

"There's my fren' Michael over there, Mary, ladin' a lonely life wid no childhern or woman to comfort him or cook a bite for him, and here's me wid all the blessin's o' the worl'." It's little he thought thin, poor fellow, you'd fill his place, an' I'd be cookin' for you some day."

Such consternation and desire to disown all such pretensions as intimated in the widow's harangue was manifest in Michael's face, which had grown haggard with suppressed feeling, that the widow took another spasm of playfulness, and leaning over coquettishly pinched him again.

The effect was electrical. Branagan's disavowal again went to the winds. He desisted from the cackle this time, however; but grinned uneasily and remained silent.

His allowance of this little caress seemed to place him under moral obligations to permit the misunderstanding which prompted it, increasing in a wonderful way in his eyes what his offense would be in refuting it.

The boot was almost done, however, and after a few final touches Branagan drew it off the last with a sigh of relief, and handed it to the widow.

"Sure, and it's a foine job you've did for me, Michael!" she commented after a few moment's inspection, turning admiring eyes on the shoemaker.

Michael evaded her glance, and bent fumbling uneasily over a pile of old shoes. "It's good work I allus thry to be doin', Mrs. O'Grath," he averred solemnly, rising at length with a shoe in his hand.

The widow chuckled audibly. "Mrs. O'Grath, indeed! Go along wid you! Sure, and you're the blarney stone itself. As if I wouldn't loike me own name o' Mary from you as well as Mrs. O'Grath! As if you'd be allus callin' me that for the sake of the compliment!"

She laughed roughly and pinched him gently again, and Michael with a blush turned and gazed out of the window with a troubled look.

"But it's throe for you, it's throe for you!" she continued, having again recovered her own gravity. "It's the nate work you're allus doin'."

For the last few moments Michael's eyes had been resting on a cow, which lingered in front of the widow's cottage and gave vent every now and then to a low bawl in a pleading manner. His face suddenly lit up with a gleam of hope.

"I see your cow Brindle has come home and wants to be let in," he said with new cheerfulness, nodding toward the window.

"You don't say?" exclaimed the widow, jumping up with sudden alacrity. "Throe it is—and the thoughtfulness of you, too, for the poor dumb brute, seein' her mistress didn't see her! Brindle will not suffer, now she has you to take an interest in her."

The widow had reached the door by this time; but paused with her hand on the latch, and with a bashful

smile illuminating her countenance came back to where Branagan sat.

"Your thoughtfulness for the poor baste has made you forget somethin' else, Michael, dear," she said softly, beaming down upon him.

"Forget somethin'?" he queried, pausing in the act of hammering a sole.

"Yes," returned the widow, blushing furiously. "You forgot to mention the day you wanted me to go afore Father Fred wid you. I'd have left it to yourself, darlin', only a woman allus needs a little preparin', so as to look dacent and respectable, no matter what clothes she's got."

"To go afore Father Fred wid you?" repeated Michael, looking at her in a quandary.

"Yes, to be sure—Father Fred. You'd be married by your own praist, wudn' you?"

Michael gazed at his hammer as if doubting his own ears, and then at the widow.

"But I wasn't thinkin' of marryin'—anyone," he said doubtfully, at last, shrinking back in his seat and averting his eyes half-fearfully to the shoe on his knee, his sallow face red to the one wisp of hair which adorned his brow.

"Wasn't thinkin' of marryin' anyone?" reiterated the widow, with a hysterical screech, taking a step toward him. "Wasn't thinkin' of marryin' anyone? Did I hear you right, Michael Branagan? Did I discover the desait of you? Wasn't thinkin' of marryin' anyone, indade, bad cess to you for a traitor! Then you shouldn't be thinkin' of axin' anyone. Heaven forgive you, Michael Branagan! To think I should survive me poor Tim to be insulted right in front o' me own house by the very man Tim belaved in loike his own brother!"

At this juncture the widow, finding Michael's face lifted to her with something like self-reproach and wavering in it, burst into tears, and flung herself down on the bench opposite him.

"To think on the 'gradation of it,'" she moaned. "Wid me poor man dead and no one to take his widder's part, and from his own best fren', who should be her stay and cumfurt in the time of thrial! I didn't belave it of you, Michael Branagan. To think that a poor, lone widder couldn't come into your shop with a shoe to mend, but that you should be proposin' to her six times, and then when she had axsapted you for the sake of her poor dead Tim—and for nothin' else in the worl', Michael Branagan—to think that

The Unfortunate Golfer

By H. P. Taber

A golfer whose eyes were oblique

Tried to make a swift drive with a clique.

If the ball he should hit

Where he's looking at it,

Why, it wouldn't get back in a wique.

Uncle Pat's Animal Stories

IV. TONY WAS HIS NAME

WHAT mare and colt is that down there at the water?"

By Agnes Morley Cleaveland

"Uncle Pat" came to the door of the ranch house and looked out, in response to the question. "Uncle Pat's" eyes are not so good as they were forty years ago when he first came to the West and began the business of raising stock, a business he has continued ever since; but he still can see more things about an animal than anyone else, no matter how far off the animal may be.

So when he looked for a couple of seconds toward the watering-trough at the foot of the hill, he replied: "That's no mare at all. That's old Mac, and he has picked up a colt somewhere."

Mac was one of the old work-horses that had been turned out on the range for a few months' vacation. Now, when he appeared at the home water bringing a colt with him, everyone on the ranch ran down to see what it meant. When he saw the procession approaching, Mac held up his head proudly and whinnied. He was showing that colt to the family. And it was such a little, thin, hungry-looking colt to be proud of! The big stomach told its tale. For a long time it must have gone without milk and got its living by following Mac's example and eating grass.

"Oh, the poor little fellow!" went up a chorus. "Let's put him in the stable and feed him some milk." But this was a thing not so easily done. The colt was wild, and would neither be caught nor driven. It was only by catching Mac and leading him into the stable that the colt could be enticed in that direction at all. But at the stable door he stopped and refused to go a step farther. Stables seemed dangerous to him;

and though Mac whinnied and whinnied, not a foot would he set over the threshold.

Finally "Uncle Pat" got his lariat and "roped" him unawares. How he did squeal and kick! Old Mac almost broke his halter in his effort to get loose and see what was happening to that colt of his. But after Tony was caught (Tony was his name from that time on) he would not and he did not drink any milk. Never so many ways were tried to make him take it, but all were unsuccessful.

Then a bran mash was substituted, with the same result. Tony knew nothing of bran mashes, and did not intend to risk any doubtful experiments. Old Mac ate the mash as he had learned to do the winter before by stealing them from the cow. Then he and his charge were turned out on the range again.

"If a wolf or a mountain lion does not get him, he'll live," "Uncle Pat" said reassuringly, as Tony walked off.

They came to the home ranch to water frequently after that, and though Tony did not grow fast he did live. One day he came in with a deep cut in his thigh as though a cruel claw had raked down his leg. An ugly scar on Mac's nose appeared, as though it might have been made by big teeth. After that we were less afraid that a mountain-lion would catch Tony.

When winter came on Mac brought the colt home. Then there was trouble. Some of the other horses wished to be friendly with the little fellow; but Mac

you would up and say you wasn't thinkin' of marryin' anyone! Wasn't thinkin' of marryin' anyone? If it had only been once; but six times, yes, six times, Michael Branagan; I counted them on the end of me fingers as you said the words anost o' ye. If Tim, the dear soul, wus in the land o' the livin', his widder wouldn't be used like this."

The storm of the widow's grief became so overwhelming at this point that burying her head in her arms she rocked to and fro on her knees, keeping a kind of irregular time to her sobs, but nevertheless casting an occasional side glance at Michael's face with an eye whose sharpness was in no way dimmed by its tears.

"You've killed me, Michael Branagan!" she moaned feebly. "The insult of it is shmotherin' me heart, and I know I'll be carried from this stool dead by your doin's."

Michael's face hitherto had worn the reddest badge of shame and self-reproach; but now a wild fear crossed it and leaning over he touched the widow gently on the neck.

"Don't die a bit yet, Misthress O'Grath—Mary," he said soothingly. "Did I raily ax you?"

"Did you raily ax me?" echoed the widow reproachfully, without raising her head. "Would you listen to the insult of it? Did he raily ax me? And me counting them six times on me fingers and never told a lie in me life! If it wasn't enough to insult me once; but to call me a liar besides! Ooch, your the murderin' of me, Michael Branagan! I kin fale my heart closin' in on me already!"

She yawned unsteadily on the bench, and Branagan, wild with distraction, reached over and caught her in his arms.

"Whishst, whishst, darlin'!" he said, coaxingly, drawing her on his knee. "Don't let it close in on you. Faix, Father Fred will marry us in the marnin', and I didn't mane to insult you. I'm just dyin' for you, darlin'!"

The widow, who had flung her arms around his neck and clung sobbing on his breast, now stole a sly, arch glance at his face.

"And you remember axin' me the six times, now, Michael, dear?" she queried, in a voice whose anxiety was ominous of another outbreak.

"Remember axin' you? Why, av course I do! I was just thryin' you, darlin', to see if you raily loiked me, only—" he grinned down upon her winningly—"it was seven times I axed you—not six but seven; you missed one av them, me jewel."

The forgiving smile which played on the widow's lips at this happy statement was like the break of day, and so attractive that Michael, now overjoyed because he found that she was not going to die in his arms, discovered himself the next moment, much to his own surprise, and for the first time in his life, with the possible exception of his mother, kissing a woman on the mouth.

would permit nothing to go near Tony. Gruyer, who was autocrat of the stable yard, and who always had made Mac obey him, walked up and began nosing Tony in a friendly way. At once Mac reared up and struck at Gruyer with both front hoofs. A fierce battle it was they fought. Gruyer was fighting for his leadership, and Mac was fighting for his colt. Perhaps Mac's heart was more in the struggle than Gruyer's. At any rate he won that fight, and thenceforth he and not Gruyer was boss of the horses, and not one of them dared to go near Tony.

When at last Tony was persuaded that a stable was not only a harmless place but a more comfortable one on winter nights, he insisted upon staying in the stall with Mac. Morning always found him lying crosswise of the stall by Mac's forefeet.

And in spite of his hardships in his babyhood, Tony grew into a big, finely built horse, and in time came to be the leader of all the horses. A more arrogant chief never lived. He would permit no other horse to drink until he had finished and left the trough—although the trough was fifteen feet long—except old Mac. He would even step aside and give Mac his place.

Mac was old now, and Tony protected him from the other horses, which would have been glad to even up old scores but for the watchful eye of the loyal Tony.

The proudest day of Tony's life was when he was harnessed with old Mac and driven to town. Although he held his head higher and lifted his feet in a more sprightly fashion, he showed no impatience with his old friend and foster-father.