

was, for he thought that Mike was but jesting with him, for the last two hours which he had been then in the house. Fortunately for all parties, the ample form of Father Proulx appeared in the kitchen door at this state of things, and great was his astonishment at the scene before him. The priest and visitor conversed in French and everything was cleared up. Mike's dumb exposition of going to confession was however remembered for many a long day. Father Proulx had it—"What do you think of that villian wanting to hear the man's confession?"

Mike of course repudiated such a sacrilegious thought—saying he was "only gosterin' with the furriner so as to give his rivrence time to have the benefit of his short time for sleep."

After the fatigue of Christmas day, Father Proulx had a quiet half-hour towards evening; and Mike felt "as pleased as a punch" at this, and was congratulating himself upon the chance of having an evening's holiday enjoyment, free from sick calls and confessions, and the hundred other demands occupying the time of his reverence. The priest's housekeeper, Mrs. Murphy, was also uniting her prayers with those of the priest's man, in thanking "the saints above" that they would be allowed to have their "Christmas tay in pace"—when a sudden ring of the door bell put an end to their felicitations. Evidently the priest had been expecting some one, for he had gone to the door himself, and was holding it invitingly open for two visitors to enter, when Mike arrived to perform that office. One of the arrivals, there was no mista'king, was the midnight visitor. His companion was a gentlemanly dressed young man, also of foreign

appearance. They appeared to be cordially welcomed by the priest, who addressed them in French, the language in which they were both offering polite apologies for their intrusion at such a time.

Mike was satisfying Mrs. Murphy's curiosity with a story (made up by himself) as to "who in the world" they were—by telling her with great solemnity that they were "two jintlemin, sint express from Rome, as ambassadors, or sich like, to ax Father Proulx to become co-a-ju-tor bishop, an', begorries, wasn't he givin' 'em the forrin lingo in style"—when the door-bell again claimed his attention. And just as in the case of the other visitors, he found that the priest had forestalled him at the door, and was giving admission to a young lady and her escort—both proving, to the astonished eyes and perplexed wits of Mike, none other than Lucy Connor and Ben the hostler.

Mrs. Murphy's ejaculations and her entreaties of "Heaven keep an' save us," and "Did ye ever, ever hear the like!" were something wonderful, for Mike, who was gifted with a rich imagination, added no little embellishment to his description of the style in which Lucy appeared at the door.

While the priest's man was entertaining the priest's housekeeper in the kitchen, the priest himself was giving and getting explanations to and from the assembled company in his parlor, and which may be briefly given as follows:—

Mr. Plamadon, the proper name of the gentleman, which must now be substituted for the more familiar "Frenchy," told how he had always loved Lucy, from the day when he was first smitten by her fair face; how he used to arrange his routes