

for ye know but little of the joy which even in this life may be discovered amidst misery and tears.

The period to which our sketch refers may not be considered as the happiest in the English annals, for men began to feel the heavings of that storm which was charged with vengeance and desolation to the Governments and people of Europe. Over the capital a speck, black and terrible, was apparent; its dread influence speedily extended beyond the territory of France; a wail, ominous and fearful, whose note of despair was reverberated in the palaces of many a monarch, and in the halls of many a noble—but it did not exhaust itself in echo or evaporate in sound—it was a wail whose dire demand was blood, and license unparalleled, and whose hideous response was life and treasure incalculable. The exaction was tremendous, and yet, notwithstanding its horrible accompaniment, the observing man must be impressed with the fear that there are many of this present generation who are willing to assume the direction of an experiment which has so recently been accompanied by such tragical results.

Although we have referred to political events, it is not our intention to be diverted from our humble Parish walk, or be diverted from those chronicleings which more befit our experience, and we only allude to the subject for the purpose of remarking that public events did cast a shade upon private enjoyment, for the reflecting and the thoughtful could not, without emotion and anxiety, behold the approach of a period laden with such peril and alarm to the nation; and so, while they cherished their present blessings as a prize, from which other countries were excluded, they felt some concern lest the insular position of the British islands should afford an insufficient protection against the dissemination of those principles which had brought ruin and disaster upon a neighbouring country.

The multitude, it is true, believed that the wooden walls of Old England, would suffice to repel invasion, and even if the fleet was eluded, they knew that British soil could not long be defiled by the presence of the enemy, for that there were abundance of loyal men, "hearts of oak," ready and willing to repel and destroy any foe, who should dare to desecrate the soil of England by his presence.

This was not the idea which gave disquietude to the minds of the thoughtful men of that day; they did not so much fear the assaults of angry men from without, as the insidious writings of evil men within. And in the presence of so much danger and alarm, it is wonderful to reflect how the nation escaped from the consequences of the moral corruption which was then engendered, a corruption against which the friends of order could offer no counterpoise, beyond that which was afforded by the interested class who possess

land or other property in the country; for the church, which is the only regenerator of a nation, had slumbered and slept over her high duties. Her clergy in the majority of instances were worldlings, and her bishops, it is to be feared, in some cases were drones.

It was early in the day, when children are awaking to the realities of which they have dreamed when sleeping—when happy mothers were seeking an increase to their joys, by busily preparing for the adornment of their darlings, when the occupants of the old house were preparing to honor old Christmas by shewing welcome, and hospitality to their families and friends; when grand-dads thought by the presence of their children's children, to renew their own youth; when neighbours were meditating the reconciliation of differences with neighbours; when friends who had grown cold, were dwelling on the pleasure of again renewing the intercourse of former days; when families which had been estranged, were to be at one again; when love was to revisit hearths which he had forsaken, and homes from which he had been expelled—love whose qualities were so pure and heaven-born, that it could only be induced by love and gratitude to HIM, whose loving advent is on that day celebrated by the universal church.

It was early on this day, for the good Rector was reading by the light of the lamp, that old Jacob Bundy knocked at the door of the Parsonage, and sought an interview with the Rev. Mr. Austin.

Jacob Bundy was an old man, a very old man; he did not know his age, but he was familiarly called "Old Jacob." He was the parish crier; for years he had followed no other occupation, and in those days, when hand-bills were less resorted to than now, his calling was as necessary as it was convenient. In the morning, noon and evening, Jacob might be seen, and his bell could be heard, in street or lane, or alley, complaining, by means of its iron tongue, of a loss, or inquiring for information, or announcing a discovery. We say that the bell made the inquiry for time had deprived old Jacob of his teeth, and his articulation, therefore, was indistinct and uncertain.

The old man entered the Rector's library, and raising his hand to his head, silvered by the frost of many a winter, he expressed, in language understood by the party to whom it was addressed, that

"I wish your Reverence a merry Christmas and happy New Year."

After thanking old Jacob for his good wishes, and expressing the same towards himself, the Rector enquired what result had followed his endeavour to gather information respecting Mary Hayworth.

The old man shook his head despondingly, and said that nothing could be heard of her; he had only heard that widow Plimsoil had a young woman, by the name of Baker, living with her for a short time, but as she had a child, it could not be her.

The Rector having made a note of the information, old Jacob retired shaking his white head the while—from the Parsonage, leaving the Rector dejected and depressed at the ill-success of the Beadle's effort to obtain information.

(To be continued.)