

ly enough beloved by all. They are respected by the old, and consulted by the young children kneel down before them and beg their blessing. The monks, many of whom are not priests—the monks so much abused because so little known by Protestants, are venerated by all who can see any charm in virtue. I beg to offer you a proof of this, which I take, almost at random, from a recent work of travels, Mrs. Romers' "Tombs and Temples of Palestine." "A considerable proportion of the population of Nazareth are christians, and the respectful attention evinced by them for the Franciscan monks, speaks volumes in favor of these latter. Wherever they appear in the streets with us, men, women and children run to kiss their hands, and the good Fathers seem to have something kind and encouraging to say to all."

Mrs. Romers justly thinks that the love and affection so touchingly evinced by the people of Nazareth for the Franciscan monks, is a proof of the worth of those men. On the same principles I maintain that the respect in which everywhere the Catholic clergy are held, where they are known, absolves them from the unfounded charges, or rather surmises, of those who know them not. In Ireland, in Italy, in other Catholic countries, the priests are numerous; were they vicious men—were they the seducers of the pure, or the disturbers of the peaceful, how long could their crimes be concealed,—how long could they deceive the community at large?—and when once unmasked—with all their alleged turpitudes exposed—held up to public execration, how long would they retain the popular favor? If priests were the corrupters of maidens and the disturbers of the peace of men, who would kiss their hand, who would beg their blessing? No, no; if there be sin, and scandal, and breaches of peace in the world, these are not to be laid to the account of the Catholic priests. They do what they can, and they do much to prevent those evils which flow from our bad passions, and which will exist more or less in the world while it is peopled by the fallen children of Adam.

At this stage of our lengthened journey, will you allow me to stop and examine whether or not the married ministers of your churches have ever been accused of the very crimes to which you say the priests are so liable? Did you ever hear of the peace and domestic comfort of some Protestant families being endangered by Protestant ministers? These gentlemen, sometimes, after courting young ladies, and even after making to them a promise of marriage, have been known, when their prospects begin to brighten, to forsake their earlier friends and look out for others richer or handsomer. In cases of this kind—and our law courts show that they are not few—there must have been many a family robbed of its peace and its honor too. Let me ask you again, do you really think that the many, and I fear, endless religious quarrels that so often take place here, improve morality, or teach families to live in peace and harmony? Did, for instance, the late Disruption, (what an ugly word in connexion with religious reform!) cause no dissensions among friends, no heart-burnings, no lasting enmities? Do the Free Kirk ministers show much love or fraternal charity towards their former parishoners, and their not long ago, "dear reverend brethren?" Next to the Pope, the scarlet lady, and satan himself, do they not hold all that remained without the walls of "our Scottish Zion," in utter abomination? Now can these and other such things, inseparable from Protestantism and a married clergy be considered very conducive to domestic peace

and purity? A proof, clear and decisive, of the utter insufficiency of such a priesthood to maintain peace and purity, may be had in the kingdom of Prussia. There, in one year (1837) there were laid before the civil courts 3,888 applications for divorce, and of these 2,191 were granted—a greater number by far, than in the entire of Catholic Christendom is sued for and obtained in the course of half a century. Now, certainly these numerous cases of separation between man and wife do not argue much in favour of the domestic peace and purity of Protestant families, with whom Catholic priests have no connexion.—You saw no parallel to this among the Catholic people of the Continent: you heard some evil rumours, but few in number, and even these, as you candidly admit, were not satisfactorily proved against the evil influence of priests over families. Yet in France, and indeed in other places, the churchmen have many enemies,—the unbelieving and the profane, who if possible, would lay bare their foibles.

From all this I think I may conclude—that Clerical Celibacy either considered by itself, or in connection with the Confessional, is attended with no inconvenience to the community, no particular discomfort to the clergy themselves; and that, while it tends to enable them to discharge adequately, as far as men can adequately discharge, their sacred and sublime duties, it is highly conducive to the best interests of religion and morality. Having now solved all your objections to the subject under consideration I would wish—and perhaps I ought to stop here—yet I beg you will indulge me yet a little, as I would fain throw out a few hints illustrative of the subject on which I have the honor of addressing you.

As a humane man and a lover of your species, you think it a hardship for the Catholic clergy from what your ministers, no doubt, tell you is to them a source of much gratification; and in your zeal for our comforts, and the welfare of our Church, you express a most sanguine hope that you will live to see her reform this, in your opinion, harshest of her laws. I sincerely thank you for your kind, good wishes, so feelingly and so properly expressed. You flatter yourself that the desired reform may not be far distant, and that you may even live to see it.—You may indeed live to see (and I wish you a long life) many changes in the discipline of the Catholic Church. Such changes are made in it as time require; but I may safely venture to say, that if you live to witness the abolition of clerical celibacy in the Catholic communion, you will reach a venerable old age; you will see all your contemporaries laid in the grave; you will outlive the British Empire, and the Kirk of Scotland, and the yet infant Free Kirk, and a hundred other kirks yet unborn; nay, what is more, you will not be gathered to your fathers until your years have surpassed in number those of Methuselah himself.

But, Sir, seriously speaking, I see no harshness in the laws relative to Celibacy. The Church, indeed, requires her ministers to lead a single life; but she compels no one to enter into her service. Those who offer themselves as candidates for her honors she trims up from childhood, in innocence and virtue, and learning. She leaves them free at the end of their lengthened term of study and trial, to remain with her, or engage in secular pursuits. She does not accept all who offer themselves for the service of her altars. She is even sometimes considered fastidious in her choice, and she binds no one by irrevocable vows, until he has reached that age when men are supposed