

ter—it would be as well for him not to crass me," and he whistled a song, as if to keep off the bad thoughts that were working within him.

When Mrs. Cormack returned to her home, her two sons and daughter were sitting around the fire, eagerly expecting her.

James, the eldest, was a fine specimen of the peasant class. He was above the middle height, with fair features and sandy hair. There was an impulsive, honest expression in his open countenance; his eye was dark and sparkling. He was evidently one that could love deeply; but could impulsively revenge a wrong. His dress was that of the peasant class—a corduroy trousers, heavy shoes, or brogues, with an overcoat or jacket of flannel.

John Cormack was a few years younger than his brother. The razor had not yet touched the down of manhood that covered his chin. Mrs. Cormack was proud of her two fine boys—and well she might; for a mother never reared more loving nor more dutiful sons. She was also proud of her gay, sprightly daughter; and it must be confessed, there was not a lighter foot in the village dance, nor a gayer smile, nor a sprightlier laugh than Nelly Cormack's.

"Nelly, alanna! will you go out and see is mother coming. My heart is heavy, somehow, until I hear the news. If I knew which road she'd take, I'd go meet her," said James.

Nelly went out, but returned immediately.

Here she is, up the road," said Nelly; "and she in shanachus with some old cosherer. I hope, James, it's not going to bring in a step-father over us she is. If so, some pretty girl I know would have a poor chance." Here she looked most roguishly at James, as much as to say, "you see I know all about ye."

"Bad seran to you, Nelly, can you ever sthoph, or hould your tongue," said James, blushing.

"Och, indeed, what color is red now, James? Shure it's no blame to you, avick machree. Faith, if I were a lump of a boy myself, I'd be in love w'd her—and a nice boy I'd make;" and she looked complacently at herself. "It's I'd have the girls crazy."

"Whist! you scatter-brain, you; and throw out the praties, and put down an egg for mother; she must be hungry. Here she's in, and the Rover too."

"Welcome, mother—and blur-an-ages is this you. It's a week of Sundays since we saw you—cead mille failte! Nelly, help mother to take off her cloak."

"Thank you, James," said the Rover. "That'll do, Nelly," said Mrs. Cormack.

They looked at their mother, to read the news of the day in her face. It is strange that when there is some event of impor-

tance at stake we do not like asking about it—we wish to keep from our minds the bitterness of disappointment as long as possible.

"Sit down, mother—you must be tired; and, Nelly, roll out the praties."

Mrs. Cormack sat down; then looked about the house, and then at her children.

"Thank God, we have the house over us, another stharr, anyway," said Mrs. Cormack.

"That's good news, anyway, mother," said James.

"It is, achorra, the Lord be praised, he was in the good humor; oh! it's pleasant to go near a man when he has the smile and kind word for you."

"That's thrue, mother; the Lord bless him for that same to you, bad as he is."

They had now collected around the table of potatoes and noggin of milk, to enjoy their frugal meal.

"Nelly," said Mrs. Cormack, "bring down that miscawn of butther in the room; shure it's not every day the Rover comes to us."

"Not every day we do have the good news, mother," said John Cormack.

"Thrue enuff, avick mastore."

"Och, and faix I will, wid a heart and a-half," said Nelly.

"There's a good dale of these black, Mrs. Cormack," said the Rover, as he shoved the potatoes aside.

"There is, the Lord be praised; but then it's nothin' I hope; what would the poor do, if they ran black on them?"

"Sorra a one of me knows, ma'am; they wouldn't live at all; shure it's hard enuff for them to manage now."

"God is good!" said James, sententiously.

"He is, achorra; praise be to His holy name!" said Mrs. Cormack, piously raising her hands in prayer, and a tear of gratitude glistened in the widow's eye.

"Did he say anything about the notices, mother?"

"Yes, John, achorra; he gave us dockets, and said that the notices were to frighten the tenants and nothing more; he should see his lordship about them."

"I never like to trust the old bodagh," said the Rover; "there is no time he's so dangerous as when he has the palaver; he has a bad set about him too; as for the nephew, he's as hard and as dark as himself; and as for Burkem—"

"He put in the good word, to-day, anyway, for us; I heard them sayin' he spoke up to his honor; and told him it would be a shame without taking the money from us."

"Well, achorra, praise the fool as you find him."

"I will go down to Mr. O'Donnell's; I am sure Master Frank will be glad to hear the good news."

"Do, James, ashore; God bless him,