

—dear! And so he's a Papist after all, and going to turn out Mr. Slowton?'

'Very little doubt about it, my dear,' replied Mrs. Cryson; 'and you must not put too much reliance upon all his soft words, for you know Satan can transform himself into an angel of light.'

This was a settler for poor Miss Tibbins, and nothing more was to be said, although her kind heart was inwardly mourning over the deceitfulness of all human appearances, and over so sad a circumstance that so much goodness as the Bishop seemed to possess, should, after all, turn out to be nothing more than a cloak to conceal the abominations of Popery.

The result of the long conversation that followed, was that Miss Tibbins was worked up to the necessary point of alarm for the purity of the faith; and of indignation at the outrageous injustice about to be practiced upon Mr. Slowton, and placed her tongue at the service of the agitators.

Although by this time it was falling almost dark, Miss Tibbins donned her bonnet and spectacles and went out, notwithstanding her very rigid notions concerning the impropriety of late hours for unprotected females. She looked in upon Miss Snip the dressmaker, who gloried in not being 'bigotted,' and proved it by attending various places of dissenting worship almost as much as the Church, to which she nevertheless professed to belong. She told the liberal-minded seamstress a most lamentable and horrifying tale which almost threw her into fits, and by which Miss Tibbins managed very materially to increase her own alarm.

Having stuffed Miss Snip with the news until she was ready to explode, the worthy spinster thought that she would just say a word as she passed to Mr. Wiggins the grocer, whom she knew to be a staunch and liberal-minded Protestant, who had many customers and a ready tongue. From his shop she knew the dreadful tidings of poor Mr. Slowton's impending persecutions would spread like wildfire—with—although, honest soul, she never thought of that—with various additions and improvements.

In the meantime Mrs. Slowton was bringing her full influence to bear upon her husband, and not without effect. She put the Bishop's proceedings in every light that was likely to be wounding to Mr. Slowton's pride, and did her very best to make him regard himself as a

much injured individual. The maintenance of Gospel truth was evidently—according to her—dependent upon the individual and supreme control of the present authorities over the spiritual interests of the Clackingtonians; and now and then Mr. Slowton did feel as though it would be dereliction of duty if he willingly allowed any interference. Still the remembrance of the solemn, earnest, loving words of his Bishop came back upon him, and made him feel how base it was to impute hidden and designing motives to one whose whole mind was evidently given up to the great work of furthering the highest interests of the people committed to his charge, and at such moments the energetic remonstrances of his wife fell upon unwilling ears.

When, kneeling in the solitude of his study, he sought direction from God, his conscience spoke loudly of many duties neglected or indifferently performed, and of what he could not conceal from himself, the growth of the place, and the consequent need of increased ministrations. At that moment the miserable, petty, self-seeking nature of the agitation which Mrs. Slowton had told him was begun, stood out before his mind with such vividness that he almost vowed that he would, despite his wife's opposition, throw himself heartily into the Bishop's plans, and show that the proposed division of the parish was not merely the wish of his ecclesiastical superior, but the prompting of his own heart.

No sooner, however, had he gone to his bed-chamber than Mrs. Slowton broke out afresh, and as usual somewhat shook his better resolutions. The same process had to be gone through in the morning, and breakfast was hardly over before Mr. Sharpley and Mr. Cryson were announced.

'Good morning, good morning, my dear Sir,' said Mr. Sharpley in a sympathizing tone, taking Mr. Slowton's hand in both of his, and pressing it warmly, 'I am glad to see you bearing up so well. We are but too fully aware of the outrageous and unparalleled injustice which is about to be inflicted upon you; and we have come not merely to assure you of our sympathy, but to pledge ourselves to do everything legal and constitutional to defend your just rights, and to uphold you under the despotic rule to which you are subjected.'