

and I came to the conclusion that the present position of the Irish people at home calls more loudly than ever for our prompt assistance. Thank God, we do not know what famine is here; but we do know what flood is. Add our own floods to that of Irish famine—to starvation from hunger and starvation from cold, wet and exposure, and you have a picture of the present distress. Add what you know yourselves to what I have described, and you will then be able, in part at least, to grasp the necessities, the crying wants of the present case. Your worship, ladies and gentlemen, let not a great peasantry perish; no one can replace them; or, in the sweet words of one of Ireland's sweetest poets:—

“ Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay;
Princes and lords may flourish or may fade,
A breath can make them, as a breath has made,
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied.”

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

ONCE, not many years ago, two officers of the army were travelling through the beautiful valley of the Colville River among the Spokans and Cour D'Alenes, some two days journey from the mission of St. Ignatius.

One of these officers was a Protestant and a Mason, the other a Catholic.

The ties of a common profession and service had long since, spite the diversity of faith, made them friends, and often the Protestant had dwelt upon the beauties of masonry, the great social power of the order, and the usefulness of being able in any moment of danger to call, by an unseen sign, a friend to your aid.

One day, after travelling till nearly the day's journey was completed, it was discovered by the Protestant officer that he had left his coat behind at the house at which they stopped the night before, and his loss annoyed him greatly.

Particularly did he inveigh against the wild and uncivilized country through which they were passing, where no man could understand English, and by whom a message could be sent back for the lost garment.

At this junction our Catholic friend

remarked that any Indian we might meet could do, as they were mostly Christians. But, though the Mason laid but little stress upon their Christianity, his puzzle was how to know the Christian from the pagan.

To this the Catholic replied, that if the Mason had a grip and pass-word so did he, the Catholic, have an infallible sign by which, even in this wild land, he could detect the Christian, and in time, he would take upon himself the task of recovering the coat.

In a short time there came to the stream where the party were resting three or four mounted Indians, who, with the stolidity of their character, surveyed them without emotion.

Our Catholic friend, at length, in a loud tone, called one of the Indians to him, who approached slowly and with evident reluctance. Asking his friend to watch the countenance of the Indian, the Catholic made the sign of the cross upon his forehead and breast. At once the impassibility of the Indian vanished and, with a cry of surprise to his companions, he advanced rapidly, signing himself also with the sign of the crucified One.

Extending his hand, he assumed a seat by the side of his friends, and then, opening his buckskin shirt, exposed the scapular and miraculous medal he wore. Our Catholic did the same, and, without knowing a word of each other's language these two Catholics were able, by signs and the universal brotherhood of the Church, to know and feel each other friends.

To write a note to the man at whose house the travellers had stopped the night before was short work. To explain by signs what was wanted was not so easy, but finally the Indian understood and accepted the errand.

It was then past noon, the distance thirty miles, yet this Catholic Indian reached again the party before setting out the next morning, and with the coat.

This incident, trifling as it is, is the index of all such meetings in these Western wilds, wherever a Catholic may be travelling. If he desires to find a friend even among those who are not converted the sign of the cross is the surest passport.