

"Where is the room for them if they did?" asked the Bishop, a question which Mr. Slowton found it convenient not to answer.

"But even if they were church people, it would be impossible for the poorest population of the town to undertake the erection of a church. In that case, the richer part of the population ought to feel that it would be a privilege to help them."

"But, my lord, how is that possible when they cannot build a church for themselves?"

"Have they ever tried?"

"Why no, not exactly, but it is plain to those who know their circumstances that they cannot."

"Mr. Brown's furniture and supper last night did not look much like poverty," observed the Bishop, smiling.

"But supposing we could build two churches, or that we needed them, which, with all deference to your lordship, I am inclined to question, even then I do not see how the two could by any possibility be served. I am sure I have my hands full enough; I could not undertake more."

"A great deal too full," said the Bishop; so full as to involve you in a responsibility heavy enough, as it seems to me, either to destroy a man's body if he endeavors to discharge it, or to ruin his soul if he leaves it undischarged."

"If that be the case where there is only one church, the difficulty surely would not be lessened by the erection of another," said Mr. Slowton.

"No," said the Bishop, "not unless the erection of a second church led to its natural result—the appointment of a second clergyman, and the division of the present charge into a second parish."

"Your lordship, as comparatively a stranger in the diocese," said Mr. Slowton with dignity, "is probably unaware that I have been regularly and legally inducted into this living as Rector of Clackington, and that my rectorial rights extend over the whole place."

"My dear friend," said the Bishop, taking no notice of Mr. Slowton's manner, but adopting a tone that completely took the starch out of the worthy rector, "you do not suppose either that I was ignorant of that fact, or desirous of making any changes or arrangements without your consent and co-operation. You do not imagine that I undervalue the result of your work here,

or that I question the sincerity of your desire for the welfare of that portion of Our Lord's flock which has been, under me, committed to your keeping! You do me great injustice if you do; that I can most sincerely assure you of."

"Oh no, my lord," exclaimed Mr. Slowton deprecatingly, "nothing of the kind. I am sure you have given me no reason to imagine such a thing."

"I should be truly grieved if any thing done or said by me should ever lead to such an idea, for the impression would be decidedly false. I do not say that our ideas of the management of a parish are altogether alike, or that we take precisely the same view of our ministerial obligations; but I truly believe that we have but one object in view—the fulfilment of our solemn vows, and the salvation of the souls over which the Holy Ghost has made us overseers."

Poor Mr. Slowton was now as limp as possible, and all thought of rectorial stiffness was entirely taken out of him.

"Indeed, indeed, my lord," he began, "I do indeed. I really wish to—ah! I am most anxious to be faithful—as your lordship says. I am however bound, I think, to protect my own rights as Rector of the whole place; and any division or alteration when it appears necessary, should, I think, be made by me as such."

"I am anxious only that the souls of the people shall be cared for," said the Bishop, "because, in a delegated sense, those souls are mine; and I must answer for them in the Great Day of account as our Lord's Chief Pastor in this portion of His heritage. I am not disposed to make any difficulty as to the precise mode by which they are provided for, as long as that provision is made; but made to the best of our ability it must be: otherwise, how shall I stand before the judgment seat on that awful Day when we shall be called upon to give an account of our stewardship? I think, however, that the idea you have broached upon the subject of what you call rectorial rights, arises in a great degree from the tradition of 'the Establishment,' which has no existence here, combined with an erroneous idea of the Episcopal office in relation to the people and to the subordinate orders of the ministry."

"Mr. Slowton looked rather *bothered* by this