

et; was in a great measure abandoned. While these things were going on, the young chief Powell was taken sick, and all the remedies used for his recovery proved unavailing. The last rays of the setting sun were gilding the tops of the western hills, and the shades of an autumnal evening had begun to cover the earth, when Powell, perceiving that his end was near, desired to be raised up in bed. "O, Lord of hosts," said the expiring chieftain, "save us from among the heathen! deliver our souls from death, and finally bring us to thy everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" when he had thus spoken, he fell back upon the bed and it was evident his sun had gone down for ever. The body of Powell was committed to the ground in the hopes of a glorious resurrection, and though dead, his holy life, and conversation, yet live in the memory of his friends. This, among many other instances, shows what good effects may be produced by enlightening the minds of the heathen.

The intelligence that a faithful Bishop of the church has lately gone out on a tour among the western Indians must be gratifying to every friend of religion; it should be the endeavour of all, as far as in them lies to assist in this noble undertaking, and to send forth missionaries among the red men of the forest? to hasten forward that glorious period when "all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and his Christ," and "when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea. We trust that when that great multitude whom no man can number," shall sing the song of "Moses and the lamb," thousands of the red men of the forest will join in the song of the Archangel, and shine like stars, for ever and ever, in the crown of their blessed Redeemer.

RELIGIOUS MISCELLANY.

THE VESTRY MEETING.*

In the outskirts of his parish there was a wild and beautiful valley, called Ashdale, formerly inhabited by a few cottagers, who watched their sheep as they browsed on the adjoining hills, or kept a few cows on the narrow slips of meadow land. A clear mountain stream dashed over the layers of rock in a succession of small cascades; and, where it ran more smoothly, the glassy surface was broke in many a circle by the rising of the trout and grayling.—Here Herbert, when a boy, used to wander with his angle rod or his pencil; and often the whole family would pass a summer's holiday amidst the lovely scenery, and spread their repast under the shade of the enormous ash tree from which the valley took its name.

But, alas! a sad change,—sad, at least, in the eyes of the lovers of the picturesque,—had come over that happy valley. A rich capitalist, with "speculation in his eyes," had marked its capabilities for improvement. He had purchased, at a low rate, half a mile or more of the stream and land adjoining, and had built a large factory just at the edge of the most beautiful cascade. The speculation prospered, and led to the erection of another factory lower down the stream. The water-power was soon found insufficient for the growing establishment and steam-engines were erected to supply the deficiency, which overpread the valley with dense volumes of black smoke. Workmen, with their families, were brought from the adjoining districts, and rows of brick cottages were built for their accommodation. In short, a population sprang up scarcely less in amount than that of the village of Welbourne; and this at the distance of three miles from the parish church, which was rarely attended even by a few stragglers from the valley.

One of the first objects of Mr. Herbert, when he became incumbent of the parish of Welbourne, was to endeavour to provide a church for this distant ham-

* From the Rev. W. Gresley's Portrait of an English Churchman.

let.—Accordingly he headed a subscription with a handsome donation of a hundred pounds. Rodey wrote down fifty for himself, and a hundred more for his brother, who was abroad. The subscription list was then circulated in the neighbourhood; some received it coolly, others contributed moderately; those who lived near the parish church thought that the people of Ashdale ought to build a church for themselves; those who were not parishioners thought it no concern of theirs. However, some subscribed their guineas, some their five guineas, and some their ten and thought they had done wonders. After a considerable delay, and large additional sums from his own pocket, and a grant from the Church Building Society, Herbert found himself at last in a condition to commence building, and the foundation-stone was laid of a small but neat church, which still remained to be endowed; and the endowment was only to be obtained by a considerable sacrifice from his own tithes. It was anything but reasonable, but Herbert cheerfully gave it.

Meanwhile the population of Ashdale increased.—Beer-shops, gin-shops, with their accompaniments of spouting clubs, unions, and all the other symptoms of a demoralized and disaffected population, rapidly sprang up. Religion there was little or none, for religion seldom exists without the outward ordinances. The new church, instead of being hailed as a boon, was rather disapproved of as an intrusion. They could do very well, they thought, without it. In short, the delay in building, unavoidable as it was, had been productive of the worst results.

When Herbert entered the vestry on the Sunday after his return from town, he found the churchwarden already there, who welcomed him with a cordial shake of the hand, but a very grave face. The cause of his gravity was soon explained. The time had arrived (he said) when it was necessary to give notice for a vestry meeting, in order to levy a church-rate, but he had just learned that it was the intention of the Ashdale people to come in a body to oppose it. The fact was, they had received circulars from some of the London Radicals to get up an opposition,—at any rate to make an agitation; and they had had amongst them some Radical orators, to enlighten their minds on the subject.

Herbert was much annoyed at this intelligence, on account of the ill-will which it was likely to breed in his parish. It was a very unpleasant business,—the most unpleasant which had occurred since he had been rector. What, indeed, could be more galling to a Christian minister than to see strife brought into his hitherto peaceful parish? what could be more cruel and uncharitable than the conduct of those by whom it was fomented? However, after much consideration, and prayer to God to aid his judgment, he resolved that it was his duty to do his utmost to rouse the energy of his friends and meet the opposition with as great force as possible, so as to crush at once the schemes of the malcontents. Accordingly, no sooner had he risen on Monday morning, than he proceeded to consult with the churchwardens, in order to arrange his plans, so that all might be strictly legal; and afterwards he went round personally to all the principal farmers and shopkeepers, and other residents in the parish. His opponents, he feared, would have an advantage over him, inasmuch as men are not disposed to vote money out of their own pockets if they can avoid it. However, he trusted to their good feeling, and was not disappointed. Scarcely was there one amongst the members of his congregation who did not readily promise to attend at the vestry, and give his vote for the Church. Herbert was much cheered by the heartiness of their zeal, and felt that he had done them injustice in doubting their attachment for a moment. He was particularly gratified by the observations of one of the principal farmers, who called on him the day before the meeting, and placed the affair exactly on the right footing.—"We are sorry," said he, "to see you so much put about by this unpleasant business; but you may depend upon it, sir, we'll stand by you. There is not one that I have seen, but says he will do anything to serve you. However, I have told them all, and I am sure you would tell them so too, that that is not the reason why we ought to vote for the rate, but because

it is our duty to God and our neighbour to stand up for the Church."

Most unusual was the scene which the hitherto peaceful village of Welbourne presented on the morning of the meeting. The farmers were seen coming in from all parts, on foot or on horseback, and though it was a busy time, they one and all declared, with honest English feeling, that they would lose the whole day sooner than not support the Church. The village doctor had already visited his patients, the shopkeeper left his business in the care of his wife; and the squire put off his shooting party, that he might not be absent. All felt that the support of the Church was a more important business than profit or pleasure.

The village clock had struck the hour of twelve, and the friends of the Church, already assembled, were rather surprised that their opponents had not made their appearance, and began to think they had given up their intention of opposing the rate. However, their hopes were soon dispelled when they heard a loud shouting, and saw the malcontents walking in a body three and three abreast straight up the middle of the village, followed by a crowd of boys from the factory, and carrying a flag, borrowed from an adjoining borough, bearing inscribed on it in large letters "Civil and religious liberty."

The Radicals came up at a brisk pace, but were evidently somewhat disconcerted at the respectability, and still more, at the numbers, of the opposite party. They expected that they should have had to contend with little more than the usual number of attendants at the vestry meetings, and that they should carry their point by a *coup de main*. It never occurred to these liberal-minded individuals that a whole parish would meet together, to vote that they might be taxed.

It was out of the question that so large a body, or a tenth part of it, should get into the vestry; so there was no alternative but to make use of the body of the church, much to Herbert's regret, who grieved to see the holy place made the scene of ungodly contention.

Unwilling to set an example of speechifying, Herbert opened the proceedings by simply reading the notice which had called them together, and requesting the churchwardens to give in their estimate, and state the amount of rate which it would be requisite to levy.

The churchwarden accordingly read to the meeting the calculated expense for the current year, and briefly added that it had been made out with all possible regard to economy. If any gentleman present suspected there was any jobbing or illegal charge, he should be happy to give an explanation. It was true that in former years when the parish was unanimous, certain charges had been inserted in the church-rates, by common consent, which were not strictly legal,—such as for the moles, hedgehogs,* and organist. In justice to the manufacturing interest, the former charges would in future be defrayed by the farmers solely, and the latter by the congregation who occupied pews in the church. The estimate which he now had the honour of presenting to the vestry was confined strictly to the necessary repairs of the fabric, and the decent maintenance of public worship.

This speech, of course, gave little satisfaction to the malcontents. A call was made for Mr. Stubbs. This gentleman was the principal shopkeeper who supplied the Ashdale population with the necessaries and luxuries of life,—as bread, butter, cheese, tea, tobacco, and snuff;—and having, unfortunately for himself, a gift of talking, he was put forward as the spokesman on the occasion.—One cause also of his selection for this honour was, that he professed to be a member of the Church, and on the score of lounging into his pew about once a month when the service was half over, considered himself an excellent Churchman.

I cannot but here remark of how little use it is for clergymen to go out of their way to conciliate these

* In country parishes it is, or rather was, not uncommon to find such items in the church-rates as "mole-catcher's salary," "paid for hedgehogs."