

HIS
MOTHER

lies," she assured herself, "but I'd better see her first—an' confess after.") And when Miss McCarty, alone in the flat, received her with a well-controlled but evident surprise, she took the upper hand in a manner of self-justification, and demanded: "Now then! What is it all about? Tell me that, will yuh? What's wrong between yuh? Why have yuh thrown down the poor boy?"

Miss McCarty had, of course, "thrown him down" because she was too proud to intrude upon any family that did not welcome her, and Mrs. Regan, by her manner at that first meeting, had most obviously intended her to understand that she was not welcome.

"Won't you sit down?" she asked, calmly.

Mrs. Regan sat down while she was replying that she could not do so, that Larry thought she was at church, that she must hurry away, that he was ill, that he was worrying. "And why?" she cried, shrilly. "Why is it? What's wrong? I can make nothin' of it!"

Miss McCarty began to explain the situation as delicately as she could.

"Well!" Mrs. Regan broke in. "Well now! Did y' expect a woman to grin an' say 'Thank yuh kindly, miss,' when yuh come to take her son from her? Did yuh? Fer if yuh did, yuh got less sense than yuh look. Faith, if you had no one in the wide worrld but Larry, yuh'd not welcome the girl that came fer him, neither." There were tears in her eyes.

"But, Mrs. Regan," the girl put in, quickly, "there was nothing—he had never said to me that he wanted——"

"Ach!" Mrs. Regan made a gesture of contempt for such nonsense. "What does it matter what he said er didn't? There he is—like he'd just buried his gran'mother—turned against his meals—an' that bad tempered there's no livin' with him. Are we all of us to be made miserable be such like nonsense? Take shame to yerself, girl!"