

choice of them you see; so if you like the ould place where you are, I'm sure we'd get it."

"What," said she, with surprise, "Mr. O'Donnell's place you mean?"

"Yes, wouldn't the people stare at us then; we could keep our car and drive about; sure after a time, we'd be rouling in riches, like Mr. Ellis.

Mary Cahill was silent; she was trying to take in the depth of his villany; believing James Cormack faithless, and knowing Burkem to be, in a worldly sense, a much better match, and seeing how deeply he was devoted to her, we cannot blame her if she hesitated as to what answer she would give to his appeal.

The only objection she had to him was, that he was the servant of a tyrant; she heard always that he used his influence for the good of the tenant; still, after all, with that keen instinctive perception, natural to women, she could never bring herself to love him; perhaps, this was because she loved another; but now he had forsaken her, would she be wise in rejecting the offer of so good a match.

Such were the thoughts that ran through her mind, until Burkem laid open his scheme for becoming rich. He, with the narrow-minded sordidness of low cunning natures, thought, as she expressed such a desire for wealth, to dazzle her with projects beyond her wildest conception. He did not see any harm in occupying the O'Donnell's place, provided they were once ejected; but when Mary understood him, she turned upon him a look of withering scorn.

"Ned," said she, "do you think I'd live in the house from which my benefactors were hurled forth to work or starve? Do you think that I'd live in the house from which any poor family was driven to have their curses ringing in my ear: no, no, I'd starve first. I thought you were a friend to the family, but now I see what you are, you are as bad as the rest of them; you only want the power to be as big a villain; so take your hands off me."

"Hear me, Mary, shure I didn't mean

"Hould your tongue, and take ov me."

"But Mary, if they were ejected some one would have it; shure we might as well have it as a stranger, but if you wish we could get some other place."

"Take ov me, I say."

"Mary, Mary, forgive me: oh, if you knew what it is to love, to feel this burning passion, to feel one's heart, as if it were in a furnace, to feel this torture; no, I cannot leave you; you must be mine."

"Must!" said she, with emphasis, as she strove to extricate herself from his grasp. "No, man, take ov me, I say. I'll never love you, I'll hate you, if you don't let me go."

"Mary, don't say that, say you'll love me."

"Never, man, never; I see your baseness now."

"Then, Mary," he exclaimed, "listen to me. Here is a prayer book, swear that you will be my wife."

"No, no, not now, perhaps some other time."

"Now or never," said he. "Here is a prayer book, and he placed it in her hand. 'Swear, or you'll rue it; we're alone.'"

"No, no, I can't perjure myself, God help me!"

"You won't do it, then?"

"No, never, I call upon a just God to assist me."

"You must swear!" exclaimed he, seizing her by the arm.

"I cannot, and will not!" answered she, much alarmed. "For the love of God, let me go?"

"You must swear to be mine," returned he; but at the same moment a blow of a stick resounded upon his head and laid him senseless on the ground.

"Take that, devil, that you are," said the well-known voice of James Cormack.

"Oh, James, save me for the love of God."

"I will, Mary, my darling, I will—thank God, I was in time." He raised her up and pressed her to him.

"Sthop, James, sthop—that's not fair; you know you are to be married to Hanna Russell, so let me go, but see me home."

"Mary, who toild you that?"

"That fellow," she whispered, and pointed to Burkem, who was wiping the blood from his brow.

"The lying scoundrel, I didn't spake to her these three months. No, Mary, if you refuse being my wife, I'll never marry; you know I love you. When I went to Mr. O'Donnell's this evening, I heard you were in town, and missing Burkem, I thought it would be, no harm to come to meet you, so, thank God, I was in time."

"The devil is in it," muttered Burkem, as he looked on with envy, like the serpent in the garden; "if I don't have sweet revenge for this, my name isn't Burkem."

"What are you saying, you double-distilled villain you; do you want more of this? said Cormack, going over to him and whirling his stick.

"Don't, James, let us pass him; he could harm us," whispered Mary.

"Deuce take him, and all the harm he can do. He's not worth minding, the dirty spalpeen."

"Forgive me, James," said Burkem, reaching his hand. "Shure my love for Mary there blinded me. I desaryed what I got. I thought to blacken your name with her to make her marry me; but shure it was no use. You know what it is to be in love, James, so you will forgive me what I did; and you, Mary, won't you forgive me?"

"Indeed, I will," said she, after a pause.

"I'm sure I'm not the man to keep in