

THE GREATEST OF GREAT CATHOLIC LAYMEN.

(Continued from September Number.)



THIS unique cohesion of hearts and minds, O'Connell accomplished by means as unique. Early in 1824, he proposed in the Catholic Association that all contributors of the trifle of one penny a month should be admitted as members of the Association. The motion was carried and the "Penny Rent" became a thing of History. But at first, the scheme met with a perfect deluge of scorn and ridicule from O'Connell's enemies and with the peculiarly damning force of extremely faint praise from his friends. O'Connell, however, proceeded calmly with the development of his plan. He appointed the priests organizers and "Rent"-collectors in their respective districts; while he arranged that each local organization, should be in direct communication with the central executive at Dublin. The Agitator's patience and energy were in due time rewarded. Slowly things moved at first. Then suddenly the land woke up to a new life of all-conquering vigor. As though by common impulse, the whole nation rushed to the collectors to pay "O'Connell's Pence." Every man, woman and child became fired with wild enthusiasm by the proud consciousness of giving personal assistance in furthering the grand old cause. Now the smile of faint praise was replaced by the firm, determined expression of fervent and zealous cooperation. Sneers gave place to fears, for again great England looked aghast as she viewed the operations of the most thoroughly national movement ever inaugurated by man. Of course, as we have seen, the Catholic Association was suppressed, but "O'Connell's Pence" only swelled to greater proportions and the New Catholic Association rose exulting in irresistible strength. Nor did the movement end here. The Irish exile in Canada and the United States, the Irish convict - convicted of fidelity to God and native