

have been a bold and sanguine man who could believe that there was any soft side to her.

"Now that you've despatched your visitor," said the Bishop, as Mr. Slowton again appeared in the study, "I hope we shall have the remainder of the evening to ourselves, so that we can have a snug confabulation on matters parochial; for certainly there seems to me to be few parishes in the diocese which are likely soon to become more important than yours."

"It has become a wonderfully thriving place, my lord, no doubt; and in course of years, if it continue to increase, its importance will certainly be considerable."

"It is that already," answered the Bishop, "and as for its increase, that is as certain as any thing human can be. In regarding the condition of such places from a Christian point of view, a feeling of great and almost burdensome anxiety and responsibility takes possession of my mind, how to make the spiritual improvement of such places keep pace with their temporal advancement."

"Ahem—very true," observed Mr. Slowton, looking uncomfortable, "but still I'm very glad to say that we have not stood quite still here in spiritual things, while the town has been increasing. We have made no less than three additions to the church within comparatively a few years. And I really think, though we have hardly finished our last improvement, we must very soon do something more in order to increase the number of our pews."

"Every measure of success in divine things is no doubt ground for devout acknowledgment," observed the Bishop reverently; but after all, a church affording accommodation for four or five hundred is but a scanty supply of church room for a population of more than as many thousand."

"But, my lord, it is our hope and intention, before long, to erect a new church to hold some fifteen hundred, and then there can be no possible want of room for the church people."

"I am very glad to hear you say so. I heard it mentioned before. When do you think of commencing? next year?"

"Why no," said Mr. Slowton, looking rather blank. "We have not yet quite paid off the debt incurred by our late enlargement, which is being liquidated by the pew rents, and is consequently only gradually effected. The car-

penter who did the work agreed to accept his payments in small instalments, and the parishioners liked the arrangement because it kept them from feeling the expense."

"Humph," said the Bishop, "when then do you expect to be in a position to begin?"

"I can hardly say. Why the—indeed the idea has hardly taken a very definite form. We talk of it; and perhaps three or four years hence I should hope that we shall be able to do something in the matter."

"Three or four years before you are able to do any thing," repeated the Bishop. "Why before you could *finish* at that rate, Clackington will be twice the size it is at present, and so the proportion of church accommodation will not be much greater than it is at present."

"But you know, my lord, we cannot do impossibilities."

"Very true," said the Bishop with a smile, "but do you really think it impossible to do any thing to increase church room in Clackington at once?"

"Why really I hardly see how it is to be managed. Considering what we have lately done, I don't know how we could propose any fresh effort immediately."

"But I thought you said just now that, owing to the easy terms of payment, the people did not feel what they have lately done; and people, in worldly things, don't often need much rest after efforts which they do not feel. What would you think of suggesting to them the idea of building another church at the present extremity of the town?"

"Another church! an *additional* church does your lordship mean?" and Mr. Slowton's heart sank within him, for he felt that his worst fears were likely to be realized. "Surely you cannot suppose that there is any present necessity for a church there; and, besides, if there was, there are no means to build it."

"As to necessity," replied the Bishop, "there is already a considerable population connected with the various railway works, and the place is evidently growing so rapidly in that neighborhood that there will be the people to fill it before the church is built."

"But I assure your lordship that there are hardly any church people connected with the railway—not a dozen of the workmen ever come to church."