



DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

MULDOON.—“Phy are you paintin’ your residence that thirty brown color. Flaherty?”

FLAHERTY.—“It isn’t for the purtyness av it, Muldoon. The shanty lets in the wind and they towld me brown was a warrum shade: that’s the rasin. It’ll save coal, so it will.”

MEEK MR. BRIGGAN.

MOSES has held the record for meekness for a long while now, but Moses in his meekest moments was never half so meek as little Mr. Briggan. He was a modest, unassuming, unassertive little fellow, with sandy hair, weak watery blue eyes and a hectic complexion, liberally spotted with freckles. He had been left an orphan and a very diminutive fortune long before he was old enough to know or care what he was left. His mother died in giving him birth, and about a year afterwards his sole surviving parent sat down carelessly on a circular saw one day. The saw was in motion and it came through and unbuttoned his vest. After that, old man Briggan seemed to lose all interest in his surroundings. He became indifferent and heedless of what transpired about him, and his only child was left to the mercy of a big, raw-boned aunt, who had a voice that rang like the toot of Gabriel’s trumpet, and a temper hot enough to melt a sad-iron. She brought young Briggan up in accordance with the ideas of the great and good Solomon, and

consequently, young Briggan attained his majority without spirit enough to set fire to.

When Brig broke loose from his aunt’s care, he locked his small patrimony up in the general store business. He employed one assistant. The assistant had not been with Brig a week before he discovered his employer’s constitutional meekness of disposition, and took a mean advantage of it. He ran the store just as he pleased. If Brig wanted the pickles on the top shelf and the canned salmon on the shelf below, Scroggs—that was the assistant’s name—would calmly put them in reverse order. He had the cod-fish and butter sandwiched between piles of gros grain silks and Canadian tweeds, in defiance of his employer’s wishes, and kept ciscoes and pickled herring in a show case along with ribbons, laces, cheap jewelry, hairpins, patent medicines and flavoring extracts. Briggan told the boy he opened the store at 7 in the morning; Scroggs would never permit it before 8. Whatever Briggan said, Scroggs seemed to take a delight in contradicting. His tyranny was shameful and scandalous. If Briggan wanted a thing done one way, Scroggs would do it by an exactly opposite method. If Briggan wanted goods kept in one part of the store, Scroggs would put them in the other. Meek little Mr. Briggan never said a word. He bore the tyranny of his man with the calm, serene patience of a monument.

“Why don’t yer sit on that feller?” the boy asked him one day.

“I can’t do it, Jimmie. He might get angry and leave me.”

“Blode if I wouldn’t let him. He ain’t no good, he ain’t. Jer suppose I’d let a feller boss me like that if I waz runnin’ this here store? Well, I guess not.”

“Hush, Jimmie, hush,” said Mr. Briggan, nervously. “He might hear you and that wouldn’t be pleasant.”

“Say, what are you two talkin’ a bout, eh?” growled Mr. Scroggs suspiciously from the other end of the store.

“Oh, nothing, nothing,” said Mr. Briggan, hastily. “We were just discussing the advisability of cleaning out the windows and dressing them up a bit for the Christmas trade.”

“Clean out nothing,” sniffed Mr. Scroggs, contemptuously. “Them windows don’t need any dressing. They’re all right the way they are. You hear me.”

“Exactly what I was thinking,” broke in Mr. Briggan, eagerly. “They won’t need fixing up for a long time yet.”

“They won’t, eh? Well, that just shows how much you know about it. They’ll need fixing next week, and they’ll get it, too. I guess I understand what this store needs. I know my business.”

“I guess you do,” said Mr. Briggan, resignedly. “I leave it right in your hands, Mr. Scroggs. I know I am safe in doing it.”

“Well, I guess you are, Briggsey. I’ll fix things all right. Don’t you worry about me.”