

"Come in, Biddy Keenahan; rise the latch, an' niver mind blessin' or crossin' when you step over the thrashold!" muttered the voice of the old hag inside. Biddy started back at hearing her own name thus pronounced; but she raised the latch and stepped in, being glad of any refuge from the darkness; and she took care not to say "God save you!" Just as she entered she received a sharp blow from some hard but feathery substance above the door. She was afraid to say, "Lord bless us!" but she stooped low, and looked up sideways, and saw a large owl flapping his wing at her from a nook over the entrance.

"Ah, then, how did you know it was me that tapped at the dure, Misthress, Morrin?" asked Biddy timidly, by way of beginning the conversation.

"Didn't you hear the black cat spaking as you come up the field, Biddy Keenahan?" replied the hag.

"The blessed Cross be about us!" was on Biddy's lips, but she dared not let the words escape.

"Sit down on that stool, Biddy, an' I'll soon give you what you want," continued old Peg, who was herself seated on just such a three-legged implement as she pointed to, with a little table before her, traced with many mystical lines, a lump of chalk being in one of her hands for that purpose, while the other held a pack of cards, which a cryptical incrustation of dirt and grease had brought to a perfect equality of appearance.

"There, Biddy, I'll put the cards away, for it isn't thim you want to dale with the night. Whin the fortin's cast, and the fate doomed, whether it's hangin' or a drownin', or a weddin' or a berrin', there's no use in the cards, Biddy—an' it's yours an' Lanty's that's settled long ago!"

With these words the crone screwed up her mouth and frowned, and thrust her dirty cards into a huge pocket; and then crossing her arms, she looked on Biddy with the half scowl and half smile of lawless power and vulgar patronage.

"Och, Misthress Morrin, *avic*, don't be afther frightnin' me this blessed night! It's for your advice I'm comed, an' sure it's yourself can serve me, an' do me a good

turn. It's ould Brine Oge, the huntsman, that put me upon comin' to you, or I wouldn't be bould enough to throuble you this-a-way."

"Brine Oge is a dacent man, an' one that nobody need be afeard to do wrong in follyin' his advice. Thin what do you want wid me, Biddy Keenahan? May be it's a love pouthier for Lanty?"

"Och, then, Misthress Morrin, jew'! what's the use of your axing me any questions at all at all, when you can answer thim before you ax thim? Then sure enough it's jist *that* I want from you."

"There it is, Biddy Keenahan, ready for you, for I knew you were comin', an' what you' be afther axin' for. Put out your lift hand, an' take hould of that paper on the shelf beside you, an' put it in your buzzum, for it's the heart that works on the heart! An' take it home wid you an' mix the pouthier wid whatever Lanty likes best—an' what 'd he like bether nor a bowl o' sillybub, the crathur? an' stir it lift-handed, and don't look at it, an' throw the paper over your lift shoulder, an' give it to your lovyer—for he's the b'y that loves you, Biddy dear—wid your own hands, an' watch him while he drinks it, an' say somethin' to yourself all the while, ar a wish, ar what you most wish for in the world. An' from that minute out the charm 'll work, and the philthur—for that's the name av it in the mystery—'ll do the rest. An' good look be on you, Biddy Keenahan, wid Lanty your lovyer, who'll soon spake the right speech to you, an' 'll only want the word av Father Rice at the Friary, afther that, to be your own flesh an' blood, Biddy, an' the father iv your childer, which may good fortin' preserve! Give me half-a-crown, Biddy, an' good night to you! for the miller's cot 'll be waitin', an' the wind' risin', an' it's a hard push Tom Fagan 'll have up the strame to the Grange."

Biddy, in a conflict of wonderment at this knowledge of her movements, and of delight at the wise woman's discourse, put the paper well under the folds of her handkerchief, and felt her heart working against, it sure enough. And she handed the fee to Peg Morrin, and wished her good night, and