



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

LEGENDS OF THE SWADDLERS.

These disgusting, because blasphemous, effusions of the Soupers in Ireland, are admirably reviewed in the following letter by Mr. Maher, in his reply to an article by the Rev. Mr. Massey, which appeared in the Carlow Sentinel; and in which the writer deprecated the anticipated criticism of his Romish opponent in the following terms:—

"He (Mr. Maher) promises the public much sport, out of the rough leaves of a diary kept by my scripture reader. I do trust, for his own sake, that his wit may not lead him to treat God's holy word with irreverence, like a scoffer, of whom the celebrated orator Melville has said his delight is to take the lightnings of the Almighty and make them flash for his own amusement."—Rev. Dawson Massey's Letter to the Carlow Sentinel.

This awful warning, conveyed in such strange phraseology—so characteristic of Mr. Massey—reminds me of the duty of redeeming my pledge, which I made some weeks since to the public.—Had it not been thus noticed I should, most likely, have forgotten it. In dealing with the subject, to relieve Mr. Massey's anxiety, I beg to assure him that I shall not attempt to play with the lightning of heaven, although I feel disposed to laugh at, and hold up to public scorn the enormous hypocrisy, and religious ribaldry of his Bible-readers and all other Tartuffes of the present day. In bringing the evangelical labors of the Scripture readers before the public, it appears to us, that the most satisfactory course, to all parties, will be to give their very words, as we find them in the reports of those proselytising societies with which the country is overrun. One of them having in its service no less than fifty-six Bible-readers, including the man of Graigue, assumes the style and title of the

LADIES' IRISH ASSOCIATION, For Promoting the Religious Instruction of the Native Irish.

These pious missionary Ladies, devoted to the ministry of "the Word" are under the government of a select committee, of five-and-twenty of their own sex, Ladies learned in the laws, strong in faith; and forty-four Parsons, whom the report denominates Superintendants. Forty-four Parsons—that is somewhat more than a Parson and a half to superintend each committee Lady. The Secretary is a Miss Mason, who has filled that office with great eclat for nearly a quarter of a century. In truth it may be said that she has grown grey in the service. This committee directs the proselytising operations of the fifty-six Scripture-readers, upon whom it has expended last year £1700 19s 9d. See report, page 60.

The readers, whose services we are about to submit to public criticism, are, by no means, ordinary men. They are the best of their class. Employed and paid by the Ladies, Mr. Massey informs us "that they are selected, trained, and superintended by the clergy." We shall begin our notice of their pious labors in our own parish, as most likely to interest the people of Carlow; but, in entering on the subject, we must again caution the public not to laugh at, nor make light of, the sacred effusions of the spirit, as embodied in the diaries of these humble servants of the Lord, as their employers love to designate them.

The first extract, p. 29, shows how the Bible-reader of Graigue, who sat for years at the feet of the Rector of Killeslin, collected, at an unusually early hour in the morning, men to perform the evangelical operation of planting the minister's potato—how he assisted a Catholic inquirer to escape from his wife in his night-dress, minus the body of the shirt—how they ran for their lives, thinking themselves hotly pursued by the infuriated woman, the inquirer still undressed and shivering like an aspen leaf. The danger being at length overcome, and the congregation assembled at the planting of his reverence's potatoes, the Bible-expounder of the sacred page, mindful of his high vocation, quoted with great unction many texts of Scripture for the Catholic inquirer and the other men.

In the following extracts, it will give zest to the subject to know that the letter W stands for John Wall, an old Protestant, designated by Mr. Massey "a Roman Catholic Inquirer" in his letter to Mrs. Inglis; the letter D stands for Dunne; the Rev. Mr. M. stands for the Parson of Killeslin; Father M. for the Parish Priest; and M stands for Mooney, the Bible-reader, whose "Diary" revised, corrected, and prepared for the Press by the 25 Ladies and 44 Parsons, is now about to be given *verbatim* and *literatim*—

"Went at five o'clock in the morning to call for W—and D—to come and plant potatoes at our minister's; so as I was at the door I heard D say to his wife to let out his shirt. I asked, 'What was the matter?' and he said that his wife had his shirt, and would not give it to him. His wife said to me, 'Begone, Satan!' She

said, 'Father M— had told her she could save a man from the devil, but from that Bible reader is no recovery.' With much difficulty the husband came to the door, and all he had of the shirt was the neck in one hand, and his clothes in the other, and a wild look in his eyes, and he said, 'Come, or she'll kill some one.' So we took to the road with speed, thinking every moment the wife would be after us; but she did not follow us, and then we waited till he put on his clothes, and he was shivering like a leaf on a tree. Then we went to the field and fell to work, and I quoted many texts of Scripture for him and the other men."

The second extract, p. 30, exhibits the courage and zeal of the Bible reader. He ventures, notwithstanding the violent opposition of the woman Jezabel, to call a second time upon Dunne, to plant the minister's potatoes—The ingenious device of the woman to defeat the call—How she succeeds this time in outwitting the Bible man—The Priest gets the merit of the invention:—"On Monday I went again to call for D—to plant potatoes; I knocked at the door, and he said, with a trembling voice, that he could not come, because his wife had got up in the middle of the night, when she got him asleep, and put his clothes in a tub of water. The priest had told her to do this to prevent the man from earning his day's wages. So I was obliged to employ another man."

Wonderful conversion—Mrs. Jezabel Dunne modifies her opinions—finds out that Protestants are the reverse of devils—implores the Bible reader's pardon for tearing her husband's clothes—associates with Mooney—works in the same employment, for which she gives thanks to God, and promises to go to church:—"Mrs. D— said she once thought Protestants were devils, but now she sees the reverse, and asked my pardon for the morning she tore her husband's clothes, &c., striving to prevent him to walk with me; but now she gives her blessing to her husband and will go to church. She sees now plainly that the Book is God's book, and gives thanks to God that she went to work where she heard how she is to be saved."

The Bible-reader, Mooney, transformed into a basket seller—received with much love by the people in his new character—attends the fairs, sells the potato basket, and quotes Scripture for the purchasers—wonderful success in trade—sells eleven times more than the unscriptural basket-maker, assisted by Roman Catholic inquirers.—Hurra! hurra! for hypocrisy and humbug, for the twenty-five ladies and forty-four Parsons:—"I was at the fair selling the baskets made in our factory; I was received with much love by those people who knew me, and also bought baskets from me. I returned them thanks, and quoted texts for them, remarking the love of Christ in dying on the cross to redeem us from our sins. I met some of our own Roman Catholic inquirers, who assisted me to sell; I sold thirty-three baskets before my opposers sold three."

Great progress in hypocrisy. Mooney is admitted to the kitchen of a Roman Catholic shop-keeper, discovers a Bible, whereupon he rejoices in the Lord, and undertakes to prove to Miss Nameless, that it is nowhere forbidden in the Bible to receive heretical money into a Catholic till. He proves, moreover, that a Bible-reader's money, or that of a turn-coat like himself, would not melt away her capital—a dangerous heresy, which the priest attempted in vain to impose upon her. Hurra! hurra! for the Biblical enlightenment of the nineteenth century! for the twenty-five Ladies and the forty-four Parsons!—"Visited a Roman Catholic who keeps a shop. There was on the table in the kitchen a Bible, which seemed to be in pretty good practice. I took it in my hand and began to read, when Miss — came into the kitchen. I was very glad, and gave thanks to God when I saw the change, for a few years ago she would not allow a turn-coat like me to come near her, or my money into her till; she said she was not to blame, for the priest said all her capital would melt away. I asked her did she read in the Bible that all her capital would melt away if the money of a man who reads the Bible would enter her till? She said, 'no, because it is the Word of God, who is love, and without the Bible the priest can make a public fool of a person concerning religion.'"

Bad news for husbands. The priests recommend wives to hang them with a rope about their neck as a legitimate check upon all Bible reading tendencies. Husbands sustained by the Bible-reader persevere in spite of priest and wives.—Bad news for wives.—Quere.—As hanging is a sinless operation, would it not be more natural and a more effectual check to Biblicism, to recommend the hanging of the Bible-reader himself:—"Visited a convert, who told me that his wife went to the priest to complain of him how he was paying attention to my reading the Bible,

and that he intended going to church. The priest told her to put a rope round his neck, and hang him before she would allow him to go church with that man, who destroyed many souls in this parish. He says, 'He will hear God's Holy Word in spite of priest or wife, and he is thankful to me for reading it for him.'"

Last extract from Graigue. An interesting dialogue between the Bible-reader Mooney, and a man 45 years of age and his beloved wife Catty. The priest is introduced as taking Catty's name out of the 'Book of Life,' whereupon the husband exclaims—"No more Priests?"—"Visited K—, and read 1 John i. He said, although he was 45 years of age, he did not know how man's soul was to be saved only thro' the priests. Read some other passages, when he asked, 'What do you call that book?' I said, 'The Bible.' He then said, 'Is that the book the Priest forbids the people to read?' I said, 'That is the very blessed book.' He called to his wife, 'Catty, Catty, do you remember when the Priest called us to pay our Easter dues; because we had no money, he said surely he would take our names out of the book of life, and then we would be lost for ever for the want of paying one 2s 6d. But now, he said, 'no more Priests while I live.'"

In another part of the "report," p. 33, we read that the Bible man fell sick, but that his time for going up to Heaven had not yet arrived. The people love him very much, pray for his recovery, listen to his commentaries with great attention, kill a sheep, and send him some of the mutton, saying the broth would do him good.—Hopes to die soon:—"I have to tell that during my illness I was visited by many Romanists, to whom, from time to time, I was enabled to tell of a Saviour's love to my soul, to which some of them listened with attention: some of them learning, praying for my recovery. There is a Romanist family whom I always considered the most bigoted in the parish; some one from their house was sure to come once or twice a day to inquire after me: these people killed a sheep, and sent me some of the mutton twice, saying the broth would do me good."

"It was reported I had a very bad fever, but the Lord's time for saying, 'come up hither,' seemingly has not arrived yet, though I do believe it will be soon."

Page 36, a Bible-reader writes:—"Visited a mason. This man had a great welcome for me, and wondered why I stopped so long without calling at his place. 'Have you the Bible about you?' said he. 'I have a Roman Catholic one.' 'Better again,' said he.—Often I spoke to the wife about you, saying, what happened the man that carries the Bible with him reading for the people? He took the Bible and read part of two chapters to the wife: he said he often thought of getting a Bible, and would not be much longer without one. I told him I would lend him one, till such time as he could make out one: he said he would wait, may be your own would make a Protestant of me."

"Was nearly three hours reading with a farmer: he is so eager to hear me speak and read, he leaves off work the moment I enter his house, but the family leave it. I said to him, perhaps the women are not willing that we should speak of religion? Never mind those women, they are 'contrary': if they don't like to listen, let them mind their business. Perhaps they will blame you when I go? Let them blame away, I will put up with the blame for the sake of hearing you read: nothing gives me more delight: I do be glad the moment I see you coming in."

"Read in a shop. Many were present. After some talk I said Roman Catholics boast of belonging to the old and true Church, the pillar and ground of truth—if you are such you will not refuse answering me a few questions to lead me right if I am astray. What is truth? All looked earnestly, but no answer. As Roman Catholics are you not able to answer a man whom you look on as a heretic? Will you not set me right if you think me wrong? Not an answer, but all looking, some of them with opened mouths and fastened eyes, wondering, so I went on for some time, but still no answer."

"You just speak truth, said several voices from the people that thronged to hear. So we parted in good friendship, I telling them to get Bibles for themselves, and not be deceived by the priests. As I went out of the shop, several voices shouted, 'Long life to you—you are a great fellow.' I heard afterwards that they argued for hours among themselves."

"There are few new conversions from Popery, but many are secretly believing the truth, and will, I trust, be open professors of it."

"The efforts of the Church of Rome here are superhuman now to keep the population from us. All means are used, and the National School system has almost entirely destroyed our Scriptural Schools. I can rarely get a Roman Catholic child to come to us. There are a great many interesting inquirers, however, in this district, and light is spreading."

To circulate this low ribaldry, this indecent travesty of sacred things, fanatical women of unsteady minds and ill-regulated piety collect large sums of money, and form themselves into committees, giving thanks to god "that they are thus privileged in spreading the Gospel light in many remote and dark corners in Ireland." Good Heavens! is it possible that they are so far blinded, as not to perceive the frightful iniquity of their proceedings.

The reports of the proselytising societies are very voluminous. I have read them extensively and I pledged myself that the above extracts are a fair specimen of the whole. Nothing certainly can bring out in bolder relief the low buffoonery, the base hypocrisy, the gross ignorance, and enormous fictions of those associations, than the pages of their own reports. In considering the subject, one cannot help asking to what state have we come, when the obscuring and rullianism of society are drilled, banded together, and hired at an enormous price, to bring disgrace by their ignorance and knavery on the very name of religion? Hundreds of this class are let loose on society—men too idle or too vicious to work out an honest livelihood in their proper sphere—men without mental training or discipline of any kind, without education or knowledge for professional life, ticket-of-leave men in the Church, are set up by a club or committee of female Evangelizers to expound the awful mysteries of Christianity, to eradicate Divine faith from the public mind. Upon the nature and character of these proceedings there can be no second opinion.

The notabilities of this evangelical committee, about half-dozen in number, are ladies of the metropolis, who, whilst their husbands are engaged in the courts of justice, or the Castle of Dublin, give up their time to "the ministry of the word." Such fanatical eccentricities cannot be tolerated without detriment and injury to religion. Female influence is most usefully exerted within the sphere marked out for it by Providence—the quiet circle of domestic life. There it is invaluable; there the gentle force of their counsel and good example is felt to advantage; but when ladies overstep that limit and sally forth, with bible in hand, armed at all points for tilt and tournament in the arena of controversy; when they come out, leading on, and guiding a troop of ignorant swaddlers, they display a total forgetfulness of the proprieties of life and of all that gives dignity and attractiveness to their own character.

This is my old-fashioned notion, and I doubt not that St. Paul took the same view of the subject when he requested the ladies of Corinth to learn at home, for "I suffer not (he says Tim. ch. 2) a woman to teach or usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

It is a grievous scandal to society, and a deep disgrace to the Clergy of the Established Church, that they do not put an effectual check upon such demoralising extravagancies. Folly, impiety, and Puritanism of this kind have banished religion from the hearts of millions in England, where the masses of people are left exposed to such corrupting influences, and they would have produced the same effect, the same loss of faith in Ireland, were they not happily counteracted by the salutary and restraining discipline of the Catholic Church.

To enlighten ignorance, to remove error is, unquestionably a good work; but the agencies employed must be proportioned to the task—otherwise, religious zeal degenerates into canting hypocrisy, and the most reprehensible and mischievous fanaticism. Does religion or common sense commission unlettered peasants to expound Scripture and sell baskets at the public fairs?—to plant ministers' potatoes, and sow the seeds of the word?—to make their way to the scullery and discuss theology with the kitchen maid—to malign, in every sentence, the Catholic Clergy in the name of the Gospel?—to circulate lying tracts, such as I have quoted from?—to post up evangelical hand bills?—to pry about the back lanes to tempt the child of misery, by an invitation "to the unfailing meal tub," to abandon the religion of its parents? Such, without exaggeration, are the works of Scripture readers, as narrated by themselves; such the demoralising system of evangelical quackery, sanctioned by parsons and worked out by the faded beauties of the metropolis. If anything could dispose the ever-faithful people of Ireland to sneer at religion—to think lightly of its sacred ordinances, or reject it altogether, this low, canting hypocrisy, the extravasated zeal of excitable women, tolerated by their husbands and encouraged by evangelical authority, would certainly do it.

Whether the "diary" of the evangelical movement in Graigue has been edited by the Rev. Mr. Massey or his eloquent Scripture reader the Basket seller, I cannot pretend to say. The style and matter, the cant and folly of the extracts very much resemble the writings of the venerable rector, and moreover the solemn warning which he gave me not to treat them with disrespect—he himself viewing them in some sense as

"God's Holy Word"—incline me to the opinion that the authorship belongs to the Rector. But the point is not of much importance.

There is one feature in the case which has afforded me some gratification. A proper sense of character has, I rejoice to see, induced the ladies of Carlow and the Protestant clergy of the town to withhold all aid from this foolish congregation of biblical women. The only assistance which the enormous folly has received in this district has been that of two collections in Killeslin Church, after sermons, amounting in all to the beggarly sum of £2 1s. 6d. It appears, moreover, from Miss M. C. Massey's collecting card, that the Countess of Aldborough gave one pound and the Rev. D. Massey half one. The following items fill up the card in those words and letters:

Table with 2 columns: Name and Amount. Includes Mamma (2 6), Frances Massey (1 0), M. C. Massey (1 0), G. S. (1 0), A. S. (1 0), L. S. (1 0), D. G. Massey (2 6), A Thanks Offering (10 0).

The Ladies conclude their report declaring "that their fund is utterly exhausted, and that during the last twelve months they received very much less than any year since 1847." This announcement indicates a return of good sense, a clear appreciation in the country of the enormous mischief attempted by the proselytising societies—that hypocrisy, cant, and vain intermeddling, beyond sphere, which characterize a certain class of nervous women, are greatly on the wane.

JAMES MAHER.

REV. DR. CAHILL ON THE FUTURE CONDUCT OF THE ADVOCATES OF TENANT RIGHT.

The result of the General Election in Ireland, will, at the end of the next week, prove that the question of Tenant right has made an advance in the public mind much more successful than its most sanguine supporters could have anticipated. In the various addresses put forward by the different candidates, we see gentlemen of large landed property, the connexions of persons of the highest rank in Ireland, proclaim their willing adhesion to the universal settlement of a Tenant right, even as sketched in Sharman Crawford's bill. The question which two years ago was scouted from the consideration of the landlords of this country is now discussed as a topic of national interest, is admitted in the highest quarters as a necessary legislation, and, in all probability, will become the law of the land before the next General Election, which will certainly take place within eighteen months from the present time. The near approach of the next dissolution of Parliament is a fact, which will add irresistible power to this bill amongst the aristocracy; and will stimulate every constituency in Ireland to put forth the very last effort of their legitimate energies to send no man to Parliament, no matter what his other qualifications may be, without being solemnly pledged to stand unflinchingly under the standard of the advocates of this measure.

But of what use is the union and the perseverance in the House, unless they have the union and the constancy of their constituencies out of the House? This external league confederacy was the lever which gave to O'Connell his gigantic power: every word he spoke in St. Stephen's was copied at home with approbation, into the Liberal Press, and was echoed at home with enthusiasm by the millions of his encouraging countrymen. Ireland was his audience much more than the assembled Senate: like the corresponding needles of the electric telegraph, when he moved Ireland moved; when he lifted his herculean arm against the enemy, Ireland instantly followed up the blow; and gave him a position, a dignity, a power, which even in a hopeless case dissolved Ministries, made Cabinets tremble, and gained for Ireland a respect, a prestige, which still accompanies our name, our fate, and our struggles, all over the civilised world.—This external support is more necessary in the present posture of our affairs than perhaps in any former period of our history. The faithful persecuted freeholder, the struggling cottier-farmer, the starving laborer, have their eyes fixed on the issue of this contest in the hope of procuring for industry its honest reward, and of securing a resting-place from the terrors of famine, the horrors of the emigrant ship, and the heart-rending death scenes of the foreign fever and cholera hospitals. While, therefore, all the Irish constituencies demand honor, courage, and self-sacrifice from their sworn representatives, all the artisans, all the laboring classes, all the poor have a national claim (in self defence) to call on the entire freehold and commercial Catholic population to unite in a resistless combination at home to support the opinions and to aid the views of our Parliamentary champions on the other side of the Channel.