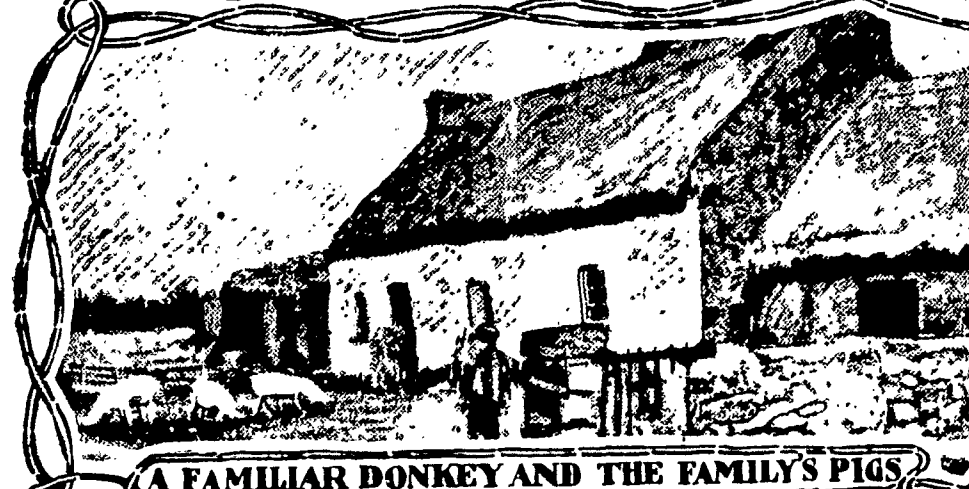


IN THE HAND OF GOOD SAINT PATRICK



STACKING TURF FOR THE WINTER



A FAMILIAR DONKEY AND THE FAMILY'S PIGS



AN IRISH COLLEEN



THE ENTIRE HOUSEHOLD



A COTTAGE INTERIOR

Home Life In Ireland

By MICHAEL O'HARA

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THIS "lowly thatched cottage" of John Howard Payne is no poet's conceit in the Emerald Isle. In such a home many of Ireland's great men were born. In such a home the Irish farmer of today lives his humble but clean and wholesome life.

One storied, with walls of turf, thatched with oaten straw over a layer of peat, the Irish cottage is a worthy exemplar of the simple life. With but three apartments, a kitchen between two other rooms, the average dwelling of the better class of peasants is neat and cozy, more homelike than many a palace. The roomy kitchen, with its hardened and clean clay floor, the inside of the roof showing above, its rough rafters of fir and bog oak exposed, is the living room. On one side of the wall hangs a ladder which gives access to the loft. A dresser, on which are ranged the bowls, mugs and platters or wooden noggins, peggins and turned beechen dishes, stands by the



COLLEEN PEELING POTATOES.

door of one of the side rooms. Under the big, wide chimney, with its crane blackened by the fumes of many years of cooking, burns a fire of mixed peat and fir. In all likelihood an oaten cake is leaning against a griddle, hardening by the fire. Ranged around the room are four-legged stools, seats of plaited straw and a few chairs. Outside the house, to the left, runs a little row of cattle byres and fowl houses. On the right stands the turf stack, fifteen or twenty tons of peat. Attached to the cottage are four or five acres of arable land. The cottager owns two milk cows, a calf or two, a few pigs, perhaps a donkey, ducks, geese and hens and on the hill some fescue sheep. These, with the simple furnishings of his house, comprise his worldly goods. He raises meat for market. It is only on high days that he tastes flesh himself. Potatoes and "strabou" (oatmeal porridge) constitute his daily diet. Yet with all his relative poverty the Irish peasant is a sturdy citizen, and his boys and girls are strong limbed and ruddy, no "muddled oafs" or "fanneled fools." The Irish lad and the colleen, too, in their bare feet travel the stony roads and stubbled fields with unconcern and climb the hills as nimbly as the herds they tend. Most of the girls are good looking. Many of them are beautiful. Work is the portion of every Irishman. In the fields, in the peat bogs, with the ducks, at the loom or at the

spinning wheel every one has his or her task. In the planting season the women work in the fields with the men, and at the hay harvest they do everything but mow. In the early days of May, shouldering his turf spade and accompanied by a handful of helping neighbors, the Irishman goes to the peat bog to cut his winter fuel. The turf is cut twelve inches deep and four square out of the soft black peat layer after layer, each block of peat containing more carbon than the one before to a depth of eight, twelve and in the best bogs even twenty feet. With one stroke of his double-pointed blades of which are set at right angles, the digger cuts a clean turf and throws it over his shoulder to the bank above. There a man with a barrow gathers the turfs and wheels them away to dry ground, where they are spread out and left until the sun has drawn the water from them. Then they are piled up and later carted home to build the turf stack by the cottage door, quite like an American wood pile.

The women and girls at all seasons have plenty to do indoors, spinning and weaving the Irish linsens and home-spuns which are famous round the world and working on their wonderful embroideries. This work the girls turn into play at their "sprigging camps," where all the lasses from one hillside or valley gather, bringing with them their embroidering materials and their stools. They meet in the home of each girl in turn, forming a circle in the center of the kitchen, while the boys of the district sit around the walls, jesting with the girls and telling stories. At about 11 o'clock the camp breaks up, and the boys, shouldering the stools, convoy the girls home.

In other cottages women sit knitting around the enormous fireplace, the men smoking their black clay pipes and swapping stories which keep the children wide awake long after they should be in bed. At these sessions the shanachy, or traveling story teller, always meets with a hospitable reception. In olden times, before the spread of newspapers and printed books, story telling was a regular profession. Nowadays the best story teller is frequently the beggar man who, traveling over great areas, meets the shanachies of many parts and acquires a vast fund of tales, true and otherwise. Most exciting are his narratives of the doings of Finn Macoul and his warriors, of giants, fairies and bunshoes. In more than one of his romances the hero is the good St. Patrick himself, of whom he tells such tales as that of his conversion of Ossian, son of Finn.

Ossian met a beautiful maiden, riding on an enchanted white horse, near the lakes of Killarney. She told him she was Niam of the Golden Hair, daughter of the king of Tir-an-og, and that she had come to Erin to see him, whose great renown had reached her own country. He fell promptly in love with Niam, of course, and went back with her to Tir-an-og, where they were married. He remained with Niam for 200 years. Then he longed to see Erin again and his old friends, and Niam said he might go if he would promise to come back, and she let him take the enchanted white horse to ride on. Great was Ossian's sorrow when he reached Erin to find that the Fenians were all dead and that the race of men was small and weak. He sought to show the pygmies what feats of strength a man of the old time could do when the girl of his saddle broke and the enchanted horse ran away, leaving Ossian behind, small and weak, like the others, and old. Ossian heard of St. Patrick, who was introducing a new worship into Ireland, and he blamed him for the sad state of the country. He went to see the saint and remonstrated with him and stayed with him four years, each trying during that time to bring the other to his way of thinking. At last the heathen was converted, after he had been given a

glance of Finn and his warriors in hell, but even then his conversion was unsatisfactory at first. In Ossian's vision Finn and his men were seen fighting the devils for lack of better foes. Finn's weapon was a flail, and with it he was doing great execution, but always just as victory was within his grasp the thought of his flail would break and he would be beaten back. "Kneel down and pray," said Patrick to Ossian. And, to his joy, Ossian knelt, but not for forgiveness or salvation did he pray. "Great God," he said, "Patrick's God, give Finn a thong of iron for his flail!" The saint remonstrated with him for his irreverence, but Ossian said, "Leave me alone. Sure, Finn would never send any one to a place like that!" But in the end Patrick prevailed, and Ossian became a good Christian.

Cheerfulness is something bachelors have to make married men wonder what it is. When she gets past 30 a girl quits laying down conditions under which she will marry a man. When a man speaks of when he had money he always means when he was not married. A little man imagines his contrariness is will power. A dollar saved is a dollar made and a dollar made is one that isn't invested in a get-rich-quick scheme. Chicago News. Vitality of Snails. The vitality of the snail is remarkable. One that was glued to a card in a museum for four years came to life on being immersed in warm water. Some specimens in the collection of a

naturalist revived after they apparently had been dead for fifteen years. —Exchange. 4,000 Newspapers in Japan. Japan has 4,000 newspapers, although the first one was printed in 1852. In 1879 there were 266. The Dsaiet Shimpo, of Tokio, is said to have a circulation of 400,000 daily. Buffalo Robe Values. George Webster of Cabot, Vt., recently sold two buffalo robes for \$150. The robes have been in constant use for 30 years and originally cost but \$30. More Potatoes in France. France produces more than twice as many potatoes as the United States. The average price a bushel is 25 1/2 cents.

A NEW ITALIAN BRIGAND. Signor Melandri Has Already Held Half a Dozen Men for Ransom. Italy begins to ring with the exploits of another notorious brigand, not this time in the remote wilds of Sicily, but close to the very heart of the monarchy, in the Romagna itself. The name of the bandit is Melandri, and his operations are conducted in the region around Ravenna. A reward of £120 is already offered for his capture but if matters develop as they have done only a few months will be needed for at least trebling the amount. A whole army of carabinieri are in the district, but so far Melandri has eluded all pursuit, though his crimes continue. He seems to nourish a particular enmity against the country clergy, of whom he has already held half a dozen as ransom. —London Globe.

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