

excommunicate the people of a whole province, because they had obeyed Parliament by paying a tax. While clamouring for liberty, they were intolerable despots; while pretending to be God's agents for the spiritual good of the people, they ground the people with an iron bondage which flesh and blood could not bear.

The clergy being grossly immoral as well as ignorant, and chief agents in encouraging superstition, delusion, and crime, what could be expected of the people but the darkest ignorance and grossest immorality? In other lands there were checks to Papal encroachments, obstacles to the march of that pestiferous influence by which Popery blights and kills wherever it travels; but hapless Ireland rose at once to the bad eminence which still maintains—head-quarters for the exhibition of what Popery is, and what Popery can do. Violence, insubordination, and profligacy have characterised Ireland ever since she embraced Popery, and what else could we expect from the immorality of its doctrines, the wickedness of its priests, and their promises of absolution to the most depraved?

THE GREAT APOSTACY, AS SEEN AND FELT IN IRELAND.

Ireland has long been, and unhappily is still, a field of melancholy interest for observing the character and fruit of the Great Apostacy. No doubt, in a country such as Spain, we might find worse specimens of tyranny, cruelty, degradation, than even in Ireland; but in Spain, Popery has the throne as well as the altar—laws civil as well as ecclesiastical under her feet; while, in Ireland, Popery spreads Egyptian darkness amid scriptural light; Popery enslaves in the very home of Protestant liberty; Popery persecutes, in defiance of British law; Popery bullies and befools British legislators, so that they not only sanction a system which the Duke of Wellington once said is inconsistent with good government in any country; but they contribute, from the public purse, to train the very men who—sworn to eternal enmity, not, like young Hannibal, against Rome, but against England; and who, with a wretched education, and class-books immoral and dangerous, go forth, with principles corrupted and hearts depraved, from a college where persecution and rebellion are part of the course—go forth, as agents of ill in hands of a foreign hostile power, to stimulate a besotted populace to deeds of rebellion and blood.

Formerly, in India, the British Government compelled soldiers to drink a daily allowance of distilled spirits, and hanged them for crimes to which that same distilled spirit drove them; now, the British Government give free education, board, and beer, and twenty pounds a year, to Popish paupers, for learning from Dens and Delahogues, how to debauch the minds, if not the persons, of females coming to confession, and how to train to seditious bitterness, or lawless violence, those who come under their influence; and when the system, patronised and paid by Government, has done its work, and issued in rebellion or murder, Government cannot hang the criminals, for the rebel has too powerful connexions, or the jury is afraid or indisposed to convict the murderer.

There have not been, it is true, any Ferdinand and Isabella in Ireland, to give a Torquemada power, as by the Inquisition in Spain, to burn in eighteen years, above ten thousand innocent people, and to sentence ninety-seven thousand more to confiscation, perpetual imprisonment, or infamy. No Cardinal Ximenes has been raised up in Ireland, as in Spain, to burn for heresy, in eleven years, above three thousand five hundred, and subject to severe punishment fifty thousand more. It may be, or it may not be, that the spirit still lives in any Irish Romanists which animated them in 1641, when, according to Clarendon, they murdered forty thousand Protestants in cold blood, unwarned and unarmed, besides all who fell afterwards in the general massacre; we require not to be told that their principles are fresh and strong as ever; that any deed is justifiable which is done for the good of the church; the bullet shot by the assassin, nerved and envenomed by his priest's curse, is aimed at the landlord and heretic in the same person; and the spirit which, over all the country, protects the murderer, and in the jury-box, saves him from the gallows, or at the gallows triumphs, over him as a martyr, is the very spirit which Popery has infused. That spirit has shown itself in a thousand ways in Ireland, in utter contempt and defiance of British law. What Protestant mission in Ireland cannot bear testimony to the persecution which converts from Romanism endure, and the base illegal means employed by Romish priests for preventing reformation? "In one district," says the Hon. Baptist Noel, "nine hundred Scripture readers are employed, and the greater number of them have been beaten or otherwise persecuted. Some have been savagely murdered, their only crime being their endeavour to guide others to the truth which they had found precious to themselves."

An official document, addressed to a late Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and afterwards published, states truly, that the whole of this dreadful and disgraceful state of things is attributable to the priests of the Roman Catholic church, from their altars. These priests glory in it, instead of denying it. The same number of a Ballina newspaper contains an account of the trial of the priests of Ballycastle, County Mayo, for cruelly beating a boy on his way to a scriptural school, and a letter from the priest of Ballina, defending his own conduct in having savagely beaten with a whip an aged female, for permitting her children to attend a scriptural school; and not only extolling the whip as an effectual means of keeping the peace, quoting in its support the example of our Lord, in driving the buyers and sellers out of the Temple with a whip of small cords.

A friend of mine appealed to a Romish prelate on account of a priest having broken into her demesne, and beaten the children of her school. The bishop's reply was this: "As these children, for clothes and stir-

about, are betraying the religion of their fathers, it is the duty of the priest to punish their parents in every legal way." Here, then, is the boundary which the Romish priest professes to set to his violence—"Every legal way,"—but is it a legal way to curse the enquiring layman by bell, book, and candlestick? A county Antrim jury said, "No!" when they returned a verdict of £70 damages against Priest Walsh, of the Glen, for cursing McGlaughlin. Was it in a legal way that a Romish priest at Mayo, with a Romish mob at his back, rode down a Protestant missionary, though a Romish jury, in defiance of evidence and the charge of a Roman Catholic barrister, found him "Not Guilty!" Is it lawful, either by the law of man or of God, for the Romish priests to execute his blinded people to deeds of deadliest violence against those whose only crime is activity for their good; and, according to the doctrines which Popery teaches, and the power which its priests assume, to do the priest's deadliest and worst to shut up in hell for ever those who would give their children opportunity for learning the sanctifying truth of God?

Ireland having now 2,361 of these priests, 138 convents, thirteen Roman Catholic colleges, with monks, nuns, Jesuits, teachers of Romanism numberless, it is surely a subject of solemn interest to inquire what effect their teaching and general influence have produced in a country which, from its situation, climate, soil, and people, should be one of the richest, purest, freest, and happiest in the world.

In 1841, one-half of the people of Ireland had dwelling-houses consisting of only a single room, and three-fourths of all the Irish houses were of mud. Two-thirds of the people subsisted on potatoes, one-third were out of employment, and one-eighth were in beggary. With such a large supply of teachers, we would expect the people to be well taught—but no; it is not long since there was not a single bookseller over six counties, and there was not one in seventy-four towns, having, on an average, 2,500; while in 1841, above one-half of the whole population could neither read nor write, and three-fourths of them were destitute of the simplest rudiments of learning. The grand deficiency, however, was want of training in the doctrines and precepts of God's Word, and the result is natural and fatal. While, in Great Britain, with three times the population of Ireland, there were, in 1850, 31,000 criminals for crime, there were 33,000 in Ireland. Three-fourths of all the crime of England is of the lightest kind, but not so, alas! in Ireland; for of 40,000 convictions, in 1848, nearly 3,000 were sentenced to transportation, and sixty to death. "Take up a map of the world," says a bishop of Limerick, "trace from pole to pole, and from hemisphere to hemisphere, and you will not meet so wretched a country as Ireland." And why, in a land fertile in resources, blessed with fertility, lying in the very sunshine of heaven's smile—why should its people be steeped in misery?—why should crime spring up daily, like hemlock in the furrows of the field?

One word—PRIEST—explains the mystery. Confession, baptism, marriage, death, the corn-field, the grave, the world beyond the grave, sickness in man, sickness in beast, all, all are taxed by him, in a spirit of heartless extortion, among the poorest of the poor; and for all that with voracious cupidity he takes, what does he give in return? Is it education? No. The education he gave was in the Irish hedge-school, from such books as "The Garden of Love," "Irish Rogues and Rapparees," "Moll Flanders," and "Freem the Robber." Is it morality or religion? Nothing of the kind, on the contrary, he confounds, in the minds of his poor blinded votaries, the distinctions between right and wrong; he subverts the fundamental principles of society; he propagates doctrines and practices which would dishonour paganism; and, after having set before them a ruinous example, and brought them, by his corrupting influence, perhaps to a felon's death, he encourages them, by the hope of absolution, to proclaim the lie of their innocence from the fatal drop; and, when his victims sleep in the solitary grave within the goal, wet by no woman's tears, he continues to drain the pockets of their friends for repose to the souls of those whom he has taught them to extol as martyrs.

CONVERSION OF THE REV. JAMES FORBES,

ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST IN GLASGOW.

The Rev. James Forbes, one of the most eminent and eloquent of the Roman Catholic priests of Glasgow, has, within the last few weeks, abandoned the errors of Popery, and transferred his services to the Edinburgh Irish Mission and Protestant Institute.

The committee, before making any formal engagements with him, thought it their duty to institute inquiries regarding his previous history; and they now state that nothing could be more satisfactory than the result. He was much admired and respected by all with whom he came in contact; and, with the exception of a liberality of sentiment for which he has all along been distinguished among the priests, and which has more than once been the subject of complaint by the more bigoted of his Church, his character is untouched by the breath of calumny.

His renunciation of Popery was the result of long-continued study and conscientious conviction—and, when he could no longer continue with a safe conscience in what he at length regarded as an apostate Church, he resolutely abandoned the comforts of his home, and gave up the emoluments and status, as well as the duties of his office. There was not one Protestant acquaintance whom he knew so well as that he could apply to him for assistance in the day of his necessity; and he knew that his Romish friends would close their hearts and their doors against him.