

**A KISH
OF BROGUES**

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A Kish of Brogues by William Boyle

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WILLIAM BOYLE

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BY
WILLIAM BOYLE

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NOTE

ONE of the most amusing objects of the old Irish fair was the *kish* or stall of brogues around which feet of various shapes and sizes were being fitted. The brogues themselves were rough, hand-sewn articles, as innocent of polish as they were of padding, but they were light, easy-fitting, and warranted not to tire out the traveller on a journey. If the first pair did not please, another and another still were tried. Seldom had the customer to go away unsatisfied. May the present brogue-seller dare to hope as much?

The greater portion of the present volume is reprinted from such varied quarters as *Young Ireland*, *The Irish Fireside*, *The People's Friend*, and *Little Folks' Magazine*. It consists of sketches in prose and verse of rural life in Ireland made by one who enjoys the advantage of having been born and brought up among those he here tries to portray.

W. B.

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A KISH OF BROGUES

THE ORIGIN OF THE BROGUE.

IN the ould anshent days, when blue murther was
sport,
And sound whisky sowld for three-ha'-pence a quart,
There lived a bould monarch who welted away
At fighting and dhrinking the whole of the day,
And the fights and the dhrinks got so mixed in his
head,
That, when sconces grew scarce, he cracked bottles
instead,
An' the bottles bled often so free in the fight,
They floated the breakfast time into the night,
An' the king grew so plagued between former and
latter day
That the poor man could hardly tell Friday from
Saturday ;
An' the fasts and the faists, so entangled, he spint
From Aisther to Whitsuntide keeping the Lint,
And only knew Christmas day by the snow
An' the steam of plum puddings a-cooking below.
Now, it chanced that St. Pathrick, one morning
in spring,

Collecting his Aisther-oats,¹ called on the king,
 An' handin' his horse to the groom at the gate,
 An' biddin' the boy give her somethin' to ait,
 Stepped in and disturbed the ould king at his booze
 By sayin' he had called on his rounds for the dues.
 The monarch looks up wid a shmile in his eye,
 An' roars, "Musha, Pathrick, you're welcome, me b'y!
 Dhraw a stool to the table—I'll ordher in lunch,
 An' herself, sure, 'ill make us a hot sup o' punch."
 The saint at a glance saw the way the wind lay—
 "Your majesty, no; I can't touch it to-day.
 Besides, I have ordhers," he says, "from the Pope,
 To taste nothin' *hard* in my mithre and cope."
 "The Pope," says the king, "has no rights in the case,
 For you know, Pat *a-gra*, I'm the lord of this place.
 Religion, as much as you like, out of Rome,
 But manners! Bedad, we can make *him* at home!
 So, to show your respect both to Church and to State,
 Hang your cope on a nail and dhrag over a sate.
 There's a sinsible saint! Take the weight off your
 legs—
 Throth! that's not the first time you put mithres on
 pegs!"
 "You're the playboy, all out!" says the good-natured
 saint,
 "And, to tell you the truth, I *do* feel a bit faint.
 We can't put a finger, I see, in your eye,
 For the sorra a hap'orth on earth you don't spy."
 "*Nabacolish*, Pat!" says the king, with a wink;
 "And now, my most reverend, what will you dhrink?"
 "Well, seein' it's yerself's in it," answers Saint Pat,
 "I think I'll be tastin' a toothful of *that*."

¹ The payment of "dues" in kind has been continued in some parts of Ireland down to our time.

"Of this?" cries the king, wid a roar of a laugh,
"Oh, murther! It's only the queen's shandygaff!"
"Thin lave it alone," says the saint, "if it's brought
her;
I'll just dhrink your health in a glass of cowl
water."

The king gev a start, an' his beetle-brows lowered,
Thin he raiched for the jug at his elbow and powered
A three-naggin tumbler right up to the brim,
Pretendin' to humour the saint's holy whim.
But his eye beamed as bright as the bead on the
measure
As he bowed to the saint with, "Your will is my
pleasure.

Besides," he adds softly, "in throth, I must own,
I never take sthronger myself whin alone."
An' begorra! the statement was throe as he give it,
For the bumper he filled was the purest Glenlivet.
But the saint, who could read the ould rogue through
an' through,

Wid a sign changed the liquor to pure mountain
dew,

An' tossed it off smiling, wid never a wink,
As if he'd been weaned on the sthrongest Scotch
dhrink.

The king stared wid invy. "God bless me!" he said,
"These saints must be blessed wid a powerful head!
If they're all only gifted like this holy elf,
I'd lave off cutting throats and get sainted myself!"
For the king, though he outwardly always complied,
To tell the plain thruth, was half pagan inside.
But, before he had time to think more, the ould sinner
Was roused to himself by the clatter of dinner.
The queen glided in wid her hair to the ground,

An' twenty-four maids of her chamber around,
 Thin the lords an' the butlers, an' boys from the
 haggards,
 An' behind thim, the *shulers* and bare-footed blag-
 gards.

An' all this parade was to fetch in a sstring
 Of two-eyed beefsteaks to set down to the king,
 Who vowed to himself he would recompinse nature,
 Just for once, by an extra taste of the crather.
 So he sstringled, as well as he could, to his feet,
 An' ordhered the saint to say grace before meat;
 "Or rather," he sighed, wid a glance at the dish,
 "If the good man prefers, we'll say grace before fish."
 An' whin it was over, remarked, wid a squint,
 "It's a pity your riverence visits in Lint.
 So don't think, my lord, it's the larder we're sparin',"
 Bekase we set nothin' before you but herrin'."
 The saint gave a smile. "Oh, don't mention it, pray!
 I can do very well—I get chops to my tay."
 Well, the queen looked so startled, you'd think that
 she'd drop

At the mintion in Lint by a saint of a chop;
 While a bald-headed lord at her back made a shiver,
 An' the king thinks, "Oh, this, thin, accounts for his
 liver!"

An' whispers across, "Won't you thry a dhrap more?"
 To which Pathrick responded—"The same as before."
 So, the jug was passed down, an' the saint filled so
 often,

That the dhrunken ould king began laughin' and
 scoffin',

An' ordhered two footmin to hurry up smart
 And prepare to lave Pathrick at home wid the cart.
 But where's the use talkin'? A babby can tell