

but for him shure I could not make up the rent."

"Take care, James, that you do not see some other one," said Nelly, with a smile.

"Bad scran to the olier one I want to see," said James, stooping down to tie his shoes.

James pulled very hard at that tie, for he broke it, and when he raised his head, his cheeks were very red; no doubt from the hard pulling.

When James went into Mr. O'Donnell's kitchen, Mary Cahill was alone at the fire, baking bread.

"God save you, Mary," said James, with something like a stammer in his voice.

"God save you kindly, and you're welcome: sit down."

"That I will, alanna," said he, placing his seat near her.

"You might keep out from a body, though, James, and not be going on with your cunnethers," and she pushed her seat over from him.

"Och, mousha! how contrary the people is getting," said James, pushing after her, and taking a stocking she was knitting in his hand.

"How the deuce do ye knit, Mary, I could never larn it?"

"Shure you ought," said she with a laugh; "and make a sheelah of yourself!"

"Ye do have as many twists and turns and ins and outs in it as there do be in a woman's heart."

"And as many crooked ones as there do be in men's, take that, James."

"I dunna, faix, what turns does be in men's hearts, at all; for when a purty colleen, like you, Mary, puts the soft sawder on one of them, sarra bit they know what they do."

"Faix, James, ye do be chicken-hearted entirely; och, botherashun to ye and yer blarney," and Mary looked at him with a most provoking, roguish look.

"Deuce the blarney then, Mary. Shure, darlin', your funny eyes and pouting lips would burn a hole in any man's heart."

James moved his chair nearer to her, and placed his hand around her waist.

"Arrah, will you sthoph, James; look at the bread the way its burning," and she hurried away from him.

"Faix, I know somebody's heart that's burning worse, Mary."

James placed his hand most pathetically over his to show where the volcano lay.

"Bad cess to 'em, can't they throw water enuff upon it," said Mary, taking her seat again. "Now, James, if you don't sthoph I won't sit here another min."

"Mary, will you——?"

"Arrah, whist, James."

"Will you?"—and he took her little hand in his; "will you tell me——?"

"Now, can't you have patience, James."

"I want to know iv you——"

"Oh, James, don't be in such a hurry," and Mary blushed and held down her head.

"Shure, Mary, it's time," and he squeezed her hand closer; "shure it's time that——"

"Oh don't James; give me time to think; don't be in such a hurry."

"About what, Mary?"

"About asking me."

"Jja, ba, Mary, alanna, I was only asking you to tell Masther Frank to come down to me."

Mary withdrew her hand.

"Bad scran from you, James; shure I thought it was going to ask me to marry you you were."

"Faith an' may be I'll be axin' you to do that same, some of those fine mornins, achree, as soon as I have things settled."

"Choke your impudence; I know you hadn't the cotrage, sorra a bit."

"Maybe I havn't, Mary, my darlin'!" and he pressed her to him, and imprinted a kiss upon her pouting lips. "Mary, my love, will you be——?"

Here his declaration, whatever it was—and there are few of my bachelor readers but could give a good guess as to what it was to be, at least,—was interrupted by the opening of the kitchen door, and our friend, Ned Burkem, walked in with a most innocent look, and a "God save all here."

Mary and James' confused manner was enough to betray them, if Mr. Burkem had not witnessed any of the interesting love drama—but he did; for, hearing the voices inside, he looked through the key-hole. A scowl of revenge, dark as that worn by Satan, when he saw Adam and Eve in the garden of Paradise, crossed Mr. Burkem's features. The demon of revenge had entered his heart, but the smile of Judas was on his face, as he opened the door.

"God save you, kindly, Ned!" said James Cormack, as soon as he recovered his composure. "Sit down, Ned. This is a fine evenin'!"

"It is, the Lord be praised; and it was a fine day altogether. The tenants got on well to-day, James."

"So my mother told me; and you wor no bad friend to them either, Ned, I can hear. Give me the hand for that."

"Shure it's only natural I would do anything I could for my neighbors. God help me, I often do things I'd rather not; but thin if I didn't another would, and maybe he wouldn't keep the light hand, as I docs."

"Thrus for you, Ned; shure the tenants all feel that. Tara-an-ages, but it would be the bad day if you should take it into your head to give up."

"Sorra a bit of me likes the business at all. It's only for their sakes I'm sticking to it."