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Young People

What the Red Cow Did

By Dorothea Conyers

TWILIGHT fell softly on a narrow way which wound through high banks to Loch Derk. Thin donkeys and tethered goats tore at the grass bordering the road, munching an inefficient supper. The west was clear amber as the sun went down and the breath of spring was in the soft air. Laborers' cottages—small, cramped, slated places—dotted the sides of the road at not infrequent intervals, with a few old thatched houses among them.

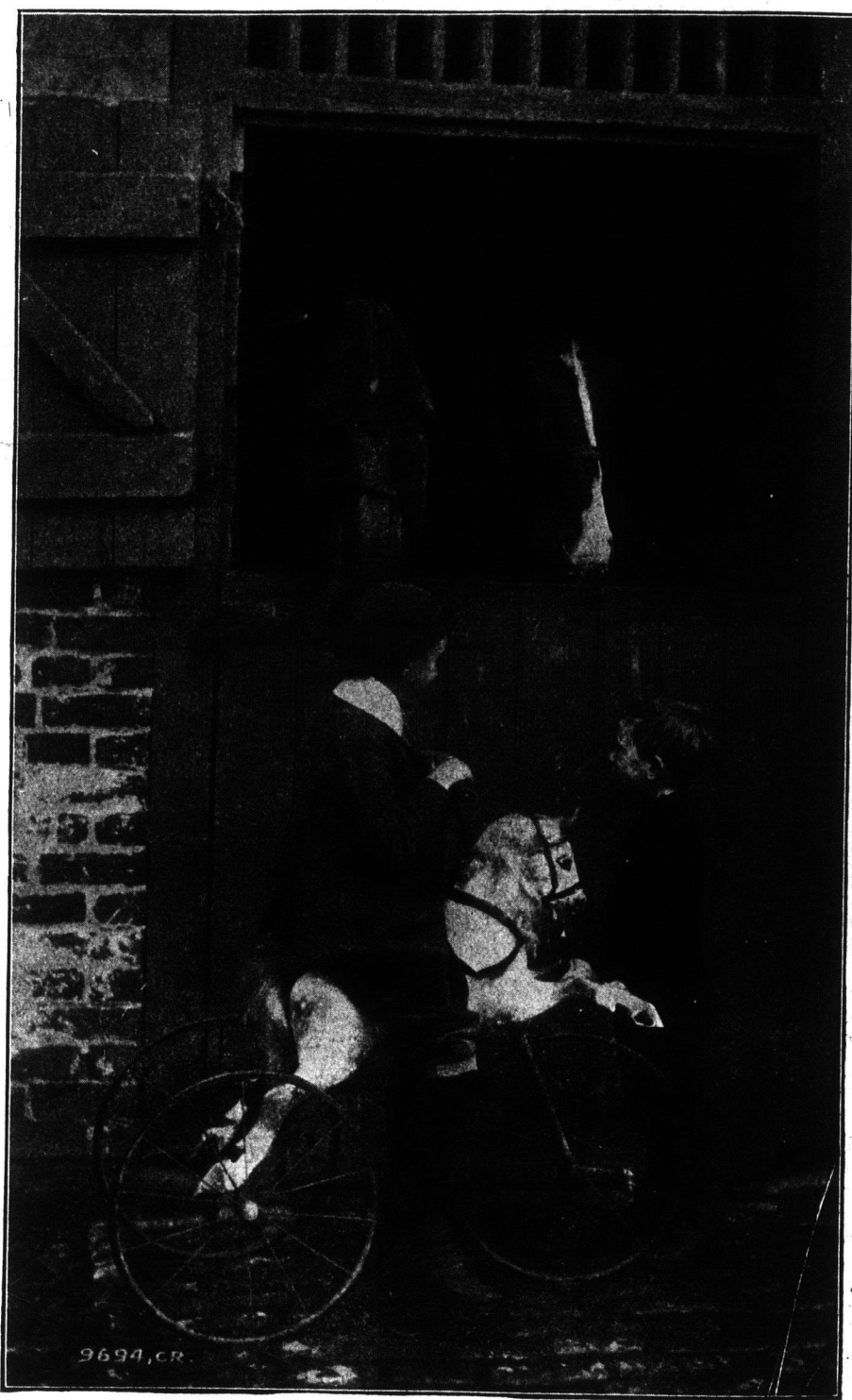
From one of these, tumble-down and picturesque, Mollie Dayly came out, carrying a steaming mess of meat and potatoes. Clucking hens and gobbling ducks surged about her feet, and the

"I was passin' the road, Mollie asthore, an' thought I'd ask ye for a cup of tay."

But the tail of Bid Naylan's eye lingered on the newly-built cottage and Mollie knew the real reason of the visit. She sucked in her lips grimly, irritation stirring in her.

"Oh, sthep in," she said pleasantly, "sthep in, Bid! The kettle's on the hook an' a cake-loaf in the bastible. Ye're welcome kindly."

Mollie bustled in, her weather-beaten and yet comely face working as she went, the hens following her to take up an isolated corner. But the cottage was bright and comfortable. A turf fire glowed golden in the wide, old-fashioned hearth; blue china shone on the dresser;



A New Competitor.

expectant pig grunted heavily. Mollie flung some of the hot stuff on to an old board, and as her feathered tribe snatched and shoved she cast a dark glance at a neat, slated cottage standing exactly opposite.

"Th' assurance of him," she remarked bitterly to the pig. "Opposite me own dour no less, and our ducks shwimmin' together in the pond. An in-an'-out meetin' on the roadside," muttered Mollie, staring at the raw bank bordering the new enclosure. "Day after day 'twill be the same."

"Good evenin', Mollie. God save ye kindly!"

Mollie swung readily to greet the new-comer—Bid Naylan, a withered crone, who retailed the gossip of the country-side and was mischief-maker and match-maker combined—a wrinkled, merry-eyed hag, with a red shawl over her head, and a multitude of miscellaneous petticoats hiding the leanness of her hips.

copper and brass showed the fire's reflection in their polished sides.

A brown tea-pot stood in the ashes, and the tea from it was so black and strong that it wrung a joyful exclamation from Bid Naylan.

"Three-an-six a pound," said Mollie proudly, as she buttered her steaming soda-loaf. "I howlds with no chape tays. An' what's stirrin' now, Bid, ma'am?"

There was much stirring, the accounts delivered between noisy sups from a thick saucer and pleasant mumbling of the soft hot bread. The match between Mary Hagan's girl, Honor, and Maggie O'Dea's Jamesey was off, because Mary Hagan could lay down two pounds in dry money, a feather-bed, and a calf, and Jamesey's father refused to part with anything except an old stripper cow.

"So, though I did me besht," said Bid, "and towld Mary the bye was decent entirely, it's off. Poor Honor bawlin'