

## HOW MISTRESS BURKE'S NEW YEAR'S GOOSE WAS COOKED.

OCH! masha thin, *that* was the goose! An' I'll just be afther tellin yez how I belave the shpooks an' the ghosts are as fond av a bit av good aitin' as ourselves. Ye see it was Misthress Richards—she live next dure neighbor to me own firsh cousin Misthress Burke, as foine luckin' a woman as ye'd see in a day's jorney, only fur thim blaguard pockmarks on her face, an' the bit av a squint in her left eye. Well, the two back-yards were all in wan, wid just a bit av a boord fince atweene them to kape the wan from seein' what the other was doin' all the time, an' Misthress Richards she was afther buyin' a toorkey an' a goose, the way theyd run around the back-yard an' get fat agin Christmas. The toorkey, ma'am, sure he was a beauty;—wid the mosht beautiful tail—an' he'd shpread it out an' come struttin down the back-yard the very way Misthress Burke 'ud come home from mass on an Aister marnin whin she'd her ould weddin' dhress on, an' a foine new bonnet to match. An' the ghoose too, as white as the drifted shnow, an' she walkin' around wid his lardship an' thim gabblin' an' talkin to aich other like Darby an' Joan—an' Misthress Burke a-feedin them up wid pays an' short stuff, till they lucked as fat an' tindher as any butermilk pig. Ye see the toorkey was fur Christmas company—an' the ghoose it was fur New Year's. Well ma'am, thim two powltry were the greatest divarsion to Misthress Burke! an' she'd sit be the hour watchin' thim, till the water ud run out av the carners av her mouth;—an' Misthress Richard's, she'd shtand in the yard an' admoire them—an' she'd luck up at Misthress Burke's back window—an' shmile, an' shmile, the way that woman ud shmile! You'd never hear her laugh—she was too prim an' polite entoirely for the likes av a good laugh, wan av your civil quiet kind, wid fair hair an' blue eyes an' thin lips, always as cool as you plaze, an' thin she'd a way av shmilin' an' shmilin', the way it 'ud make yer blood boil, an'—Mother av Moses! that woman ud shmile the two horns aff uv a goat. It was just four days afther Christmas whin I was afther loosin' me comb, an' I couldn't find it high nor low, widin the four carners av the house; so I wint over to Misthress Burke's to borrow the loan av her comb, an' there she was, sitting at the back window up shtairs, wid her mouth waterin' an' she gazin at the big white goose waddlin' round Misthress Richard's backyard, an' lookin as lonely as a widdy woman the day afther the funeral—the way she missed the gobble av the toorkey.

"The tap av the marnin to yez," sez I, "Misthress Burke." But the divil an answer she made me, only she kep her oye on that goose, an' sez she, "Whisper!" sez she. "What evir is it," sez I. "This wurld's moighty onaiquil, Biddy Flynn," says she, noddin' over at the goose. "Onaiquil!" sez I—an' sure its all over goose-flesh me skiu was—thinkin she was after takin lave of her sivin sinsis. "Yes, Biddy Flynn, onaiquil!" sez she, shtartin' up an' stretchin' out her arrum right over towards the goose, "just luck at that, wud yez, an' tell me if there isnt a screw loose in this wuruld somewhere, whin that shmilin' good-for-nothin' omadhaun next door musht have her toorkey an' her goose up to the handle, an' daycent honest payple like you an' me, Biddy Flynn, musht lick our fingers afther carned beef an' cabbage on New Year's Day," sez she. "Well," sez I, havin' a big sigh, "Its thrue fur yez, Mrs. Burke, but how are yez goin' to help yerself?" sez I. "Help meself! Biddy Flynn, is it a thafe ye'd be after makin' me, to be talkin about *me* help-

ing meself? No, ma'am! I nivir stales; I'm as honest as the sun, but yez know very well that its moighty hard-up I am fur kindlin' just at present, an' its often I've to take the loan of a loose boord aff the backyard fince. Now, Biddy Flynn, supposin' I was to light the fire wid a boord an' that goose ud walk in to me back dure throug the hole in the fince—would *you* ait corned beef an' cabbage fur your New Year's dinner?" sez she, lookin at me wid the shquint in the left oye. "Divil a bit," sez I, "Misthress Burke," sez I, "yer a credit to yer country." "Biddy Flynn," says she solemnly, "this is an age av progress an' aiquality—an' aigual rights fur all. Me-self was come of an ould family—an' was brought up in daycency an' 'onesty, an' I cant abear cuvetousness, but whin it comes to payple makin' hogs av themselves wid geese an' wid toorkeys, an' their betters only wid praties an' carned beef, its high toime to let thim oonderstand that this is Amerikey an' aiquil rights fur all. We don't want to be afther raisin' a bloated arrahstocracy on this continent wid a toorkey fur Christmas, an' a goose fur New Year—set them up indade!" Wid that she comes down shtairs an' she goes an' shlips a boord aff uv the back fince, an' sure enough just as we were havin' a drhop av the craythar to flavor a cup av tay—who should walk into the back shanty but me laddyboy the goose! "Biddy Flynn," sez Misthress Burke, "howldin' up her two hands an' rowlin up her oyes wid devotion"—"just luck at that! luck at the kindness an' mercy av providence to sind a poor widdy woman a goose fur her New Year's dinner! just shut the back shanty dure on him, Biddy Flynn," sez she, an' wid that she grabs a knife an' cuts the throat av the goose afore she had time to turn around. An' thin she sat down, an' masha! the beautiful pillow av shnow fhwhite feathers she got out av that goose! Thin she hung him up in the cellar to stiffen, an' afther gettin' the lind av the comb, I cum home—but just as I was afther passin' Misthress Richard's dure, who should be shtandin' on the shtep but me leddy herself, an' she a-lookin' at the white feathers av the goose shtickin to me gownd—an' shmilin' to herself—an' shmilin' an' shmilin' more an' more. On New Year's marnin' who should open the dure but Misthress Burke, all dresht up an' ready fur mass. "A good New Year to yez, Biddy Flynn," sez she, "I'd like to begin the new year well," sez she, "so its to mass I'll be afther goin' an' whin I come back its a few ingans an' a wisp av sage I'll want to borrow from yez—an' the pleasure av yer company to ait me New Year's goose." Well, when mass was over, we wint acrasht the strate to Mrs. Burke's—an' we stuffed the goose wid ingans an' praties an' sage an' butter—an' widout a word av a lie we got more than a pound av goose grease out av him for the childer wid the croup—an' we put him in the oven an' we roasted him just beautiful an' brown, an' Misthress Burke had him just set on the platter on the table alongside av a mosht illigant dish av mashed praties—whin there cum a murtherin' rat-tat-tat at the back shanty dure—"Mother av Moses! Biddy Flynn, what's that!" sez she, turnin' as white as the wall, "Ye'd better open the dure," sez I, throwin' me apron over the goose, an' wid that I opens the window wide to let out the shmell av the burnin' grase, an' all thrimblin' an' shakin she opened the back dure a leetle bit, an' keekt her head out. Och thin! savin yer prisince, its the drhum av me ear was clane split open wid the awful yell she let out av her whin she flew pasht me an' cleared out av the window like a cat. An' its meself wasn't long behind her whin I saw a long white ghost walk in, all in a windin sheet, glory be to