while I turned my head round afther her, in a complete bewilderment and botheration, and followed her wid me two peepers. You percave I had a rason of my own for knowing that she couldn't git down the stares althegither and intirely; for I knew very well that I had hould of her hand, for divil the bit had I iver lit it go. And says I:

"Isn't it the laste little bit of a mistake in the world that ye've been afther the making, yer leddyship? Come back now, that's a darlint, and I'll give ye yur flipper." But aff she wint down the stares like a shot, and thin I turned round to the little Frinch furrenner. Och hon! if it wasn't his spalpeeny little paw that I had hould of in my own—why thin—thin it wasn't—that's all.

And maybe it wasn't mesilf that jist died then outright wid the laffin', to behold the little chap when he found out that it wasn't the widdy at all at all that he had hould of all the time, but only Sir Pathrick O'Grandison. The ould divil himself niver behild sich a long face as he pet an! As for Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, it wasn't for the likes of his riverence to be afther the minding of a thrifle of a mistake. Ye may jist say though (for it's God's thruth), that afore I left hould of the flipper of the spalpeen (which was not till afther her leddyship's futman had kicked us both down the stares), I gived

it such a nate little broth of a squaze, as made it all up into a resperry jam.

"Wouly-wou," said he, "pully-wou," says he—"Cot tam!"

And that's jist the thruth of the rason why he wears his lift hand in a sling.