

"Bad cess to you," cried Andy; "what do you hit me for?"

"Who are you, at all at all?" cried the widow.

"Don't you know me?" said Andy.

"No, I don't know you; by the vartrue o' my oath, I don't; and I'll never swear again' you, jintlemen, if you lave the place and spare our lives!"

Here the hens flew against the dresser, and smash went the plates and dishes.

"Oh, jintlemen, dear, don't rack and ruin me that way; don't desthroy a lone woman!"

"Mother, mother, what's this at all? Don't you know your own Andy?"

"Is it you that's there?" cried the widow, catching hold of him.

"To be sure it's me," said Andy.

"You won't let us be murdered, will you?"

"Who'd murder you?"

"Them people that's with you." Smash went another plate. "Do you hear that? they're rackin' my place, the villians!"

"Divil a one 's wid me at all!" said Andy.

"I'll take my oath there was three or four under the bed," said Oonah.

"Not one but myself," said Andy.

"Are you sure?" said his mother.

"Cock sure!" said Andy; and a loud crowing gave evidence in favour of his assertion.

"The fowls is going mad," said the widow.

"And the pig's distracted," said Oonah.

"No wonder; the dog's murderin' him," said Andy.

"Get up and light the rushlight, Oonah," said the widow; "you'll get a spark out o' the turf cendhers."

"Some o' them will catch me, maybe!" said Oonah.

"Get up, I tell you," said the widow.

Oonah now arose, and groped her way to the fire-place, where, by dint of blowing upon the embers, and poking the rushlight among the turf ashes, a light was at length obtained. She then returned to the bed, and threw her petticoat over her shoulders.

"What's this at all?" said the widow, rising, and wrapping a blanket round her.

"Bad cess to the know I know?" said Andy.

"Look under the bed, Oonah," said her aunt.

Oonah obeyed, and screamed, and ran behind Andy. "There's another here yet!" said she.

Andy seized the poker, and standing on the defensive, desired the villian to come out: the demand was not complied with.

"There's nobody there," said Andy.

"I'll take my oath there is," said Oonah; "a dirty blackguard without any clothes on him."

"Come out you robber!" said Andy, making a lunge under the truckle.

A grunt ensued, and out rushed the pig, who had escaped from the dog, the dog having discovered a greater attraction in some fat that was knocked from the dresser, which the widow intended for the dipping of rushes in; but the dog being enlightened to his own interest without rushlights, and preferring mutton fat to pig's ear, had suffered the grunter to go at large, while he was captivated by the fat. The clink of a three-legged stool the widow seized to the rescue, was a stronger argument against the dog than he was prepared to answer, and a remnant of fat was preserved from the rapacious Coaly.

"Where's the rest o' the robbers?" said Oonah: "there's three o' them, I know."

"You're dhramin'," said Andy. "Divil a robber is here but myself."

"And what brought you here?" said his mother.

"I was afeared they'd murder me," said Andy.

"Murder!" exclaimed the widow and Oonah together, still startled at the very sound of the word. "What do you mane?"

"Misther Dick," said Andy.

"Aunt, I tell you," said Oonah, "this is some more of Andy's blundhers. Sure Misther Dawson wouldn't be goin' to murder any one; let us look round the cabin, and find out who's in it, for I won't be aisy until I look into every corner, to see there's no robbers in the place; for I tell you again, there was three o' them undher the bed."

The search was made, and the widow and Oonah at length satisfied that there were no midnight assassins there with long knives to cut their throats; and then they began to thank God that their lives were safe.