

'Then you haven't heard of this deep-laid plan?' sighed Mr. Cryson. 'Well! it's only another proof of a design that needs secrecy.'

Mr. Sharpley was beginning to feel and to look mortified that any one should be aware of anything of which *he* was ignorant; and Mr. Cryson felt that he must not carry his mysteriousness too far.

'In fact,' he continued, 'I should not have discovered it had not Mrs. Slowton come down and laid the whole plot open before me, and I immediately came to ask your advice as to our future proceedings.'

'Quite right,' observed Mr. Sharpley, evidently mollified by this tribute to his wisdom; 'nothing like legal advice in all difficulties. Ah—I see. Mr. Slowton—the Bishop—Puseyism. Eh? And he winked very knowingly as though he was already perfectly acquainted with all that Mr. Cryson had to communicate.'

'Exactly,' replied Mr. Cryson; 'you've hit the nail exactly on the head. There is good reason to think that the Bishop, with his taking manners, is nothing but a Jesuit, and that he is bent on destroying the Protestant faith in this place.'

'Hum,' said Mr. Sharpley sagaciously; 'and Mr. Slowton ——' And he paused.

'Precisely!' exclaimed Mr. Cryson; that is just what I was coming to. You see, of course, that Mr. Slowton, worthy man, is the great obstacle in the way of these plans—and so he is to be got rid of.'

Eh—what—got rid of? Why they are not going to poison him, I suppose; that's a hanging matter, you know.'

'Why, no; not exactly that; but they are going to cashier him—deprive him of his living and cast him adrift upon the world, after his long and faithful services.' And Mr. Jeremiah Cryson looked woeful.

'Ah!' exclaimed Mr. Sharpley, rising from his chair with a suddenness which reminded one of Jack-in-the-Box, and rubbing his hands with glee—'That *would* be famous—that would be capital. I declare I'd rather than ——'

'Why you surprise me, Sharpley,' interrupted Mr. Jeremiah, looking aghast—'famous'—'*capital*'—to have Mr. Slowton sent to the right about! Why I thought you were one of the staunchest friends of him and the Gospel.'

'So I am, my dear sir; so I am. But your

mind not having enjoyed the advantage of legal training is lacking, naturally enough, in that acuteness which enables the members of our profession to see further into millstones than other people. Now, don't you perceive,' he continued, patronizingly, 'that this would be a beautiful case to go to a jury with—long services of client—faithfulness to his principles—persecutions—Protestant martyr—civil and religious liberty—Constitution in danger—inquisition—popery—appeal to patriotism and protestantism of the jury—swinging damages for certain! O, glorious; I hope they'll turn him out!'

Poor Mr. Jeremiah looked unusually lugubrious at the turn which the conversation had taken. 'But I don't like law,' he observed, 'for you see ——'

'Don't like *law*?' echoed Mr. Sharpley; 'then what in the world is it you *do* like? Law is a noble science, and is the very ——'

'Well, well,' broke in Mr. Cryson, who feared that Mr. Sharpley was fairly off upon a stereotyped laudation of his profession; 'that is all very true, but law is always bothering about *evidence* for everything; and when we *know* quite well what these men's opinions and predilections are, it is no use being troubled about hunting up evidence. For my part, I think it would be far better to bring up the matter before a public meeting, and you could press all the points of which you have spoken with just as much effect without the annoyance of having every word and statement one may chance to make canvassed and taken to pieces in cross-examination.'

As this mode of proceeding did not interfere with the prospects of speech-making and importance on the part of Mr. Sharpley, and had many advantages which were too evident to be denied, it was resolved that they should, if possible, adopt it; and while we leave these worthies to lay the plan of the campaign, we will follow Mrs. Cryson and see how *she* sped upon her errand of mischief-making.

Bending her steps to a very precise and trim little cottage inhabited by Miss Tibbins, her servant and cat, she knocked, with the very bright brass knocker, a decidedly important knock; whereupon the handmaiden of Miss Tibbins made her appearance. She bore a strong family likeness to the cottage itself, not in features exactly, nor in size, but in her precision of dress, manner, and general bearing.