

THE

FORTUNES OF BRIAN MULVANY AND HIS WIFE OONAGH.

BY M. A. S.

Now I take it for granted that every one has read or heard of "The Fortunes of Nigel,"—"The Fortunes of Hector O'Halloran, and his man," may even ascertain "Torlough O'Brien," (I crave pardon of the author of the work first mentioned, for placing him in such companionship, particularly that last mentioned, and I see no reason in life why the fortunes of Brian Mulvany and his estimable partner should be left untold, or the extraordinary mental endowments of Mrs. Mulvany, (who in her day, was "a wise and prudent woman,") be suffered to go down to oblivion. No! be mine the pleasant task to record her grotesque virtues, (to make use of a new figure of speech,) and thus give to the world, (my readers I mean,) the practical illustration of a notable housewife!

Yet though I have constituted myself the biographer of the worthy couple, whose joint name heads my narrative, I shame to say that I am entirely in the dark as to the when and where of their union—or any of the events which preceded that auspicious event. Of their *single* lives I know nothing—absolutely nothing—but of their *united* lives I know everything, as you, my dear reader, will confess, when you have journeyed with me through a few pages.

In personal appearance there was a decided resemblance between the pair—both were short, thick-set and ruddy; but Oonagh was of the two the shortest, stoutest, and most rubicund. Both had light, grey eyes, both had broad, flat-noses, with a wide expanse stretching between the eyes, but Oonagh had furthermore a fleshy protuberance (called a wart) on the right side of her nose, which added very considerably to the *intellectual character* of her countenance. In short had Oonagh been so blessed as to have drawn her earliest breath in the *celestial* dominions, we have not the shadow of a doubt but she would have been empress at least, for the *fattest* fair one in all China would have resigned the palm to her. Hers, too, was that waddling gait peculiar to Chinese beauties, though, if truth must be told, it was by no means owing to the diminutiveness of Oonagh's *understandings*, which were (alas! that I must own the fact!) rather of the formation of the camel's foot, equally flat, and

broad in proportion. In these last characteristics the good wife differed from her husband, who was, notwithstanding his bulky form, what is called "a tight little man," and as he jogged along to fair or market, or on Sunday or holy-day to mass, you would scarcely find a more active looking little personage than Brian Mulvany, while Oonagh on her part moved along with much the same lightness and grace as an elephant would display in climbing a mountain. Such as they were, however, they trod "the even tenor of their way" in a good jog-trot sort of manner, seldom diverging to the one hand or the other. If honest Oonagh did sometimes err in her judgment, (for my readers will see that she was not infallible,) why Brian, as a wise man should, surmounted the effects of the mistake as he best could, and worked on all the harder for the difficulties he had to encounter. Never was a word of angry recrimination heard to pass between the pair, who were certainly mated as well as matched. Their domicile was a low mud cabin, comfortably thatched, however, and kept in good repair, for Brian was, as we have said, an active, pushing little man, and though twelve of the twenty-four hours were devoted to the farmer from whom he held his cabin together with a potatoe garden, yet did he find time to keep his own little tenement in good condition. In the cultivation of the garden aforesaid, he was, to be sure, assisted by Oonagh, who could dig the ground, and plant potatoes and cabbages, (the only products of the little garden,) as well as Brian himself—provided always that he was by, to keep her to work, and give directions, for poor Oonagh was, like the Irishman as described in Orr's fine song, "more fit to practice than to plan."

At the time we commence our acquaintance with Brian and Oonagh, they were a thriving little couple as you would find, in their own way. They had their crop of potatoes carefully stowed away in a capacious pit, dug for the purpose in a corner of their little tenement, together with a good garden of cabbages, viz., a spot about eight feet square, thickly planted with this useful vegetable; they had a cow, too, which furnished them with milk, to soften "the dry praties;"