

the timber speculators until it was repealed and superseded by the unwise law of 1893, when a wild stampede was made for the spoils? Was the loss of the resolution offered by Mr. Fernow, "that the policy of selling outlying parcels be discontinued or restricted to such cases only as are fit for agricultural use, and are needed and desired for such purpose," a movement in the interest of forest preservation? It must be remarked that, as far as this resolution refers to the Adirondack region, it is entirely inapplicable, for it is well known by those who reside in the vicinity and have "camped out" in that region that it is adapted only for a wooded park or State reservation for pleasure and recreation, and as a great water reservoir, composed of numerous lakes—a spongy reservoir, formed by the growth of ages of mosses and leaves which the cool atmosphere keeps from rapid decomposition; and not one tree should ever have been taken from it. Was the exclamation of a member of that Congress, in response to remarks by a friend of forest preservation, "Well, when are we to be permitted to cut down these trees?" an indication of encouraging progress toward forest preservation? Old and earnest members of the State and National forestry associations like Mr. Edmund P. Martin, Chairman of the Committee on Forestry of the New York Board of Trade and Transportation, who is familiar with the Adirondack region and the efforts which have been made, only too successfully, to devastate it, came away from the Congress disheartened, expressing their fears that the forests owned by the State will fall eventually into the hands of the lumbermen. Is this the way in which the headwaters of the Hudson are to be kept from dwindling away to small rivulets or dry ravines in summer, and subjected to raging floods in the spring? And, looking westward and northward, ought two great nations to stand inactive while the great lakes and the St. Lawrence are diminishing in volume at one season and rising in floods at another, and one of the great natural wonders of the earth, which should have been preserved forever in its wild state, is desecrated by mere beaverish interests? It should be proclaimed everywhere that our climate is changing, and that it is not only the storms and floods which are causing disaster, but that the increase of fogs on the Atlantic coast and in our harbors, produced by the annually increasing sweep of cyclonic winds, bringing in moister atmosphere, is a large element of evil. What a thought!—a great country's climate and rivers—a country in which millions had taken pride as promising to become the greatest and the happiest—irreparably impaired to satisfy the vulgar and insatiable greed of avarice!



## The Bargain Man

By Jno. Gilmer Speed

Thackeray has made for us a pathetic picture of the old-clothes man who was worsted in the bargain for a high white hat. So noble, so sad, was the face of this man that the gentle novelist, him whom the unthinking and unregenerate call a caustic satirist, was inclined to think that the old-clothes man was the Wandering Jew himself. But the bargain man I have had under observation for a long time very rarely looks in the least sad, for he never gets worsted in any of his many transactions; or, what is just as good, he never allows himself to believe that he has been beaten. On the contrary, he is always exhilarated by the hope that, if not his last bargain, the next to the last is sure to bring him an ample fortune. This sturdy hope never forsakes him for a moment, and, inasmuch as he always turns a little penny when the mighty dollar is out of his reach, his sanguine nature has reason for its robust existence.

My bargain man is not a Jew, but he is every whit as sharp as the sharpest Israelite that ever traded graven images with an unsuspecting housewife for the clothes that her husband had not cast off. My bargain man is, however, a transplanted Oriental, and has the imagination that is essential to refined traffic; he is a negro who was born a slave, and calls himself a "colored gentleman."

And if gentility be measured by deportment, he is as good a gentleman as the next. His bow is graceful, his speech is fluent, his eye is kindly though shrewd, and in his raiment he is a model of tasteful propriety. He can say, and does say, things to me which, if I said to another, would seem rude and impertinent; but he speaks always without offense. This in itself indicates ability, and at the same time accounts for his capacity to make purchases and sales impossible to another. And, moreover, nothing balks him, whether it be large or small, or whether he have knowledge or not. A little matter like ignorance does not stand in the way of business with him for a moment, and in this he reminds me of a lady who, in the absence of her husband, was administering the affairs of a great stock-farm. A neighbor called and asked her to put a price on a certain brown mare. "What will you give?" she asked. The neighbor offered \$250. The lady asked \$750. There was much talk, and finally a bargain was struck at \$500, and the brown mare was bought and sold. I expressed surprise at her knowledge of all the horses on the place. "Bless you!" she replied, "I don't know which brown mare it was." Then she was asked to explain her method. "I felt pretty sure," she said, "that Farmer Green would offer about half what the mare was worth, and I knew also that he would not come to my terms, so I placed the price at \$750. That gave him a margin to raise his bid and me a chance to lower my price. I am sure that I got just about what the mare was worth." And when the husband returned I learned that the wife had made a fair and judicious sale. But my bargain man would not have sold the mare for \$500; he would have acted on the same principle as the lady, but he would have placed the price at \$1,000 after the farmer's offer of \$250, and would have made the sale at at least \$625. He would have been better pleased, however, if he could have induced the farmer to give him a mortgage for that amount on a house and lot. Then he would have had something else to trade. I have known him to swap a diamond ring, a shot-gun, and a side-saddle for a farm in Missouri, and then to sell the farm for a silver-mine. But this was a transaction rather out of the ordinary run.

What delights him more than anything else is to get a work of art—a painting or a statuette. He brought one day a rather remarkable painting in a deep gilt frame, the canvas carefully covered with glass. "Here is something very fine," he said, and he appeared to be so sure of it that it would have seemed unkind to have told him that the painting was a worthless daub, as in truth it was. So I looked at it without saying anything. For a moment a shade of disappointment passed over his burnished face. "This was painted by Jones, the greatest artist in England," he added, with a tone of triumph. And now I did not have the heart to tell him that I had never heard of Jones, nor to call his attention to the sad fact that even the best English artist of the present day was far from being great, so I silently acquiesced in the idea that Jones's picture was fine, and that Jones himself was a great artist. My bargain man had got from me all that he wanted, for with my unspoken commendation of his sorry daub he sold it to one of my friends in less than two hours. I never saw him look sad until I brought the picture to him and demanded the return of my friend's money. And then he was sad for only the fractional part of a minute. His good nature returned, and he congratulated himself that he had the picture on hand again, and thanked me for being instrumental in its return. He was confident that he could sell it for a higher price to some "real connoisseur"—this was a polite dig at me over my friend's shoulders; and, sure enough, he did do that very thing. This was a genius for bargaining, and a conversion of defeat into victory.

The other day he began pumping me to find whether I knew anything about violins. I asked him to come to the point at once. He said: "I wanted to get a fiddle for my boy, and I perused the Bowery from eend to eend, and I seen one in a pawnbroker's winder. Well, sir, I bought it for three dollars and six bits, and, sir"—here his eyes lighted up wonderfully—"it is a genuwine Stradivarius." I showed the surprise that was expected, and he asked,

"How much do you s'pose dat fiddle's wuth?" "Oh, about six bits," I answered, carelessly. My bargain man was convulsed with merriment. When his laughter was over, he assured me with the utmost gravity that that old fiddle was surely worth every penny of \$2,500; and, for all that I know, it may be so. Certainly I hope it is, for I am persuaded that such energetic enthusiasm, such hopeful pertinacity, as that of my bargain man is worthy of reward. Meantime, if any one wants to buy anything out of the common and pay only twice what it is worth, I will gladly put him or her in communication with the subject of this sketch—a man who conquers all difficulties by cheerfulness, and coaxes the unwilling dollars from other pockets and into his own by the amiable art of knowing when to laugh.



## Peasant Life in Ireland

By Adela E. Orpen

Even in the most desolate parts of the West of Ireland, where the eye seems to wander vainly in search of signs of comfortable homes, there is a great deal of enjoyment. The Irish peasant is a gregarious creature. He ever loves the companionship of his fellow-men, but in especial of his Irish fellow-men. I know it is said of my countrymen that they all have the "gift of the gab." This is true, but it is true in an offensive sense only of those Irishmen who have acquired a foreign veneer over their natural material. A real Irishman is most agreeable when at home, and the less he knows of the outside world the more agreeable he is. The art of conversation and story-telling is inherent in him. It is an art which I fear is dying out. It disappears as reading comes in. But old Irish peasants who cannot read are generally charming companions. They can talk so well, and "cap" your stories so inimitably, and yet they never descend to that degraded form of fun, the modern and ever-to-be-deplored pun. I have been told by people who remember Ireland much further back than I can that they used to be a nation of beautiful whistlers, and that noted performers on that primitive instrument, the human mouth, used to be invited to parties in order to whistle. Men don't whistle now—they smoke instead. And just as the tobacco-pipe has banished whistling, so will cheap newspapers banish story-telling and talking from among the people. It is a curious fact, which all who have considered the subject will be ready to admit, that Irish women are not nearly as gifted in this way as the men. The women, when you have once established a friendship with them, are well up in all the folk-lore of their neighborhood, and can give you details upon any popular belief if you inquire about it, but they don't volunteer stories the way the men do. Perhaps they have not had the same traditional training as the men; just as, among the ancient Irish bards, the succession went ever in the male line.

During the long winter evenings the young men of the countryside go from cabin to cabin retailing all the news of the day. The prospects of the season and the likelihood of certain matches are all discussed over each fireside. An Irish peasant marriage is very different from what one might expect it to be among such a highly emotional and poetic folk. The royal marriages at the court of Louis the Fourteenth were drawn up on pretty much the same principles as those which are followed by the farmers and their fiancées in Ireland to-day. It is purely a matter of business on both sides. But here the similarity ceases, for whereas the royal marriages of France and elsewhere were followed by connections of a reprehensible character, the peasant marriages in Ireland are, in truth, "for better or worse," and husbands and wives live together in singular accord ever afterward. I should say that these marriages are, as a rule, conspicuously happy, and yet the preliminary proceedings don't seem to point that way.

Take an example. Jim and Mary Murphy were brother and sister, and had lived comfortably on the old farm for fifteen years since their parents died. Jim was nearly fifty, and Mary was on the shady side of forty-four; still he was a

"boy," that being the courtesy-title of all unmarried males of whatever age. Now the neighbors began to talk the matter over, saying, "Shure, an' it's toime Jim Murphy was takin' a woife into the farm." "Faith, an' that's so; he's a foine bye entoirely, an' will make a good husband to any gurl, an' it's meself says that same."

So answered McLoughlin the smith. He was a power in the land, and had made more matches than any other man. People deferred to him. "Boys" besought his aid, and girls sent friends to him to ask him to look out for a husband for them. So when McLoughlin agreed that Jim ought to be married, the neighbors were satisfied; they knew the job would be done speedily and satisfactorily. He visited two or three families where there were daughters, gathered any information he stood in need of, and then waited upon Jim and Mary.

"Faix, Jim Murphy, it's yerself must git married," says he.

"Troth an' I'll not make a liar o' ye, Larry McLoughlin. Say the word, an' I'll take the woman," says Jim.

"Right ye are, me bye. There's Mike Morrissey's daughter; she's a hard-workin' woman, an' she's got three good heifers to her name an' half a score sheep runnin' on the mountain. An' there's Biddy Doolan; she's got a tidy bit o' land of her own, that she have."

"An' she's got four cows, an' one o' them the finest milker in the parish," interrupted Mary.

"'Tis the truth," says McLoughlin.

"People does be sayin' it's herself killed old Doolan, an' didn't give him half enough to ate, bein' that close wid her money," says Jim, reflectively.

"Ah, people does be tellin' a heap o' lies," says Mary; "an' it's yerself, Jim, 'ud be able for any woman, let alone an ould creature like Biddy Doolan."

"I'm thinkin' she's ower ould," says Jim.

"Aye, she's a bit on in years. She'll be nigh on forty-five, I'd say. What does yer think, Mary?"

"Forty-five!" snorts Mary; "she'll never see fifty ag'in."

"She's too ould," says Jim, with decision.

"But think o' the four cows, lad. They 'ud be grand to hev four cows. An' me fathar, God rest his sowl, used for to say he knowed the world an' he knowed the women, an' in all the world there war'n't a woman one cow better nor another."

Jim was greatly tempted by the cows, certainly, but fifty was old for a wife, and then she was a termagant and a widow; so he decided for Morrissey's daughter.

That did not end the matter, however, because, before Jim could bring a wife on to the farm, he must find a husband for his sister Mary. That was a necessity, since the fortune of the wife would go to paying off his sister's portion. McLoughlin, the match-maker, of course knew this, and as soon as he had got Jim's word for Morrissey's daughter he began to cast about for a "boy" for Mary.

"I must go, as Jim's gittin' married," said she. "It's small odds to me who ye git. I don't care a hap'orth. All I bargain for is there sha'n't be ne'er a woman in the place. I'll marry any man ye like, if he's got no womankind to his name." Mary had been head at her brother's house so long that she could not brook the idea of going under a mother-in-law.

The whole proceeding was so contrary to all romantic ideas that a lady who was very fond of her remonstrated with Mary.

"So I hear you are to be married. I am sorry you didn't take a husband neerer home than Luke Flood. However, I suppose it doe-n't matter how far you go from home when it's the man of your choice—eh, Mary?" So spoke the romantically disposed lady.

"He's none o' my choosin' at all. I niver set eyes on him," replied the bride-elect.

"Er, what! Do you mean to say you are marrying an unknown man?"

"What's the odds which man it is? I've got to go out of the place, secin' as Jim's bringin' in a woife."

"Then why take Luke Flood more than another?" questioned the lady, with a slight sneer.

"Oh, well, McLoughlin says he's a dacint bye, an' he-