

THE BLACK SHEEP OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

It was in the winter of 1847 that I was at a tea meeting held in Dublin, by the members of the Methodist new connexion, for the purpose of collecting funds in aid of their missionary societies. Several clergymen of various denominations were in attendance, for however they might differ upon some points of doctrine, they could all unite upon common ground to promote the object dearest to the heart of every Christian—the promulgation of gospel truth among the ignorant and unconverted.

Among the number was an humble old man, whose form had bowed, and whose head had whitened beneath the hand of time; but his heart was still earnest, and his words were still powerful to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, as when, in earlier years, they had made the walls of his chapel ring to the soul touching sounds of God's message to man.

Though well acquainted with him by name, I had never heard him speak either from pulpit or platform, and anxiously awaited the moment when this eminent minister should address the assembly. When the chairman introduced the Rev. Dr——, the old gentleman rose, and, so soon as his voice could be distinguished above the heart-felt demonstrations of pleasure indulged in by the audience, he said—"For that evening he would leave to others the task of discussing at length the many interesting facts which he understood should be brought before the notice of his hearers, and confine himself to the relation of a short story, which he thought would do much to impress upon them the vast importance of two great branches of the work to be accomplished by the Church of Christ on earth, namely, the necessity of perseverance and faith in the training of her Sabbath-school children, and also that of sending forth men, into whose hearts the Spirit of God had entered, to bear the lamp of his grace to the dark places of the earth." Some years before (the Rev. speaker proceeded), whilst making a tour through the south of Ireland, he arrived in a small country town late upon the Saturday night, and took up his abode at the house of a friend. Early next morning, accompanied by his host, he sallied forth to visit the Sabbath school. Groups of the peasantry were lounging here and there in the main street; many were hurrying to the neighbouring chapel; all the smaller shops were open, for the hour at which Sabbath traffic becomes illegal had not yet arrived; that district was essentially Popish, and as they pur-