

### POPPIN' THE QUESTION.

Ali soch a night as 'twuz the moon hung out her silver lan'tr'n.  
An' sights o' leetle fleecy clouds across the sky went can't-rin'.  
A millyun stars o' pear'st you please showed all their sassy faces.  
An' winked an' blinked at aster stars aglow in woodland plances.  
Wall! Jen an' I wuz walkin' hum, for meetin' wuz just over.  
An' I wuz tryin' to tell her how that she wuz sweet ez clover.  
An' sights o' other poetry things I'd hunted high 'n low for.  
About her bein' ez dear to me ez all the gold o' Gopher.  
There's nothin' makes a feller feel much meachin' or greener.  
Than when he's tryin' to tell a gal o' how he'll love'n screen'er.  
From every leetle puff o' wind, an' how, if she'll but take him,  
Her lovin' presence by his side will either make or make him.  
I'd studied sights o' sech-like talk an' I had popped the question.  
A hundred times or so in thought till I quit bein' interestin'.  
We talk about a slew o' things, the meetin' an' the weather.  
The country fair'n singin' school'n then I asked her whether.  
She looked bein' a sour old maid like Aunt Mirandy Claffin.  
Goodland I thought she'd kill herself a giggle an' a laughin'.  
An' then I don't know how I dared no more'n you do, mister.  
But she leaned up agin' my arm an' fore I knewed, I kissed her.  
An' now, we're jest ez happy, wal—that goes without the saying—  
We'll be married n'all settled 'fore it's time for hayin'.  
There's jest one thing a worryin' me, 't sticks to me like a plaster.  
The fact o' it is, though we're engaged I hadn't never asked 'er.  
—Isabel Gordon, in Farm and Home.

By this time North had with a little curiosity scanned the paper that she had given him, and his expression was even more blankly amazed than hers had been. It was only a name that was scrawled on the bit of paper that his fingers held; but that name was Dennis O'Reilly.

"Dennis O'Reilly? What does this mean?" he asked himself in puzzled speculation. "In this a mere coincidence, or am I on the verge of an important discovery?"

Mrs. Maynard interrupted his meditations.

"It is the man who claimed to have a knowledge of Annie Dupont's history, is it not, Mr. North? The name certainly seems familiar to me, as if I had heard it recently."

"Why, yes," answered North, too much bewildered by this unexpected turn of events to consider his words very carefully, "he is certainly the man."

Nothing loath, Dennis followed the gentleman from the house and down the street at a pace set by North's impatience. They did not exchange another syllable until they were closeted together in North's room at the Clement house; then throwing himself down in his favorite lounging chair and facing O'Reilly, who was seated near him, North returned to the charge.

"Now, O'Reilly, there's an agreement, a business contract between us. Do you understand that?"

It was not clear, from Mr. O'Reilly's expression of countenance, that North's meaning had fully penetrated and permeated his intelligence; but notwithstanding his slightly blank look, he gave a prompt and enthusiastic affirmative to this question.

"What do you understand to be the terms of our agreement?" continued North, determined to know his ground perfectly before he ventured upon any personal negotiations with the man. "We've both agreed to do something, haven't we?"

This at least was within the scope of Dennis' instant comprehension. His ruddy face glowed as he responded emphatically:

"Thru for you, sorr. An' it's mislif as will kape me worrad about that same."

"Of course, Dennis, of course; you will keep your word and I shall keep mine. Now, what was it that you agreed to do for me? Let us be perfectly sure, before we go any further, that we understand each other."

The expediency of this precaution seemed to recommend itself to Dennis at once, and he proceeded to do his utmost toward establishing that desirable mutual understanding.

"Wull, sorr," he began, looking reflectively at North, "it was all along o' the stirr made about Annie Dupont, an' them lawyers in New York puttin' so much in the papers about her, an' me knowin' the whole what a dale o' trouble had been caused by me own cousin Patrick O'Gorman's wife; for who ud it be but Ann Murphy herself, before the praste made her Ann O'Gorman (bad luck to me cousin Patrick when he did that same!) who was housekeeper an' me the coachman for the mistress an' the swate young leddy as was Annie Dupont, sorr, an' niver knew ut."

There was almost the suggestion of a refined sneer in these last words. Had North been attending to them he would have detected the subtle sarcasm and also the desperate pain that forced it from her; but his mind was at that moment otherwise absorbed. Mrs. Maynard's words had let in a flood of light upon the mystery that had been perplexing him. Dennis O'Reilly's appearance there was fully accounted for.

"Another singular throw of the dice," he said to himself, with grim satisfaction, "and, as usual, it is in my favor. I had actually almost forgotten this man who was the real cause of my coming to X—, and I had no very sanguine expectations of being able to find him; my efforts in that direction thus far having totally failed; and behold, he turns up without an intervention or purpose of mine, all ready to play Noll's game right into my hands! Well, I have some claim upon him anyway, in view of his overtures to Hunter and Ketchum; and if he is trying to play a double game, I shall bring him sharply to book!"

With this reflection, North turned to take leave of Mrs. Maynard.

"There must have been some misunderstanding about this matter, Mrs. Maynard," he said, suavely. "I certainly do not wish you to be annoyed by this person, since I can conduct the investigation without your direct assistance. I will see the man at once, and ascertain whether or not he really possesses information that will be valuable to us. I will devote as much time as possible to this investigation and will call from time to time to report progress; shall I?"

The permission was coldly granted, and North with a bow of farewell withdrew from the drawing room, curious about his coming interview with Dennis O'Reilly.

CHAPTER XIV.  
King—An hour of quiet shortly shall we see; Till then, in patience our proceeding be.—Hamlet.

He found the man waiting in the hall. He was apparently about forty years of age, short, stout and red-faced with bristling red hair and whiskers, twinkling blue eyes, and an expression of shrewd native humor. His clothing, though of cheap quality, was neat and whole, and he had the general appearance of a thrifty workingman. Not at all the "seedy" adventurer that North had half expected to see.

He looked up with a slight degree of astonishment, but an unmistakable recognition in his round wide-open eyes, as North approached him; then, bowing low with his hat in his hand, he advanced the plain, indisputable and self-evident proposition:

"Well, Muster North, I've got back." North surveyed him critically from head to foot for an instant. Then he put a leading question abruptly:

"You are Dennis O'Reilly, are you not?"

"Indade, sorr, an' I am that same," admitted Dennis with another low bow. "Did you wish to see me?"

"Yis, sorr, by yer honor's lave."

"Why did you come here, then, and inquire for Mrs. Maynard?"

"Sure, an' that was just what yer honor told me to do," protested Dennis. "Twas yerself, sorr, as tould me that yer honor would be out of town when I got back, an' so I was to report meself to Mistress Maynard."

North nodded slightly at this confirmation of his own shrewd suspicion; adding instantly to Dennis:

"Where have you been for the last few days? Why didn't you report sooner?"

"Sooner, is it, sorr? Indade, thin, an' I've been just where yer honor sint me, sorr," was the evasive reply as Dennis began to eye his questioner somewhat askance.

"Oh, come on!" exclaimed North, suddenly taking up his hat from the hall table. "I cannot turn Mrs. Maynard's house into an inquisition, and the pres-

ent prospect is that I shall have to resort to the thumb-screws and rack before I succeed in obtaining any satisfactory information." This last was an aside, as he hurriedly drew on his gloves; then to Dennis he added more intelligibly: "Come with me to my hotel, and we will have a confidential talk about this matter."

Nothing loath, Dennis followed the gentleman from the house and down the street at a pace set by North's impatience. They did not exchange another syllable until they were closeted together in North's room at the Clement house; then throwing himself down in his favorite lounging chair and facing O'Reilly, who was seated near him, North returned to the charge.

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"How long have you known these facts about Annie Dupont, Dennis?"

"I've since my cousin Patrick told me, at Teddy O'Corrigan's wake, sorry returned Dennis, after a pause of recollection.

"But when was that? I know nothing about Teddy O'Corrigan's wake. Can you not tell me more definitely than that?"

Dennis reflected again with his face contorted as if the effort of memory were a painful one.

"Indeed, thin," he exclaimed, suddenly radiating with triumph, "it was soon after St. Patrick's day, for I remember that poor Teddy died of a brick-bat in the hands of one of the byes, which same was never mint for Teddy at all, at all, but for the blatherin' perliceme that was makin' himself troublesome to the byes in the paradise."

"St. Patrick's day?" repeated North. "Then it is nearly a year since Patrick told you. Have you talked to anyone about the matter during this time?"

"Never bit, sorr, till the day when your honor heard me tellin' Jim Nolan about it."

"Was that before or after you had written to Hunter and Ketchum, of New York, offering to give them this information?"

The question was asked sternly, and North's face was equally stern as he spoke.

Dennis started as if he had been shot, and his eyes grew more round than ever in his astonishment and dismay. He was beginning to stammer out some answer, when North coolly added:

"Don't lose your senses, now, nor attempt to evade my question. I happen to know all about that little affair, and I wish to know whom you communicated with first: for it is pretty evident that you have been accommodating enough to offer yourself to both parties. Come, now, to my question again. Was it before or after you had written to Hunter and Ketchum?"

Dennis had not yet recovered from the confusion into which he had been thrown on being thus suddenly confronted with his double-dealing; but he answered, humbly:

"It was after, yer honor."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

### FACTS ABOUT FURS.

Millions of Squirrel Tails Used—Dyed Rabbit Skins.

A good deal of uncertainty seems to prevail as to the likely supply of seal-skins, but a recent feature in the fur trade is a liberal resort to the use of tails of animals, which at one time were regarded as being of very secondary importance. The most urgent demand for tails would appear to be in the instance of ermine. But the point only, being jet black, is inserted, after the well-known fact of their introduction, at intervals—in reality, the ermine trimmings of the sovereign and royal family not actually consisting of the tail of the ermine, but of the paws of the black Astakhan lamb or other suitable black fur, according to the Wardrobe and Draper's Trade Journal.

Squirrel tails are however, largely used, and one million or two million of these find their way annually into the market, as well as martens' tails, which really make a beautiful fur. The muskrat tail is also a large article of commerce, the muskrat skin itself being perhaps the best natural low-priced fur that finds its way into our markets, and far superior in point of wear to the dyed rabbit skins that are sold in black and brown lustered goods familiar in the trade.

### How Fast Coal Is Going.

A statistician has attempted to determine approximately the world's consumption of coal. He estimates that in generating steam for engines aggregating 10,000,000 horsepower (some authors rate the world's engines as high as 20,000,000 horsepower) coal is burned to the amount of about 12,000 tons per hour. For gas for lighting, the consumption is not less than 10,000 tons per hour; and for gas for heating and motive power, probably 4,500 tons. In metallurgy, the use of coal reaches about 9,000 tons per hour; and in workshops and factories, 5,000 tons. It is difficult to calculate the quantity employed for domestic purposes, but 55,000 tons per hour, or 1,320,000 tons per day of twenty-four hours, seems to be an under-estimate. Placing the actual daily consumption for the entire world as low as 1,600,000 tons, we find that a solid cube of coal more than 100 yards on a side is burned up every day.

### Delicate Italian Rings.

Rings of Italian workmanship are remarkably beautiful, says the Detroit Free Press. Venice particularly excels in this art. In the Lendesborough collection is a fine specimen. The four claws of the outer ring, in open work, support the setting of a sharply pointed pyramidal diamond, such as was then coveted for writing on glass. The shank bears a fanciful resemblance to a serpent swallowing a bird, of which only the claws connecting the face remain in sight. It was with a similar ring Raleigh wrote the words on a window pane: "Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall," to which Queen Elizabeth added: "If thy heart fail thee, climb not at all," an implied encouragement which led him on to fortune.

### The Rights in a Picture.

They have curious ideas of ownership in Europe, says the Washington Post. In France there is an unwritten but immutable law that a painting shall not be exhibited without the artist's consent, no matter what the wishes of the owner may be. And now a literary and artistic congress in session at Milan, Italy, has decided that the right of reproduction does not pass to the buyer of a picture. Thus you may pay for a picture, have it in your possession, and have a clear and free title to it, but you don't quite own it after all.

### The Indiana State News.

REVERLING's grocery and saloon, Porter's saloon and restaurant and a cottage, at Owensboro, were burned at an early hour the other morning.