

Readers, The appointment of an itinerant Missionary Agent, Mission to Roman Catholics, and Irish Schools.

The Irish Church has shown their sense of the importance of an agency for missions, by appointing the Rev. Dr. Dill to conduct it.

We give entire the portion of the report under the head Mission to Roman Catholics.

Much of what has been already said is applicable to our missions to Roman Catholics, yet a subject of such importance demands for itself a separate section—not to detail the proceedings of each missionary in each station, they shall speak for themselves in our appendix, but to record some gracious providences of which they have all partaken.

For example, though, in certain respects, there has been, amidst disease and death, the same event to the righteous and wicked, yet our missionary congregations have furnished happy illustrations of the promise:—“In famine He shall redeem thee from death.” God fulfils His promises by suitable means, and by the temperance, frugality, and enterprising industry which our people had been taught, they had some resources, and some little store to draw from, when the day of trial came.—God makes a provision for his own poor, by the respect, and confidence, and friendship which their character inspires, and He gives a special security that the righteous shall not be forsaken in the mutual love with which He has warmed the hearts of Christian brethren, and the gracious charge which He has given His Church to support her own poor. Thus have our missionaries, commanding so extensively Christian sympathy and confidence, been largely supplied with the means of feeding the hungry; and thus a peaceable and deserving people, known to those who distributed charity, have been so tenderly watched and nourished, that, in one district, for example, where thousands have fallen victims, a whole congregation, all, with a few exceptions, poor, have not only been kept alive, but they have been enabled to preserve their clothes, furniture, and cattle; and their fields, plentifully sown in good season, now give delightful promise of harvest. Our missionary congregations are thus invested with an interest which they never had before; they are as shipwrecked mariners saved from the barren rock, and we treat them tenderly because of the sufferings they endured, and in gratitude to God for lives preserved; we press them to our hearts, as each Jewish mother pressed her eldest child, when she found that all the first-born of Egypt were dead—we rejoice over them, as angels rejoiced over him, who, when a mighty famine arose in the land, found that in his father's house there was bread enough and to spare—and if we feel as we ought towards brethren and sisters in Jesus, we will adore the gracious providence of that God, who though he did not command the ravens to bring them bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, yet let them know, by sweet experience, that their own God and the God of their children is He who, in the wild wilderness, fed Israel to the full.

Not only have our missionary congregations been wonderfully preserved, and the numbers in our Sabbath-schools been wonderfully maintained, but they assemble now in more interesting relations than ever to one another, and to the world. They cling to their place of assembly, as the Jews to Godden; for they find it to be the place of safety and peace. Drenched, swollen feet, that tottered round the fields in search of nettles, or seaweed along the shore, are long since quiet in the grave; and the yellow hands of hunger, so often stretched forth in vain for food, are food for worms now; but their feet still stand in the courts of God's house, and their hands are still stretched to His holy oracle. Neighbours and friends are no more; but brethren in Jesus love more tenderly when left alone. The judgments of God have been among them, and over their head His thunder has roared; but the doves have flown to their windows—the warmed and awakened remnant whom mercy has spared meet for worship, awe-struck and softened to the last after three thousand had fallen be-

fore Levi's sword; and godless neighbours, struck by the proofs of God's presence, feel like Darius when he decreed that, in every dominion of his kingdom, men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.

It is a subject of congratulation, that, by an over-ruling Providence, the famine has introduced our missionaries to many of the excellent of the earth whom otherwise they would never have known, and that it has elevated their position and extended their influence; but the great subject of exultation and gratitude is, that famine has eaten the arm of Romish power, and left, in many cases, to priestly tyranny, only an unburied corpse, while many around it are ready to cry—“Let us bury it at the nearest cross roads, and pray God that it may know no resurrection.”

The poor Romanist, in the day of calamity, found that the arm of the proud ecclesiastic, on which he had long leaned, was powerless to save. He had paid his priest to cure the potato, but the potato was gone; he had paid him again to bring fish into his bay, but, after long wakeful nights, his net was drawn empty in the morning; his child, that had begun to lip his father's name, sickened and died, but no priest came, in the Saviour's name, to say,—“Suffer little children to come unto me.” Fever, looking haggard and wild over the shoulder of famine, came stealthily in at his door, and his beautiful girl, whose soft hand had pressed his own temples in sickness, was laid on the bed, from which she would never rise; and beside her lay his fond wife, who had clung closer to his bosom as the night of sorrow closed in, and, in ministering so kindly to his wants, had forgotten her own; and yet, because money and means were gone, no priest came to perform the last rites for the mother and child; and when their corpses, wrapped in straw, were carried to the grave on the old ass which had carried them so cheerily in the day of their pride, no reverend father was there to commit them to their last resting-place with imposing rites and holy clay. And yet, notwithstanding all that childhood had learned, and all that superstition believed, a husband and a father's heart could not believe that a wife and daughter were lost for want of the oil and the clay—oh, no!—would not believe that the avarice of man could stop the full free flow of the mercy of a sovereign God; and as his sympathies were more stirred, and the fountain of his love gushed more fully for the hapless fate of those that were gone, he became gradually more and more alienated from the heartless man who deserted his friend in the day of his need, and came with no word of comfort or peace when he was burying his heart in the grave.

The poor Romanist, like the man of sorrows, went to his own, but his own received him not—he asked bread of his spiritual father, and he gave him a stone; but when outcast, and hopeless, and dying, he found in his Protestant neighbour, he found in the humble Presbyterian missionary, a benefactor and a friend. Could he possess the common feelings of an Irishman or a man, not to love those who saved his life and his family's by risking their own? Could he be possessed of sense or gratitude, or any noble feeling, not to venerate the religion which bore fruit so very generous, and so very good! The Irish Roman Catholic is proving himself to be possessed of both good sense and feeling by his anxiety for becoming acquainted with the Bible, by the glad welcome which he gives in his cabin to the Protestant Scripture-reader, and by the boldness and steadfastness with which he waits on the Protestant minister to learn the truth of God. Let it go forth, then, this day, to all the Church, and to all the world, that the God who brings order out of confusion, and light out of darkness, has overruled the famine in Ireland, to open up Ireland for Protestant missions; the Protestant Scripture-reader is everywhere welcome, the Protestant missionary is respected and loved; a secretary of Presbyterian missions in Ireland has preached to Roman Catholics in the school-house, the dwelling-house, the barn, the open field; and in broad day-light in wild Connaght, has had as many Romanists in attendance as the priest of the neighbouring chapel; and the same Roman Ca-

tholic people who heard a Presbyterian missionary denounced by their priest on the Sabbath, carried him in triumph on their shoulders, before the week had closed.

In Scotland, as we have already mentioned, the Home Mission of the Irish Church has been liberally supported. As an illustration of the kindly feeling towards it in the Free Church, it may be noticed, that the Sabbath-school children of the Free Church, themselves, in reply to an appeal from the Rev. A. J. Campbell, of Melrose, lately collected the sum of £220 sterling, for the Irish Schools of that mission. We extract from the “Edinburgh Witness,” of the 23rd October last, the following notice of the proceedings of the Synod of Perth, held a few days previous to that date. The Moderator who introduced the overture given in the quotation, is the Rev. Andrew Bonar, of Collace.

OVERTURE ON THE EVANGELIZATION OF IRELAND.

Whereas it appears that in many parts of Ireland, where Popery has hitherto reigned, there is presented a remarkable opening for the entrance of the truth, and whereas this opening has been very much the result of the late famine and its attendant results, it appears to the Synod that the Lord is, by His providence, calling on Protestants generally, and on our Church among the rest, to embrace this opportunity of labouring for souls in that island. The Synod, therefore, hereby overture the venerable the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland on this matter, praying them to take the subject into their anxious and prayerful consideration, and, if possible, send help in answer to this Macedonian cry.

Rev. Mr. Bonar having left the chair, said, that he had lately, in the providence of God, been led to visit Ireland, and to witness what is taking place there. It was not now as heretofore. Some time ago, they could not get an entrance, but now there was an open door to them. At every school there was an attendance of from 120 to 150 scholars, and these fully instructed in Protestant doctrine, although by far the greater number of the scholars were the children of Roman Catholic parents.—The parents make no objection to this instruction. On one evening he had gone to preach in two large rooms. Both were crowded, about 200 people being in attendance, and not more than a dozen Protestants among the number. These, with the children present, left at least 150 Roman Catholics who listened to Protestant truth on that occasion. They listened most attentively, and seemed deeply interested. If they could only send them a Protestant minister, and find a place of worship, they might easily have congregations of 400 members in a year. It was agreed by these people to institute prayer meetings; and a man well acquainted with the people read a chapter of the Bible. Many congregations would be formed if ministers were sent and churches built. The Free Church was specially called on to look to the sad condition of Ireland. God intended this when he called our attention to Ireland by the famine.

The Rev. Mr. Cunningham seconded the adoption of the overture. There is a tendency at the present day to greater power amongst the people in civil matters; but how will that power be employed if they are left in ignorance of the great regulating principles of religion? Why, the Pope himself, seeing the tendency to democracy in other States in Europe, has been adopting measures which have the appearance of liberality. It was the opinion of a highly-respected member of this Synod, now removed to another part of the country, that the last form of the beast is democracy. Let them think of the masses acquiring civil power, with irreligion, that they may be alive to their awful responsibility if they fail in their duty.

It is because Christ has all power in heaven and on earth, his ministers are therefore to go forth and publish his salvation.