

priests, who had the people completely in their power. Pointing to his little punt, made fast to our gangway, with the words "Mission Boat" prominently painted on her bows, he said he had infinite trouble to secure a boy to row him from ship to ship in the prosecution of his work. The boy he had then was, of course, a Romanist, and he remained with him because he had quietly resigned himself to the perdition his priest had prophesied for being in the service of a heretic.

My missionary friend had given his boy a Bible, requesting him to read it. Soon the Bible disappeared. The following conversation occurs:—

"Where is your Bible, Guiseppe?"

No answer.

"Where is your Bible?"

"In the fire, sir."

"You haven't burnt it?"

"Yes, I have, sir."

"Why were you so wicked?"

"The priest came to the house and made me. He said it was a bad book."

"Do you think it was a bad book?"

"Yes."

"Well," said the missionary, "you see me every day reading that book to others, and teaching what it teaches; what do you think will become of me?"

"You'll go to hell, sir," was the ready answer.

"But what will become of you? You row me about that I may read and teach."

"I'll go to hell too, sir."

I needed no further proof that the people in this British Dependency were priest ridden than the sounds and scenes of revelry on the eastern shore of Valetta Harbour on that Sabbath afternoon. Racing in sacks, climbing greased poles, grotesque nummeries, were part of the observance of a Maltese Sabbath. And all this arranged and patronized by the priests themselves!—and under the British flag!

SOME PROMINENT MEMBERS OF THE BORE FAMILY.

One of the best human things in this wicked world is a bright, lively, vigorous conversation, well spiced with wit, well seasoned with good sense, well lighted up with good anecdotes and allusions, with lots of places where a good laugh comes kindly in. The best doctor in the country can't make a tonic that goes to the roots of the human constitution as fast as a good laugh. Solomon said a good many years ago that a merry heart does good like a medicine. If Solomon had ever taken some of our modern patent medicines, he would have added, And much more good than *some* medicines. Happy is the man, and thrice happy the minister, who knows just where he can strike up in a few minutes a lively, spicy, inter-

esting conversation, interspersed with occasional side splitters. Most of the old ministers were good laughers. We can think of one now who used to laugh so loud that he sometimes woke up the baby, if there was one in the house. He was a grand man. He would have gone to the stake or the battle field for principle, with as little hesitation as he used to light up his long pipe. He was a gentleman, a scholar, a Christian and a *man*, not a dude. When the family gathered around a fireplace that we remember well, and he formed one of the circle, you might always look out for something good and spicy; it always came. We can hear him tell some stories about Aberdeen now, and we distinctly remember that, however they began, they always ended with a good moral. That man was worth more to his country and his Church than a thousand clerical dudes. He has gone up higher. Would that his class had more successors!

Good conversation being such a good and pleasant thing, it is not wonderful that a class of people, very properly called Bores, inflict themselves on society, and add immensely to the troubles of this life. The Bore family are numerous, and may be divided roughly in this way:

There is first the *political* bore. He abounds this winter. He has been to the eyes in clover since last fall. The successful candidate is rarely a bore. He has been bored so much himself that he is thankful when people say nothing about his election. The unsuccessful candidate, you may be certain, is quite willing to talk on some other topic. The bore is a sort of middleman, who burns to tell you of the meetings he organized, the speeches he made, the electors he turned, the sharp tricks he played, and all that sort of thing. To put the matter plainly—but yet in language so exquisitely exact that it cannot offend anybody but one who hates a truthful description of wrong far more than he hates the wrong described—the election bore is often a conceited campaign liar.

And here is the *ecclesiastical* bore. He always has a full budget of gossip about all the congregations and ministers within a radius of fifty miles or so. He sits down, coolly opens his budget, and hopes you are going to sit quietly until he pours its contents into one or both your ears. If you have any sense or any regard for your ears, you will use them for another purpose. One-half the budget is, perhaps, untrue. The other half grossly distorted truth, and the whole contemptibly small and gossipy. The sickening thing about the ecclesiastical bore is that he calls his gossip *religious conversation*. Oh!

And here comes the *clerical* bore. Sometimes he tortures you with an account of his alleged triumphs at college; sometimes with the number of his calls; sometimes with grossly exaggerated accounts of the marvellous effects produced by his sermons and speeches; but more frequently with a detailed