

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord."

Psalm lv. 22.



THE NOBLEMAN'S OFFER.

NOTICE.

The Lord of the Manor will be present, with his steward, between the hours of nine and twelve on Tuesday, the 14th inst., and will then and there pay freely all accounts and debts, to whomsoever due, of any of his tenants who cannot discharge their obligations. To avail themselves of this offer, the applicants must present their accounts in the form of separate bills, containing the exact statement of the amount and nature of the debts owing to each creditor; and they must also give a statement of their own means and whatsoever property they have.

THE foregoing notice was, by order of a christian nobleman, posted in prominent places over his estate. His object in doing so was to impress upon his tenants the fact that God is ready and willing to pardon sin.

Very soon crowds began to gather round the various placards through the village, and at the office, and curiosity and astonishment possessed them all. Every one was asking, "What does this mean?" But to one and all the steward had but one and the same answer to give: "That is his lordship's signature, and the notice speaks for itself. That is all I know about it."

The day appointed by the notice rapidly drew on, and the excitement of the tenants increased. Some, as they read the last clause of the notice, seemed to think that it meant that they must give up all that they had if they would claim the offered benefit. And as they were not insolvent, they concluded *they* would not apply. Some gathered up their accounts and made out the required statements, but concluded to wait and see how others might fare, intending, if they succeeded, to present their list of hopeless debts. Some again planned to keep back part of their assets; while others deterred by argument or ridicule, gave up all thought of the matter; and still others thought the idea so strange that they said it was only some unaccountable whim of his lordship's, and not worth a moment's thought or notice. "But there's his own signature; he'll never dishonour *that*," said a neighbour; and so the discussion went on to the end.

At last the day came. A little before the appointed hour the nobleman's carriage drove up, and from it he stepped into the office, and the door was closed and locked after him. Precisely at nine a step came from the inner room, and they heard the bolt thrown back, so that any one could enter. Men looked at each other and waited, none being willing to go in first, fearing either to confess their poverty or indebtedness, or to meet the ridicule that might follow an unsuccessful application.

"Do you go and try, Pat," said one to his neighbor. "I'm not as poor as you think for," was the answer. "Do you go," was said to another. "I think I'll wait and see what others do," was the

"The Lord will go before you."

Isaiah lii. 12.