

Off Dooty

by Carewe-Carvel

WELL, the town is still ringin' with me thrillin' findin' of the rich Misses Dooley's pet cat, and the reward money of fifty dollars I made off the cat is still the talk for miles around.

So havin' the desire to be blowin' meself with the reward money to an unusual treat, 'twas with this intention I hit the bright lights on me next night off.

Faith, for months I'd been doin' the beat outside of the handsome Tango Tea Parley, which its name is the Green and Gold Cafe in colored lights on the outside and grand, dolled-up, uniformed fellys, full of the gold braid and brass buttons, standin' at the door.

Class, you will observe, as the sayin' is.

Arrah, manny the time I'd be standin' without and see them society queens with dresses cut down to the wishbone and escorts in silk hats and walkin'-canes come to be spendin' the evenin' in mirth at the Green and Gold Cafe.

And 'twas meself always wishin' I could be rich enough to be joinin' in the merriment within the inside. Well, behold me dream realized this night which me dashin' form was makin' tracks with me little fifty for the interior of the elegant Green and Gold Cafe.

Well, I might as well tell yez I was

dressed in sufficient taste, I was, lookin' very handsome indeed in me citizen's clothes and a fine brand-new hat I'd bought at a sale for ninety cents, marked down from a dollar. 'Twas a bargain, and it fit me somethin' wonderful.

As I steps inside of the door somebody makes a grab for me hat like it hadn't cost nottin', and we had words immediate.

"'Tis the roole," says the fresh gossoon, "to check yer hat," says he.

"You can't trifle with the police department," says I with dignity, says I. "In a minute I'll have yez apprehended for insultin' the law," says I in a rage.

"Aw, don't be workin' overtime," says the fresh one; "yer off dooty. Take a rest; yer lookin' sick, anny-way," says he, winkin' insultin'.

"Is that so?" says I. "And what may yer name be then so I can serve yez with a summons to-morry?" says I with excitement.

"I'll let yez into the secret," says he, unruffled at me threat. "I'm the King of Denmark in private life, but to the public I'm just plain Mike, the checker," says he with tough airs like a thug, he did.

"Whisht!" says I. "Listen to me, young man. I—I—"

But somebody slaps me suddint then upon the back with cheer, and says

with hearty, welcomin' speech it was a delight to be listenin' to.

"Well, if it isn't friend, Officer Micky O'Toole. Come in, come in, officer," says he, "and I'll seat yez at the very best table there is. I will indeed."

It was me old friend, Bill Baily, head waiter in the Green and Gold Cafe, comin' out to welcome me like that. Faith, I was impressed with how foine it was of him to be doin' it, I was.

And shakin' hands was we immediate together and gushin' blarney one to the other; and before I knows it, glory be! if he doesn't be takin' me own hat and throwin' it to the same felly. And says he. "Here, Mike, give me a check for this," says he, which the head-waiter hands me the check and hurries me with speed through the door to an elegant seat the like of which I'd never sat down me two hundred and ninety pounds of magnificent physique before in me life.

And I'll have yez know 'twas everybody in sight turnin' to be seein' meself led elaborate to a seat like that by the head-waiter, which is considered a special honor, I shouldn't wonder.

Begorry! sinkin' I was all deep in cushions. Faith, the feelin' —well, now, it was just too grand for ordinary expression. Sure I just sat there, I did, feelin' like I'd never committed no sin in me entire life!

Instant me order was took by a waiter felly, which I told him, leanin' back with an easy air, I did. "A drop of the best, and I'll take it straight." says I. "Whisht!" says I, snappin' me fingers like the lord of creation.

And as he disappears I smiles jovial about the place in general at annybody which might be lookin' toward me to get the benefit of the same.

Then when I had a minute to spare I gazed around to be notin' how the

decorations suited me eye, and I hadn't no fault to be findin' whatever.

There was make-believe trees crawlin' up and down the walls, pretendin' like they grew about latticework, and Chinese lanterns hung aloft above me head, and everything was ablaze with lights; the music was clashin' away like it didn't give a dam who heard it; couples was dancin' remarkable in the middle of the place, and I was very pleased with the entire sight, I'll have yez know.

Faith, that rejoiced was I I'd come. I shouts aloud impulsive, holdin' aloft me glass.

"Hurrah, hurrah for the Green and Gold Cafe!" which every one nods and smiles in admiration of me act.

After sittin' a few minutes in contemplation to the front of meself, watchin' the couples in the dance, I spots to me amazement Mrs. Kitty Hennessy, draped elaborate in her diamond jools, doin' the latest tango steps with a felly all slicked up in evenin' raiment, which he looks mighty familiar to meself.

When they comes spinnin' near to me table I give an extry good look, and, sure enough, wasn't it a crook called "Slippery Sud" I'd threw in the jug five years past meself.

Faith, the realization brought me to me senses!

Pish, thinks I to meself, is this what they lets in here, is it? And if this is a specimen of what floats around in them high-toned tango tea parleys, then me for the rear of Durgan's saloon, where the company is more select.

Well, annyway. I was concerned in me mind about Mrs. Kitty Hennessy goin' about in company like that; so after the dance I up and goes deliberate over to her table and plants meself alongside of her. I did.

“Good evenin’, Mrs. Kitty Hennessy,” says I, “How is yerself this magnificent night, and how is the health of ex-Champeen Pat Hennessy?”

“Faith, I’m foine,” says she, a trifle unsteady. “and celebratin’ I am me eighteenth weddin’ anniversary this night to ex-Champeen Pat Hennessy. And,” says she, “I’m havin’ a lovely time, and I think this is a lovely place, and I’m comin’ here often, and—”

“But,” says I, cuttin’ in, “if yer celebratin’ yer eighteenth weddin’ anniversary to the ex-champeen, where, in the name of all that’s remarkable, may be the ex-champeen himself?” I asks, astonished at the unusual state of affairs in celebratin’ such an event.

“Faith,” says she, laughin’ and shruggin’ her shoulders, “I preshoome, Mr. O’Toole, he’s celebratin’ his eighteenth weddin’ anniversary in his own way, the same as I’m doin’ meself.

“The fact is,” says she, “I haven’t laid eyes upon the man since Monday morning, when he went out to buy me an elegant weddin’ present, so he said,” says she: “but, judgin’ that I waited for his return till Toosday evenin’, he must have went clear to Ireland to be importin’ the same.

“Well, annyway.” laughs she, “seein’ that the day would soon be over and no Pat Hennessy, I thought I’d best be squeezin’ a little celebration out of what was left of the same, and I’m doin’ that,” says she, “in excellent company,” says she. “Be introdooced,” says she, wavin’ her hand jovial toward the two, “to me good friends, Miss May Casesy and Mr. Montague O’Flaherty Ward, himself a travelin’ man.”

“ ’Tis honored I am, Miss May Casey,” says I, bowin’ low over the

introduction. “And Mr. Montague O’Flaherty Ward,” says I, catchin’ the felly’s eye, “is it possible yer travelin’ still?” says I. “Fatiguin’ it must be, without no let-up the way yer does,” says I, lookin’ him direct in the eye. “What is yer line now?” says I with interest.

“Interior decoration,” says the felly, lookin’ right through me with calm unconcern.

“Interior decoration!” says I. Faith, his nerve took away me breath for the instant. Then, with a knowin’ twinkle, says I: “Begorry, now that yez recall it to me mind, I do believe yez have decorated the interior of every jail in the country.”

“No,” says the divil, replyin’ to that. “You flatter me,” says he, “for there is still one or two that has escaped me artistic decoration.”

“Is it possible?” says I. “Is it—”

“Arrah!” laughs Mrs. Hennessy, tappin’ me gaily upon the arm with her fan. “Yer always talkin’ shop talk, Mr. O’Toole.” says she, “about jails and prisons and police courts. Change yer toone this once, yer off dooty,” says she, “and drink a toast to me eighteenth anniversary,” says she.

“To meself,” says she, holdin’ up her glass, which I did the same, and then, whisht! up starts the music with a lively toone, and up jumps Mr. Montague O’Flaherty Ward, takin’ Miss Casey by the arm, and in a twinklin’ they’re glidin’ about among the crowd on the floor.

Mrs. Hennessy,” says I, “listen to me.” says I. “Yer in the company of one of the smartest crooks in the history of police records.” says I, “a felly with a black record and no principles whatever known as Slippery Sud, and it’s a blot upon yer high social standin’ to be seen with him.” says I, excited, grabbin’ her arm.

“What!” says she, astonished at me information. “That lovely, polished, handsome man? What! What!” gasps she, incredulous.

“It is the truth, upon me honor as an officer of the law,” says I. “However did yez happen to meet the gent?” I asked.

“Faith, through Miss Casey there,” says she. “Sure I came in here to me dinner to celebrate me eighteenth anniversary, and Miss Casey, seein’ me sittin’ there alone, disconsolate, she bein’ with a party, comes over and asks me kindly to be joinin’ them, which I did not hesitate to be doin’, seein’ that he looks like a gentleman.”

“Faith, he had his eye on yer jools.” says I. “I’m not doubtin’ that at all,” says I, “and as like as not she’s one of the gang.”

“Well, maybe yer right,” says she, “fer they says somethin’ about goin’, the three of us, to Miss Casey’s apartment later on, and—”

“Fer Heaven’s sake. Mrs. Hennessy,” says I in surprise. “and where yer goin’?”

“I was,” says she, “with Hennessy actin’ the way he has and—”

“Glory be to goodness,” says I. “’tis lucky I happened in this night of all nights,” says I. “I came in here with me fifty dollars reward money to be seein’ the sights. Faith, I have seen more than I bargained for already,” says I; “and what with hat-checks and crooks,” says I, “faith, how do I know but that I’ll not get back me own hat again—me fine, lovely, new straw hat,” says I, gettin’ all excited thinkin’ about that hat.

“Mrs. Hennessy,” says I, “we’d best be movin’ out of here, for ’tis no place for decent people in this Green and Cold Cafe. Come on, Mrs. Hennessy; come on,” which she follys me with reluctance and no willingness at all, at all.

I run out quick then to be presentin’

me hat-check which I fished out of me pocket after some trouble to be locatin’ where I’d put the same, and thinks I, with murder in me eye, there’ll be a fight without no question if I don’t be gettin’ back me own hat.

Well, it was me own hat all right, but that fresh gossoon holds on to it with one hand while puttin’ out significant the palm of the other.

“What!” says I. “Do I have to pay to be gettin’ back me own hat—the hat which I paid cash money for in the store already? ’Tis an outrage,” says I, “a bunco game. How much is it?” says I in a temper.

“As much as yer generosity will spare,” says he.

“Well, here is two cents,” says I, throwin’ him the pennies.

“Don’t stint yerself,” says the fresh one in thanks.

“Well, you wouldn’t have the nerve to be takin’ a dolly,” says I, passin’ along. “when the hat was a ninety-cent bargain in itself, I hope. Faith,” says I, grumblin’ out good and loud so the management might be posted upon me feelin’s concernin’ the same, “I don’t like the system at all, at all, of the Green and Gold Cafe.”

When we gets out on the street says Mrs. Hennessy to me:

“I want to go in one of them taxicabs,” says she.

“Wurra,” says I, “it costs fifty dollars a minute in them things,” says I, “we’d best be walkin’, I’m thinkin’.”

“Yer broke into me party,” says she, “and now yer denyin’ me a little pleasure,” says she, startin’ to weep somethin’ fierce right on the pavement, she does.

“Faith, I have no money to be throwin’ away on them expensive wagons,” says I, talkin’ plain.

“Faith, you have not spent much

this night, I'll warrent," says she, talkin' plain, too.

"Well." says I philosophic, says I, "economy doesn't start at the bottom of the purse, and reward money in me career is not profuse," says I with conviction.

"Well, here is a wad I'm not usin'," says she, throwin' her purse to me, "and I'm goin' anyway," says she, fallin' into the door of one of them which the uniformed felly was holdin' open all the while we was arguin'.

"Where to?" says the felly, which I had to go in after her, I couldn't be lettin' her ride around late at night by herself alone.

"To the cemetery," says she before I could give the home address of her.

"Wurra, what a selection," says I.

"Tis me own money that's makin' the selection," snaps she. "I want to visit me first husband's grave."

"Wurra," says I, not bein' strong inclined for such a place by night.

Faith, I'd never been in one of them taxi things in me life, and I want to tell yez right now that I'll have to be unconscious in death, before I'd ever be persuaded to go again. For I never was so shook up in me born days as upon that little trip.

Faith, we must have been climbin' mountains and suddint fell to the bottom of a ravine with no questions asked whatever by the driver as to whether you would care to have him wait a minute to be regainin' yer breath.

No, begoorys, like the wind he goes, and you gettin' bumped all out of conversation in the inside. Faith, I was holdin' on to the handle of the door for dear life, and that opens mysterious with the intention no doubt to lose me upon the trip.

Mrs. Hennessy grabs me violent

and I flops back against the seat scared and exhausted.

"Is it like this all the time?" I asks, "and are you enjoyin' yerself, Mrs. Hennessy," I asks polite with clenched teeth.

"These roads is pretty bad," says she, "but we'll have to stay within," says she, "for it's pourin' with rain. Don't you hear it?" asks she.

"Wurra," says I, tryin' to listen; "faith, a lovely time we'll be havin' in the wet cemetery ten feet deep in mud. Let's be turnin' back," says I, "for the love of Heaven." says I.

"No," says she in firm tones, "it is me intention to visit me first husband, Dan O'Brien's grave."

"This is the cemetery," says the driver, stoppin' with a jolt that sends us both nearly flyin' to the top of the cab.

It was still rainin' hard, but Mrs. Hennessy jumps out, and pickin' her way over the stones in the road, runs to the gate.

Sure I had to do the same, stumblin' after her in the dark, was I; but when I'd got half-way, back she comes, wailin' in tones of grief.

"It's no use, no use at all," cries she, "fate is against me all the time this evenin' to be havin' any enjoyment whatever, for now the cemetery gates is locked."

Sure I was glad to be hearin' that, was I, for to be sittin' upon Dan O'Brien's grave in the mud was an act I would not have relished at all, at all. But I wasn't sayin' nothin', was I: just sympathizin' how terrible it was that she is disappointed.

"Now we've got to go back, I suppose," says she.

"In *that* thing?" I asks.

"In what else?" says she. "In this rain would you care to be walkin' two

miles in mud to the street-car line?"

" 'Tis cheaper," says I, "and more restful."

"But further away and slower. Come on," says she.

"How much is the affair now?" says I to the driver.

"Five dollars," says he.

"Do yez want to waste five dollars more on the return trip?" I asked her.

"I'm celebratin' me eighteenth weddin' anniversary," says she. "Sure I'll waste it," says she.

So in we piles again, the both of us gettin' threw all over the inside the same as before, as we strikes the high spots in that terrible cemetery road.

When we gets into the city I tugs hard at the windy to be lettin' in a breath of air, and discovers to me delight that the rain has stopped.

"Let's get out now, Mrs. Hennessy," says I. "We have only about seven or eight streets more to be goin'," says I.

"Very well," says she. "As well as not, for I'm that thirsty I want an ice-cream soddy, anyway," says she.

So out we gets and starts to be walkin' the rest of the way, when suddint I feels a sharp sting in the middle of me back and I lets out a yell of murder.

"Ouch!" I yells. "Who done it?" says I, seein' I had been assaulted with a brick which fell to smithereens upon the pavement.

"What is it—what's the matter?" cries Mrs. Hennessy in alarm.

"I'm killed," says I. "Some one threw a brick," says I, turnin' around to be face to face with ex-Champeen Hennessy himself.

"What!" says he, pushin' his fist in me face. "What!" says he. "Elopin' with me own wife on the broad highway in view

of thousands of citizens all makin' remarks concernin' the disgrace?"

I knew he was jealous somethin' fierce, but bein' innocent, says I with anger, says I:

"Yer exaggeratin', which there is not one person about at all."

"Well, there might have been," says he with rage.

"Come on," says he, pullin' off his coat, "let us fight, let us fight."

And he plants himself right close up to me, shakin' his fist in me face.

"I will not fight you," says I.

"You coward," says he, insinuatin'.

"It's better to be a coward for one minute than dead all the rest of yer life." says I philosophic, knowin' the ex-champeen was a pig-headed Mick with muscles of solid iron. "Faith, I am no fool," says I, "and I am a custodian, besides, of the peace," says I.

"Begorry," says he, "if yer don't fight," says he with menacin' tones. "I'll strike yer dead," says he. "You've been elopin' with me wife, and—"

"Blame yerself," says Mrs. Hennessy, pushin' him away from me, "for findin' me in the company of Mr. O'Toole," says she, havin' him out emphatic. "Faith, I was wanderin' about the streets lookin' for yerself to be celebratin' me eighteenth anniversary to a dubloon which hasn't got the decency to be returnin' to his home for two days, bad cess to yez entirely," says she.

"Where have yez been for two days?" says she. "Flyin' about in unheard-of places, I shouldn't wonder, with yer low-lived companions, and yer poor neglected wife havin' to be walkin' about alone on her anniversary; and if it wasn't for the fact that along comes Officer Micky O'Toole to be savin' me from the thugs that fell upon me this night, I should have

been lobbed of me diamond gems and sustained injuries for life,” says she, talkin’ affable without no let-up. “Six men,” says she, “he fought single-handed; just struck them dead with one blow, he did—masked men they was, too.”

Then pointin’ with pride to me, says she:

“A wonderful spectacle of heroism and bravery is Officer Micky O’Toole, an elegant specimen of brain and brawn. Yez can thank him for savin’ me life and me diamond gems,” says she. “for he’s a man to be admired is Officer Micky O’Toole, magnificent and handsome—”

“Faith, I believe yez, I believe yez,” says Hennessy, throwin’ up his hands in dismay, which he was not willin’ to be listenin’ to any more praise concernin’ me.

As for meself, I just stood there amazed at Mrs. Hennessy’s outburst of praise, and under the circumstances it seemed the least I was savin’ the best it would be for the three of us.

“Where have yez been for the past two days?” says Mrs. Hennessy again to the ex-champeen. “Faith, I’d like to thrash the very divil out of yez for yer nerve to be stayin’ away for the age that you have, and on me eighteenth anniversary, too,” says she. “Me first husband, Dan O’Brien, would never have did that to me,” says she, commencin’ to weep at the recollection of the dead.

“Confound that O’Brien,” says the ex-champeen savagely. “Yer always throwin’ that O’Brien in me face,” says he. “If yer hadn’t gone and wasted five good years on him,” says he loud enough for the whole neighborhood to hear, “it would now be twenty-three years to be celebratin’ this night. What is the good,” says he, still shoutin’, “anyway in eighteen years? Twenty-three years is worth celebratin’, but

eighteen years, pish!” says he with contempt.

“Is that so?” says Mrs. Hennessy, as mad as himself. “Well, it is eighteen years too many,” says she, “O’Brien was a gentleman,” says she, “to say nothin’ of the fact yer insultin’ the dead,” says she.

“How do I know he’s dead?” says the ex-champeen, the two of them walkin’ along with vapid strides and meself laggin’ behind.

“How do you know?” says she in tones of surprise. “Why, I showed you the certificate, I did,” says she, “and besides I didn’t know yerself was in existence them five years,” says she.

“ ’Tis yer own fault,” says he, “when I was champeen heavyweight of the world, with me name on every lip, and the public payin’ expensive for admission, with me pictures in all the dailies, and write-ups and things. Faith,” says he, tappin’ his chest important. “I’ve had it all over O’Brien all me life.”

“Well,” shrieks Mrs. Hennessy, “concernin’ meself, yer as dead to me as he is now, only yer memory is deader,” says she, walkin’ faster and faster up the street.

“Is that so?” yells Hennessy. “Faith, then I was right; right I was,” says he, “Yer in love with that divil, O’Toole,” says he. “Faith, I might have guessed it the way you was gushin’ the blarney concernin’ his heroism, the blitherin’ coward, entirely,” says he. “Begorry, I *will* celebrate me eighteenth anniversary,” says he suddint. “I’ll celebrate it by killin’, by killin’ that,” says he, turnin’ deliberate around and walkin’ back, shakin’ his fist in me direction.

Faith, I did not wait to receive him. I’ll have yez know. But over the fence I goes of the O’Rouke’s back yard, and into the big rain-barrel I jumps which bein’ the

handiest thing in sight. Wurra, the thing was full of water from the rain shower, but I crouches there for maybe fifteen minutes which I emerges puttin' me head up with caution and not hearin' a sound.

Up the avenoo then I scoots, makin' a bee-line for me home, when I runs right into Officer Danny O'Moore, which is laughin' fit to kill himself is he.

"What's the joke?" I asked, bein' in no mood for laughin' I was not, was I.

"Faith, there was a terrible fight down the street just now," says he. "It took four officers to subdue him, and the four of 'em look like a cyclone struck them and turned them over, they do."

"Who is it?" I asked, me heart thumpin'.

"The Hennessys. Captured upon their weddin' anniversary," says he, laughin' hard. "with a crowd at their heels was they, and Mrs. Hennessy tuggin' at the ex-champeen's arm, pleadin' with him to be goin' home, and himself yellin' at the top of his lungs that indeed he would not till he'd finished celebratin' his anniversary by killin' the coward which tried to elope with his wife.

"Faith. I don't know who he could

be meanin'," says O'Moore to me.

"Annyway," says he, "Donovan tries to quiet him for the sake of Mrs. Hennessy, warns him to be peaceful and go home, and the ex-champeen rewards him with a blow that makes him reel back and yell for help, and the three officers that runs to his assistance, faith." says O'Moore, splittin' his sides, "if the ex-champeen doesn't turn in and lick the lot.

"Wurra they is sights, is they," says he. "bein' damaged terrific. Well, Owen and meself comes to their rescue, havin' to use clubs did we, with Mrs. Hennessy screamin' blue murder that Hennessy would be killed. Indeed we locked up the ex-champeen after much trouble did we."

"Who would 'a' thought it!" says I, breathin' hard.

"Yes, and it's your beat, too. O'Toole," says he, slappin' me upon the back and laughin' hearty. "Faith, you can be thankin' yer lucky stars this was yer quiet little night to yerself—off dooty," says he.

"Yes, indeed," says I, squirmin' in me wet clothes. "As yer say, it has without no doubt been me quiet little night to meself—off dooty."