

# LOCAL LEGENDARY TALES OF IRELAND.

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NO. III.

## THE TREASURE SEEKER.

"Thus seeking for the golden spoil  
Long hidden deep beneath the soil,  
By rules of art I dug the ground  
While night and storm were dark around."

CORNELIUS O'CARROLL, as he wrote his name, in cramp characters, with an O as large as a plate,—or as he was better known, *Con-na-boccaugh*, or Limping Lero, from the shortness of one of his legs,—was second in command, own man, foot, and errand-boy, charioteer, and body-guard, to the hospitable and happy Widow Moriarty. To give even an idea of the multifarious vocations of Corny would be impossible. He said himself he was "cook, slush and dairy maid." Equally impossible would it be to say that he fulfilled the duties of any one office, or even pretended to fulfil them. He was a distant relation to his mistress, and was consequently a privileged person; at least he thought he ought to be. His ready excuse was, "Arrah! sure blood's thicker nor wather any day; aint I the rest o' themselves?" Though Idler in ordinary, and Story-teller General to the establishment of Knockbeg House, yet he was sometimes useful and always in request. No one could give such pleasing accounts of the coming harvest and its prospects to the "Misthress," which he made out was principally due and owing, under Providence, to his own judicious management and industry; no one so ready to drive home, and spanceil the cows for the girls, turn a spit, bring in turf, give a hand to wait on table, look after Master Brian's dogs and sporting gear, find out a hare's seat, or a covey of partridges; none could drive the ladies in such style, or, in a strange place, with hat in hand, pay them such obeisance; and none could tell—and this talent was the best feather in his cap—so many droll stories, legends of the past, personal adventures, and passing events, or repeat the dim old prophecies that told of the future. To be sure he was an idle, drunken, philandering, occasionally-light-fingered, lying sort of fellow, (his statements were always taken at a considerable discount, all due allowance being made.) He had one fault, it must be admitted,

and that was, staying out late. Every night, as regularly as the sun went down, was he engaged in some excursion, *shanochis*, at the neighbors', or drinking, doacing, or something, at the "Cat and the Fiddle," or digging for hidden gold. It must have been owing to being out so much "twixt twelve and one" with his mental faculties in a certain state of aberration, that he saw, or thought he saw, so many strange sights; here falling in with the "good people," there carried off on the Pooka, encountering so many

"Black spirits and white,  
Red spirits and gray."

At any rate,—on those occasions it was, that he collected or invented those tales with which he amused so often a credulous but attentive auditory round Mrs. Moriarty's fire-side.

But if he loved one thing more than another it was digging for hidden treasures. Having first discovered the locality in a dream, where they lay since the "troubled times," he thought he could not always be unsuccessful, but in some lucky hour, find a crock of gold, when with a coach and four, and rich as a Jew, he need shift no longer for a living, but live like the lords of the soil, an idea particularly grateful to his indolent habits. On returning from his nocturnal rambles, he prevented the reprimand, or turned away the volley of invective, by commencing a story as he raised his hand to the latch, by this manœuvre taking off the attention of the enemy from himself, and engrossing it with his "hairbreadth 'scapes" or traditionary tales, and thus in effect silencing the only battery that could be brought to bear on him, and from which he deserved and expected a running fire of small arms, or a heavy cannonade.

When out later than usual, he was ready with a circumstantial account of being led through bogs and morasses for two hours, by the mischie-