

the chimney watching the lazy curling smoke from the aforesaid fire. She looked a real picture of enjoyment, and no wonder, for the very fins glistened upon the dresser, and the flags were perfectly clean and smooth, and the fitches of bacon hung temptingly over her head.

"So, you expect Mister Frank, ma'am," said Neddy O'Brien, the boy of all work, as he sat at the other side of the fire enjoying its warmth.

"Yes, achom," said Mrs. Hogan, without lowering her eyes.

"Shure I am often wondering, Mrs. Hogan, why he didn't become a priest."

"Well, asthore, as Father O'Donnell says, 'man proposes but God disposes.'"

"True enuff for you, ma'am; oh, its you have the larnin' and scripture; faix though what do you think of myself, but do be thinking that Miss Maher has something to do with it; begorra, ma'am, but I thinks they's courtin'." Neddy held down his head and blushed at the turpitude of his suggestion.

"May be so, achud; who knows; shure its natural; throw tow into the fire and it will burn."

"Thruve for you ma'am, but they say it is not lucky, when one is intended for the church to kick up; but Mrs. Hogan, I do be wondering that so fine a woman as you never married; shure Jack Grace, and you know he has a sang place, often ax's me would you marry; shure I don't know what to say."

"Git out of that now," said Mrs. Hogan, looking evidently well pleased.

"Sorra a word of a lie in it; faix he has me bothered."

"A good sensible man he is, and a sang little place he has. I believe he milks two cows."

"Three, Mrs. Hogan," suggested Neddy.

"And what did you tell him?"

"Faix I said I knew you would, that you had a handsome penny, and that there were many looking for you."

"That's a good boy, Neddy; shure it's a blessing for people to have their own house; you see, Neddy, if anything was to happen the poor old priest, God betune us and harm"—here Mrs. Hogan put the corner of her apron to the corner of her eye, and indulged in a little melancholly reflection; having composed her feelings, she continued—"if anything happened him, I would be badly off."

"That what I does be saying myself, ma'am

in your absence. I wish I had my dinner, for I feel hungry," said Neddy, breaking off with a yawn and stretching his hands.

"That's true, I was forgettin'," said Mrs. Hogan, as she went, and placed plenty of cold meat on the table, and fell at crisping the potatoes for Neddy.

"I will draw the table near the fire," said Neddy.

"Do, avic, and make yourself comfortable."

So he drew down the table, and made himself comfortable, all the time chuckling inwardly at how he "butthered" Mrs. Hogan; for Mrs. Hogan was remarkable for her miserly propensities, in fact for starving every person and thing she could, save and except herself.

"Neddy," said Mrs. Hogan, "maybe you'd like a glass of punch with that."

"If you please, ma'am, shure that's what would wash it down. I wish," and Neddy gave a sly look at her from under his brows, "I wish I had a hoise, and a few acres of land, it's I wouldn't be long without a wife, and that's somebody I know." Here he gave another sly look.

"Who would she be, Neddy?" said Mrs. Hogan, attempting a laugh, or rather a kind of chuckle.

"Faix, I needn't go outside the dure to find the best wife in the parish," and Neddy winked at Mrs. Hogan, as much as to say, you know who I mean.

"Get out, you schemer," said Mrs. Hogan.

"Sorra a word o' lie in it, and that's what I do be telling Jack Grace." Here their *tele-a-tele* was disturbed by a ring from the bell.

Frank had driven over to Father O'Donnell's that evening, accompanied by Uncle Corny.

As Uncle Corny is to be a remarkable personage in our story, it is fit that we should introduce him to our readers.

Corny O'Brien, or as he was more familiarly called, "Uncle Corny," had vegetated among the O'Donnells for the last forty years, and was now superintending the growth and military education of the third generation. Uncle Corny had been something of a Lothario in his youth; but at length he fell head and ears in love with a pretty girl. Aileen was not insensible to his addresses, but, he being a younger brother, with slender means, her father, who was a shrewd old fellow, without a particle of romance in his composition, took a common-sense view of things, and married her to a