

This is so frequently the case, that even moderately informed Catholics are surprised at the extent of the delusion which is practised on their hapless neighbours, and still more so at the voracious manner in which those huge fictions are gulped down. Rarely, if ever, is a Catholic dogma truly stated by our opponents, or if there be a grain or two of truth, it is so small, and so mixed up with error, that it is hard to distinguish it. Sometimes the doctrine is not stated at all, and a passing sneer is deemed quite sufficient to refute it; or to condemn some pious practice with which it is connected. There are some pet topics, too, with which Protestantism is particularly enamoured, because they afford so much room for the display of that species of profane wit to which we have alluded. Moreover, it is so easy to acquire a cheap and speedy renown by fierce attacks on the horrid 'Papists,' the Image-worshippers and Idolaters, that there are many 'godly ministers of the word' who never mount a pulpit without discharging therefrom a full vial of wrath on the head of that unfortunate and well-abused lady who is supposed to have none but scarlet-colored dresses in her wardrobe, and whose proper domicile should be on the banks of the Euphrates, or the Tigris, or some other outlandish river, instead of appearing bodily in the haunts of the orthodox, and making the chickens of grace scream with affright at her flame-coloured vesture. To compose a good moral sermon, or to deliver a sound well-reasoned discourse on man's duty to God, to his neighbour and himself; to unfold the secret windings of the mysterious and incomprehensible heart of man; to trace the crimes of individuals and the vices of society to their source, and, in demonstrating their wickedness, to suggest an efficacious remedy; to explain points of doctrine supposed to be believed by the congregation; to sustain them by appropriate and well-reasoned quotations from holy writ, and to answer all objections alleged against them—these and similar topics, one would suppose, should afford a wide field for the display of ability, and a large scope for pastoral zeal.