

and he thought the good bishop must either have taken leave of his senses or Clackington must be a much more wonderful place than he had ever supposed it to be.

The thought, however, that was most dwelt upon by the bishop, as the first step towards securing the future carrying out of what good Mr. Slowton verily thought to be castles in the air, was the present acquisition of land. On visiting the portion of the town that lay across the river, where the station and workshops of the railway were situated, and which was rapidly growing, his principal regret was that no land seemed likely to be easily obtained as a site for the church and other buildings, which, the bishop very quietly observed, must very soon be erected in that place.

Poor Mr. Slowton! Here was confirmation strong indeed of his worst fears about the division of the parish: he thought it prudent, however, to say little beyond the remark that, considering the enormous price which was asked for building lots in that neighborhood, he thought it would be long before the people in that part of the town would be in a position to secure the ground which would be requisite for a church, much less to erect the building itself.

"The more reason, my dear sir," replied the bishop, "that those in other parts of the town and other parts of the country too should help them. Depend upon it that, from the very unusual advantages which this town enjoys, 'waiting' won't make the land cheaper."

"No, indeed," observed Crampton; "it is rising steadily in value every year; and I think it must certainly continue to do so."

"There can be no question upon the subject," said the bishop, "for it is plain to any one who will examine the place, that the land must rise, not from the mere excitement of unhealthy speculation, but from the real and positive advantages which the town holds out to commercial enterprise. This *must* become a large place—immensely larger than it is—and though it is to be regretted that the foundations of the church have not been laid broad and deep before, still we may be thankful that it is not altogether too late now."

At this moment a messenger came for Mr. Slowton, saying that a child of one of the parishioners was at the point of death, and apologizing for interrupting him, at a time when he

was engaged with the bishop, asked him to come and baptize it without delay.

While Mr. Slowton was gone upon this duty, the bishop continued the conversation with Mr. Crampton in a more unreserved tone.

"It is a true nineteenth century idea of christianity," he observed, "to suppose that a church, especially in towns, needs no larger a space of ground than enough to hold it. Men have to a sad extent forgotten that the Church is and has always been the great fountain head of all the charities of life, and that around the material Temple of God should ever be seen clustering those institutions of mercy in which the devout love and worship offered within the sanctuary, should find its outward expression and embodiment."

"That is a subject on which I should much like to have some conversation with your lordship," said Crampton thoughtfully. "I have long had a vague feeling that we are sadly wanting in some evidence of our faith as a church, and that while as a church we fail to do Our Lord's works, we shall not be acknowledged to be Our Lord's body."

"The subject is one of great importance and interest," answered the bishop; "and I should be glad to talk it over with you when I have leisure, but about the site for this church—it is unfortunate that land is so very expensive; we shall find our energies a good deal crippled, I am afraid, by this great want. What would you suggest as the best mode of proceeding?"

"I think I can relieve your lordship's anxiety on this point, by telling you what has hitherto been known only to myself and my rather odd but very worthy friend Mr. Jackson; there is about an acre of land, occupying one of the very best positions in this part of the town, and which stands in my name. It has, however, been purchased by the united offerings of Jackson and myself, and we purpose at the proper time to present the title-deed of it on God's altar as a thank-offering for the many mercies which we have both received."

The bishop was silent for a few moments, and then pressing his hand warmly, and with a glistening in his eye, he thanked him earnestly for his intended gift, and thanked God yet more fervently for putting into the heart of his servants such true love and care for His Holy Church.