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looked upon the group before him, felt that elective shock of agony shot through his frame which a parent only knows. But a few scanty meals were between them and starvation, and even now the privation of their little comforts was making a sensible alteration in the otherwise healthy looks of his children; yet still was his trust strong in Almighty goodness.

The Priest preserved a gloomy silence, and seemed almost choking with smothered emotion. The desolation of the parlour, the destitution of the entire house, the wasting of the family, all presented themselves as if in miniature before him, and the dumb eloquence seemed to say, 'Thou art the man.' He waited, however, in performance of his promise, to join in that humble repast. The dinner was presently served up, and consisted of a single dish, not placed, as usual, at the head of the table, but in the centre. — At its appearance the family rose from their place, whilst the aged Pastor, with uplifted eyes and all the fervour of sincere gratitude, besought the Giver of every good to pour a blessing upon what he had been pleased to provide for them. Grace having been pronounced, he motioned to his little son to remove the cover, and the contents of their solitary meal were displayed, which consisted solely of potatoes. The Priest was cheerfully invited to commence operations upon what had been placed before him, but he was alike insensible to word or motion; one object rivetted his attention, and that was the gentle sufferer in the window, who was endeavouring to eat a portion of the food, which each succeeding effort shewed that she loathed. Two or three times she raised it to her lips, and as often her hand fell powerless upon the table. Her father's eye was directed towards her, and a tear glistened in it; once again she raised the food to her lips, that she might not appear to him to dislike it, but her feeble grasp loosened its hold, and the potatoes rolled upon the floor. Quick as thought her younger sister glided to the window and presented her with one she had peeled for herself, whispering in soft and endearing accents as she kissed her, 'sweet sister, eat;' but she to whom these words were addressed drooped her head towards the speaker, her arms closed around her, her raven locks fell in wild and beautiful profusion upon her snowy neck, and the next minute she had fainted.

Not a struggle escaped the notice of the Priest, till at length the conflict of feeling became too intense to be resisted. In spite of the hardening effects of popery, horror and remorse harrowed up his soul, — the swelling tide of nature burst from those eyelids which for years had not been dimmed with grief, and in which the fountain of tears seemed dried up, and the big drops of agony that fell almost hissing upon his burning cheek told the sympathies of the man still played within his breast. 'God of mercy, must those little ones perish who have never offended, and whose hands at least are guiltless of a nation's wrongs?' With these words, and casting a parting look upon the afflicting scene, he rushed from the parlour, threw himself upon his horse, and was soon out of sight, leaving the Rector and his family in utter amazement at the abruptness of his departure.

The next day was the Sabbath: the chapel congregation were seen winding their way to mass, and their conversation almost exclusively referred to a seizure which had been made a day or two previously in an adjoining parish, the epithets which faction has branded upon the legal rights of the Clergy being freely and frequently bestowed upon them. A universal determination of resisting the payment of the 'blood-stained impost,' even to the death, was agreed upon, and a well-grounded hope was entertained, that a little more of strenuous uncompromising opposition to the 'harpies' of the Established Church would leave their enemies powerless in their hands.

The ceremony of the mass was performed, and the congregation was preparing to depart; a sermon being rarely delivered in the chapel, and only upon occasions when it became necessary to stimulate the piety or awaken the slumbering consciences of the faithful, for the purpose of collecting contributions to defray the expenses of repairing their place of worship. A dark mass of heads was slowly undu-

lating, like the deceitful heaving of the ocean; ere yet the gathering storm has burst upon the black waste of waters that yearn to rebel, when all became motionless and still as the valley of death. Not a sound was heard save the heavy tread of the Priest, as with steady pace and gloomy aspect he mounted the steps of the altar.

Every eye was fixed upon him, and numerous were the surmises as to what could be his object in addressing them now. Alas! rarely does the poor Roman Catholic hear a disinterested sermon from his Pastor. But a few weeks had elapsed since a sum of money had been wrung from the purse of their poverty to satisfy the cravings of sacerdotal cupidity.

For awhile he contemplated in silence the assembled multitude with stern and commanding dignity, and not an eye was there that did not quail before his basilisk gaze. Was he searching for some culprit who had treated his holy offices with scorn and contempt, upon whom to subornate the awful judgments of his Church, and then leave him to languish out a doomed existence tainted with the leprosy of an anathema? Or did he endeavour to discover the presence of some miscreant informer, who was sent there by the government to listen to his treasonable harangues, and then denounce him to the officers of the Crown? No: his countenance, though stern, was tinged with melancholy, and the ashy paleness of his lips betokened not the daring of the traitor, or the defiance of a demagogue. The first faltering accents that fell from him told that a tale of misery was to follow; and one solitary tear that trickled down his cheeks seemed as if it were a drop that had escaped from the bitter cup of his affliction. 'My friends,' said he, after a settled calm had succeeded to his previous emotion, 'I purpose addressing you on the subject of tithes.' The murmur which followed this announcement plainly indicated that it was an agreeable one. 'Do not expect that I now, as at other times, advise you to resist the payment; if you do, the shriek of the bereaved, and the cry of the orphan, will echo in our ears till your dying day. The family of the Rev. Dr. —, the Protestant minister, are starving. (Here his voice failed, and a cry of horror thrilled through the chapel; again he resumed, in broken sentences.) His house is — is a desert; every article of furniture, of whatever kind or description, has been sold from time to time to stave away the gnawing worm of famine and the horrors of starvation. The bloom has left the young cheeks of his daughters, who, whatever be our religious prejudices, were justly regarded as the fairest flowers of our village, and many was the afflicted soul that drank consolation from the lips of those 'sisters of charity' when God gave them substance to relieve the destitute. Consumption has seized upon the loveliest, and she is now in danger of dying from hunger before the short span of her existence is measured. Truly are tithes a blood-stained impost, but we may not murder the innocent, even in defence of our liberties. Let every penny of arrears be paid to the minister before this day week; and tell him to thank his daughters, not the law, for it.

He ceased, and the next moment disappeared into the sacristy, as if ashamed of the tender feeling which the occasion had called forth, but left not a dry eye after him. Many who listened had had too keen an experience of the horrors of starvation not to feel for the sufferings of others, and but few were possessed of so much of this world's goods as to justify them in the assurance that they were beyond the reach of human casualty.

The Irish, when left to their own natural dispositions are a peculiarly sensitive people: every tale of woe jars wildly upon the chords of their tender sensibilities. In the periods of passion, prejudice, or forced insult, the spirit of the demoniac fires their roused energies; but in the flush of thought and reflection, the emotions of pity and compassion are brought into beautiful display, recurring grief holy when sanctified by tears of contrition.

A week had elapsed, and the Popish Priest of L. — was again upon the avenue leading to the glebe. Perhaps he deemed that some apology was necessary for the abruptness of his departure upon his former visit, when he had been received with so much more of kindness and civility than his own

heart told him he had a right to expect, or, as is generally the case, when we are conscious to ourselves that we have conferred a favour upon another, are inclined to gratify the feeling of our self-love, the expense of our generosity, and repay our debt for any inconvenience we may have been occasioned by personally exacting the homage of the grateful.

The tall trees waving majestically at each of the avenue, imposed an air of solemn grandeur upon the scene. The floating murmur of the breeze through the rustling leaves was like the voice of 'one crying in the wilderness' for the withered glory of autumn. There was an awful silence about the glebe, which late had been the hum of many voices, and a darkness was cast over the spirits of the priest, as he dismounted at the door, and the dull echo that was returned by the empty halls, as he knocked for admission, fell upon his ears like the muffled tolling of the death knell. A few seconds, and the summons was answered by the aged Pastor in person; but, as if the appearance of the Priest had carried to his heart a concentration of agony too intense for his bruised spirit to sustain, his eyes became glazed and leaden, — there was a twitching of the muscles of the cheek, and gasping these words, 'Oh, Sir, you have indeed given us bread to eat, when the lips that would have blessed you are closed for ever,' he fell senseless at his feet.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A TOWN PASTOR.

The Church as it was, and is.

In carrying my thoughts back some thirty years ago, I cannot but be struck with the almost incredible change wrought during this period, with reference to the state of religion in the established church. I do not mean to cast discredit on those who were then rulers or ministers in our Zion. I do not mean to affirm that formality has disappeared, and unsound views of divine truths are excluded; that there is not a most wanton profanation of the solemnity of the sabbath, amongst all ranks, from the occupants of the splendid equipage in the park, to that of the wretched donkey-cart, which crawls along the highway. Profligacy in its most disgusting forms still offends the eye and pollutes the ear in every corner of our streets, but I mean simply that there is an activity, and an activity; and a zeal, and an anxiety in the church, almost unknown at the period referred to, which could hardly have been expected. — The clergyman, who now enters on the faithful discharge of the duties of a metropolitan parish, and finds every moment of his time is occupied, not with matters of a strictly parochial character, would be astonished, were he enabled to compare the activity now presenting itself, with the apparent apathy which then prevailed. The style of preaching unquestionably improved. The spiritual wants of the population were but then little regarded. Provision of adequate church accommodation was never thought of; while even in the churches, in many instances, as is at present not unfrequently the case, a very small congregation assembled. A minister advancing in years, who walks about the metropolis or its suburbs, and witnesses the number of new churches erecting and erected, may thank God and take courage, when he reflects on the then enormous parish of St. Pancras, but in small village church was the provision for the wants for parochial worship, and that, in other neighbouring parishes, there was even a jealousy of permitting new churches to be erected, lest rights might be infringed. He cannot but be grateful for the new towers which, on all sides, present themselves to his notice. The same may be said with respect to the scriptural education of the young to the imparting of religious knowledge amongst all ages, to the zeal testified for missionary labours; a zeal not indeed by any means commensurate to the wants of the heathen, our own res-

* Whilst all due protection should be given to such a cause, it is questionable how far a too great sticking to the old has not opposed a serious barrier to the wider extension of church accommodation. There is good ground to believe that many pious and wealthy churchmen would have liberally built and endowed churches had they not been deterred by difficulties thrown in the way.