

Spring, and the long days of summer, and the delightful season of the fall of the year passed over without anything certain coming to light as to the destruction of the horses or the fate of Frenchy. Rumors and surmises there were in abundance. As time wore on it was noticed that Mr. Dryden, the township reeve, and Father Proulx were more than cordial when they met, in fact very friendly, and that the reeve had ceased to bother himself over much about the suspicions of "foul play." Christmas-tide had come again. It had snowed incessantly for two or three days before Christmas eve, and the bitterly cold weather had somewhat moderated. Father Proulx, as is invariably the case with the hard-worked Catholic priest, when engaged in the performance of the duties which the celebration of the great Christian festival renders incumbent, was overwhelmed with work. It was past two o'clock in the morning before he was able to retire to his room, and then with the parting admonition to his factotum, Michael Gallagher, or as he was called by priest and people, "Mike," to remember that first mass had to be said at half-past five. As Mike was preparing to take the benefit of "forty winks," he was aroused by a knocking at the door. Not wishing that the tired priest should be disturbed he made all haste to open the door to the belated visitor, whom he ushered in as noiselessly as possible through the hallway to the kitchen. Shutting the door carefully, he found himself confronted by a stranger, a tall man, who had the appearance of a foreigner, and who made the priest's man a low bow. Having seated himself, the visitor talked in a low tone and with great volu-

bility, but in a language one word of which Mike could not understand. "Talk plain English, if yez plaize, an' tell me what ye want in dacint langwidge," demanded Mike, in low and emphatic tones. The stranger only seemed to take Mike's demand as a confirmation that he was understood, and he went on more confidently in another torrent of words and gesticulations. Mike was "non-plushed," as he said himself; but he had determined not to awake the worn-out priest, no matter what the consequences, and had made up his mind that it was a "sick call." His comical countenance was rendered still more so by his endeavors to assume a mournful aspect, and placing his hand in a feeble manner upon head and side with deeps groans as of suffering and distress, indicative of sickness. This but brought forth a further torrent of explanations, in the language Mike did not understand, and the latter calmly waited until the gust had blown over. He could see that the errand was not as he had surmised, a sick call. But he was gaining time, and the priest was having his much required sleep. How could he manage to understand what the stranger wanted! It was plain that one understood the English tongue just as little as the other did the language of the foreigner. All of a sudden the thought struck Mike that the stranger wanted to go to confession. With pantomimic motions of hands, and face contorted, he thought he had made his meaning as to this understood, and kneeling himself, tried to force the visitor to follow his example and repeat the confiteor. The visitor at this became exceedingly angry, and his flashing eye, without any need of words, told how exasperated he