

and give up this dangerous breach of the peace; but both declared that the "Souper" should get his "duck."

"What on earth," cried Mr. Seymour, "do you mean by such violence, and in the open light of day?"

"Oh, save me! save me!" cried the unhappy "Souper!"

Looking at the young men they saw that they were thin and pale; and the dark lines around their eyes made a shocking contrast with their pallor. They had the appearance of hunger.

For awhile they were too much excited to give any explanation, and the "Souper" could say nothing but "Save me! save!" The elder of the men at length spoke, and said in a tone of suppressed passion that this man was a "Souper" and "as if the d——l told him when our food was runnin' out, he came one day to offer us tickets for soup and bread, and money for clothes for our little sister if she would go to his school."

"Well," Mr. Seymour asked, "what crime is there in that?"

"Crime," cried the young man, "crime! Is there a blacker crime than to ax us to sell Christ an' His Holy Mother for our stomachs, as the vagabone did himself?"

"Their own good! their own good!" cried the "Souper."

"Hould your tongue, you dirty d——l," cried the younger of his captors. "No one belongin' to you was ever honest? Your grandfather sould the whole country in '98."

And they gave him another shake.

"Look, sir," said the elder, turning to Mr. Meldon. "He came first and found us poor, an' he made us offers of money and Bibles. The ould man, our father, was sick and hungry the same time, and he came in with his bribe to us."

"The word of God!" cried the "Souper," but the younger man literally stopped his mouth.

"See, sir," continued the man who spoke first, "Our old father died, and more betoken Father Ned gave him a decent berrin'—God bless Father Ned! and Father Aylmer!" he cried emphatically.

"The clergy knew you were so badly off?" Mr. Meldon asked.

"Oh, don't talk of the clergy! They gev the people all they had, an' they left their own table poor enough, an' sometimes empty, to divide their share with the poor. Oh! God bless the clergy!"

"How they love one another!" murmured Mr. Seymour.

"As I was saying, sir, this 'arnation of Ould Nick came the day after the funeral an' we tould him to be off; and then in three days after he heard little Mary was sick and he came again. Well, we let him pass until to-day, an' our little sisher was far gone, on'y we had a few pence of Father Aylmer's money to pass the day. The little colleen was so frightened when she saw the "Souper," an' hard him say something about Holy Mary, something bad, that she fell down on the flure like one goin' to die. 'Tis the mercy of God we didn't kill the vagabone on the spot, but we made up our mind to duck the villain well an' to choke him with his false Scripture."

Mr. Meldon intimated that the "Souper" was certainly wrong in the time he chose, but they were too violent in the manner of vindicating themselves.

"See, sir," the young man said, "the valleys round Slieve-na-Mon are the churchyards of martyrs. Our fathers' blood was pow'r'd out like wather for the blessed faith; an' many a wan like my own father was working on the ground he might own, because he would't bring a blush to the faces of the dead. Our good father died sooner than listen to the devils' imps; an' maybe little Mary is dead now; an' knowin' all, an' thinkin' all this, wasn't we come to a purty pass when the gran'son of the spy would come to our cabin to offer us soup an' lies for the Church of St. Patrick! Oh by——"

The poor fellow had worked himself up to such a pitch of passion that no one can say what would have come of the sudden gush of memories and experiences, if the two gentlemen had not interposed, and begged them to leave the "Souper" on a promise that he would never again come to their dwelling. "Crichawn" ventured with great respect to add that the "Souper" ought to promise never to be seen in that part of the country.