

does your lordship propose to take 'at once,' being as we are without a clergyman, or (apparently) the means of supporting one, and with very feeble hopes of being able to erect a church, until some years at least shall have passed away."

"Energy and care on my part," answered the Bishop, "will, I hope, find the clergyman, and energy and self-denial on your part and on his, will, I have no doubt, provide the means to support him. As for the church, that is the least part of the difficulty."

"Why, yes," said Crampton musingly. "I think we could easily make temporary arrangements. Jackson and I have talked the matter over, and we have thought that some of the railway buildings could be arranged as a temporary church."

"No doubt, no doubt," said the Bishop, "and even if we could not succeed in obtaining the use of one of them, we could easily devise some other mode of meeting the difficulty. And now good morning, for I mean to-night to break the ice with Mr. Slowton."

The great press of the Clackington festivities were now over. Mrs. Brown's party had succeeded to admiration; and as the agreeable manners and conversational ability of the Bishop had manifestly done much towards making it "go off" well, that worthy lady was in a state of great amiability, especially as regarded her Chief Pastor, and turned a deaf ear to Mrs. Slowton's occasional croakings about the doubtfulness, after all, of the Bishop's orthodoxy. Those croakings, however, were now comparatively few and faint, and would probably have died away altogether under the general influence of the good prelate's presence, but for the harassing suspicion that there was an unexpressed idea in his mind about some alterations in existing arrangements of the Parish, a proceeding to which Mrs. Slowton was most bitterly opposed, and against which she had constantly excited her husband, ever since it had been broached by Mrs. Crampton.

As they were likely to have a quiet evening at the Parsonage, the Bishop proposed to Mr. Slowton that they should retire to the study; and as he was going to leave in the morning, there were several matters, he said, on which they had better take counsel together before they separated, since it would necessarily be a

considerable time before he could visit Clackington again.

Mrs. Slowton, who heard the proposition, looked more decidedly grim than she had done since the arrival of their Right Rev. guest; and even her husband, whose regard for his Diocesan was fast ripening into reverential affection, was sensible of some misgivings connected with the proposed *tele-a-tete*. There was, however, nothing to be done but to comply with the proposal, and consequently Mrs. Slowton (though sorely against the grain) ordered lights in the study, and a little fire, as the evenings were getting chilly.

The door was just closed, and the Bishop was in the act of drawing his chair, in a friendly familiar way, to the side of the fire, as if he meant to be cosy and comfortable, and to enjoy a good long talk, when a loud ring was heard, and Mr. Slowton was summoned to the hall. "A person wanted to see him for a moment."

Making his apologies to the Bishop, he left the room, and found some trifling household matter was the object of the person who called, and on expressing his surprise to Mrs. Slowton, who was standing at the dining-room door, at her allowing him to be interrupted about what was no concern of his, he soon saw by her face that she was the "person who wanted to see him for a moment."

"Now Mr. Slowton," said she, in a subdued but energetic way, motioning him into the room, "mind that you are firm—no division of the parish—no assistant minister—no interference—remember that you are rector—no namby-pambyism, but stand upon your rights like a man."

"All very fine talking," answered Mr. Slowton hurriedly, and making towards the study, "but it's a good deal easier said than done."

"There," said Mrs. Slowton, plumping herself down in a chair as her inferior half disappeared into the study, "I know just as well as if I was there that he will make a fool of himself, and allow that plausible Puseyite Bishop to talk him over. Oh dear! I only wish it was *me* he had to deal with—he'd soon find that he couldn't get to the soft side of me!"

And truly, as she sat with her tall spare angular figure bolt upright, and a look of vexation upon her hard sharp features, he would