

**IRISH LIFE & HUMOUR  
IN ANECDOTE AND  
STORY**

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Irish life & humour in anecdote and story by William Harvey

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**WILLIAM HARVEY**

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# IRISH LIFE & HUMOUR

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BY

**WILLIAM HARVEY, F.S.A. Scot.**

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"Kinnethorpe: Some Sketches of Village Life," &c., &c.*

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## PREFACE.

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A VERY cordial reception was given to "Irish Life and Humour in Anecdote and Story" on its appearance two years ago. Favourable press notices were seconded by the rapid disposal of a large edition. The suggestion was frequently made that while it would be well to reprint the original work as a book for the library, it would be a good thing if an abridgement were prepared and issued at a popular price. It was felt that such a book would appeal to the traveller and holiday-maker. Acting on that suggestion, the author has condensed the original bulky volume into the present publication. He has endeavoured to preserve the best stories of Irish wit and humour which his collection contained, and readers will find that though the following pages fall short of his original work in quantity they do not suffer in quality.

In his selection of stories, the author has endeavoured, as far as possible, to illustrate the main features of Irish character. As a general rule he has given the anecdotes exactly as he found them—without comment or observation—leaving them to speak for themselves. It is his hope that the volume will afford pleasure to Irishmen at home and abroad, and to many others who have not had the privilege of birth in the Land of the Shamrock.

4 GOWRIE STREET,  
DUNDEE.

January 1st, 1906.

## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
I.—THE JARVEY, - - - - -	9
II.—THE DOMESTIC SERVANT, - - - - -	19
III.—SOLDIERS OF THE KING, - - - - -	39
IV.—PRIEST AND PEOPLE, - - - - -	51
V.—THE MEDICAL MAN, - - - - -	61
VI.—THE FLOWING BOWL, - - - - -	67
VII.—WIT AND HUMOUR, - - - - -	71
VIII.—BULLS AND OTHER BLUNTERS, - - - - -	87
IX.—BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS, - - - - -	99
X.—YOUNG IRELAND, - - - - -	108
XI.—THE IRISHMAN ABROAD, - - - - -	113
XII.—BENCH AND BAR, - - - - -	120
XIII.—PADDY, - - - - -	147



# IRISH LIFE AND HUMOUR

## IN ANECDOTE AND STORY.



### I.—THE JARVEY.

**L**IKE the Lakes of Killarney and the Giant's Causeway, the Irish jarvey is one of the attractions of the Emerald Isle. The tourist who returns with pleasing memories of the "Devil's Punch-Bowl" and the "Wishing Stone," also returns with happy recollections of the jaunting car and its witty driver. Of the wit and humour of his country the jarvey is typical, and in some ways this is lucky, for he, perhaps more than most others, comes in contact with those who are desirous of witnessing the characteristic traits of the Irish people. He is complimentary when he thinks it suits his purpose, is sarcastic when his "fare" would make merry at his expense, can practise a little deception when it lies in the way of business, but is perfectly honest when he feels that the occasion demands him to be so. To take the last feature first, what is more expressive of the jarvey's honesty, while at the same time it implies all the other traits we have mentioned, than the story of the Cork gentleman who, having an English friend on a visit to him, took the latter round the town on a car to show him the sights? Coming to a public building with which he was not acquainted, he asked the jarvey what it was. "Sure, I don't know, sir," was the reply. "Don't know?" queried the gentleman in surprise, "why, I thought there

wasn't a square foot in the whole town that a jarvey did not know the history of?" "Well, it's this way, sir," explained the jarvey, who knew his man, "I could have told you all about that building if you'd been a stranger!"

Sometimes the tourist was of opinion that the driver was "drawing the long bow," and remonstrated in consequence. "The way you're describing the different places to me," said a tourist, "you evidently consider me a stranger here." "Av coorse, sor," replied the sour-looking driver. "What makes you think I've never been here before?" "The fact that no wan iver comes back that's been here afore."

Another worthy car-driver, whose propensity for explaining places to the stranger had roused the ire of a native, who recognised that he was drawing the long bow, and who was remonstrated with for telling so many lies, warded off the attack with the words, "Indeed, thin, I've a great deal more regard for the truth than to be dhragging her out on every palthry occasion."

It was the truth, however, that was "dragged out" on another occasion. A member of the nobility—a large landowner in Ireland—paid a visit to his Irish estates. His visit was a private affair, and no one was cognisant of it but his own agent. On the first day after his arrival he hired a car to take him over his property. He was unaccompanied, and, the journey being a long one, he struck up a conversation with the driver as a means of passing time. "Who owns these estates?" he queried in a careless tone. "Well, yer honour," said the jarvey, "he's a lord—and he's not ov much account: he gets all his money from the poor people here, and spends it with the big people in London, and we never hardly see him." "Indeed," said the gentleman, "and why do the people put up with such a man?" "Faith, then," said Paddy frankly, "I don't know." "It's a wonder they don't shoot him," said the nobleman. "It is," was the somewhat laconic reply. "Come now, Pat," said the nobleman in an insinuating tone, "tell me

really why don't they shoot him?" "Well," ventured the jarvey, "it's this way, yer honour—what's everybody's business is nobody's business, and that's the truth."

As is to be expected, the jarvey has always a certain interest in his horse. He is ever ready to excuse its weaknesses when his "fare" ventures to point them out, and is always prepared to excuse himself if he is reproached concerning the condition of his steed.

"I say, Paddy," said one tourist to his car-driver, "that is the worst looking horse you drive I ever saw. Why don't you fatten him up?" "Fat him up is it?" queried the Jehu, "faix, the poor baste can hardly carry the little mate that's on him now!"

Similar to this, so far at least as the load is concerned, is the reply which another driver gave on one occasion. He was driving a car between towns in the North of Ireland, and the horse was going so slow that numerous other vehicles overtook it. This roused the ire of one of the passengers, who shouted, "Push on, Paddy, you'll be late." "Who says I'll be late?" quickly asked the driver. "I do," said the passenger, prepared to stick to his guns. "Shure, an' how do ye know I'll be late?" continued the driver. "I know it by my watch," answered the passenger somewhat hotly. "Och, shure, then," said Paddy, his native wit coming to his rescue, "if your watch had a load on it like my poor ould baste it wouldn't go so fast."

As was indicated by an earlier story, questioning the driver comes in handy as a means of whiling away the time, and many are the questions which the long-suffering jarvey has to answer. These queries sometimes refer to his own domestic affairs, concerning which usually he is nothing loath to speak. A passenger who had drawn his driver into a long discussion concerning the unhappiness of his married life, elicited the fact that the driver's wife had eloped, and also that the driver intended giving a not inconsiderable sum of money to the man with whom she had gone. "What!" exclaimed the passenger