

for penances, pilgrimages, and burdensome exactions.

The doctrines of the Reformation, and their influence in the formation of Christian character, will be considered in a future number. C.

Difficulties of Ireland.

Our difficulties are very many, and none of the least of them is the hold which Popery has on the native Irish heart. It is the religion of a father and grandfather, and of a fond mother, who taught the infant lip to lisp its prayers in the native Irish tongue; and how can it be forsaken? Must wife, and sister, and child, be all left for the religion of the heretic stranger?

Let a convert Romish boy himself tell what ties a convert bursts when he deserts the religion of his father:

"Oh, pity (says he) the state of a poor Irish youth. Whose heart has been touched with a love of the truth;

By father and mother renounced and forgot,
Should he dare to be that which the priest bids him not.

The eyes will look cold that smiled on him before:
And the hearts that once loved him will love him no more,

Should he open the Book that to sinners was given,
And try to make out the right way to heaven."

Independent of prejudice, of superstition, of early associations, of all the lessons and recollections of childhood, think of the mental courage required to set at defiance the opinion of a whole Romish neighbourhood, to brave the fury of priest and people, and be everywhere the unsheltered, unpitied object of abuse and ridicule, and contempt and violence.

"I would go up to my neck in the sea to serve the gentleman," said a poor Romanist, who had given evidence respecting a priest cursing from the altar: "I would do anything short of my life; but it would be better for me to be dead a thousand times than have my name brought in question about this business. Five hundred could tell you the same story; but what could a man do standing alone? For God's sake," he cried, "don't expose me!"

Who does not know that the relations of every Romish convert consider him a disgrace to his family and his name? "Was it for this," cried a convert's mother, "that I reared him, that early and late I laboured; and, when all the world slept, I waked, and thought no hardship hard if out of it I could bring decent bread for him, my darling and my pride, and the pride of his poor father, that left him because he could not bear to see him want? O happy father! whose head lies low in a land far away beyond the sea! and woe to the mother left behind, that lives to see this bitter, bitter day!"

In the native Irish graveyard, the latest buried coffin is put under the others; and need we be surprised that the poor, superstitious Romanist should fear, lest the heavy, damning weight of heretic bones should, at the resurrection, weigh the others down?

At the burial of a convert, his sister hastily gathered, in her apron, their parents' bones, and buried them in another part of the churchyard, lest they should be polluted by the cursed remains of an impenitent heretic.

It is indeed a heavy day to a Romish family when one of its members becomes a convert to Protestantism, and heavier by far when that convert dies in the faith of "the stranger."

At the funeral of a convert, who had died of hardship endured in shipwreck, his sisters created great disturbance, by their desperate efforts to have him buried as a Romanist; and some idea may be formed of the excitement raised among the Romish crowd, when one sister sang, to the wild Irish cry—

"Oh, would that thy grave were made under the
billow,
And would that the wild shark himself were thy
pillow,
Than thus on the bed in thy senses to lie,
And our Church and her priesthood so boldly defy."

And the second sister, taking up the plaintive wail, sang—