

THE BABY SITTER

“Tis a softie I am, and never a thing will I be learnin’. So the big mouth of me is answerin’ “yes” to me lovin’ daughter when she is askin’, “would I be stayin” with her four little ones, while she and her slave the O’Daniels run over to a friend’s house, “for just a little while.” “Sure,” I hear me big mouth answerin’, “you go right along, and don’t worry about a thing.” Me big mouth, not me little brain was not considerin’ that “stay with” is not the same as “care for.” And also, me daughter, bein’ a wife and a mother, provin’ her to be a female, should have warned me that “just a little while” is a orto’ comparative and indefinite.

So, away they went on their carefree way, sharing the confidence of the O’Haney himself being the father of seven and the grandfather of nineteen, with a vast experience, and havin’ the natural genius inborn from a long line of Gaelic kings that made the illustrious history of glorious Erin.

But I had not reckoned on the offspring of an O’Daniels, with the name of Erin, as not being an ordinary bit of humanity.

Me big mouth started payin’ for the irrational runnin’ off of me big mouth the first time I stole into the room to check on the wee infant that me lovin’ daughter had assured me was sleepin’ soundly, and would not awaken during her absence. And me Gaelic ancestors were silent.

Now what could be the matter with a wee baby that’s supposed to be sleeping soundly, when it is kicking around, both legs at a time, shaking the bed, and slobbering, and never a vocal sound out of her? So Grandpa studies the situation carefully and makes

the diagnosis—that he knows not a thing about the behavior of an offspring of the wild Clan O’Daniels.

So I tiptoes away, then creeps back for another look. So help me, the little tyke is doin’ pushups and a-grinnin’ at me. So, I fade from sight, with visions of having to walk the floor, with her flung up against me mighty chest, and a-pattin’ her on the back in the approved manner I’ve seen me wife a-doin’ to our several youngsters. And still not a sound out of her. So, again I back away and out of sight of the littlest angel.

Then, after a few day-long minutes, I take a stealthy look from the other side of the room. The quietness of her is fearful. So I waft closer for a better look. May the Saints preserve me! And there she is, a-sprawl on her belly and as quiet and motionless as a sleepy worm on cold mud. So I examine her for some motion from her breathing and can find none. There is never a quiver from mouth nor nostril. There is not a movement of any part of the tiny elf. With a prayer on me lips, I change position of one of her tiny hands. Glory be; there is a reflex action of a living muscle! I am thankful.

The telephone rings. The sweetest words I ever hope to hear were words of me lovin’ daughter tellin’ me she would “be home soon.”

The nerves of me and the happiness within me were in such shape that I did not question the meaning of me lovin’ daughter tellin’ me she “would be home soon.”

This had been a long night, but the natural and inborn genius of the O’Haney has met and conquered all the problems and emergencies with his courage and confidence.

But ‘tis me that’s thinkin’ that I would not like to be a mother.

Veracity O’Haney

Clark