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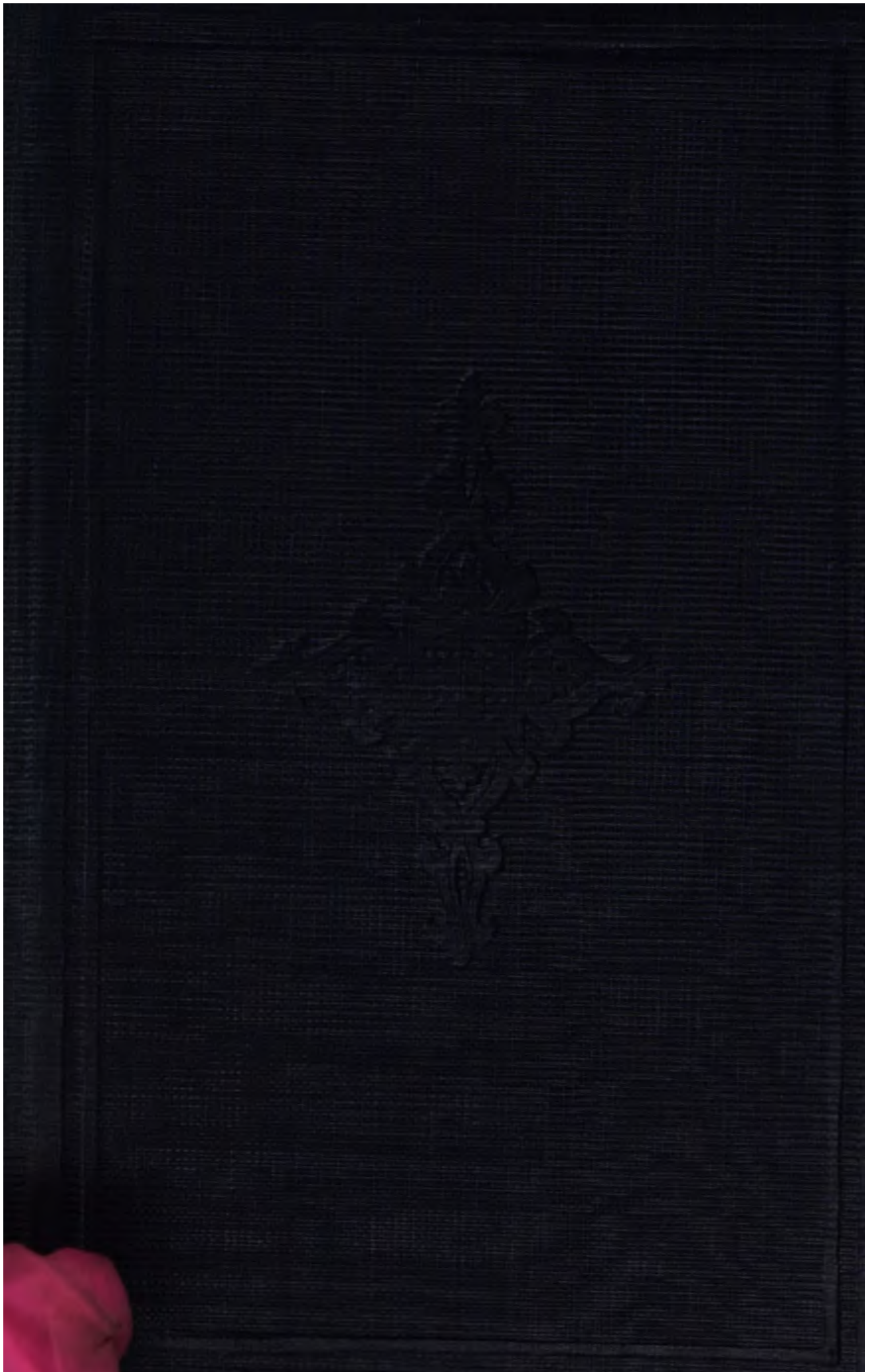
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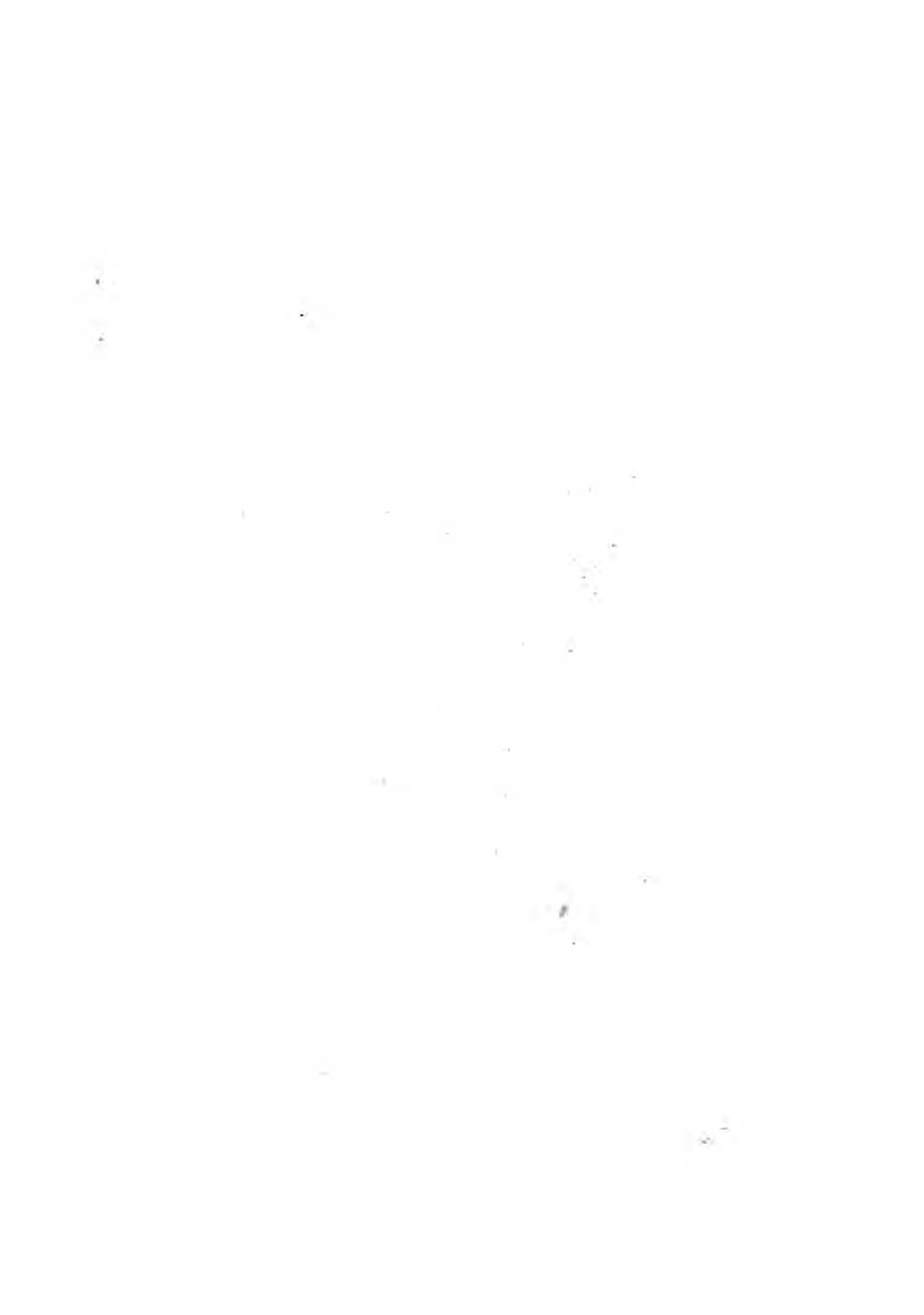


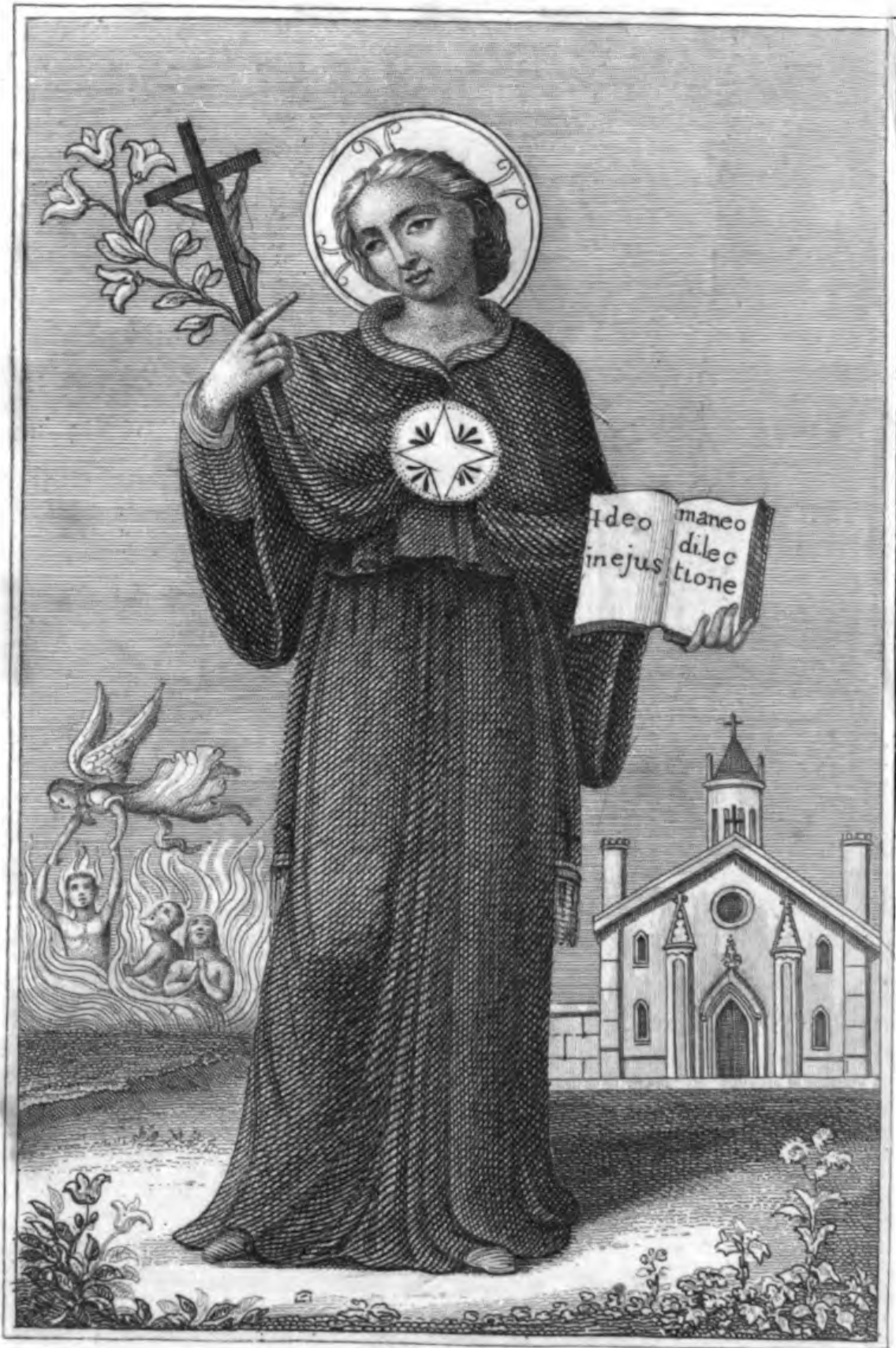


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FATHER ROWLAND;

OR, THE

Force of Truth :

A

CATHOLIC TALE OF NORTH AMERICA

EDITED AND ENLARGED

BY A CATHOLIC BISHOP.

“This is the Holy Church, the One Church, the True Church, the Catholic Church, which combats all heresies. She may fight, but she cannot be overcome. All heresies have gone out from her, like useless branches lopped off from the vine, but she remains in her root, in her vine, in her charity. The gates of hell shall not overcome her.”

S. AUGUST. *Sermo. de Symbol. ad Catechumenos.*

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PREFACE.

THE tale upon which the following history is founded, was originally published in America. Its great merits, and the fact, that the principal characters depicted in it, were well known to have lived during the war of independence, rendered it generally popular. The editor of the present volume considered that some judicious changes might be made in the plot, which would render it more interesting, and that additions might be made to various parts of the work, which would more fully exhibit the real nature of Catholic doctrines. He has, therefore, taken great liberties with the original, both by addition and otherwise, in the hope that it would more effectually promote the cause of our holy religion in these countries, where, notwithstanding all the pains that have been taken to the contrary, it is so grievously misrepresented.

Dublin, February 1, 1837.

FATHER ROWLAND.

CHAPTER I.

“By education most have been misled.”—DRYDEN.

ON one of those beautiful evenings of autumn, for which the northern parts of America are distinguished, after the company had retired from a dinner, given in commemoration of his birth-day, by General Wolburn, Mrs. Wolburn had seated herself in a spacious portico, that overlooked the waters of the Potomac, and was watching the rising of the moon. The sun had sunk behind the brown tops of the mountains, the bosom of the river was still reflecting in its rays, the verge of the firmament was streaked with a variety of hues, and the twilight began to assume its peaceful reign. Her two daughters, Louisa and Virginia, were pacing up and down the lawn, engaged in a serious conversation.

The General had ordered his horse, the same on which he rode to the field of battle, during the revolutionary war, and which he was accustomed, in his merry moods to call “John Bull,” probably from the circumstance of his having figured so nobly, charging against the English cavalry on the plains of Trenton. The old gentleman was accustomed every evening, to ride on “Bull,” with his trusty servant Moses, around the limits of his farm : and often would he amuse himself in conversing with his “good man,” as he styled

Moses, about politics, and the times, not forgetting to joke with him occasionally on the subject of religion; for Moses, the reader must know, was a Roman Catholic, and seldom suffered a night to pass without reciting his beads, and praying for his "master."

"Well, Mosey," said the General, as he checked in the reins of Bull, "you don't forget your master at your prayers, I hope."

"God knows, massa, I don't," replied Moses.

"Old men can't hope to live long, you know."

"Yes, massa, we's all gwyng fast—"

"Whither?" returned the General.

"To eternity," answered Moses, as he cast up his eyes, and pointed, with a rude emphasis, to heaven.

"Mrs. Wolburn, you know, is half a Catholic, and frequently says she has reason to think—"

Here, as they ascended a rising ground, the view of the river burst upon their eyes: and the moon in full bulk, appeared like a globe of solid fire, pausing in solemn silence, over the half-conscious waves.

"What a magnificent prospect!" exclaimed the General.

"If dat's so grand, how much grander the Creator, massa," returned Moses.

"True," said the General, "but men are too apt to familiarize themselves with the wonders and beauties of creation, and to forget their author."

"Ah, massa, if you had hearde Fader Rowland, de great preacher, talk about dat, last Sunday, at de Chapel, you know.—He made us all cry. Misses was dere, she kin tell you all about it."

"I'll be bound for Susan," (this was the name of Mrs. Wolburn,) "did she kneel with the rest of you?"

“Dat she did, and cried with the rest, too,” replied Moses.

“I know now what has made her so pensive all day—”

“Miss Louisa was dere wid misses,” continued Moses.

“Poor Lou,” returned the General, she has too much sensibility! Virginia is less susceptible.

“Where was Virginia, Moses?”

“You know, massa, Miss Virginy won’t go to our church: tother day, she called me a hard name, and said I made Gods outen pictures—”

“Well is’nt it true,” replied the General with a smile, and a significant glance.

“Oh, massa, dere’s God,” said Moses, pointing to the firmament—“up dere.”

“Did you explain the thing to Virginia?”

“Me massa, Miss Virginy won’t listen to Mosey, and won’t go to hear Fader Rowland.”

“Rowland is no favourite of her’s, my good man,” replied the General.

“No, massa, young misses talk too much about Dr. Dorson—you know what he calls us.”

“Idolaters, I suppose.”

“Papists, massa, besides,” replied Moses with a strong emphasis.

By this time they reached the gate, which opened into a delightful avenue, winding with a gentle sweep through a cluster of oaks and elms, his hereditary trees. With the activity of a young man, Moses unlatched the neatly painted gate, and the General rode through. Bull seemed conscious that he was approaching to his stable; he pricked his ears, now almost grey with age, and neighed, and hastened his pace. In a short time they reached the portico, and the General dismounted.

“Well, papa,” exclaimed Louisa, running to her father, “you have returned from a pleasant

excursion I hope. What a lovely evening, how balmy the air!"

"Is it not like declining age, the twilight of a virtuous and useful life?" said Virginia.

"By the by, my dear," said the General, looking affectionately on Louisa, "I hear that you had a sentimental sermon on Sunday last, and that you behaved so like a Catholic, that you might have been mistaken for one." Virginia evinced an expression of marked displeasure at the conduct of Louisa.

"Yes, papa," she said, "I know not what infatuation has seized on Louisa, nothing now will go down with her but Father Rowland. I should not be surprised to hear that she has been to confession."

"To confession!" exclaimed the General.

"You know the meaning of that word Louisa," said Virginia.

"I am not yet sufficiently instructed, my dear sister," returned Louisa, with an air of diffidence, which her father could not help noticing.

"Confess your sins to God, my child," said the General.

"But, papa, what if I am commanded by the founder of the church to confess them to *man*?"

"Where was such command ever given, Louisa?" asked Virginia.

"Did I not read you, this very morning, a passage from the bible, shewing, that power had been given to the apostles to forgive sins?"

"Ah, my dear, you do well to read as much of the bible as you can before you turn Catholic, for then, it will be closed for ever."

"Strange prejudice! no later than last week, I found Mrs. Herbert, (you surely never doubted *her* orthodoxy,) busily engaged in reading her bible."

"Yes, but well stocked with Romish notes," returned Virginia, somewhat piqued.

"I am fond of commentaries," replied Louisa: "for my dear Virginia, neither you nor I should attempt to interpret, as we please, so sacred a book, which was written so many ages ago, in a language we know nothing about."

"Have we not excellent translations, Louisa?"

"True, but they differ, and I am at a loss to know which is the genuine one. I was amused, in reading Dryden's *Hind and Panther*, to find a line which is true to life: speaking of the private interpretations of individuals, he says:

"The text inspires not them, but they the text inspire."

The dispute now began to grow noisy; the General, apparently with displeasure, left the girls on the portico, and retired into the hall.—Mrs. Wolburn, who overheard the controversy, came from her chamber, whither she had withdrawn to perform some devotional exercises, which she never omitted, except in cases of company.

"You have become quite polemical my dears," she said; "it were better to drop the argument since you cannot agree, and to-morrow, if Wolburn has no objection, we will invite Father Rowland to dine with us, and we will pray him to explain the matter."

"If Rowland dines at Wolburn-hall to-morrow, mamma, I beg leave to spend the day at Colonel Bramswell's," said Virginia.

"You seem afraid to investigate the matter, my dear," said Mrs. Wolburn. "Do, my child, converse with the good priest."

"Why, mamma, it would appear, that you are giving up good Dr. Dorson, and the old English church."

"I know not, my dear, what I might do, were I convinced that I am in error."

"What do you mean by *error*?" returned Virginia, with rather a contemptuous emphasis.

"If the Catholic religion is the only true one, then are we in error.—"

Virginia was about to make an observation, when the servant gave notice, that tea was on the table, and the General waiting.

The time, in which the facts occurred, on which this tale is founded, was immediately after the conclusion of the American revolution: the Wolburn family was originally English, but the General, at an early period, evinced a spirit of republicanism, in its proper acceptation, such as exists among us now: and often was he heard to say, and it was known, that he was of a determined character, that if his majesty, George III. did not accede to the prayer of the colonists, he would be the first to sound the tocsin of war. As regards his religious notions, he had been brought up in the principles of the Church of England, but, except for the sake of argument, or, perhaps, at times when maxims were inculcated not congenial with his temper and ideas, one of those liberal, charitable men, who think that even *Catholics* may be saved.

Mrs. Wolburn's maiden name was Mansfield: she was a native of Maryland, but had received her education in England, where, of course, she became imbued with the principles of the episcopal church: but, from her childhood, she was fond of reading, and as she possessed an unusually acute mind, loved to investigate the subject of religious belief. Books explanatory of the Catholic doctrine were, however, cautiously kept from her reach; those filled with venom and misrepresentation recommended to her perusal and study. One point there was, which had al-

ways given her great uneasiness; namely, the separation of Luther and Henry VIII. from the mother church. Often, when alone, did she reason with herself, as she afterwards was wont to relate, if the Catholic church was the first, must it not have been the true church? Could it have fallen into Idolatry, superstition, and error? If it could not have fallen, it could not be *reformed*; why then did Henry VIII. attempt to reform it? She never could satisfy herself about the cause, which induced that king to throw off all dependence on the Pope, since the Pope was bound by the laws of common decency, as well as those of the church, to oppose the divorce which he meditated, and condemn the marriage which followed. Besides, she would frequently contrast the unbending firmness of the Pope with the unworthy pliancy of the father of the Reformation: for, whilst the former preferred the interests of truth to the friendship and support of a powerful monarch, and sooner than annul a marriage which he knew to be valid, consented to see the national church of England separated from the communion of the Roman see—the latter, by an unchristian and unscriptural compliance, permitted one of his supporters, the Landgrave of Hesse, to take two wives.

Mrs. Wolburn was intimately connected with the family of the venerable Mr. Powell, and the light thrown upon all her doubts by the conversation of Mrs. Payson, who is still the ornament of society, as well as of the church, was too brilliant and pure, not to induce her to believe, that the Catholic religion has much to recommend it; or to use her own expression, that “the religion of the Powells must be the true one.” Her daughters, Louisa and Virginia, had been sent, at an early age to New England, where they were educated in the *puritanism* of the Church of Eng-

land. Virginia retained all her prejudices and rancour against what she termed, with an affection, which her Catholic friends styled pedantry the *Romish* religion. Louisa took after her mother, she was of a kind-hearted, open and benevolent disposition, more amiable, and though younger, more generally read than Virginia. From her childhood she felt a natural, unaccountable bias for the Catholic church; and even when in New England, she was slow in accrediting the aspersions thrown upon its doctrines and its members. Virginia would seldom speak on controversial topics with the young Paysons, whose company, however, she courted, and whose queen-like manners she studied to imitate. Louisa was their constant and welcome visitor, as well in town as in the country; and the venerable Mr. Powell would often "run her," to make use of her own familiar expression about religion: "I hope to see you a good Catholic yet," would he feelingly say, "my dear Louisa."

CHAPTER II.

"Thus one, thus pure, behold her largely spread
Like the fair ocean from her mother-bed:
From east to west triumphantly she rides,
All shores are watered by her wealthy tides."

DRYDEN.

Who has ever stood on the borders of the broad Potomac, when the morning first breaks over its waters, has seen the mist melting away before the aurora, has heard the deep forests, with which the river is shaded, echoing with the horn of the merry boatsman, and did not say to his heart, This is a grand and enrapturing scene!

At that lovely hour, and amid the beautiful scenery, Louisa was accustomed to take the air on the dew-scented lawn. At times she would admire the works of creation, cast her eyes now on the sparkling waves, now on the blushing heavens, then around the verdant fields, and then again on the deep shades of the woods. "Why," was she heard to repeat to herself, as she paused in profound reflection, "why have I been placed on this magnificent scene! been gifted with reason to meditate on what I see, and with a will to make whatever use I please of the works of creation? am I to act awhile on this theatre of life and then to fade away like the leaves, which now begin to lose their verdure, and be forgotten?—Exists there no region beyond the starry spheres, where immortal spirits are to mingle and live, and be happy? and is there no means specified by the Creator, by which, and by which alone, I may attain to that happy abode? Is there no church to teach me truth? no tribunal to solve my doubts, no agent commissioned by the Redeemer to forgive my sins, and remove from a troubled conscience, the cause of its grief and depression? O my God!" did she exclaim, as she clasped her hands and rolled her dark-blue eyes to heaven, "teach me to love and to serve thee."

After her morning walk, she was wont to return to her room and read a chapter in the bible. It chanced that this day she fell on the following text from St. Matthew: "And I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."—(St. Matthew, xvi. 18, 19.) She read these verses over and over,

paused, meditated, and wept: "Is it not manifest," she reasoned, "that a church is here established on a rock? that is to say, it is never to fail: and secondly, is not confession plainly instituted; by giving the 'keys' to the apostles? else what mean these words: 'I give unto you the keys of heaven?'"

Overcome by this reflection, she closed the sacred book, and pensively reclined her head upon her hands, which were clasped upon the table. The servant found her in this attitude when breakfast was announced; she feared lest some features of solemn thought might be discovered on her countenance, and awaken a sentiment of uneasiness in the breast of the General; she bathed her face in fresh water, mixed with the fragrance of cologne, and with a light and active step, skipped into the breakfast-room. Mrs. Wolburn was seated on the sofa; Virginia was looking over a piece of new music, which had been sent her from Colonel Bramswell's; and the General was reading the newspaper. After an affectionate salutation, they sat down to the table.

"Were Rowland here," said Virginia somewhat abruptly, "we should have a Latin blessing."

"Why Latin, my dear?" asked Mrs. Wolburn.

"Why the Roman Catholic priests bless the table in Latin you know, mamma."

"Do you hear that Louisa?" said the General with a smile; it is well that you studied a little Latin in New England."

"I'll lay a wager," said Virginia, "that if Rowland comes, we'll have a Latin benediction."

"How often have I not heard Mr. Rowland give grace in English, at the manor, Virginia?" said Louisa: "indeed, the Catholic clergymen

never think of blessing the table in Latin when they dine out."

"I think, if I remember rightly, I heard an English blessing from a Catholic priest.—"

"Right, papa," resumed Louisa, "the last time we dined at Mr. Powell's."

"Well, you'll find I am right," persisted Virginia: "take my word for it, Rowland will bless in Latin."

The conversation continued during the whole meal, when the General taking out his spectacles, retired with the newspaper, to his study: the ladies repaired to the drawing-room.

"My dear Louisa," said Mrs. Wolburn, "your harp has long been neglected—tune its chords, and accompany its music with your voice."

"Louisa has become so fanatical about *truth* and *error* of late," said Virginia, "that I should not be surprised, if she were to deem it a sin to play on the harp."

"By no means, Virginia: is there not a time for everything? you have read the writings of the wise man." She then adjusted and attuned her instrument, and, with a feeling peculiar to herself, and a voice highly cultivated and naturally sweet and melodious, commenced the following song:

"The sun of earthly love may rise,
To cheer life's wintry day;
But from the youth's deluded eyes
That sun shall fade away.

"The moon of friendship o'er this night,
May throw her beams serene,
But soon, ah, soon! her placid light
Shall leave the sinking scene.

“The stars of science may perform
 Their visionary dance;
 But quickly shall the midnight storm
 Of ignorance advance.

“The flow’rs of happiness may shew
 Their blossoms to the gale;
 But soon by stormy winds laid low,
 They wither on the vale.”

The concluding line she expressed with a countenance enkindled with sentiment: it was observed by her mother, that the tear stole timidly from her eye, which she closed to conceal it—Mrs. Wolburn melted.

“How charming is that sentiment, mamma,” observed Louisa, as she rose from the harp.

“How important, my love, that we should endeavour to discover the will of God, in order that we may cull ‘those flowers of happiness,’ which never fade.”

“If you allude to his will, regarding religion, mamma, we know it well,” said Virginia.

“I fear we may be deceived, my daughter?”

“Impossible, in the church to which *we* belong, we cannot but know it.”

“And does not the Roman Catholic affirm the same, my love?”

“But without grounds, mamma.”

“Does not the Presbyterian lay claim to the same?”

“And the Methodists too,” added Louisa.

“Nay, even the Unitarian,” continued Mrs. Wolburn.

Virginia appeared confused, she was silent, and hurt.

“My dear Virginia,” said Mrs. Wolburn, “com-

mon sense alone must teach, that all the religions now existing must be erroneous, save one."

"How so, mamma?"

"Because they all contradict one another."

"Then *ours* is the true one."

"So says the Quaker, the Anabaptist, the Swedenborger," replied Louisa.

"But the Episcopal church is conformable to the bible."

"So says the Baptist of his church," returned Louisa.

Here the bell rang, and Virginia suspecting that it might be Father Rowland, abruptly left the room, and skipped up stairs. In a few minutes she was dressed, and slipping out through a back door, hurried over to Colonel Bramswell's: for such was her bigotry that she could not brook the idea of a priest, and what was worse, a Jesuit, entering Wolburn-hall. Her suspicions were realized: the servant ushered in Father Rowland, who was met by Mrs. Wolburn and Louisa with the most cordial welcome.

"How rejoiced we are, dear Sir, to receive you under our roof," said Mrs. Wolburn.

Louisa took his hand—and wept.

Father Rowland, whose person was dignified, and whose education refined, as well in the sciences of the sanctuary, as in the formalities of high life, entered with an unaffected gracefulness, which could not but conciliate the prejudices of any company. His life for twenty years, during which he had been engaged in the duties of the ministry, had been a series of charity, virtue, and zeal: the poor found in him a benefactor; the orphan a father: assiduous in the occupations of his calling, he was not wanting in the civilities of life, but happily combined the gentleman with the priest. He was a professed father of the society of Jesus, among the members of which he

stood conspicuous for all the qualifications of his order: and this, Mr. Powell was accustomed to say, was the highest eulogy that could be bestowed upon any individual. For to be conspicuous among such ornaments as the society can boast of, is, indeed, to be a luminary. Rowland was a native of Maryland, but was sent when a boy to England, and thence to Liege, where he completed his theological career: and after visiting the scenes of his boyhood in Lancashire, returned to his native country.

There is no one who has not heard of the colleges, of Liege and St. Omers, those seminaries of great and virtuous men, of whom there are but few still lingering amongst us. Those institutions, like so many others in Europe, were under the direction of the Jesuits, the sons of Loyola, men who have done more in the various branches of literature and science, shone brighter in the church, and suffered more calumny, aspersions, persecutions, than any other society, since the first establishment of religious orders. To read the history of their rise, their progress, their glory, and their fall, is to read a most interesting and instructive lesson: their labours in China, in Japan, and through all the Levant; their unwearied and successful exertions in taming and softening the savage of our own vast continent, cannot but excite the astonishment of mankind. When, by the intrigues of the illuminati and infidels, they were suppressed in the Catholic kingdoms of Europe, they were hailed and protected by Catherine of Russia, some of them bent their way to these regions, and settled on various residences and farms, which they retain to the present day. Of this society, therefore, Father Rowland was a conspicuous member.

“My Dear ladies,” said he, “I have come earlier than I should have done, had I stood upon the etiquette of fashion.”

"You could not have come too early, dear Sir," replied Mrs. Wolburn, with a benevolent courtesy.

"Especially as we have several questions of importance to propose," said Louisa.

"How delighted should I be, my dear Miss Wolburn, could I be of any service to you."

"Be seated, dear Mr. Rowland, and make yourself at home at Wolburn-hall," said Mrs. Wolburn, as she rang for the servant; "it is, you perhaps have heard, the home of hospitality and friendship."

Father Rowland made a reverence and expressed his gratitude.

"Especially for the clergy," added Louisa.

The servant having entered, Mrs. Wolburn bade him inform the General, that Father Rowland was in the parlour.

"Louisa and Virginia, you must know, reverend Sir, have been engaged in a warm controversy, and really I know not——"

Here the General entered: a more venerable man, with the exception of Mr. Powell, was not in the neighbourhood. He was quite grey, but active, vigorous, and spirited; and delighted in welcoming a stranger to Wolburn-hall. Rowland met him at the door, with great dignity and ease.

"I need not assure you, that you are thrice welcome to Wolburn-hall," said the General, taking the hand of Rowland.

"Nor need I attempt to express the pleasure it affords me," returned the Father.

"I just observed, my dear," said Mrs. Wolburn, "that ours is the mansion of hospitality and friendship."

"I trust it will ever be found such," returned the General.

"Louisa and Virginia, I have been mentioning, have been in a heated argument, Wolburn."

"May I ask on what topic, madam?" said Rowland.

"The most important, dear Sir."

"Was it then a religious controversy, Miss Louisa?"

"You have hit on it exactly, Mr. Rowland," was her reply.

The General made his obeisance, and retired.

"A considerable uneasiness has been occasioned, dear Sir, you must know, by certain doubts, which Louisa and myself begin to entertain respecting the church to which we belong. I have been reading on the subject, and have lately been at Mass, and heard your sermon on the infallibility of the church. Louisa was with me; and our principal object in sending for you was, that you would have the goodness to set us at rest on the subject: any instruction you may please to give us, will be gratefully appreciated."

"I thank God," replied Rowland, with an emotion which he could not suppress, "that I have been chosen to be the instrument through whom the light of truth may be communicated to you, my dear madam: it is a subject of poignant grief to my heart to behold so many persons of the most amiable, benevolent, and pious dispositions, lulled into a delusive apathy in a matter, which as you have just remarked, is of all others the most important. If there be a true church on earth, it is the Catholic church, established by the Redeemer, built upon a rock, and destined to subsist for ever."

"This is the very difficulty we wish to see cleared up," said Mrs. Wolburn, placing herself in an attitude of deep attention. Louisa, too, seemed hanging on the lips of the Father.

"Since you have done me the honour to propose the subject to me," resumed Rowland, "I shall answer with candour, that the Roman Catholic Church is the **ONLY TRUE ONE**: it was established by Christ, when he **changed** the name

of Simon into Peter, saying: 'thou art Peter, and on this rock I will built my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;' (Matt. xvi.) and gave him the keys of heaven; (John xxi.) and entrusted to him the charge of feeding both the sheep and the lambs, assuring him that his faith should never fail. (Luke xxii.) St. Peter was thus made the first among the Apostles; he is always named first by the evangelists; he is the visible head of the church, the vicar of Christ on earth. The supremacy of Peter has been transmitted to his successors in the church of Rome, which has always been regarded as the mother of all other churches spread over the whole world, and the centre of Catholic unity, according to the testimony of innumerable fathers, especially St. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, disciple of St. Polycarp, who had been instructed by St. John.—(Iren. lib. 3.) Consequently, of all the churches founded by the apostles and their successors throughout the world, there is formed ONE UNIVERSAL church, united under a visible head, having, at the same time, according to the language of St. Paul, 'one God, one faith, one baptism.'—(Ephes. v.) Thus is this union founded on the unity of worship, on the profession and rule of one faith, and the participation of the same sacraments."

"How different from the sects of modern times," exclaimed Louisa.

"You alluded, dear Sir, in your discourse, on last Sunday, to certain marks by which the true church is distinguished: would you be pleased to explain them," said Mrs. Wolburn.

"Those marks, my dear madam, are four: the true church must be *one*, must be *Catholic*, must be *apostolical*, must be *holy*: no other can be the true church.

"The church is *one* by the unity of her doctrine, and the union of all other sees with the see

of Peter. Unity of doctrine is an essential character to the church of Jesus Christ: which being his depository, should consequently be invariable; because the true doctrine of Christ is one, and cannot vary. This deposit he has consigned to the apostles and their successors, to be preserved by them to the 'consummation of ages.' In the days of Julian, the Almighty was pleased—"

"You allude to the 'apostate,' I presume," said Louisa, begging pardon for the interruption.

"Yes," replied Rowland; "in the days of Julian the apostate, it pleased the Almighty to shew, by the most signal prodigies, that, according to his promise, the gates of hell should not prevail against his church: and in virtue of this promise has the deposit of doctrine continued inviolable and unchanged. Indeed, there is not a single dogma believed now, which was not believed in the earliest ages; and none believed in the earliest ages, that is not believed now."

"How admirable!" exclaimed Mrs. Wolburn; "and how strange, that we should have attempted to change this beautiful and heavenly system."

"This is not all, my dear madam; you have as yet but a faint view of the magnificent picture. Let me now propose to your consideration the second mark. The true church is *Catholic*, that is to say, universal and perpetual. Under Julian, and long before his reign, it was diffused through the east and west, through the whole extent, and even beyond the limits of the Roman empire: where the eagles of Rome never fluttered, the authority of Peter has been admitted. At the present day, the Catholic church exists in every quarter of the known globe: in Turkey, in India, in America, in the most distant regions: all of which are united by the same faith, and participate in the same sacraments."

"Oh! that we may constitute two more mem-

bers to that universal church!" exclaimed Louisa.

"God grant it, my dear Miss Wolburn," returned the Father, "but let it be through pure conviction."

"Never shall I act otherwise, than from conviction, dearest Sir."

"Heaven forbid that you should, my love," said Mrs. Wolburn, looking tenderly on her daughter.

"To continue the argument, ladies," resumed Rowland: "the true church is *apostolic*; because it was established on the foundation of the apostles; (Ephes. vi.) and is the depositary, as I before remarked, of the doctrine given them, and their apostolic ministry is kept up in the church by means of sacramental ordination, in virtue of which, the succession of pastors is continued without interruption. This succession is evidently demonstrated in the Roman Pontiffs: of this St. Irenæus bears testimony down to Pope Eleutherius. St. Augustine, who flourished in the fourth century, among other motives which kept him in the true church, insisted particularly on that of the uninterrupted succession of Pontiffs from St. Peter, to whom the Redeemer intrusted the charge of feeding his flock. Bossuet, the celebrated bishop of Meaux, no doubt you have learned to reverence his name—"

"I always venerated the name of that great prelate and orator," returned Mrs. Wolburn.

"Well, my dear madam, Bossuet has shown in his *Universal History*, how consoling it is for the children of God to know, that the chain of succession, from Innocent XI., the Pope then reigning, up to St. Peter, was unbroken: and ascending still higher, it continues to the Pontiffs who exercised the ministry in the old law, up to Moses and Aaron, and finally to the patriarchs themselves, even to the beginning of the world.

Hence it follows, that the human mind, which is naturally so light and inconstant, was under the necessity of being fixed and directed by an infallible authority, in things appertaining to eternal salvation. In the Catholic church, then, my dearest madam, we find the authority of all past ages, and the traditions of human kind from the remotest antiquity."

The General, entering the parlour, interrupted the conversation: Louisa, though the most affectionate creature, could not but evince an air of displeasure at the sudden pause created by her father's presence. She, however, repressed her feelings, and arose to receive him.

"Well, my dear Mr. Rowland," said the General, "I trust Louisa is now satisfied: she has been looking forward as anxiously to this interview with Father Rowland, as Mrs. Wolburn thirty years ago, was looking for the day of her wedding."

Mrs. Wolburn laughed. The Father, with a talent quite his own, dropped the solemnity and earnestness of an instructor, and partook in the General's merriment. Louisa, however, looked somewhat serious, or to use her father's expression: "Lou looked sentimental." The hour of dinner had now arrived, and they repaired to the dining-room. The table was served with elegance, abundance, and simplicity: The General bowing, requested the Father to bless the table. Louisa was all attention: she remembered the assertion of Virginia, that the priests blessed the table in Latin. Father Rowland putting himself into an attitude of prayer, with his eyes closed, and in a distinct and solemn tone, pronounced this Benediction in English: "Bless, O Lord, these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bountiful hands, through Christ, our Lord."

"Well," exclaimed Louisa, "this is a triumph for me!" The General and Rowland, after the usual civilities, were soon lost in a deep conversation. Louisa set about writing on a scrap of paper with a lead pencil.

"What are you scribbling now, my love?" asked Mrs. Wolburn.

"I will read it to you immediately, mamma," replied Louisa, without taking her eyes off the paper or stopping her pencil. In a few moments, she read the following note to Virginia:

"DEAR SIS,

"Had you bet me a kingdom, I should have won it; Father Rowland is here, we have just sat down to dinner—and he blessed the table—in what language think you? In Latin? No, my lady, but in pure plain English. By the by, I wish you had been present at the conversation of the good Father, this morning. Away with your affectation—shall I not rather style it fanaticism? Do be sure to come home this evening before sun-set: mamma wishes you a good appetite—as to papa, he is in a philosophical chat with Mr. Rowland.

"LOUISA."

The dinner passed off most agreeably: after which the General, who though polite to refinement, was quite unceremonious, arose to comply, he said, smiling, with an old habit, to which he, like the inhabitants of *Catholic* Rome, had become a very slave. I mean, he added with a graceful sweep of his right arm, to take a siesta—and retired. Louisa was not sorry: "I knew papa would take to his sofa, according to custom," she said: "so my dear Mr. Rowland, we may be left to ourselves, and our controversial disquisition." Mrs. Wolburn rose, and the Father gave thanks in English. They then withdrew into the parlour.

CHAPTER III.

“As undivided, so from errors free,
 As one in faith, so one in sanctity:
 Thus she, and none but she, the insulting rage
 Of heretics, opposed from age to age.”—DRYDEN.

After some instructive remarks on the customs of different nations, which he interspersed with several amusing anecdotes, the Father observed, that the custom of taking the siesta was as common in Italy, as that of taking *café* after dinner is in France. Rowland, though grave, was facetious and lively, presenting a lively picture of a truly pious man, such as the Almighty is pleased with, according to the scripture, “God loveth the cheerful giver.”—2 Corinth. ix. How far the *puritanism* of speech and manner evinces the sanctity of those who are distinguished for it, I leave it to experience to testify.

“But, my dear ladies,” said he, assuming his wonted gravity, and an air of dignity, which could not but excite attention, “perhaps you would wish me to continue the subject which I was interrupted in before dinner.”

“By all means, dear Sir,” replied Mrs. Wolburn.

Louisa appeared delighted: she had taken her seat at a distance from Rowland, and was looking out of a window into a flower garden; which, though it began to fade under the chill influence of the autumn nights, was, nevertheless, interspersed with some flowers that linger in bloom, and shed their fragrance amid the withering leaves of others. But, as soon as it was proposed to resume the subject which had become so interesting to her, she hastily, yet gracefully, removed to the sofa near the person of him, to whom she now looked up, as to her benefactor.

“My dear Louisa, how sorry I am that Virginia has behaved so unhandsomely,” said Mrs. Wolburn.

“I regret she is not here, mamma, to take part in this most interesting conversation—”

“As you have desired me to prosecute the observations which I began this morning, on the marks of the true church, dearest ladies,” said Rowland, “I will show you that the church must be *holy*.”

“Holiness, madam, is the most precious prerogative, which belongs to the true church alone, and which, of itself, should suffice to convince any reflecting mind of her divinity. She is holy, because her head, Jesus Christ, is holy, and because as the Apostle says, (Ephes. v. 25, 26, 27,) his love for his church was so great, that ‘he delivered himself up for it, *that he might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.*’ Christ’s deliverance of himself must have been efficacious for that purpose, for which he delivered himself and shed his blood. Now, according to St. Paul, his object was to sanctify the church of his love, to render it a *glorious, and holy* church, without *spot or wrinkle*. The church, therefore, must of necessity be holy, or we must admit that Christ failed in accomplishing one of the principal objects for which he died! He who is the principle and source of all holiness, directs and governs her by his Spirit. She is holy, because her doctrine and morality breathe nothing but holiness; her doctrine relates and leads to the knowledge and worship of him who is the last end, and the sovereign good of man: her morality extends to the love of God above all things, and a well re-

gulated, and subordinate love of creatures. All the duties of man, with regard to God himself, and his neighbour, are presented, and taught, without the least mixture of error. And he pleased to remark, ladies, that this code, this body of all moral truths, without the mixture of error, is a work, which surpasses the power of human reason so liable to be deceived, and so often and lamentably deceived, as the experience of so many ages testifies. We see millions of moral systems, purely philosophical, given by the Platonics, Stoics, Peripatetics, &c. all of which prescribe excellent rules on some subjects, while they admit the grossest errors on others."

"Besides this, the morality of the church presents motives the most elevated and satisfactory to inspire the love of virtue, and horror of vice: it points to the recompense of virtue, to God himself, the principle of happiness: and this was wanting to all the systems of philosophy, which never could reveal the secret, how virtue can be, and always is, reconciled with genuine happiness, which the human heart pants after above all other things, and cannot help aspiring to—"

"Ah, Louisa!" sighed Mrs. Wolburn, with a flush of sensibility, "there is no happiness but in religion."

"And very little," added Rowland, "except in the true religion. Admirable thing! exclaims Montesquieu, 'Religion not only promises bliss hereafter, it inspires it here.' But to continue: The church is holy, because it joins to the holiness of his doctrine, a sovereign efficacy, which is granted by the Holy Ghost to convert souls, and conduct them to a state of sanctification.— This efficacy appeared in the most marvellous manner, in the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Christ; by the innocence of the lives of the primeval christians; by their charity, and

their constancy in the midst of torment. It appeared in the renovation which it operated in the world, in eradicating the corruption of morals so universally diffused, and so inveterate, though nothing could be more contrary to the law of nature. Such were the sacrifices, by which human beings were immolated by human beings; sacrifices admitted among the most polished, as well as among the most barbarous nations, but which have been abolished by christianity. To reflect on the bloody amusements presented to the Roman people by the gladiators, and consider the present state of the metropolis in which they were exhibited, would be almost sufficient of itself to prove the holiness of the religion, which now triumphs over the ruins and waste of paganism."

"I remember, mamma, some very pretty lines from a translation of Racine's Epistle on Man, which, with Mr. Rowland's permission I will repeat:

"But see the stubborn gladiator die,
Pierced to the soul he utters not a sigh:
And should his nature, vigorous and strong,
In horrid pain his agony prolong,
What signs of dark approval are displayed
By the grave senator and vestal maid!"

"Very appropriate and beautiful is your quotation, Miss Louisa," said the Father: "not dissimilar in sentiment to a sentence of Rochefaucalt; 'in the adversity of our friends,' he says, 'there is always something with which we are not displeased.' 'The church is holy,'" continued Rowland, "because it alone possesses the power of forgiving sins."

"An interesting question," observed Mrs. Wol

burn: "what would I not give were Virginia present!"

"Truly interesting and important," returned Rowland: "Jesus Christ has communicated this power to his apostles: 'whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven, whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.'—(John xx.) This power is transmitted to their successors, through sacramental ordination, and their successors only, sacramentally ordained, can have the power. Consequently, it cannot pass, or be communicated, to sects separated from that succession: but man cannot arrive at holiness, except by the remission of his sins, and this remission of sins cannot be obtained, except through those ministers, who are the successors of the apostles.

"The church is holy, because God has been pleased to manifest, from time to time, the sanctity of its members by the gift of miracles, a great number of which is so authentically attested, that we might as well reject the authority of history, as to refuse to believe them."

"It is not true then, dear Sir, that miracles have ceased," said Louisa.

"Why should they have ceased," returned Rowland; "is the arm of the Almighty weakened, his power abridged? Did not the Redeemer expressly declare, that those who believe in him shall 'cast out devils,' 'take up serpents,' and 'if they drink any thing poisonous, it shall not hurt them?' (Mark xvi.) and pray, did he limit those who believe in him to the apostles, or to the primitive ages? By no means: the proposition is general; the promise unlimited; to continue, and to be fulfilled to the consummation of ages. Do not, however, mistake my meaning: for, though a Catholic is obliged to believe, that the power of miracles is still existing in the church, he is by no means obliged to believe, that such or such

an event is miraculous; no more than when he believes the church to produce saints, that such or such a person is holy."

"The doctrine is perfectly reasonable," said Mrs. Wolburn, "and it really astonishes me, Louisa, to hear some of our friends, you know whom I allude to, ridiculing this prerogative.—For God is God, as he always *was*: and the church is the church, as it existed in the first ages."

"Ignorance, my dear madam, will, I trust, excuse many: but have we not reason to fear, that for the most part, this ignorance is wilful, and consequently criminal? Why will not men examine, reason, investigate, before they ridicule or condemn us? But let us bear their censures and their carcassms in silence: blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake."—Matthew v.

"For theirs is the kingdom of heaven," added Louisa.

"Ah, my dear! prepare *yourself* to suffer persecution," said Mrs. Wolburn, "if you turn Catholic: the world may talk as it pleases; it is too true, that there exists a bitter animosity against the Catholic church. You were present and heard, my dear, the remark made by Mrs. Colonel Bramswell, last Wednesday: it is astonishing how a lady of her fine mind, and charitable disposition, could have suffered such an expression to escape her lips: she would, she averred, rather follow her daughter to the grave, than see her become a *Romanist*, as she sneeringly styled a Catholic."

"These strong prejudices, madam," said Rowland, "have been transported from England, and are hereditary even in this free country; but it is to be hoped, that the present generation will think for themselves, and act for themselves, in religious matters, as they have lately done in

civil." "General Washington expatiated very sensibly on this subject, you remember Louisa," said Mrs. Wolburn, "the last time we spent the day with his amiable family."

"Allow me to make one important observation, dear madam, that just presents itself to my mind," resumed Rowland: "it is this; that from the marks of the true church, which I have detailed, there results in favour of the Catholic church, a proof of credibility, so strong and convincing, that in the eyes of the Catholic, no matter how little instructed, there can be nothing more solidly, more infallibly established, than the truth of the doctrines, which he believes. He knows that the doctrine taught by his pastor, comes not from him; that it is the same doctrine as is taught in all the churches in the world, united under a visible head. He knows that the pastors of all those churches have received it from their predecessors, and those pastors have succeeded one another from the times of the apostles: consequently, besides the characteristic marks, of which I have spoken, the Catholic, my dear ladies, has on his side the authority of all the churches of Catholic christendom, all united together by the same doctrines, which the apostles have transmitted by a succession of pastors, which has never been interrupted.

"All other religions, far from uniting the characters which are so essential to the true one, contain in themselves the principle of destruction, which is manifest, and which must occasion no small suspicion regarding the sincerity of those who profess them, if they reflect for a moment on the subject."

The entrance of the servant with a note for Louisa, here interrupted the Father; Mrs. Wolburn was convinced that it came from Virginia.

"Louisa, my dear," she said, "let us hear what Virginia writes."

Louisa did not, apparently, notice the observation of her mother, but rapidly glancing over the note, alternately smiled, and reddened. The change of her countenance was remarked by Rowland, who attempted to divert the conversation from the note.

"Louisa will have no objection, dear Sir, to read the note aloud," said Mrs. Wolburn.

"None at all on *my* part," she returned, "mamma, but Mr. Rowland—"

"Oh let nothing relating to me or my religion prevent your reading it," said the father.

Louisa again threw her eyes over the whole, and, after a moment of silence, read as follows:

"DEAR LOU,

"I do not envy you your controversial repast with the Jesuit priest: had you read your Bible more attentively, you would have learned to avoid such a character. Dearest mamma! how can she suffer herself to be caught in the subtle toils of Jesuitism? I am astonished, indeed at both of you, Louisa: Colonel Bramswell and Sabina are scandalized at you. Henry tells me it is a subject of uncommon anxiety to his bosom, and if you really turn Papist—farewell; you understand me, Lou. Dr. Dorson, that saintly minister, who has your interest so much at heart, burst into tears when I informed him of what was going on at Wolburn-hall. He promises to pray for you, however: you must not expect me home till morning—may God preserve you from Popery and Jesuitism.

"VIRGINIA.

P. S. Parson Dorson intends putting into your hands some good books, and among others, he speaks highly of Don Iago, a Romish Priest, lately converted to the true church of England:

a work which is recommended by the signatures of the first divines in Maryland, and elsewhere; I trust it will save you and dear mamma. "V. W."

Rowland could not but smile—

"Bravo! Virginia," exclaimed Mrs. Wolburn.

"Do you know the book she alludes to, Mr. Rowland?" asked Louisa.

"A work of an apostate friar," replied Rowland, "stored with misrepresentations and falsehood."

"How then could it be recommended by the Protestant divines?"

"Many of them either never read it, or were blinded when they read it; and when the blind lead the blind, you know the consequence—"

"They will fall into the ditch," subjoined Louisa: "for my part, she continued, no earthly consideration would induce me to act against my conviction: as much as I have learned of the Catholic church, I admire, I believe, and am determined to prosecute the investigation. Dorson may pray as much as he pleases, and fret as much as he pleases, and Henry"—Here she began to grow rather warm, but soon repressed her feelings.

"You are affected, I perceive, my love," said Mrs. Wolburn.

"Indeed, mamma, it is provoking to hear the language of Protestants on the subject of the Catholic religion."

"It is trying, very trying," returned Rowland; "but let us have charity for all, while we do not suffer ourselves to be actuated by human respect. Many there are, who affect to despise our religion, because it is not the most fashionable in some parts of this country."

"As to fashion," said Louisa, "it will not be my standard: I look to reason, to authority.—And, indeed, who can be more respectable than

the venerable Mr. Powell? and is he not a rigid Catholic?"

"And is not the Catholic religion the religion of almost all the kings and princes of Europe?" added Rowland. "It is pitiful to hear persons talking about the respectability of religion, when ours was admitted, and practised, by all the nobility, chivalry, wealth, talent, and learning of Europe. In proof of this assertion, I need only refer you to the history of England alone, of which all the best, and bravest, and mightiest kings, were Catholics. Henry VIII. was the first to sever himself from the chain of Catholic succession."

"He clung to it," said Mrs. Wolburn, smiling, "as long as he could."

"Had the Pope granted him what he demanded, it is more than probable, that Henry would have continued a Catholic," said Rowland. "But it proves the virtue and integrity of the Pope," added Louisa, "to have resisted so firmly, and so courageously, the pretensions of the tyrant."

"It was always a subject of astonishment to me," said Mrs. Wolburn, "how the descendants of the ancient Catholic nobility of England could have abandoned the religion of their ancestors, to embrace that of a king, who was a disgrace to his kingdom, and a scandal to the world."

"It was not through a motive of virtue, but interest," returned Rowland: "the penal laws subjected the Catholic noblemen to disqualifications; deprived them of their birth-rights; and excluded them from the councils of their country. The Earl of Shrewsbury, whom I had the honour of being acquainted with in England, assured me, I remember, that if those penal laws were abolished, many of the nobility would return to the religion of their ancestors: and this, he avowed, he stated on good authority."

The evening was now advanced, and the atmosphere was chill and heavy: Rowland, rising from his chair, reminded the ladies that it was time for him to return home.

"It is very cloudy, my dear Mr. Rowland," said Louisa, running to the door, "and in all probability, we shall have a hard rain."

"Well then, my dear, you must order the carriage," said Mrs. Wolburn. Louisa rang the bell, and gave orders to the servant to prepare the carriage: but she had hardly closed the door, before a torrent of rain began to pour down: in a short time it rattled tremendously against the windows, and through the trees; the yellow leaves were pelted to the ground, and the park, in a few minutes was stript. The lightning, with fierce and rapid flashes, gleamed, and the thunder pealed abroad.

"It will be impossible for you to venture out in such a storm, dear Sir," said Mrs. Wolburn, "make yourself content at Wolburn-hall, till morning."

Rowland was advancing to view the appearance of the weather, when the General entered. "The rain falls in torrents," said he, "I hope you do not think of turning out this evening, Mr. Rowland," taking him by the hand.

"It was my intention, but I must submit to the will of providence, and to you, General."

"The air is cold and bleak," added Wolburn, "there is a fire in the drawing-room, by the side of which, I have no doubt, we shall feel ourselves more comfortable." They then retired to the fire-side.

"What is the result of your conversation with the ladies, Mr. Rowland?" asked the General.

"We are almost Roman Catholics, papa," answered Louisa, with an expressive smile.

"Act from conviction my dear, do nothing

precipitately: if, after a mature investigation, you determine to embrace the Catholic doctrine, you will meet with no opposition from me. I respect the Catholics; Mr. Powell is my most intimate friend, and some of the officers of the revolution, brave and good men, were Roman Catholics."

"I trust, the ladies will not be so imprudent as to declare themselves Catholics, unless from conviction," said Rowland.

"There can be no other motive, surely," replied Mrs. Wolburn: "we can have no temporal interest in view."

"Well, Mr Rowland," resumed the General in a loud and jovial tone, "make them good papists."

The fire, which was now burning brightly, was as comfortable as in the bleak month of January: and who has not felt the charms of a winter-fire-side, when the curtains are let down, the shutters closed, and the sofa drawn near the blazing hearth? There, the bosom that has been agitated during the storms of the day may calmly and happily repose: its throbbing may be stilled by the smiles of home, and its cares be forgotten in the converse of friendship and love. The fire-side! Oh, what associations linger around that scene! what reminiscences are recalled by that name! when we were young and artless, hanging round the blaze, or bending over the coals, listening to the sweet instructions of a mother, charmed by the music of her endearing voice. The fire-side! which, in the language of Cowper—

"Calls the past hour to our exact review,
The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,
The disappointed foe, deliv'rance found,
Unlooked for, life preserved, and peace restored:
Oh evenings, worthy of the Gods! exclaimed
The sabine bard; Oh evenings, I reply,

More to be prized and coveted than yours.
 Fire-side enjoyments! home-bred happiness!"

Of this description was the scene which was presented at Wolburn-hall, by the General, his lady, Virginia, Louisa, and a group of young friends, who, every evening partook of the delightful enjoyment. The long evenings were spent in reading, pleasing and instructive conversation, and music. There

"The poet's or historian's page by one
 Made vocal for the amusement of the rest;
 Discourse ensues, not trivial, yet not dull,
 Nor such as with a frown forbids the play
 Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth,
 The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds
 The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out."

To one, whose fortune it has been to spend an evening in mid-winter, in the bosom of the family of which I am treating, it would appear, that Cowper had copied his beautiful picture from the original there presented. This evening there happened to be no company: Virginia was not at home: the General, Mrs. Wolburn, Rowland and Louisa, were alone and at liberty to discuss whatever subject might be proposed. The favourite topic of the General was the revolution, which had just been brought to a conclusion, and raised the colonies into a free, and since into a great and flourishing republic. He kept up a constant epistolary correspondence with all the worthies of the times, especially with General Washington, with whom he was upon terms of the easiest familiarity, and with whom he was accustomed to spend some time, every summer, at Mount Vernon. In describing the dangers which he had been exposed to, the risks he had

run, the thread-breath escapes he had made, the destitute condition of the country, when she declared herself free; the want of ammunition, troops, discipline, resources, and even the necessities of life, his eyes flashed with enthusiasm, and the vigour and fire of youth seemed to revive in his bosom. In the course of his remarks, he would digress to his old horse *Bull*, which might be called his hobby; and with *Bull*, he would invariably couple his *good man* Moses.

"By the by," said he, "Mr. Rowland, Moses is a Roman Catholic."

"And a more faithful servant cannot be found in the world," added Louisa.

"Our religion inspires fidelity, my dear," said Rowland.

"Even Protestants appear convinced of that," said the General; "for most of those whom I am acquainted with, give them a preference."

"I heard Sabina Bramswell remark, papa, that when her father can get a Catholic servant, he will have no other."

"And justly, very justly, my love, if I may judge from my good old Moses."

"You must know, Mr. Rowland," observed Mrs. Wolburn, with a significant emphasis, "that Moses goes regularly to confession. To Father Hamilton, isn't it, Wolburn, in Alexandria?"

"Every month, my dear, as regularly as the sun. Even during the war, when we poor sinners," he continued with a tone of voice, half jocular and half earnest, "had hardly, or thought we had hardly, time to say a prayer, Moses would find time to prepare himself for confession, and receive communion. And I never knew him to be without his beads. I once surprised him at the rosary, and asked an explanation of that kind of prayer: and I believe he satisfied me."

"I think he mentioned, papa; that the beads

are a spiritual nosegay made up of prayers in honour of the Virgin Mary," said Louisa.

"A very pretty idea," rejoined Mr. Rowland.

"The beads, my dear General," said Rowland, "is composed of five or six decades, divided from each other in such a way, that the ten *Hail Mary's* are separated by a *Glory be to the Father*, and the *Lord's Prayer*. The prayer called the Hail Mary consists of three parts: the first of which consists of the words of the angel Gabriel on announcing to her, that she was to be the Mother of God. 'Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee'—(Luke i. 28.) The second consists of the salutation of Elizabeth inspired by the Holy Ghost, 'Blessed art thou among women.' The third part was added by the Church, in the fifth century, when the *maternity* of the blessed Virgin was denied by the Nestorians: 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death.' The 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,' &c., is a doxology, which was introduced into the various churches, after the condemnation of the Arian heresy, which denied the mystery of the trinity. To perpetuate the remembrance of the incarnation of Christ, the maternity of Mary, and the mystery of the trinity, is the object of the Catholic in reciting the beads. The beads themselves are of no other use than to designate the number of times the prayers should be said: the efficacy of the rosary, therefore, consists not in the beads themselves, but in the prayers offered with attention, and fervour, and religion to the Virgin Mary: not with the view of making her equal to her Son, or of obtaining from *her* the remission of our sins, but merely to propitiate her favour, and obtain her advocacy and intercession."

Here Mrs. Wolburn begged leave to retire to her devotions, and left the room. Louisa followed.

“Perhaps, Mr. Rowland, you may desire to be alone till supper,” said the General: “I will therefore leave you to yourself.”

The father was not unwilling to spend the short time which remained before tea, in reciting his breviary, and performing several spiritual exercises, from which he never dispensed himself, except in case of necessity. The General having ordered more wood to be put on the fire, made his obeisance, and retired.

CHAPTER IV.

“When Prudence warned her to remove by times,
And seek a better heaven, and warmer climes.”

DRYDEN.

ROWLAND finding himself alone, and not likely to be disturbed for some time, took from his pocket a breviary, and commenced his “office.” For the reader must know, that every Catholic clergyman is bound to recite, every day, a certain number of Psalms, extracts from the sacred scriptures, and from the fathers of the church; and this is what is termed the “office,” and the book in which the office is contained, is called the “breviary.” So that the Catholic priest who is accused of keeping the bible out of sight, is obliged to spend at least an hour a day, in reading passages from that sacred volume. Do those persons who are loudest in the praises of the Bible imitate their example? or rather is not their time, and care, and attention absorbed by the concerns of a family, which they raise around them? Father Rowland was accustomed to recite his office kneeling, and when time would permit, he concluded the whole by a chapter

from the epistles. It chanced, as he opened the testament, a small edition of which he always carried about him, that he fell on the second chapter of the second epistle of St. Peter. With the utmost attention, he perused the first verse: "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there *shall be among you* lying teachers, who shall bring in sects of perdition." He was struck most sensibly; and closing the book with his thumb in the page which he was reading, he pondered over and over the words—*lying teachers*—*sects of perdition*. As he sat pensively ruminating on these expressions, and pitying the delusion and errors of so many well-disposed and amiable persons, who are led astray by false teachers, tea was announced.

When he entered the room, he found the General and the two ladies sitting at the table. Wolburn rose to receive him, and requested a blessing, which, as usual, he said in English. After supper, the General, perceiving a new publication lying on the sofa, asked what it was?

"A new poem," replied Louisa.

"By whom, my love?"

"By an unknown writer, papa."

"On what subject, Louisa?"

"The institution of the christian religion," she replied, presenting it to her father. Wolburn was a friend to literature, and not unacquainted with the muses: when young, he had written several fugitive pieces, principally on the subject of the revolution, which were read with avidity. Mrs. Wolburn was devoted to poetry; and Louisa was sometimes styled the *poetess*.

"Good poetry," observed Father Rowland, "is the best mode of communicating thought: but it is a pity to see how it has been abused. How many have distinguished themselves as *voets*, how few as *moral writers*!"

"'Tis true, dear Sir," replied Mrs. Wolburn, "and hence it affords me an exquisite entertainment when I come across a poem like this, which, though not of the first class of writers, is not without force, and some elegance."

"Parents cannot be too cautious," said Rowland, "what books they put into their children's hands: how many have been perverted, have lost all principle of religion, and have been led into the most shameful excesses by reading libertine books! My dear madam, it is all important to infuse religious sentiments into the minds of children. The language of some parents, and I may in a confidential manner, name, for example, the Collinghams, is, that children are not susceptible of religious principles, that they should be left without any control, until they arrive at an age to judge for themselves." "Such language," repeated the General, with considerable energy, "cannot be too much deprecated."

"Leave a child without religion, till it reaches the age of discretion, and that child will choose none," said Rowland. "For surely, were it a matter of choice, no mortal would submit to any religious yoke. But there can be no choice either to embrace or not embrace a thing, when that thing is necessary, and urged upon all by the divine command."

"I may adduce myself as an instance," said the General: "but, to be sure, my case may be an exception, as I have been so much agitated by the political storm which has just been lulled. I was brought up in no church: my father, it is true, was a Protestant, but cared little about my principles of religion: and though I call myself a member of St. Saviour's Church, I declare I know not what I believe."

This candour of the General excited the astonishment of Mrs. Wolburn and Louisa: never

before had they heard him express his sentiments so freely, and with such little reserve. Louisa could not but fix her eye on her mother, and smile. She was pleased, delighted to hear the liberal remarks of her father: and, by her looks, she seemed to say, "This is good encouragement for me."

"Speaking of books," resumed Father Rowland, "is it not to be regretted by every reasonable man, that those used at school are, most of them, filled with calumnies and falsehoods against the Catholic church? Why so bitter against *us*, and so liberal and lenient towards all others?—Have we not at least as much reason to believe ourselves right as others? What is the grand principle on which they act? Read the Bible, they say: true religion is contained in that sacred book. Well we *do* read the Bible; and, according to the privilege given by the Protestant to interpret as we please, we do so: and, therefore, no one has any right to blame us; no one has any right to say that we are in error. Why then should we be calumniated, vilified, condemned?"

"It is wrong, very wrong," said the General.

"But, Louisa, how pleasing would it be to me, and I am sure to our respected guest, to hear you read some parts of this poem," handing it to Louisa.

"The opening of it I think very pretty, papa."

"Through distant realms the woes of war to spread,
To strew the battle-field with heaps of dead,
See foreign princes from their empires hurled,
And drive the car of triumph o'er the world,
Was once the dream of Philip's frantic son,
Who swayed thy sceptre, far-famed Macedon!
Say, by what arts did that fierce despot throw
The yoke of conquest o'er each mighty foe?"

How laid he prostrate, in their destined hour,
 The Mede, the Persian and the Indian power?
 Ambition fired the reckless warrior's heart,
 Made nations quake, and yeild, and then to smart.

“Still could not he, from pole to pole extend
 War's bloody ravages: there is an end
 To all that's human; the wild warrior's arms
 Which scatter woe around and dire alarms
 HAVE had their destined boundaries, and SHALL have:
 He that hath laid ten thousand in the grave
 And stript whole nations of their better half,
 Shall, one day, cease war's bloody cup to quaff.
 The hand that traced the limits of the deep
 O'er which the raging billows dare not sweep.
 Hath marked the boundary, where the surges red
 Of mad ambition, fret back to their bed.
 Thus far advanced! here let the deep that raves,
 And here proud conquest break alike their waves,
 No human power, before religion's birth,
 Ere swayed his sceptre over ALL the earth.” *

“A just, and beautiful idea,” said Rowland, praying to be excused for interrupting Louisa; “and perfectly conformable to truth, and the prediction of the prophets. The dominion of man can extend so far—and no farther. It is the church alone that can enjoy the prerogative of CATHOLICITY, or universality. She it is, which has been represented under the image of a mustard seed, a small grain, but which, when it puts forth, rises, and grows, and expands, into the

* A similar sentiment is to be found in St. Prosper's “Carmen de Ingratis,” which appeared so early as the year 431.

“Sedes Roma Petri quæ pastoralis honoris,
 Facta caput mundo, quicquid non possidet armis
 Religione tenet.”

largest and noblest of trees. She it is, which is represented under the figure of the city built on the top of a mountain, to which all nations are to flock, which is to be visible to all, from the time of its first institution down to the 'consummation of ages.' "

"If it be necessary that the church should be *visible*, I wonder where the Protestant church was during fifteen hundred years?" said Louisa.

"You are always aiming at the Protestants, Lou," said the General, in good humour. "I am sure you will have Dr. Dorson after you before long."

"Papa," replied Louisa, "I can see no consistency in any church, except in the Roman Catholic: all its members, from the highest to the lowest, believe the same doctrines, are subject to the same head, and partake of the same sacraments. I believe my observation is correct, Father Rowland?"

"Perfectly so," replied Rowland; "and whoever sincerely investigates the subject, will be led to the same conclusion."

"I admire consistency, and unity too," said the General: "but continue, my daughter."

"Divine religion, though the powers of earth
Combined with 'hell' to crush thee in thy birth;
Though streamed in every clime, thy martyr's blood,
Against thy law though error boldly stood,
Disturbed thy peace, and rent thy seamless vest,
And aimed the dagger at thine holy breast,
Thou still dost triumph; still thy sacred bark,
While all around is ruin, like the ark
Magnificently rising with the surge,
Shall live triumphant o'er the general scourge."

"The church is here compared to the ark," said the General: "it would appear from this, that the

writer believes no one can be saved, except the family of Noah; that is, those in the ark—the members of the Catholic church. The author is a *good papist*, Louisa," he added, with a tone of voice, and an expression of countenance, which she well understood.

"Well, papa, is not the church *one*? Do we not read in the Bible, '*one* God, *one* faith, *one* baptism?'"—Ephes. iv, 5.

"Now, if there is but *one* faith, all that contradict that faith are in error," added Rowland.

"The great question to be decided is, which is that *ONE FAITH*? The reformed church cannot lay claim to it: for it is manifest that she is the prolific parent of a thousand creeds, each contradicting each; all disagreeing; none admitting anything like a tribunal to decide their controversies; all appealing to the bible—the bible—the bible!"

"Bravo!" exclaimed the General, in a merry tone: it reminds me of the beating of the drum, or the Indian war-song, during the late war. The bible—the bible—the bible."

This was expressed in a manner so peculiar to the old General, that it was followed by a burst of laughter. "At any rate," he continued, "the booksellers profit by the cry. Every bible sent out brings something into their purses."

"It always appeared to me," said Mrs. Wolburn, "that the boast made of the propagation of the bible is a mere speculation, a matter of interest to those who form the societies for diffusing the light of the gospel."

"Instead of diffusing light," said Rowland, "they scatter abroad the seeds of error: each individual interprets for himself and forms a religion for himself; and, ask him who authorised him to judge of these matters in his own regard, and he will appeal to the scripture, and make the scripture speak any language he pleases. With-

out thinking of examining on what grounds the *divinity* and *canonicity* of the books is proved, on what authority it rests, he takes it for granted, that it is what people say it is, and then tortures and twists it into a thousand shapes."

"By what authority," asked the General, "can we know which books are canonical, and which are not?"

"I have frequently put this very question to the parson," said Louisa, "and could never yet get any satisfaction."

"No minister ever could satisfy you on that subject," replied Rowland: "for, to decide that question, and it is one on which the whole edifice of religion must rest, we must necessarily have recourse to some tribunal. A great portion of christians contend that some books, for example, the two books of Machabees, are not canonical: a far greater portion maintain that they are, prove their canonicity, and revere them as they do the four gospels. Now, by whom is it to be decided, which of these contending parties is in the right? Certainly not by every private consciousness, not by inspiration, not by any intrinsic character of their divinity: for *I* could not be conscious of the truth of that which is false; I could not be inspired that a thing is divine, and you be inspired that the same thing is not divine. I could not judge of the canonicity of a book by an intrinsic character, when you judge that the same book is uncanonical for the want of an intrinsic character. Now, this is the case with the Catholic and Protestant, on the subject of the divine inspiration of the books of Machabees, and others. The Catholic says they are canonical; the Protestant says they are not. The Catholic asks, how do you prove they are not? The Protestant replies, because I do not discover in them an intrinsic character of their divinity. The Protes-

tant asks, why do you believe them to be canonical? The Catholic replies, because I *do* see in them an intrinsic character of their divinity, and because they are declared to be canonical by the same church on whose authority is grounded the canonicity of all the other books of the Old and New Testaments. Because they were admitted as such by all christendom before the doctrine of purgatory, which is expressly taught in them, was called in question, and by a great majority of christians at the present day.* A Protestant, therefore, has no right to argue on religious matters, until he establishes the first truth, that the bible is truly the word of God. But this he can never do without some authority to distinguish between what is genuine scripture, and what is apocryphal. This authority must be *infallible*, otherwise it might deceive him, and cause him to believe to be genuine that which is spurious. But the Protestant rejects an infallible tribunal, the Roman Catholic claims it; therefore, among the Catholics only, that infallible tribunal exists; but that tribunal is the church; therefore the Roman Catholic church is the tribunal, and the *infallible* tribunal."

The General was pleased with the argument. "He was too old," he said, "to think of changing his religion—Louisa might act for herself."

"That I certainly am determined on, papa," she replied.

"What! will you give up Henry?" he asked with a shrewd emphasis.

"A thousand Henry's for the truth and heaven," was her reply.

"Certainly, my dear, if Henry Bramswell will

* Et hanc quidem scripturam quæ appellabatur Machabæorum, non habent Judæi sicut Legem et Prophetas et Psalmos sed recepta est ab Ecclesia non mutiliter.—S. Augustin. Lib. 2. de Pecc. Orig. c. 37.

reject Louisa, because she becomes a Catholic, she should not regret the loss," said Mrs. Wolburn.

"You must prepare to meet it then, Louisa," added the General; "you remember Virginia's note, my dear."

"And I must not forget the words of our Saviour, papa: what will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?"—Matt. xvi, 26.

The General seemed affected; he knew how sensitive, yet firm, was Louisa's heart: he drew his handkerchief over his eyes, and turned away his face. To conceal his feelings, he rose from his chair, and, looking through the poem which Louisa had been reading, remarked that he was much pleased with the following lines, which, after wiping his spectacles, and drawing the lamp nearer, he read in a low and tremulous tone:

"But from the bosom of this general gloom
That brooded o'er the world as o'er the tomb,
There sometimes shot a meteor—but its ray
Was faint and rapid, and soon passed away.
'Twas like those baneful fires enkindled o'er
A stormy ocean, on some fatal shore,
Which, glaring on the tempest, only shew
The wreck it should have saved—the scene of woe!
And from the flashes of this transient light
The world's deep gloom seemed gloomier to the sight.
By the rare, doubtful, virtues of a few,
The world appeared more vicious—and *was* too:
Thy precepts, Plato, are indeed sublime;
Thy genius still shines through the mist of time,
And thine, O Socrates, like beacons bright,
Burning all lonely o'er the deep at night.
Sweet flowed from Tully's lips the honied streams
Of genuine eloquence, sparkling with beams
Of brilliant wit, and deep with varied lore,
Pure, chaste, and rapid: now meand'ring o'er

A flowery mead, now winding down the side
 Of some green hill, now rolling in a tide
 Of might and majesty.
 But if their minds by Heaven seemed half inspired
 And still their moral precepts are admired ;
 Base and degraded were the lives they led,
 And half-obscur'd the light by wisdom shed."

"This was the state of the world," added the General, "before the propagation of the christian religion. Dr. Dorson," he continued, throwing the book on the table, "in one of his sermons last fall—I believe—no, last winter, described the condition of the christian world before the Reformation, in nearly the same colours. Martin Luther, he observed, was the star of hope, that rose amid the universal light."

"A bright star, indeed!" exclaimed Louisa ; "have you not read his life, papa?" "My dear," said Mrs. Wolburn, "you know his history full well."

"The state of christendom could not have been as Dr. Dorson described it, General," said Rowland ; "for the light of the true faith was shining over the face of the world: and though it must be admitted, that that light was somewhat obscured in some parts, it never was extinguished in any. I defy Dr. Dorson to prove, that in the midst of the broils between the popes and princes, the church ever ceased for a moment. Have we not the canons of the councils held during the middle ages, during *all* ages? Have we not historians to bear witness to facts? And above all, have we not the promise of Jesus Christ to his church: *I am with you all days for ever?*—Matthew xxviii, 20. Now, either Christ was wanting in his promise, or the church must have existed, as he instituted it, *all days*, even to the

present: but the Redeemer could not have failed in his promise—to conceive such an imperfection in him were a blasphemy: therefore the church must exist, and always must have existed, pure, and free from error. If it must have always existed free from error, then it could not be *reformed*: if it could not be reformed, then Martin Luther was an impostor, Henry VIII. was an impostor, Calvin was an impostor, Zuinglius was an impostor, and all who teach new doctrines are impostors; and, consequently, all who adhere to them, adhere to the doctrine of impostors; but the doctrines of impostors are *necessarily* false; therefore all who follow Luther, Henry VIII., Calvin, Zuinglius, and all other *reformers*, follow false teachers, and are in error: and they are bound,” he added, looking steadfastly at Louisa and her mother, “not only to abandon their error, but to return to the mother church.”

“Aye, Lou,” exclaimed the General, “that’s for you, my girl. I take nothing of it for myself,” he added, laughing, “I take nothing of it for myself.”

The evening was now far spent, the clock on the mantel struck nine. The rain had ceased, but the atmosphere was very chill, and the night boisterous.

The winds roared through the park, and whistled at the windows: but the more bleak it was without, the more cheering seemed the fire within. The blaze crackled, and burned fiercely, as though it defied the keen, cold winds that blew. Mrs. Wolburn, who knew that it was customary for Rowland to retire early to his room, proposed that he should say the night-prayers. “For, my dear sir,” said she, “although not as yet a member of that church, which I begin to be more and more convinced is the only true one, I was always in the habit of calling

together my family, and reciting public prayers at night."

"Who knows, my dear madam," replied Rowland, "but that it is in reward of your piety, and good example, that God, in his mercy, is now opening your eyes."

"They have been closed too long," she returned with an air of dejection—the General walked away. Louisa fixed her eye on her mother, her face flushed with feeling—the tear of sensibility was about to start—when the bell rang for prayers. Almost instantly she threw herself upon her knees, reclined on the sofa, covered her eyes with both her hands, and dissolved in tears.—After prayers, the Father, accompanied by a servant boy, retired: Louisa and her mother remained together, conversing on what they had heard from the Father, and contrasting the consolation, the satisfaction, the truth of his religion, and the vagueness, groundlessness, fallacy, of that in which she had been educated. "Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Louisa, after bidding her good night, and kissing her, "what a benefactor have we not found in good Mr. Rowland."

CHAPTER V.

"By various texts we both uphold our claim,
Nay, often ground our titles on the same:
After long labour lost, and time's expense,
Both grant the words, and quarrel for the sense."

DRYDEN.

Whoever has spent any time in the northern climate of America, has experienced how sudden are the transitions from cloud to sunshine, from cold to heat: he has witnessed the decline of the

evening amid the regions of winter, and the rising of the following morning amid mists and haziness covering the mountains, and floating, like a vast scene of waters, in the vallies. To such a one, the idea of Indian *summer* towards the end of *autumn*, is perfectly consistent and familiar. The native anticipates, with sentiments half mixed with joy, the coming of that weather; for it is peculiar to his climate, and wears the character of home. The foreigner may style it what he pleases, compare it to the malaria of Italy, or the fierce siroc of Africa. Still it is *Indian summer*, congenial to the sons of the land of liberty. The winds which had succeeded to the heavy rains last night, gradually sank, with the world, to slumber: the clouds were dispersed at midnight, and the morning arose in all the fog and mists of the Indian summer. One thick body of vapour hung and brooded over the whole landscape, covering the waters of the Potomac, the hill of Virginia, and the vicinity of the hall. Hill and dale, mansion and cot, meadow and woodland, were all lost in a sea of vapour. But as the sun arose, the first beams were too feeble to pierce the dense fogs, the rays gradually had their effect, first tinging the deformed atmosphere with streaks of faint light, then penetrating the mass which insensibly broke up like the gentle removal of a curtain, and displayed to the eye a scene, which resembles a place of enchantment. Mild, fresh, and beautiful, the day advanced; and it would appear to one unaccustomed to our climate, that nature was about reviving from the torpid slumbers of winter.

After the breakfast table was removed, the Father, Mrs. Wolburn, and Louisa, were soon engaged again in close conversation on the subject of religion, when the rattling of the wheels over the gravelled way, gave notice that a car-

riage was approaching. Louisa flew to the window, she suspected it was Virginia, and was delighted at the idea of her sister's meeting Father Rowland this morning, to avoid whom she had spent a day and a night at Colonel Bramswells.

In a moment Virginia came running into the room, wrapt up in a warm shawl, her reticule hanging at her arm. With much eagerness she opened the door, when she suddenly paused—reddened—and became singularly perplexed.—Rowland was seated on the sofa: she hardly had self-command enough to lift up her eyes, or to treat him with common civility. After exchanging the usual tokens of affection with her sister and mother, she hurried out of the room, piqued and mortified at the conduct of Louisa, who, she remarked, “had treated her very unhand-somely, in not letting her know that the Jesuit was in the hall.”

“Did you ever see a thing so affected as that same Virginia?” said Louisa, and hastened after her.

“I have no idea of such treatment, Louisa,” said Virginia; “common propriety should have induced you to send me word that the Jesuit was still here.”

“I am glad it so happened,” returned Louisa; “and if you will make up your mind to set aside your prejudices and affectation, and converse an hour with Mr. Rowland, you will alter your notions of him, and perhaps your ideas respecting your own religion.”

“Do not, I entreat you, speak so to me, Louisa; do you think I should lose my senses so far as to turn papist?”

“Why cannot you say *Catholic*, Virginia?—You should know, that that nickname is exploded in this enlightened country.”

"They deserve no other name, since they make the Pope the head of their church."

"Do you understand the subject, Virginia? Do you know what you say? The head of the Catholic church is its founder, Christ. The Pope is merely a representative, inasmuch as he succeeds to St. Peter, on whom the church was built."

"What! was the church built on a *man*?" exclaimed Virginia.

"What says the scripture, Virginia? 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church;' (Matthew xvi. 18.) but do, I beseech you—let me prevail on you—do consent to converse with Mr. Rowland on this subject."

Virginia was prepared to give a flat refusal, when the General entered—"Well, my dear," said he, "have you been introduced to Mr. Rowland? You will find him an accomplished gentleman, and a learned and pious priest."

Virginia threw down her eyes and looked displeased. "Come with me, my daughter," he continued, giving her his arm, "let me make you acquainted with a *Jesuit*." Virginia could not resist. Her heart beat within her, her cheeks were suffused, and an expression of fixed displeasure was on her countenance. Still, she could not but go with her father. Louisa took the other arm of the General and they proceeded to the room in which Rowland was conversing with Mrs. Wolburn. As they entered, the Father rose with great composure and dignity, and, with a smile on his face, advanced to meet them. Virginia's courtesy was stiff, and her manner cold and reserved. Without saying a word, she seated herself by the side of her mother, with her face half turned from the Father. Rowland had been prepared for this meeting by Mrs. Wolburn, who had informed him of the deep-rooted antipathy

which she entertained against the Catholic church. The General noticed the manner in which Virginia made her entree, with a loud and jocund voice, though with the usual refinement, for which he was distinguished, "Mr. Rowland," he said, "you will find in Virginia, something of a Puritan."

"A good deal of it," added Louisa.

Virginia remained silent, her eyes were cast downwards and her arms folded.

"Miss Virginia, is, no doubt, sincere in her belief," said Rowland; "if she is prejudiced against us, it is nothing more than the natural effect of her early education."

Virginia was astonished at the language of the Father: "I imagined," she briskly replied, "that we were all *heretics*, and doomed to eternal woe."

"Why so, Virginia?" asked the General.

"Why, papa, because we do not throw away the bible, and fix our faith on the opinions of men, instead of building it on the word of God."

"Is it true that you throw away the bible, Mr. Rowland?" asked the General.

"We are charged with it by the enemies of our faith," returned the Father, "just as we are accused of adoring images and relics."

"It is a calumny, therefore."

"A calumny of the darkest nature; and the misfortune is, when we declare that it is a calumny, we are not believed: when we prove that we reverence the bible, that our religion is in the bible, that we respect the bible as the word of God, we will not be believed."

"You do not make the bible your *only* rule of faith?" said Virginia.

"True," replied Rowland, "we do not."

"There lies your error, and the error of all Roman Catholics."

"No, but by assuming the bible as your sole

and exclusive rule of faith, *you* fall into an egregious error," said Rowland rather animated, "or if the bible were our only rule of faith, then the church could not exist without the bible."

"Is it then possible for the church to exist without the bible?" urged Virginia: without that sacred, that precious book, which we are commanded to search, and in which is all godliness and hope?"

"Let not my assertion surprise you, for nothing is more certain, than that the church did exist without the New Testament."

Virginia rose from her seat, and forgetful of her wonted suavity and amiableness of manners, "whoever," she said, "believes that the church could exist without the bible is no christian."

"Were not the first followers of the apostles true christians," said Rowland, "and yet, for the first ninety years after the establishment of religion, they were without the whole of the New Testament, for it was not yet written. Hence I argue: that is not the sole rule of faith, without which the church existed for ninety years; now, the church existed ninety years without the whole of the New Testament, therefore the New Testament (or the bible,) is not the sole rule of faith."

"There could not be a more convincing argument, my dear," said Mrs. Wolourn.

Here the General was called out of the room.

"I defy any one to answer it," added Louisa.

"If this argument can be answered," continued Rowland, "I am ready to give up the cause: St. John did not write his gospel till the year ninety; now, either the church existed during the preceding period, or it did not. If it did not exist, then it was not established by Christ, and preached by the apostles: if it did, then it existed with,

out the whole of the New Testament. If it existed ninety years without the whole of the New Testament, it might have existed for nine hundred or nine thousand years without it. Because he who supported it during that time, was able, and promised to support it, and preserve it for ever."

Virginia appeared stunned; she took from her reticule a scrap of paper, and noted down the argument, that she might propose it to Dr. Dorson.

"From all which it evidently follows," concluded the Father, "that the bible is not the sole rule of faith. Again, that is not the sole rule of faith, which cannot decide all controversies: but the bible cannot decide all controversies, therefore the bible is not the sole rule of faith."

"But cannot the bible decide all controversies?" asked Virginia.

"It is manifest from the distracted state of the christian world that it cannot," returned Rowland. "The Episcopalian contends that he is right, and appeals to the bible. The Presbyterian contends that he is right, and appeals to the bible. The Methodist contends that he is right; the Baptist that he is right; the Quaker that he is right; the Unitarian that he is right; and all appeal to the bible. The bible is silent, and the ardour and tumult of controversy still continue."

"I conceive the bible to resemble our constitution," observed Mrs. Wolburn, "each individual is not at liberty to interpret it as he pleases, but there are judges to decide on the true meaning of a disputed passage; otherwise there could be no order or peace in the commonwealth."

"You are perfectly correct, madam," returned the Father, "and surely the Redeemer, who was wisdom itself, could not have consulted less for

the welfare of his church, than the framers of our constitution did for the well-being of our republic.

“In consequence of assuming the bible as the exclusive standard of all faith, Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, and other sectarians have varied continually in their doctrine; and this spirit of variation has passed to their followers, which is manifestly contrary to the institution of the church of Jesus Christ, in which truth must be permanent and unalterable, as a deposit entrusted to it to be preserved invariably, and for the preservation of which, the assistance of the Holy Ghost to the end of time has been promised.—(2 Timothy, i. 11, 12.) These innovators, in separating from the church, have fallen into errors the most palpable and incompatible with the sanctity of God. They have affirmed, ‘that God compels man to sin; that he is no less the cause of the sin of Judas, than of the repentance of St. Peter; that good works, no matter how they may be performed, are sinful in the sight of God;’ and have propagated other principles equally revolting, from which we may judge of their doctrine as we judge of the tree from its fruit.”

“But,” said Virginia, “they separated from the church on account of the abuses which had crept into it.”

“This is a frivolous pretext: Jesus Christ predicted that there would be scandals and abuses among the faithful, but still commanded all to remain united to the fold; supposing it might happen on account of human weakness that certain abuses, (no *errors*, however, for he has promised that the church shall continue free from errors,) should find their way into the very sanctuary.”

“Rejecting the authority of the church, they contend that all disputes should be decided by the scriptures, and they leave to each one the

liberty of making a church for himself, in granting him the power to interpret the scriptures as he pleases. Now this is in direct contradiction to the scriptures themselves: St. Peter expressly says, that the scriptures should not be explained by private interpretation, and in speaking of the epistles of St. Paul, he observes that there are passages *hard to be understood*, which the unstable and *unlearned* wrest, as they do the *other scriptures* also, to their own *destruction*."—2 Peter, iii. 16.

"It seems to me there could be nothing plainer," said Louisa.

"Nothing more decisive," added Mrs. Wolburn. Virginia sat in profound silence and deep thought. "According to the system," continued Rowland, "the ministry of parsons is quite useless. Their religion obliges the people to mistrust them, because it is a maxim with them, that not only a particular minister, but all the ministers together, are liable to error, and the christian alone is the competent judge of the sense of the bible, and that each may form to himself a belief that all, young and old, learned and ignorant, read the bible, and understand it according to their caprice."

"But are not the fundamental articles of faith clearly discovered by all?" asked Virginia.

"Why then do they not all agree as to those fundamental articles?" returned the Father.—"Take the first and most important of all, the Divinity of Christ; the Protestant with the bible in his hand, contends that it is a fundamental, and all important article: the Unitarian, with his bible, after a deep research into the original languages, contends that it is *not* a fundamental article, that he may be saved by rejecting it, as well as the Protestant may by believing it. Again, the Quaker, with his bible, rejects the necessity of baptism, and smiles when he hears

it termed a fundamental article by the Protestant. Now, which is, and which is not fundamental?"

"The church must decide that," said Louisa.

"And what is the church?" asked Virginia.

"All the faithful under one head," answered the Father: "the church is a spiritual commonwealth, of which there must be a head, as in all temporal governments. In monarchical countries, the king is the head of the government; in republican, the president. Is it then to be supposed that the Redeemer would establish a government without appointing a head to it?"

"God is the head," said Virginia briskly.

"God is the head of all governments," answered Rowland, "but yet there are visible heads to which the members must be subordinate. So it is in the church: God is, by excellence, the head, for he is the author of the church; but he has appointed a visible head to hold his place on earth, and that head, with all its members, (the faithful) constitute the church, and 'he who will not hear the church, let him be as an heathen and a publican.'"—Matth. xviii. 17.

"What will the Doctor say to this?" asked Louisa with a tone of triumph.

"What *can* he say?" observed Mrs. Wolburn.

"I shall soon know," said Virginia, in rather a subdued tone. "Dr. Dorson will clear all up."

"I defy Dorson," replied Rowland, "or any other parson to answer the argument. It is unanswerable. But, my dear ladies," he added, "I will take another opportunity to prosecute the disquisition on which we have entered. The weather is now fair, and my duties call me to my station." Mrs. Wolburn rang the bell and ordered his horse. When it was announced Rowland arose with great dignity and ease of manner, expressed his sincere attachment to the family,

and evinced a peculiar regard for Virginia, "who," he hoped, taking her by the hand, "would one day or other enter into the fold of Christ." The General seeing the horse at the door, with his wonted urbanity, thanked the Father for his visit, and "though I myself," he added jocularly, "am rather old to begin the investigation of religious matters, you have a fine field in the ladies, my dear sir."

Louisa smiled. Virginia looked perplexed.—She had conceived a very different idea of a Jesuit from what she found him to be. Her ministers had left no artifice untried to prejudice her against *Papists, Romish Priests, Jesuits, and Monks*; and it seemed she hardly knew whether to believe her own eyes and experience, or the assertions and calumnies of the ministers. As soon as he had started, she ordered the carriage with the determination to go immediately to Dr. Dorson's.

"Rowland," observed the General, "is a man of great worth, he is the gentleman, the scholar, and the priest."

"What do *you* think of him, my dear?" said Mrs. Wolburn to Virginia.

She was silent for a moment: "Mamma," she then returned, "we hear but one side of the question; if Doctor Dorson were here to refute the arguments of Mr. Rowland, he would not go off so triumphantly."

"Ah, my dear sister!" said Louisa, putting her arm in Virginia's, "Mr. Rowland has truth on his side."

"Why then do you not abjure the religion in which you have been brought up, Louisa," returned Virginia, with some warmth.

"I am only waiting to be sufficiently instructed," she replied—"and then—"

"And then," interrupted Virginia, "you will

lose Henry, and the Colonel's family will add—your senses.”

“I act conformably to the strictest reason,” she returned, “and as to Henry, if he will not grant me freedom of conscience in a free country, he is welcome to please himself.” The carriage was now at the door, and Virginia drove off with great speed to Doctor Dorson's.

CHAPTER VI.

“For well she marked the malice of the tale,
Which ribald arts the church to Luther owes.
In malice it began, in malice grows.”—DRYDEN.

If the reader has ever seen a tall, spare, yet not undignified person, with a bald head, and a stern, sanctimonious countenance, he may form an idea of the Rev. Dr. Dorson. This gentleman was by birth an Englishman; and when the subject of the established church was introduced, rather touchy, insomuch, that during the revolution, it was very much doubted whether he was not too loyal to his church, not to incur some suspicion of his loyalty to the American government: yet so bitterly averse was he to the *Popish sect*, as he sneeringly denominated the Catholic religion, that he was often heard to say, that were he a member of parliament in England, he would never, never, relax the penal code. It was his most studious care to allude in all his sermons to the *ignorance*, and *superstition*, and *idolatry*, of the Catholic worship. Rome he styled Babylon. The Pope the beast. The Church the mother of corruption. In his catechetical instructions to the children, he would throw up his eyes to heaven, and in a prophetic and tremulous tone of voice, conjure them to fly the company of Popish

play-mates; to look upon their *chapels* as places of abomination; and to regard their priests as monsters. In his library were collected all the works against the Catholic church; and he was among the first to recommend with his signature the work of Don Iago, the Spanish apostate, than which there never was published a blacker compilation of falsehoods, and aspersions against an enlightened people. In the corner, however, the Doctor did not fail to keep (carefully concealed from public view,) the Sermons of Père Bourdaloue and Massillon, which, with a few variations, he translated and preached with great applause. But this privilege will surely be excused in one who was encumbered with a large family, and had to preach every Sunday! He enjoyed, however, the reputation of a learned man, and such a model was he esteemed among the younger classes, that as great as Doctor Dorson, as learned as Doctor Dorson, as pious as Doctor Dorson, and all such adulations passed into a proverb: and to pretend to compare any preacher with him would be downright profanity. His dwelling, a large comfortable mansion, was little more than a mile distant from Wolburn-hall. It was situated adjoining his church, (a spacious building, with a very high steeple,) on a hill, from which it commanded, on one side, a view of the Potomac's waters and tree-crowned banks, and on the other, an amphitheatre of hills skirted with brushwood, and varied with timber. A well cultivated farm was attached to the parsonage; the meadow was covered with cattle, and the barn stocked with plenty. So that all the concern of the good Doctor, in this world, was to take care of his children, preach a sermon, and calumniate the Catholics. This was the case immediately after the American revolution. How the thing is now I leave to others to judge. As soon as General Wolburn's

carriage was discovered from the second story, Mrs. Dorson hastened to put herself in readiness to receive the expected company. The Doctor was informed, but continued writing in his study. When the bell rang, Mrs. Dorson flew down stairs and received Virginia.

"Are you alone, Virginia?" she asked with some surprise.

"All alone, madam," was her reply: "you, surely, could not expect Louisa and mamma in your *heretical* mansion," she added, with some emphasis and an expressive smile. Mrs. Dorson was somewhat astounded.

"I have great things to communicate to the Doctor, my dear madam, which are hardly credible."

The curiosity of Mrs. Dorson was excited, she knew not whether to look upon the circumstance as a frolic in Virginia, or as a serious affair.

"How is your mamma, my dear," said Mrs. Dorson.

"Alas! for my poor mother!" here she drew her handkerchief over her eyes as if to wipe away a tear, which she did not like to expose.

"Come, my dear Virginia," returned Mrs. Dorson with some agitation, "relate what you have upon your mind to the Doctor;" and, putting her arm in Virginia's, they advanced to the Doctor's study-room; he did not rise, but continued writing.

"You do not appear to recognize Miss Virginia Wolburn, my dear," said Mrs. Dorson.

"My dear Miss Virginia," exclaimed the Doctor, starting as it were from a reverie, "I trust you will excuse me: I have been deeply engaged in composing a sermon for next sabbath, in which the *papists* will get their share. Be seated, my dear." Mrs. Dorson retired.

"Melancholy indeed is the business on which I have come, dear doctor," said Virginia.

“Has any misfortune occurred in your most excellent family, Miss Virginia?”

“A fatal one,” she replied as she reclined her head in an attitude on her arm. “Rowland, the Jesuit, has been at the hall.”

“Gracious Lord!” exclaimed the parson.

“And has been calumniating our holy religion till he has turned the heads of my poor sister and mother.” Dorson’s countenance assumed a variety of colours and expressions. “It is a calamity indeed:” he then sighed in a sepulchral tone.

“I come expressly to propose to you the argument he made use of, to shew that the bible is not the rule of faith.”

“Blasphemy! my child,” exclaimed the parson; “here the character of the popish religion discloses itself completely: it rejects the holy word of God, in which is all comfort, and hope, and godliness.”

“He says he defies any parson in the world to answer the argument which I have noted down,” said Virginia, as she opened her reticule and drew out the paper.

“A Jesuit never made a real argument, Virginia,” replied Dorson: “you know the meaning of *Jesuitism*.”

“Allow me to read it, dear Doctor, it is this: ‘St. John did not write his gospel till the year ninety. Now either the church existed during the period before it was written, or it did not: but all admit that it did exist, therefore it existed without the whole of the New Testament. And if it existed without the whole of the New Testament for ninety years, it might have existed nine hundred or nine thousand years. Therefore it follows that the bible is *not* the exclusive rule of faith.’ ”

For a moment the Doctor did not know what

reply to make: answer the argument he could not: he sought only how to evade it most dexterously—"a specious sophism;" he then returned, "my dear Miss, can you not perceive the sophism? Is it possible that such a piece of abstract dialectics could disturb the mind of a good practical christian, who looks to Christ for the salvation of his soul, and not to the priests?"

Virginia was somewhat startled at the evasion of the parson. "Is it true," said she, "that St. John did not write his gospel for ninety years after the christian era?"

"Be not too curious in these matters, dear Miss Wolburn, curiosity is a rock on which many a follower of Christ has split."

"But this is a fact of history," urged Virginia.

"If you wish to satisfy yourself in historical matters, read the abuses and corruptions of the church of Rome. Leave these idle speculations to *Jesuits* and *Monks*."

"But my dear Doctor Dorson," said Virginia, taking him by the hand, "can you not answer and refute the argument?"

"It refutes itself, Miss Wolburn," replied the Doctor. Virginia hung her head and shed tears. "I have come expressly to have our holy religion vindicated," she sighed, "and I trust dearest, dearest Doctor, you will not permit me to go home unsatisfied."

"If you have any doubt about the pure, and simple, and holy religion in which there is no picture worshipping, no praying to saints, no purgatory"—here the Doctor waxed warm: he arose from his chair and walked up and down his room much agitated—"read the bible Miss, and the work I have just recommended, *Don Iago*; will you go to a Jesuit for instruction? he will pervert you Miss, he will pervert you."

"My dear sir, you mistake me. I have not

doubted—at least,” throwing her eyes to heaven, “God knows I never doubted of one tittle of our religion till this interview with you. Can you not, will you not satisfy me?”

“I will pray for you—your faith is shaken. I will implore the mercy of the Redeemer for you, and your family.” Without waiting for an answer, he ran to his library, and after rummaging the shelves, returned with a book which he presented to Virginia. “This will satisfy your doubts, dear Miss Wolburn: in this book you will discover the true nature of *Popery*.”

Virginia coldly received it, and turned to the title page, from whence she discovered that it was *Paschal's Letters*, a new edition of which was then circulating through Maryland. With an expression of indifference she closed it, and as it was small put it into her reticule. Virginia was very sad: prejudiced to the highest degree against the Catholics, she hoped to come off from her visit with Doctor Dorson most triumphantly. She went prepared with a sheet of paper to write down the refutation of Rowland's argument. But after urging it over and over, conjuring the Doctor to reply to it, shewing him the evil consequences which would result from her not being able to answer it, when called upon to do so by her sister and mother, she could not obtain a shadow of refutation. She knew not what to attribute it to. She clasped her hands, and with much excitement assured the Doctor, “that he should have to answer for the loss of their religion.” She then abruptly quitted the room, and hastened to the carriage. Mrs. Dorson was a good deal perplexed. She had heard that Rowland had spent a day at Wolburn-hall, and she knew not whether to evince her usual affection to Virginia or not. As the footman closed the carriage door, the Doctor came down and

slipped into Virginia's hand a letter directed to Mrs. Wolburn—Virginia bowed, bade good morning, and drove away.

The road to Wolburn-hall was rural and picturesque, winding now along the borders of the river, and now into a stately forest, impervious, during the summer months, to the rays of the sun. The leaves had either fallen from the oak and hickory, and were driven with a rustling noise before the wind, or were lingering in their last dyes, red, purple, yellow, and pale green, on the boughs. The variety of scenery presented to him who strays through the American woods in autumn is magical, and no where else to be discovered. The ground is strewn with leaves of every hue, sprinkled with acorns, walnuts and chesnuts, varied with brushwood, intermingled with some solitary wild flowers which bloom in the chill air, "born to blush unseen," in the deep and tangled thickets. The forests towering to the clouds, spreading out their mighty branches, like the arms of so many giants, groaning as the blast blows through them, resound afar like the downward rush of a mountain cataract. Glittering through the intervals that separate these lofty trees, the red-berries of the haw, the dog wood, and various shrubbery is seen; and pleasing, cheering to the eye, and wholesome, fresh to the smell, and fraught with moral lessons to the contemplative mind, is the whole native woodland scenery. In her solitary ride through the forest, Virginia was wrapt in contemplation. She pondered over and over the argument of Rowland. She could not answer it. Dorson could not refute it. What then was to be the consequence? She sighed, she wept—on entering the lane which led to the hall, her heart beat. She had left her mother abruptly, with the view of gaining a signal victory over the Jesuit. But she

now saw herself defeated, and returning without anything like an answer to the argument proposed. She alighted from the carriage, and hastened as privately as possible to her room.—Louisa, however, pursued her; and suddenly opening the door, found her sitting in a thoughtful posture, reclining her head on her hands, clasped upon her toilet.

“Well Virginia,” said she, “what news do you bring from Doctor Dorson?”

“My dear Louisa, be kind enough to hand this letter to mamma.”

“Is it from the Doctor? Yes, I know his hand writing. I suppose we shall have a real scolding now. He has satisfied *you* no doubt, and all that remains is to save *us*,” said Louisa, with an emphasis.

“Louisa, hand it to mamma immediately, and I shall be with you in a moment.”

With her wonted ingenuousness and simplicity, Louisa flew to her mother’s apartment, and presenting her the letter, “here mamma,” she exclaimed, “is an antidote against all that we have from Mr. Rowland, I presume.”

“From whom does it come, my dear?”

“Open it, mamma, you will soon perceive.”

“Ah! has Virginia returned?” she exclaimed; “it must be of course from Doctor Dorson. Well, let us see its contents.”

As she was opening the letter, a servant entered with a book which he said was sent by Miss Virginia. It was *Paschal’s Letters*. After running rapidly over the title, Mrs. Wolburn gave the letter to be read aloud by Louisa. It was as follows:

“MY DEAR MADAM,

“The grief which I experience at the unaccountable step you have lately taken, may be expressed by my tears, never by words. I am

informed by your daughter Virginia, that the Jesuit Rowland has spent a day under your roof. Like a wolf in sheep's clothing, he has led you astray. Can a lady of your fine sense, good education, experience and piety, suffer herself to be duped by a manifest impostor? Will you ever degrade yourself so far as to confess: to kneel down and adore relics and pictures, and look to Mary and the saints for redemption, which alone can come from the merits of the Lamb? Are you not acquainted with the intrigues, the corruptions, the proverbial deception of the Jesuit order: a king-killing and arbitrary set of men, who monopolize to themselves all the good things of this world? Permit me to send you, as an antidote to Rowland's intrigues, a work which as lately been published, the object of which is to unveil Jesuitism. "DORSON."

"Dear mamma, what a spirit is this? could such rancour and hatred abide in the bosom of a minister of truth? What epithets cast upon one of the noblest and most respectable bodies of men? Could you conceive it possible?"

"And what supine ignorance of Catholic principles," added Mrs. Wolburn.

"What can be expected from the people when the ministers are so prejudiced, and so malicious?" returned Louisa. "The Catholics are accused of bigotry, but, upon my word, mamma, they are infinitely more liberal and charitable than any sect. They know they are doing right; they believe in a true doctrine—for really *I* am convinced they are in the true way—and they wish well to all others."

"Your remark is quite correct, my dear," said Mrs. Wolburn. "My dear, I have read somewhere that Blaise Paschal was not an orthodox member of the church. Do you remember to have read any thing on the subject?"

"I am not sure, mamma, but any one who writes as he does must cease to be a Catholic."

"Well, my dear, write a line to Mr. Rowland, and pray him to give us some account of the man: and perhaps you had better send Doctor Dorson's note with it."

Louisa instantly seated herself at her writing desk, and addressed the following lines to Father Rowland:

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

"You will pardon the freedom I take in writing you this note, when you perceive from the inclosed, that Doctor Dorson is labouring to undermine all that you have done at Wolburn-hall. Virginia has been to see him, and is made the bearer to mamma of his note, and a book, entitled 'Paschal's Letters.' He represents the author to have been a Catholic. This, we think, impossible. You would oblige me much, and greatly contribute to the peace of our minds, by informing us who this Paschal was. Since our interview with you many observations have been made by our friends; a strong opposition is evinced, but fear not, dearest sir, for mamma and myself will never sacrifice our consciences to any earthly considerations. Religion is our only solace: may we soon become worthy members of the true church. With great esteem, and many thanks for the interest you take in our welfare. I remain, &c.

"LOUISA WOLBURN."

Louisa had hardly put her note in the servant's hands before Virginia entered the room.

Mrs. Wolburn did not hint in the least to her visit to Doctor Dorson. She merely remarked, that Virginia appeared unusually depressed.

"What ails you, my dear," she said; "there is something upon your mind." "I imagined Virginia would have come back triumphant and in

high spirits," said Louisa. "Virginia, it is in vain to attempt to conceal it, there is an expression of sadness on your countenance."

"I must confess, mamma, that my spirits are somewhat damped, but do not, I beseech you, enquire the reason."

"Has Doctor Dorson satisfied you, Virginia?" asked Louisa, rather abruptly. "What do you think of his note, and the book he sent you, mamma?" said Virginia. "Had you read the note, my dear, you might judge of the sensation it created in me. Such calumnies are no arguments. If Doctor Dorson would wish to counteract the instructions and sound reasoning of Mr. Rowland, he must make use of similar means."

"I have determined," said Louisa, "to believe nothing I hear about *superstition*, the *dark ages*, *idolatry*, and——"

"Why?" asked Virginia.

"Because it is calunmy and idle verbiage."

"What a difference between the calm, dispassionate reasoning of Mr. Rowland, and the vapid vituperation of Doctor Dorson."

"I must confess," said Virginia, "I have a better opinion of a Catholic priest than before; and," she added with some reluctance, "I should have no objection to listen to Mr. Rowland again."

Louisa was delighted with this concession.—She looked at her mother and smiled.

"But what have you done with Doctor Dorson's letter, mamma?" asked Virginia.

"I have sent it with a letter to Mr. Rowland," said Louisa.

"I should wish to see the answer. And how were you pleased with the book? Doctor Dorson mentioned that it would prove a sovereign antidote against popery in this country."

"The book shall not be read," returned Mrs. Wolburn, "until we receive Rowland's answer."

"I can bear anything in the Catholic church, but transubstantiation and purgatory," said Virginia.

"These are the doctrines I wish to have explained, my dear," returned Mrs. Wolburn; "but I am persuaded they are scriptural: we must have another interview with Mr. Rowland."

"I shall be pleased to be present, my dear mamma," said Virginia.

"It will satisfy all her doubts," added Louisa.

"For my part," resumed Mrs. Wolburn, "I am convinced that the Protestant cannot be the true religion, and I never again will appear in St. Saviour's. The Catholic church seems to me, as far as I have investigated the subject, to be that which was instituted by Christ, and can teach no error: therefore, it strikes me, the doctrine of that church must be true."

"That is, if it be the *true church*," said Virginia: "but that's the question. Yet I really must confess"—her voice faltered, and her sentence was left unfinished.

"My dear, did Doctor Dorson refute the argument of Mr. Rowland?" asked Mrs. Wolburn.

"It were unless for me to make a secret of it; mamma, he did not: and, to be candid, my ideas respecting the Catholic religion are much altered since the short conversation I had with Mr. Rowland. Indeed, I am astonished at myself, when I reflect upon the singular antipathy I had before conceived to any thing like a priest, much more a Jesuit."

"Dear Virginia," exclaimed Mrs. Wolburn, as she clasped her in her arms, "I am charmed with your candour. God grant that we may all come to the knowledge of the truth, and embrace it."

"Really, mamma, Doctor Dorson could not answer the argument, and if it be unanswerable, the religion which I believe to be the true one,

and which I would have sacrificed my life for, cannot be the true one—my faith is shaken : and, as I know that without faith it is impossible to please God, I will leave nothing undone to embrace the true faith.”

The resolution so suddenly effected in Virginia, was a matter of astonishment, not only to her mother, but even to herself. The puritanical prejudices in which she had been educated, and which had grown with her growth, were dispersed like clouds before the winds, and she determined to make the subject of religion a matter of serious investigation.

CHAPTER VII.

“An hideous figure of their foes they drew,
Nor lines, nor looks, nor shades, nor colours true,
And this grotesque design expose to public view.”

DRYDEN.

LOUISA sat impatient to receive an answer from Rowland : frequently did she run to the door, with the hope of seeing the servant returning. At length the boy appeared with a letter directed to her mother. She seized it with avidity, and hastened to give it to Mrs. Wolburn. Virginia was then called, and Mrs. Wolburn read it aloud, as follows :

“MY DEAR MADAM,

“Your communication surprised me not a little. I had heard much of the acrimony and illiberality of some who call themselves the ministers of peace and charity, but never could I persuade myself that in this enlightened and free country, the cant of intolerant England could be carried to such an extreme. I flattered myself that we were no longer

regarded as *idolators* and *intriguing* men, and that we might at least enjoy in peace the right of believing and preaching what we please. But no : we are held up to the world as the worst of men, and our holy religion is represented as a medley of follies and errors, not less absurd than the reveries of Mahommed. Thank God ! the fetters of the mind, as well as of the body, have been thrown off by the American people ; our fellow-citizens will not be influenced in their estimation of Catholics, by men nurtured in the bosom of national prejudices, and intoxicated with antipathies against that church, which the great, the good, the learned, the noble, the wise, belonged to, and still belong to. Your friends may oppose the steps you are taking, my dear madam, 'for they know not what they do :' but I trust you will have strength, courage, perseverance enough to embrace the truth. What a pitiful attempt has Dorson not made to shake your resolution ! Does it not prove the badness of his cause, when, to defend it, he must have recourse to abuse ; when he can without blushing recommend to you such a book as Don Iago, or even Paschal's Letters ? You ask if Paschal was a Catholic ? I answer, he was *not*. He was a Jansenist, and as virulently opposed to the church as Dorson himself. His object in writing those letters was to destroy the Jesuits, a body of men diametrically opposed to the Jansenists. To effect this, he had recourse to satire, calumny, misrepresentation, and falsehood.

"How glad should I be to have another conversation with you on these matters. Might I expect you this evening, dear madam ? The weather is fair, and a ride to the 'chapel,' would, perhaps, be of service to you. Recommending you and your family to Almighty God, I remain, dear madam, your obedient servant, "ROWLAND."

"It is, indeed, astonishing," said Virginia, "that Doctor Dorson could recommend the work of a Jansenist, as that of a Roman Catholic."

"His object is to delude the simple and uninformed, Virginia," returned Louisa.

"Not to *delude*, I hope, Louisa," observed Virginia.

"Well then, to deceive or impose upon the common mass of readers."

"There will, no doubt, be a long list of signatures in commendation of this work, as there was in that of Don Iago," said Mrs Wolburn; "though I am informed by the best authority, that some of the signers are ashamed of themselves, and would willingly erase their names."

"Dr. Handerway is, in my opinion, the only minister who acted like a gentleman and a christian, on that occasion," said Louisa.

"It is strange, I must confess," said Mrs. Wolburn, "that any gentleman could recommend a book full of calumnies against the religion of the most enlightened men of the age."

"In this number you will include the venerable Mr. Powell," said Louisa.

"But there are some points in the Catholic doctrine which appear strange and unreasonable to me, mamma," observed Virginia.

"I am not at all astonished at that, my dear; I had the very same ideas and prejudices, before I began seriously to investigate the subject. And, Virginia, my dear, I begin to be thoroughly convinced, that all the sects of the present day are mere impositions, disguised under the appearances of truth and religion."

"If Mr. Rowland, mamma, can convince me of transubstantiation, purgatory, praying to the saints, relics, absolution, and some other articles of the Roman Catholic faith, I should then have some reason to agree with you in your observation."

“ Well, my dear, he has had the goodness to invite us to the chapel this evening.”

“ Will you go along with me, Virginia?” asked Louisa.

“ Certainly : I cannot object ; I was very much pleased with what I saw of Mr. Rowland, and since my interview with Doctor Dorson”— her voice began to falter --“ I am still more pleased with him—I must say the truth.”

“ Rowland, my dear, has truth with him ; and truth will prevail,” said Mrs. Wolburn. Virginia was silent.

The extraordinary revolution of Virginia's notions regarding the Catholic church was a matter of consolation and astonishment to her mother and sister; and they began to conceive a faint hope that she might be brought to forsake a false religion, and embrace the true one. She was of a firm disposition, and when she once made up her mind to act, nothing could prevent her. It was this tenacity to her resolution that caused her to despise the Catholic religion, which she had persuaded herself was idolatrous and absurd. She was accustomed to fly with disdain from the sight of a priest, the very name of whom was sufficient to awaken her indignation and contempt. But the conversation of Rowland had now disabused her of her erroneous ideas, and she felt anxious to hear him again on controversial matters.

About three o'clock, therefore, Mrs. Wolburn ordered the carriage : and Louisa, Virginia, and herself started for the “ Chapel.” The distance from Wolburn-hall was not more than four miles, along a level, and almost direct road. The evening was mild and beautiful ; and though the trees were almost entirely stript of their foliage, the country was still full of charms. The road continued for a considerable distance along a ser-

pentine fence, so common in North America, covered with blackberry bushes, and dog-wood. Sometimes the ground-squirrel was seen running along the fence, a flock of partridges sometimes started with a noisy flight from the thicket on the side of the road ; and even the wild rabbit was spied, swift as the wind, scudding across the corn-field, or darting into the brush-wood.

As they rode on, the conversation turned entirely on religious topics, until the chapel appeared in view. It was situated on a gentle declivity, surrounded by poplars and elms, over the tops of which the white steeple pointed to heaven. Rowland's house was small, but comfortable and neat. He possessed a competency : he asked no more.

"How interesting to the christian," said Mrs. Wolburn, "is that cross rising above the loftiest trees—is it not astonishing how all sects should have done away that sign of redemption, that instrument of our hopes?"

"There is nothing about a Protestant church to distinguish it from an heathen temple," said Louisa.

"You surely cannot mean what you affirm, Louisa," returned Virginia.

"I surely do, Virginia; what is there about 'your church' to distinguish it from a Pagan temple?"

"But you forget that there is a cross on St. Saviour's," added Virginia.

"Do you call that strange thing a christian cross?" asked Louisa : "mamma," she added with somewhat too much of satire in tone and manner, "I declare it is more like a turn-stile." Virginia could not brook the expression : "you are rude, Louisa, very rude, and I must add unbecoming in your language."

"Louisa is right, my dear," said Mrs. Wolburn ; "it would really appear that the Protestants are ashamed of the cross."

"It is a scandal to them, as it was to the Jews," exclaimed Louisa, much too warmly.

The conversation continued with animation until they reached the gate that opened into Rowland's yard. In an instant the Father was at the door, and with his elegance and simplicity of manner, welcomed the ladies into an humble dwelling.

"How pleasing to me, dear ladies," he said, "to greet you into my rustic abode. Here is my home," pointing to his house. "I have all that I want, and more I do not desire. My companions are my books, and my place of resort is that simple chapel." This he expressed in a manner so unaffected and striking, that Louisa, as she afterwards declared, could hardly refrain from shedding tears.

"How happy!" she turned aside and whispered to Virginia, "how happy!"

Mrs. Wolburn noticed how keenly she was affected; and to divert her thoughts, "Virginia," she said, "dear sir, has at length consented to be present at our conversation. I know not," she added with a smile, "what has revolutionized her ideas so suddenly."

"My ideas on *religion* are not revolutionized, mamma; but I will acknowledge that my ideas concerning the Catholic clergymen are very much altered."

"For the better, I am persuaded," said Rowland, taking her hand. "Dear Miss Wolburn, how are we not misrepresented, and that by persons utterly unacquainted with us!"

"Really Mr. Rowland, I was taught to believe, that a priest was an illiterate, fanatical being; and a Jesuit—"

"And a Jesuit," Rowland interrupted her laughing, "a monster, I presume."

"Not quite a monster," she replied, "but a wicked and intriguing man."

"These notions you derived from books which were put into your hands at school, Virginia, and which you devoured," said Mrs. Wolburn.

"Fatal is the evil," returned Rowland, "effected by the prejudices and acrimony of men who write books for schools. Wherever it is possible to introduce anything against the Catholic Church, they will not fail to do so."

"True, Mr. Rowland," said Virginia; "but it cannot be denied that there are certain points in your doctrine which are liable to be ridiculed."

"Ridiculed," exclaimed Louisa with energy: "is it possible, Virginia, that you—"

"Pray tell me, my daughter," said Mrs. Wolburn, interrupting Louisa, "what there is in the Catholic church that deserves to be ridiculed?"

"I do not mean to imply, far be it from me, mamma, that I would ridicule any part of the Catholic worship; but the ceremonies of the church are so strange, and the idea of worshipping images, the Virgin Mary and the saints, is so absurd, that it is not to be wondered at if—"

"Are you then in earnest, Miss Virginia?" asked the Father: "do you really believe that the Catholic adores images, the Virgin Mary, or the saints? the Catholic adores God alone; he honours and respects the saints."

"It is certainly represented by Protestant writers, that Catholics pay adoration to the saints," said Virginia. "And the misrepresentation is too often assumed as truth," added Mrs. Wolburn.

"Do you not honour—are you not commanded by Almighty God to honour your parents, Miss Virginia?" said Rowland.

"I certainly do and am bound to honour them."

“Are you accused of idolatry for so doing?”

“By no means; who could accuse me of idolatry for honouring them?”

“Do you not honour, and evince every mark of respect for General Washington?”

“I revere his very name,” said Virginia, with some enthusiasm.

“And why?”

“On account of his great qualities, his noble exploits, his disinterestedness, and his love of the republic.”

“When your parents will be no longer with you, but in a better world, will you cease to honour them?”

“I shall then feel more devotion towards them than ever,” she replied.

“Will not Washington deserve the benedictions, the reverence, the love of those who will survive him, and all posterity?”

“He will; and time will only increase the lustre that encircles his name.”

“Well, Catholics do no more; they reverence those persons who have distinguished themselves for their truly great qualities, noble achievements in religion, disinterestedness about the things of this world, which soon pass away, and their love of Heaven and the Creator. And such persons are proposed as models to the imitation of all future ages.”

“Nothing could be more satisfactory,” said Mrs. Wolburn.

“Nothing more reasonable,” added Louisa, “than the respect which Catholics pay to the saints.”

“I will admit,” returned Virginia, “that it is proper to reverence the saints on this principle; but what is the use of *praying* to them? Is it not derogatory from the merits and mediation of

Christ, to have recourse to their intercession? Can they hear our prayers?"

"What is the use of requesting the prayers of our brethren on earth? Does not St. Paul recommend himself to the prayers of the faithful: Brethren, pray for me, does he write."

"This is the very text which Doctor Dorson made use of some time ago," said Louisa; "mamma, you remember it, and he earnestly exhorted his flock to be mindful of him in their prayers."

"St. Paul would not have recommended himself to the prayers of the faithful, if their prayers had been unavailable," said the Father: "now if the prayers of the faithful on earth may be of use, surely those of the elect in heaven will be more so; and if Doctor Dorson could recommend himself to the prayers of the congregation, the Catholic cannot certainly be accused of idolatry for entreating the saints in heaven to pray for him. It is no more a derogation from the merits or mediation of the Redeemer, to entreat the prayers of the saints in heaven, than to request the prayers of our brethren on earth—and Christ expressly declares in the scriptures, that 'there shall be joy before the saints of God on one sinner doing penance.'"—Luke xv. 10.

"What does this text prove?" asked Virginia.

"It proves that the angels and saints are conscious of what is done on earth."

"How so?"

"Because, if they rejoice at the repentance of a sinner, they must know that he does penance; if they know that he does penance, then do they know that he prays, and will intercede for him with the Almighty."

"I hope after this, the Catholics will not be accused of adoring the Virgin Mary," said Louisa.

"They should not be," added Mrs. Wolburn;

“but no doubt we shall hear the same song from the Bramswells and others.”

“I was always under the impression that the Catholics paid adoration to the saints,” said Virginia, “and often have I wondered how such a patriot, a philosopher, and a christian, as the venerable Charles Powell, and so enlightened a lady as his daughter, Mrs. Payson, could be so blinded and inconsistent in this particular. But, dear sir,” she continued, “I cannot reconcile to my notions the respect which you pay to relics and images.”

“The Catholic, Miss Virginia, reverences the images of saints on the same principle that he reverences the saints themselves. And if you are convinced of the propriety of praying to the saints——”

“I certainly must confess that I am,” interrupted Virginia.

“You cannot, therefore, object to the propriety of paying respect to their images,” continued Rowland.

“But does not the first commandment forbid us to make any graven thing, or the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or under the earth?” Louisa smiled.

“Why then do you wear the likeness of grand-papa round your neck, Virginia?”

“A very pertinent and convincing retort,” said Rowland. Virginia appeared confused, she fixed her eye on the image, and reddened—

“Is that not a graven thing, my dear,” asked Mrs. Wolbourn: “is not that the likeness of any thing that is on earth, or in the heavens above?”

“I trust it is the likeness of one who is in heaven above,” said Virginia, as her eyes became suffused.

“If then it be improper, if it be idolatrous for Catholics to have and respect the images of saints, it is equally so for you to reverence that image of

him whose memory you love and revere," said Rowland. "For the first commandment makes no distinction between the images of sacred things and profane things: 'thou shalt not make to thyself *any* graven thing:' it forbids us merely to *adore* and *serve* them. 'Thou shalt not adore and serve them.' Now, where is the man so silly, so heathen-like among the Catholics, as to kneel down and adore a senseless, lifeless thing?"

"The very idea of such a thing is absurd," said Louisa.

"But why do Catholics reverence the relics of saints?" asked Virginia. "Is it not somewhat disgusting to kneel to the bones of dead men?"

"We do not kneel to the bones of dead men, no more than you kneel to the likeness of a dead man. And pray, do you not preserve and respect the hair of a departed friend?"

"Have you not a locket of aunt Sabina's hair, which you press to your bosom, in token of your veneration?" said Louisa. "I think I have heard you call it a relic too."

"But not in the sense which Catholics attach to it."

"The word has but one meaning, dear Virginia," said Mrs. Wolburn; "it signifies something that is *left*."

"Could the identical skull of Cicero be discovered, would not the most prejudiced Protestants in the world deem it an invaluable acquisition," remarked Rowland; "would it not be placed, as an object of respect, in the museum? Does not all Europe, and especially Protestant England, value and esteem, I might add, respect, the statues of famous men, found amid the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and other ancient cities? Why do they respect those statues? It is because they represent men worthy of respect."

Why does the Catholic respect images and relics ? Because those images represent great and holy men, and those relics are what once belonged to them."

"Is that the doctrine of the Catholic church ?" exclaimed Virginia, with astonishment.

"How it is deformed and misrepresented by Protestant writers. What is truly reasonable and what now appears to me proper and natural, is disfigured by prejudice or malevolence, into idolatry, absurdity, and sacrilege."

"From this instance, you may judge of all," said Rowland. "But only continue the investigation, dear Miss, and you will be convinced that there is nothing in our church that is not strictly conformable to sound reason, and the word of God."

"The next question which Virginia wishes to hear discussed, dear sir, is the subject of transubstantiation," said Mrs. Wolburn.

"An important and much agitated question it is," remarked Rowland.

"It is a subject which hitherto I regarded as ridiculous. I will be candid mamma," said Virginia.

"How is it possible that Christ, at once God and Man, can conceal all that he is, in his humanity as well as divinity, under the appearance of an host?"

"There is the mystery," returned Rowland : "How is it possible,—you believe in the divinity of Christ—"

"Most certainly I do."

"Then let me ask you, how is it possible that Christ, at once God and Man, could conceal all that he is, his divinity, his omnipotence, his immensity under the garb of an humble and despicable man ? And yet you can believe that God became man."

"I believe it, because I find it in the scripture," said Virginia.

"You cannot believe it merely because you find it in the scripture," rejoined Rowland.

"Certainly I can, does not St. John declare in the most precise terms, that the 'Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us?'"

"He does; but is there not a *vicious circle* in your mode of reasoning?"

"I can; perceive none, sir."

"You believe that God became Man, because you find it in the scriptures: you believe in the scriptures, because they are inspired by God made Man. Believe me Miss Virginia, you must have recourse to some authority besides the mere bible."

Virginia evinced a good deal of perplexity.

"I never before reflected on this fact," said Mrs. Wolburn. "It is convincing to my mind, very convincing."

"It is unanswerable," added Louisa.

"Again, Miss Virginia, you say you believe in the divinity of Christ, or in other words, that God became Man, because you find it in the scriptures; well, for the very same reason, should you believe in the mystery of the real presence, or transubstantiation?"

"Where do you read in the bible that Christ has given us his own flesh?" asked Virginia.

Rowland immediately took up a pocket edition of the New Testament, and turning to the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, "here you will read it most distinctly," he said, "so plainly, that there can be no doubt left, it appears to me, on a serious and reflecting mind." He then read the following passage, (verses 47, 48, 49, &c.) "Amen, amen, I say unto you: he that believeth in me hath everlasting life. I am the *bread* of life. Your fathers did eat manna in

the desert, and are dead. This is the BREAD which cometh down from heaven. If any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living *bread* which came down from heaven. If any man eat of it, he shall live for ever; and the *bread* that I will give is my *flesh*, for the life of the world.

“The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say unto you: except you shall eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me. This is the *bread* that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this *bread* shall live for ever. Many therefore of his disciples hearing it, said: this saying is hard, and who can hear it.—After this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”

“But does not Christ, in another verse, expressly declare that his words are spirit and life?” returned Virginia.

“He does,” replied Rowland, “but never did he mean to explain in a figurative sense, the declaration which he had made. Else why did many of his disciples abandon him? And you must remark, Miss, that they abandoned him after he had used the terms *spirit* and *life*; now I contend, if the Saviour had explained his meaning, according to the acceptation of the Protestant world, his disciples would not have forsaken him: the *saying* would not have been hard: for certainly, it was no hard matter to believe that the body of Christ could be represented under the form of bread, and his blood under that

of wine. But even after the explanation, if explanation it can be called, given by the Redeemer, the incredulous disciples abandoned him. Christ did not call them back, and show them how they had misconceived his meaning, no, but turning to the twelve, 'will you also go away?' he said. 'And Simon Peter answered him: Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.' "

"But you quote from the Catholic bible," said Virginia, "can you find the same related in the Protestant scripture?"

"Certainly, I can."

"Pardon me, if I say, that I very much doubt it, Sir."

"Here is a bible, published by the bible Society of Maryland," said Rowland, opening the volume, "the facts are the very same, and the language varies but little." Here he read the whole of the passage.

"Is not that enough to convince the most incredulous, Virginia?" exclaimed Louisa.

Virginia was silent, and looked amazed.

"Again," resumed Rowland, "in St. Matthew, we read that, at the last supper, Jesus took bread and brake and gave to his disciples, saying: *this is my body*, (26. vi.) Allow me to make one simple reflection on this text. According to the principle of the Protestant religion, each individual has a right to read and interpret the bible as he pleases. Is it not true, Miss Virginia?"

"By all means; on that grand and liberal principle our church is founded."

"If, therefore, after a mature perusal and reflection, I am convinced that it should be understood *literally*, no one has any right to condemn me. I act on the broad principle of Protestantism. Why then should I be accused of error, or idolatry; especially when to my interpretation, I

adjoin that of the greatest, wisest, holiest, and most learned of men, during eighteen hundred years?"

"But was it really the doctrine of all Christendom, before the reformation?" asked Virginia.

"If there be any truth in history, this fact is manifest," returned Rowland. "The first person who dared to attack it, was one Berengarius, who lived in the twelfth century. But he was immediately condemned by the whole world, and afterwards retracted, and repented. And at the present day, it is the doctrine of a great majority of christians. In Italy, in Austria, in Poland, in France, in the Netherlands, in Portugal, in Spain, in Ireland, in South America, in the east, it is the faith of the greatest, the noblest, and the wisest of men. Are all these persons so stupid as to take that for the real body of Christ, which is a mere wafer? Is it not more safe, at least, is it not more prudent, for us to believe with them, especially when the scripture is so plain on the subject, than to adhere to the opinions of a few, who found those opinions on the principle, that they are allowed to interpret the bible as they choose, and they choose to interpret it *figuratively*? And because they interpret it to suit and please themselves, they wish to deprive *me*, and all who believe in the real presence, of the privilege of interpreting it according to the literal acceptation."

"What a strange inconsistency on the part of the Protestants!" exclaimed Louisa.

"The Protestant religion, I am more and more persuaded, is made up of inconsistencies," said Mrs. Wolburn.

Virginia fixed her eye on the floor, and was pensive. After a considerable pause, "indeed," she said, "the Catholics appear more consistent.

They interpret the bible after their own conviction, and have the authority of almost all the world besides."

"And of all antiquity," added Rowland.

"But our Saviour said: 'Do this in commemoration of me,'" replied Virginia.

"This objection is always adduced, when no other can be found," said Rowland: "but it proves nothing against the real presence, much less in favour of the figurative interpretation."

"Why not?" asked Virginia.

"Because, you must remark, in the institution of the blessed sacrament, there are two distinct propositions: one of which cannot contradict the other. The first is: This is my body. The second: Do this in commemoration of me. By the first, the bread was changed into the body of Christ, as I have proved. By the second, the apostles were commanded to do the same, and of course received the power to do it. And this power was transmitted to their successors; in virtue of which we *transubstantiate*, at mass, the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ."

"Hence the institution of the mass, my dear," said Mrs. Wolburn.

"Again," said Rowland, "Protestants are not generally aware of the frightful consequences to which their doctrine of a *figurative* presence would inevitably lead. It tends to destroy the reality, and by consequence, the efficacy of the great christian atonement."

"That will be a singular and convincing argument, indeed," said Virginia, "if it can be sustained."

"Well you shall hear," replied Rowland.—

"At the institution of the eucharist, Christ did not simply say: *This is my body*: he added, *which shall be broken or delivered for you*. He

thus distinctly describes the body of which he spoke. He identifies it with that very body which was broken for our sins on the cross. We must, therefore, either admit, that the words of Christ are to be taken in their obvious and literal sense, as indicating a real presence of his real body, or we shall be forced to acknowledge, that his body did not really suffer on the cross. For, adopting for a moment the figurative interpretation, Christ's words will run thus: 'This is my body, (that is, *the figure of my body,*) which (that is, *which figure of my body,*) will be delivered for you.' Now we all agree, that it was the real body of Christ which was delivered for us into the hands of his enemies, and which was broken for us, upon the cross, and consequently, I think, that we should reject that interpretation which would tend to overturn the whole foundation of our hopes. A similar process of reasoning may be applied to the words spoken at the consecration of the cup."

"Really," said Virginia, "that view of the subject never struck me before; and, besides, I cannot conceive how, at so solemn a moment, Christ could have used other than the plainest and most simple language."

"The remark is just," replied Rowland. "But observe further, that our Redeemer foresaw the manner in which the great body of christians, with very few exceptions, would interpret his words for fifteen hundred years, as significative of a real presence; and do you not think if he meant the contrary, his goodness and mercy to his creatures would have induced him to employ such language as would leave no doubt of this doctrine? Now he has done the very contrary, and has spoken in such clear terms in favour of the real presence, that his words must be unna-

the body of Christ, only as long as it is pure and incorrupt."

"Never, never shall I believe such a thing," exclaimed Sabina, "who can understand it?"

"Who can understand the Trinity, my dear," returned Mrs. Wolburn. "The Unitarian laughs at you for believing that three persons constitute but one God. *You* contend that that is a most sacred truth: *they* deny it. They urge you to shew the word 'Trinity' in the bible; you cannot. Now, if you admit that first and most important, and most incomprehensible of all mysteries, why do you refuse to admit another, which, if any thing, is more clearly expressed, and more forcibly inculcated in the scripture than the former?"

"The truth is, I do not wish to offend you Sabina," said Virginia, "but it is notorious the Protestant religion is a tissue of inconsistencies—"

"You are then determined to abandon it," said Henry with a penetrating glance, and a look of anxiety.

"At any peril," replied Virginia; "I am bound, and determined, to embrace the truth."

"Little was this expected of your good sense, and education, Virginia," said Sabina.

"Permit me to observe, Sabina," she returned, affectionately taking her hand, "for I love you still, dear, dear girl, that if, with your good sense, and virtuous heart, you would make religion the subject of your serious and unprejudiced investigation, you would follow my example."

"I would rather follow her to the grave," said Henry, rising with agitation from his chair.

"The Jesuit has ruined you, Virginia, ruined your happiness, and perverted your reason," said Sabina.

Dear Sabina, be cautious how you speak."

"I know what I say," she replied, with warmth.

"My dear, why all this agitation?" said Mrs. Wolburn.

"Oh Sabina, Sabina!" exclaimed Louisa, clasping her hands, "reflect on what you say!"

"I speak with reflection, Louisa, you have been deluded—"

"Are we not at liberty to act as we please on the score of religion?"

"And are we not bound to act according to our sacred convictions, my dear," added Mrs. Wolburn.

Here the General entering the room, interrupted the conversation. Sabina and Henry hastened abruptly to their carriage, and drove off.

CHAPTER X.

And still the nearer to the spring we go,
More limpid, more unsoiled, the waters flow,"

DRYDEN.

THERE is something in the breaking of a Sunday morning, that sheds on the christian pious heart, a calm and solace which seems to be a foretaste of the eternal sabbath of heaven. There is no sound of business, nor stir of men pressing at dawn to their commerce or their trade. The streets of the largest cities, as well as of the village, are silent, and, as it were, at rest. There is not heard abroad the buxom voice of the merry cartman, nor the cracking of whips, nor the whistling of the early sawyer, nor the uncouth, yet shrill tune of the sweep, which ring on other days upon the unholy weikin. On Sunday, nought is heard around but the ringing of bells, which give notice to all that hear them, that this is a day of prayer. Would to heaven,

that all the bells that ring, were swung in the steeples of orthodox churches! inviting the faithful to the worship which the Almighty smiles on, and accepts with pleasure. To the reflecting bosom, it is a subject of keen grief, to view the multitudes of our fellow-beings who are led astray, either to partake in the cold formalities of the Protestant religion, or to be swept into regions of fanaticism, by the tumultuary shoutings of the followers of Wesley. Is it not a lamentable reflection, that of all the churches in the United States, those only which are dedicated to the service of the Catholic religion are the true ones? And yet thousands upon thousands press, without a scruple, to the innumerable conventicles, with which our country is crowded. They press forward without a thought: custom, or fashion, or human respect, is their only guide. They will not, they are afraid to pause and meditate. Could I induce one of those deluded christians to listen to me, I should thus address him: Brother, whither art thou going? to worship God! Where is the altar? where is the sacrifice? where is the priest? Hast thou not read in Malachy, the prophet, that "a clean oblation is to be offered from the rising to the setting sun?" Is that oblation to be found in your church? Was there ever a true religion without a sacrifice? In the natural religion there was a sacrifice, in the Jewish religion there was a sacrifice, and is there none in the christian religion? Again, brother, reflect, who is the author of thy church? how long has it been in existence? Is it ONE, in its faith? Is it HOLY, in its effects, as well as in its creed? Is it CATHOLIC, in point of time and place? Is it APOSTOLICAL? Can you trace it up from the present day to the days of St. Peter, to whom Christ gave the *keys of heaven*, and whom he consti-

tuted the chief pastor, entrusting to him the office of feeding both the *sheep and the lambs*: or rather, does not the last link in the chain of its antiquity attach to the fallen monk, the apostate priest, the profane innovator, Martin Luther?— Brother, I speak not thus to offend thee, did I not love thee, I should be silent. Charity commands me to warn thee, and, with the utmost sincerity and candour, I do so. Pause before thou minglest in the crowd of those who flock to the temples of error!

The dawn of the Sabbath broke, with heavenly lustre, over the borders of the river which, with its dark-green waters, laves the foot of Wolburn-cliff. Early after breakfast, in compliance with their promise, Mrs. Wolburn ordered the carriage, and prepared to start for the "chapel." The General had engaged to spend the day at the venerable Mr. Powell's, whom sickness prevented from attending mass, on the present Sunday. It was delightful to behold the recollected mien, the expression of content, and the calm sense of duty that appeared on the countenance of the ladies. On their way to the church, their conversation turned on religious subjects. They could not but feel astonished at the extraordinary change effected on their own hearts and minds.

An hour before the time of service they reached the desired spot: the chapel was surrounded with persons of all ages, from the village, and the neighbouring country, attracted together to "worship the Lord in spirit and in truth." The sight of Wolburn's carriage created a general excitement: some whispered that it was the venerable Mr. Powell; others that it was General Washington: others that it was the Wolburn family. But no one for a moment imagined, that the ladies it contained were converts, about to embrace the true Catholic faith. Cu-

riosity, they knew, induced many in those days, even as at present, to attend the Catholic service: and an artless little urchin was heard to say, it was to be hoped that the ladies, whosoever they might be, would behave themselves better in church than some Protestants who refuse to conform to the exterior ceremonies.

As soon as Father Rowland perceived the carriage, he hastened to welcome the "converts," and shewed them into his room, where he ordered a good fire to be made: though not very cold, every one knows that a fire in autumn is not uncomfortable in North America.

"With what sentiments of joy do I not receive you, on this occasion, dearest ladies," said Rowland. "Oh, if there be joy in heaven upon one sinner doing penance, how much is not that joy increased, when ladies of your sincerity and pious inclinations embrace the religion of Christ?"

"Although we have not yet made our profession of faith, dear Mr. Rowland," replied Mrs. Wolburn, "still we feel a satisfaction, a peace of heart, a content, to which we hitherto were strangers. Is it not true, Virginia?"

"Dear mamma, we cannot be grateful enough to Almighty God, and next to him, to our affectionate instructor."

"Oh! Miss Virginia, attribute it all to God: the grace of the Holy Ghost was offered you, you put it to profit, and you are now to have your reward."

"You promised, you remember, to shew us the convent before mass, dear sir," said Louisa.

"There is a seat in the carriage for you, Mr. Rowland, if you will accept it," added Mrs. Wolburn.

"With pleasure, dear madam," he replied, and arose.

The convent, as I remarked above, was but

two miles from the church, and, of course required but a short time to reach it—as soon as the horses started, “well,” said Virginia, “I am perfectly satisfied with all that I have learned respecting the Catholic church, and I am determined to become a member of it.”

“The fundamental articles you are acquainted with, dear Miss,” returned the Father, “as to the forms and ceremonies, they are mere matters of discipline, to which it is not difficult to submit.”

“I am, however, anxious, as we are on our way to the convent, to hear an explanation of the monastic vows.”

“It will afford instruction as well as gratification to us all,” said Mrs. Wolburn.

“Is any one *commanded* not to marry, dear sir?” asked Virginia.

“By no means,” returned Rowland; “matrimony is a sacred institution, and numbered among the sacraments of the church. But there are certain evangelical counsels, which, though we are not *commanded* to follow, we may do so with great merit. Does not our Saviour declare, that ‘Whoever leaves father, mother, brother or sisters, &c., shall receive an hundred fold, and possess eternal life?’—(Matth. xix. 29.) Now surely we are not *commanded* to leave our father and mother, it is a mere counsel of perfection. So it is with nuns: they were not obliged to leave the world, any more than you are, but they remembered the language of St. Paul: ‘He who giveth his virgin in marriage doth well, but he who doth not doth better.’—(1 Cor. vii. 38.) Now, they desire to do not only that which is good, they aspire to that which is best. And who will blame them? Are they not free to act as they please? and why, if after mature reflection and a regular probation, they determine on abandoning the world, should they be censured, or pitied,

or condemned by persons who wish to live otherwise?"

"Certainly we are free agents, and at liberty to marry or not," said Virginia.

"Are there not persons who prefer a single life even in the world?" continued Rowland; "what then should prevent the pious female or man, to dedicate to God, in a religious life, that singleness which is a matter of choice to many? Why, the pagans did not condemn, on the contrary they held in the highest esteem, the vestal virgins; among the Jews, there were communities resembling those of the conventual orders; for example, the Essenians. And it has been the custom from the days of the apostles, (of whom those who had been married quitted their wives,) down to the present age."

"I cannot but admit, and admire, the propriety and perfection of such communities," said Virginia.

"Especially as the life they devote themselves to, is recommended by St. Paul," added Louisa.

"Protestants make very light of the passage in St. Paul which approves of virginity, while they are continually poring over others less intelligible," said Rowland.

"It would really appear, that what is plainest in the scriptures is least read and remembered by them," observed Mrs. Wolburn.

"It is a pity, a very great pity; and oh! how much do I feel for them," exclaimed Virginia, "who, from their amiable and excellent qualities, I am persuaded, would they but instruct themselves, would become most fervent and edifying Catholics."

"Pray for them, my dear," said Mrs. Wolburn, affectionately, "recommend them to Almighty God."

The convent, an handsome, though not magnificent edifice, suddenly burst on their view, through a vista, formed by nature through the

woods, with which they had hitherto been encompassed. Virginia fixed her gaze upon it, and an air of solemn thought was upon her countenance.

“You appear impressed with a solemn sentiment, my daughter, in approaching the convent,” said Mrs. Wolburn.

“Judge not of that spot, dear Miss, from the notions you have derived from romances,” said Rowland.

“I must confess I have singular feelings, mamma—my heart beats—”

Louisa was not at all agitated: she had once before, (but it was kept a profound secret,) visited the convent. As they drew nigh, the bell was heard to ring, and the echo of the solitude lengthened the solemn sound.

Oh! who has ever entered the precincts of a convent, and has not breathed the atmosphere of peace with which it is pervaded! Can there be any thing like the bliss of those more than earthly beings, whose sole occupation is to sing the praises of God, whose study it is to forget this world, and to think of another! There every countenance is lighted up with smiles, the calm of their hearts cannot but evince itself in the meek serenity of their features, and the sanctity of their deportment. Peace to those christian vestals, whose fostering hands are employed in keeping alive the sacred fire of virtue on the altars of the orphan, and the youthful bosom!

The first sister who presented herself to the visitors, was Angelina, a lady of birth, fortune, and education: who, in imitation of the Clares and the Teresas, bade adieu to this transient world, to all its vanities, and all its pageantry, and all its cares, and retired into the blissful shades of a monastery. With an expression, such as Virginia had never before witnessed, Angelina welcomed them to the “Vale,” (this was the name of the spot,) remarking, at the

same time, "that the vale of tears was the path to eternal joys."

"Sister," replied Virginia, "it is the first time I have ever had the honour, or enjoyed the pleasure, of conversing with one devoted to God in a life of religion. But oh! how different are my ideas now, from those which I had conceived! How—" she could not continue.

"We imagined," said Louisa, turning to Rowland, "that the inmates of a convent were little better than the convicts of a jail."

"I foresaw, and am delighted to perceive, what a change this visit would cause on the minds of my daughters," said Mrs. Wolburn.

"To him who is our common Father and Lord be thanks and praise for ever!" returned the sister, throwing her eyes to heaven.

The strangers were then introduced by the Father and Angelina, to the community: the members of which appeared to partake of the nature of angels, rather than of mortals; and after visiting the various apartments of the convent, and the neat little chapel, which it was like paradise to enter, they returned to the church. It were useless to attempt to describe the sensations which were awakened in the bosoms of these ladies, on this occasion. As they retired, they looked back, with a lingering farewell, to the Eden they were leaving.

Little more than half an hour elapsed, before the sound of the bell gave notice that the hour for mass had arrived, and all who either sat in conversation on the steps, or rambled through the woods around, or stood in groups before the door, hastened to take their seats in the church. A place was prepared for the ladies, near the altar, from which they could see the ceremonies, and hear distinctly the voice of the preacher.—The small, yet sweet-toned organ, touched by an able

hand, began to sound, and the litany of the Blessed Virgin, was sung, in a solemn tone, by the choir. After which, Father Rowland made his appearance at the altar, accompanied by two youthful assistants clothed in white: one bearing in his hand a plated urn, the other a brush. With a full and imposing voice, he intoned the *Asperges me*, or, "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, O Lord, and I shall be cleansed, &c." A lady of great respectability, from a distance, who happened to be present on this Sunday at Rowland's church, perceiving that the ladies were not Catholics, with much politeness presented Mrs. Wolburn with a prayer book. As she was in the same pew, Virginia requested her to explain the meaning of the lustration. "The water," she replied, "which is sprinkled among the people, was blessed by the clergyman: by this ceremony, it is meant to impress the faithful with the necessity they are under of being washed from their sins, and thus to induce them to make an act of contrition with David, whose language is used on the occasion. "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed, thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow." Before the explanation given by the lady was finished, the Father had time to conclude the ceremony, and return to the sanctuary to begin mass. He now, besides the white robe, wore a vestment, richly variegated with flowers, and bearing the form of a cross. "That," remarked the lady, "represents the cross which the Redeemer carried to Calvary."

Rowland, having blessed himself, was immediately followed in the same ceremony by all the congregation, who simultaneously fell upon their knees, and opened their prayer-books. The lady held her's in such a manner, that Virginia could read with her. For although the whole of the

service adapted to each day, is not to be found in the common prayer-books, (there is, however, a missal in English, which contains the whole,) yet, there are prayers proper for each part of the mass, and also meditations on the various stages of the passion of Christ, which the mass represents and renews. Rowland now intoned the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to men on earth of good will," which was sung with much taste and spirit by the choir; after which, he continued to chant the prayers of the Sunday and the Epistle. The book was then removed, and the congregation arose. "Why do they stand now!" asked Virginia, in a soft whisper.

"To shew their respect for the gospel of Christ, which the priest is now reading," replied the lady.

"Is the portion of the bible which the priest is reading in Latin, translated for the use of the laity?" "It is, and I regret that I have not the book with me; it would be quite satisfactory."

After the gospel a short hymn to the Holy Ghost was sung, and Rowland ascended the pulpit. After reading in English the gospel of the day, he took as a text for his discourse these words of the Redeemer, "I am the good shepherd." He showed that Christ is God; that he founded a church; and that he appointed a vicar, that that vicar was to have successors down to the end of time; as the church was established to continue for ever. He then, in the most convincing manner, proceeded to demonstrate the infallibility of the church, and to point out those marks contained in the creed of the apostles, by which she may be clearly recognized.

"The God," said he, "whom we adore, is infinite in every perfection. As infinite Holiness he requires a pure worship; as infinite Truth he can-

not be pleased with a false one;—as one, simple, and immutable, he cannot be adored by two methods essentially different. *Without faith it is impossible to please him*, that is, without *true* faith, and truth is but one. As true faith cannot be found in different religions, and as we have numerous merciful proofs of God's earnest desire for our salvation, he must have appointed some means for discovering true faith, without which salvation is impossible. Hitherto, christians are agreed. Our separated brethren consider this infallible method to the sacred scriptures, as explained and understood by private interpretation; whereas, Catholics believe, that the written and unwritten word interpreted by the unerring judgment of a church appointed by Christ for that purpose, is the infallible rule in all matters of faith. For it would be repugnant to the wisdom of Christ, and he would have acted contrary to all other legislators, if he had left a law, mysterious from its own nature, and subject to a thousand different interpretations from the various interests, prejudices, and passions of those for whom it was intended, without having constituted proper interpreters to expound its meaning. This rule of faith, besides being infallible, must be also adapted to the generality of mankind. What more simple than the obedience required from Catholics to the dictates of a church with which Christ has promised to abide for ever? There is no one so humble, so ignorant or unlettered, but may safely follow this rule, which, with a divine and admirable impartiality, renders the attainment of saving faith equally easy to all. But if the reading and interpretation of scripture were necessary in order to arrive at true faith, what must have become of the great majority of Christendom for several hundred years before the invention of printing, when copies of the bible were so valuable and so scarce,

and when, comparatively, very few persons, indeed, were able to read? Innumerable systems of religion, each differing from the rest, have arisen from private interpretation. In fact, by private interpretation alone we could never make an act of faith. For we cannot discover by it, which are the divinely inspired books, or whether any have been written—if they have, whether the copies or translations of them printed in the bible be authentic or accurate—if they be genuine or canonical—whether they are faithfully translated from the languages in which they were written, in the English, or any other copies;—in fine, even if all these things were established, whether we be infallibly certain that we understand the true sense of the whole scriptures, or whatever part of them are necessary to be understood. It is clear, then, that the person who follows this rule must entertain very reasonable doubts on every question of faith, and, consequently, cannot make a true act of faith, which totally excludes every shade of doubt.

“It would, moreover, be unreasonable and preposterous, that the church in the law of nature or the mosaic law, should be endowed with greater privileges than the church in the law of grace; yet we find from the beginning of the world to the promulgation of the new law, that all true believers had ordinarily no other grounds for their infallible faith than the infallibility of the church, or body of faithful then existing, in proposing the traditions which she or they had received. Until near a century after Christ’s passion, when the canon of the scriptures were completed, no christian could have the private interpretation of the written word for his rule of faith: Even long after the canon was filled up, all true believers, and particularly those who were converted from paganism, received their faith in a

different manner. *What!* (says St. Irenæus, Lib. iii. 4. advers. Val.) *if the Apostles had not left us the Scriptures, ought we not have followed the order of tradition which they delivered to those to whose care they committed the Churches? To this order of tradition many barbarous nations assent who have believed in Christ without any writings.* These are but a few of the thousand reasons which induce us to believe in the existence of an infallible church. I proceed to examine in scripture whether Christ has really established such an authority on earth."

But we must reserve the continuation of the good father's eloquent and argumentative discourse for another chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

"But, gracious God! how well dost thou provide
 For erring judgments, an unerring guide.
 Thy throne is darkness in the abyss of light,
 A blaze of glory that forbids the sight:
 O teach me to believe thee, thus conceal'd,
 And search no farther than thyself reveal'd
But Her alone for my director take,
Whom thou hast promised never to forsake."

DRYDEN.

"The first promise of Christ for the infallibility of the church," continued Rowland, "was made to St. Peter after that noble profession of his Divinity: '*Thou art Christ the Son of the living God,*' which neither flesh nor blood, but the Father who is in heaven hath revealed to him. (Matt. xvi. 17.) He hath hitherto been called Simon Barjona, but being designed by God for the pillar and foundation of his church, he was resolved to dignify him

with a title expressive of the sublime state to which he was about to be raised, and the invincible strength of his future faith, when he addressed him in these words, '*Thou art Peter, (that is, a rock,) and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*' This I consider to be an incontestible proof of an infallible church. For, these words evidently contain a promise made by Christ to his church. What does he promise? To build this church upon a rock. Could Christ in his wisdom have promised to build a church upon a rock, if he foresaw her future fall by heresy or error? or, did he not intend by these words that she should be so firmly established, as never to be overturned? Unless this were the case, who could 'liken him to the wise man who built his house upon a rock, and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon the house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock?' (Matt. vii. 24, 25.) But if a shadow of doubt remained on the subject, it is immediately removed by the concluding words of the promise, '*And the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.*' Now, faith is essential to the constitution of a church, and faith is destroyed by heresy. Hence, if the church has fallen, or can fall into heresy, she ceases to be a church—she was not built upon a rock—the gates of hell have prevailed, and do prevail against her. Moreover, either Christ foresaw that the gates of hell would not prevail against his church, or he did not. If not, we will be compelled to deny his prescience, and to say that he promised what he knew nothing of. If he did foresee it, as his prescience is infallible, so the event must infallibly correspond with the prediction—and it is infallibly true that the gates of hell never did prevail, and never will prevail against the church. In a word, to conclude this almost superfluous argumenta-

tion on so very plain a text—according to Jesus Christ, the fountain of truth, the gates of hell will never prevail against his church.—But if she fall into any error in faith, the gates of hell would prevail against her. Therefore, she cannot fall into any error against faith, and consequently is infallible in all articles of faith.

“It is true that if the infallibility of the church were to depend on the natural weakness and fallibility of the members who compose her, the unbeliever might have some specious pretence for refusing to submit to her authority. But the eternal wisdom of the Father, who ‘reacheth from end to end strongly, and disposeth all things sweetly,’ took especial care to provide his chaste spouse on earth with an infallible guide, to preserve the integrity of that faith which he had purified in his blood. On the eve of his passion, in order to wean his afflicted Apostles from the sensible delights of his presence, of which they were in a short time to be deprived, he places before their view the speedy arrival of another comforter, and the glorious prerogatives of that pillar of truth, of which they were to be the first supporters. ‘*I will ask the Father,*’ said he, (John xiv. 16.) ‘*and he will give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive.*’ He then subjoins (v. 27.) the nature and end of this divine mission: ‘*The comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name; he shall teach you all things, and suggest all things to you, whatsoever I have said unto you.*’ In the continuation of his address (xvi. 13.) the same promise is repeated: ‘*I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot hear them now. However, when the Spirit of truth is come, he will lead you into all truth.*’

“It is almost trifling with common sense to set about reasoning on these evident testimonies.

Christ promises the descent of a comforter. The promise was fulfilled on Whit-sunday. He further promises, that this Divine Spirit of truth should abide with them for ever, should teach them all things, and lead them into all truth. Who shall dare to doubt but that this second part of the promise has also been fulfilled in every age since the days of the Apostles? What was the end or nature for which the promise was delivered? To guide the Apostles and their successors for ever, into all truth. For, has not the church in every age required the perpetual assistance of the director of truth, as well as in the Apostolic times? And if it were necessary for them who had imbibed the true faith from the mouth, and in the school of Jesus himself, how much more so must it not be for the faithful in every succeeding age? Therefore it is clear that the unlimited and unconditional promise of Christ could never become void, whilst the only cause for which it was made, still existed in all its force; and hence he has promised that the Spirit of truth should *for ever* remain with the church, conducting her into *all truth*. That this was his meaning will be further proved from the next scriptural argument in support of her infallibility.

“ In his last discourse with his apostles, as recorded by St. Matthew, (xxviii. 19, 20.) he thus addresses them. ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them, &c., and lo, I am with you all days, even to the end of the world. It is plain that the apostles were not to live unto the end of the world, and hence their successors must be implied in the promise. It is equally plain, that if Jesus Christ be with them to the consummation of ages, they cannot fall into error against faith. We read in St. Matthew, (xviii. 17.) ‘*He that will not hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen*

and a publican.' From this, I think, it undeniably follows that a church exists, that we are bound to hear her under pain of damnation, and that we would not be commanded to listen to her voice under such a grievous penalty, unless it were impossible for her to lead us into error, since it would be unreasonable to condemn us for not believing a seducer.

"St. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy terms this unerring guide, '*The Church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of truth;*' and in his Epistle to the Ephesians he describes the tender concern of Christ for his divine spouse, '*In order that he might present her to himself without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.*' What can be more secure from falling into error than the very pillar of truth? What more pure and inviolate in faith than the '*glorious church*' of Jesus Christ, which he has presented to himself without wrinkle and without stain?"

After having proved from reason, from scripture, from the constant belief of the faithful in every age, and the manifold absurdities which flow from a contrary opinion, that an infallible church existed on earth, invested with proper authority to decide on all matters of faith, he advanced farther, and established that '*this church can be no other than that body of the faithful which being subject to, and united in communion with the bishop and see of Rome, is well known by the name of the Roman Catholic Church.*' He said, "It clearly followed, that the Church being infallible, and all other Churches except the Roman Catholic admitting their fallibility, she alone must be the true Church of Christ." He however waved this concession, and proceeded to shew from the marks of the true Church contained in the Apostle's Creed, that the Catholic Church alone could lay claim to the title of the

Church of Christ." Here Rowland seemed to lay aside the serious style of controversy, and rose into sublime and fervid eloquence.

"In the first place," said he, "she is remarkable for unity. She alone, of all other Churches is the one sheepfold under the one shepherd. Every one of her members, to the utmost bounds of the earth, no matter what his clime or colour may be, is subject in obedience to one spiritual pastor, the bishop of Rome. She has one faith, one Lord, one baptism, one sacrifice, one common mediator. Her faith is fixed, and unchangeable, so that when any individual presumes to disbelieve any dogma proposed by her, he ceases to belong to her communion. The faith which she professes, is that which truly deserves the name:—simple, clear, and indivisible, admitting neither doubt nor hesitation, as being founded on the principles and revelation of eternal truth. Her hopes of future mercy and happiness are centered in nothing, save in the merits and passion of one common mediator, and to the one God and Father of all, whom she adores, there is offered in every place, from the rising to the setting of the sun, one clean oblation, in the same language, and with the same ceremonies. Who is there even of her enemies that considers the admirable unity, which exists between all her parts and members, the uniform tenor of her faith, her morals, her worship, and her sacrifice—the intimate connection between her pastors and her flock, and the undivided spiritual allegiance of all to the same vicar of Jesus Christ, but must think that the countless millions who compose her form but *one heart*, and *one soul*, and that of her alone it may be said with propriety, 'One is my dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the chosen of her that bore her?'

"But if we are charmed with her unity, how can we refrain from admiring her *holiness*?—How

beautiful, how pure, how sublime is the heavenly code of morals which she proposes for the observance of her children! Of what powerful efficacy is it to raise them to God, and approximate them more and more to the author of sanctity! What powerful means does she not point out to them in order to render them holy! In what sacred channels of sanctity and grace does she not purify their souls! What strict lessons of perfection does she not read to her ministers to render them truly holy! What heavenly counsels does she not recommend to all the faithful, for the sanctity of each in his particular state of life!

“ She reproves, she consoles, she chastises, she forgives—she offers up the infinite victim of holiness—she administers the sacraments of grace—she accompanies their administration with holy rites—she encourages the spirit of chastity, poverty and obedience—she teaches to despise the world and its allurements, the flesh and its delights, to mortify the body, and subdue the passions of rebellious nature—and all, to ensure the holiness of her children. Hence it is that in every age, and in every nation, they have been remarkable for holiness. Not a corner of the earth in which there have not lived some prodigies of virtue, grace, and perfection—not a barren desert in which there has not bloomed some innocent flowers of sanctity, shedding around them all the odour of spotless integrity—not an age of darkness in which some brilliant light has not appeared to dispel the surrounding gloom—not an age of corruption and crime in which there has not been some steady friend and patron of virtue to awe the wickedness of the world, and shame the profligacy of the sinner—not an age of cruelty and persecution without its generous and heroic souls to despise the threats and frowns of the tyrant, the infamy and suffering of the prison, the

rack, the gibbet, the sword and the flames, and to smile even in the face of death, under whatsoever form he presented himself, and all for the love of holiness and truth. Thus is she holy in her faith, holy in her morals, holy in her ceremonies and worship, and holy in her members, the lives of several of whom have been so eminent for sanctity, that her very enemies are forced to admit it, and the church of England herself has enrolled many of them in her catalogue of saints.

“When we come to consider her universality, what a glorious spectacle does she not present to our view, preserving the chain of her existence unbroken through every age since the time she was established by her divine founder! She is Catholic not only in name but in reality. The most unblushing sceptic cannot doubt for a moment, that a visible congregation of christians has continued to exist in obedience to, and communion with the see of Rome. This church of all ages is morally extended through all places. From Rome, the centre of light, and truth, and unity, her scattered rays diverge to the extremity of the earth. Europe, Asia, Africa, and America—every region, and country, and clime are filled with her members, and this glorious prerogative seems to correspond in some manner with the immensity, eternity, and omnipresence of the God whom she adores throughout all time and place.

“The Holy Roman Catholic Church is also apostolic. The deposit of faith which her first pastors have received from the apostles, she has carefully preserved, and delivers us at this day to her children in its original purity and lustre. She has always been the faithful guardian, the ardent admirer, and unerring expositor of the writings which they published at the dictation of the Holy Ghost. Her pastors also derive their orders and

jurisdiction in direct succession from the apostles. She can recount the names of her chief bishops, from the blessed Peter down to the present pontiff. Even her enemies acknowledge the apostolicity of her mission, although with their usual inconsistency they deny the apostolicity of her doctrine.

“This is but a brief sketch of her leading features. But let any man of any creed consider for a moment with a calm unprejudiced mind, her unchangeable standard of faith, the sanctity of her doctrine and members, her universal extension through every age and nation, and the uniform succession of her ministry from the prince of the apostles:—let him compare her with the ancient prophecies of the church of the new covenant, and the promises and predictions of Jesus Christ in her regard, and he must be tempted to exclaim: *Either there is no church at all, or the Roman Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ.*”

After a short pause, during which Rowland seemed to recover himself from the exhaustion produced by the energy and feeling with which he spoke, he resumed—“And yet the doctrines of this church have been grossly misrepresented. We are accused of adoring pictures, saints, and relics; we do not adore them, we merely respect them. We are accused of worshipping the Virgin Mary: we merely reverence her as the mother of God. We are accused of teaching that the Catholic may sin with impunity, since, if he only confesses he is instantly pardoned. We fling this calumny back on our enemies, as groundless, malicious, and abusive. To be pardoned for sin, a Catholic must repent inwardly, and resolve to forsake it for ever. We are accused of every inconsistency, superstition, error, and even idolatry. We spurn these imputations, pity and pray for those who invent and propagate them, and call

upon the world to hear us in our own defence." After having dilated with force and eloquence on these topics, he concluded his address in the following impressive terms :

"The obvious conclusion of all I have said is, that the church established by Christ is the Roman Catholic Church, that she is infallible, and consequently, that it is the duty of all mankind to bow with respectful deference to her decisions in matters of faith. Let me, therefore, congratulate you, my dear brethren, and all my fellow-members of the Catholic Church, on being united with this glorious society of all ages and nations, and being fastened to the immoveable rock on which she has been built. Let me conclude by addressing them in the words of St. Epiphanius, (*Advers. hæres. in fine,*) 'My dove, my undefiled is but one; this spouse, the holy city of God, the faith, the foundation of truth, the firm rock against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. For now being free from all trouble, and fear, and uneasiness, and being in an excellent situation on account of the firm tranquillity and security which exist here, how did we rejoice in spirit on being received into a peaceful harbour! We have passed many evils in our navigation through the above-mentioned seas; but now having the city in sight, let us hasten to this holy Jerusalem, this virgin and spouse of Christ, the secure foundation and rock, and our reverend mother, saying with propriety, Let us ascend unto the mountain of the Lord, and into the house of the God of Jacob, and she will teach us our ways. Let us speak to her these words which her spouse did: Come from Libanus, my spouse, come: because thou art all fair, and there is no spot in thee: in order that being placed in thee we may rest from the above troublesome heresies, in thee our holy mother, the church, and in thy holy doctrine, and that we may be

refreshed in the truth with the holy and only
faith of God.' ”

CHAPTER XII.

“ Can they who say the Host should be descried
By sense, define a body glorified,
Impassable, and penetrating parts?
Let them declare by what mysterious arts
He shot that Body through the opposing might
Of bolts and bars impervious to the light,
And stood before his train confess'd in open sight.”

DRYDEN.

The sermon being concluded, Rowland mounted the steps of the altar, and entoned the *Credo*, “I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,” &c. which was continued by the choir. Which being concluded, he turned to the people, and extending his hands chanted the *Dominus vobiscum*, “the Lord be with you.” After this the wine and water were put into the chalice, the matter prepared for the sacrifice. At the conclusion of the hymn, sung in the meanwhile, the Father raised his voice and entoned the solemn and ancient chant, styled the *Preface*, which being finished, the bell rang to give notice to the congregation, that there commenced the canon of the mass; in a few minutes another stroke of the bell announced that the moment for the consecration had arrived. The host was elevated amid the ringing of bells, and afterwards the chalice; while the faithful bent in prostrate adoration. The ladies, who were now perfectly convinced of the real presence, put themselves into an attitude of profound devotion, and seemed deeply penetrated with sentiments of awe and fervour. And here it must be remarked that genuflexions made by the clergy and Catholics into, or passing by, the sanctuary, are not made

to the crucifix, as is sometimes said, but to the Blessed Sacrament, which it has been proved above, contains the true body of Christ.

The Father then continued with his arms extended in silent prayer, until the choir had finished the *Sanctus*, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts," and the *O Salutaris*, &c. He then intoned the *Pater Noster*, or "the Lord's Prayer." Then the *Pax Domini sit*, &c. "May the peace of the Lord be always with you." After which, striking his breast thrice, like the penitent publican mentioned in the gospel, he repeated thrice these words: *Agnus Dei qui tollis*, &c. "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us:" and then, as the bell rang, the following: *Domine non sum dignus*, &c. "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof, say but the word, and my soul shall be healed." After which he consumed the host, and drank the contents of the chalice. The faithful then sat, until the Father, turning towards them, sang the *Dominus vobiscum*, "The Lord be with you."

They then arose and remained standing, while he chanted the prayers after communion, until he gave them the benediction of the Holy Trinity, which they received kneeling. The whole service was concluded by the gospel of St. John. The organ then struck up a loud peal, and the congregation dispersed for the morning.

Immediately after mass, the ladies hastened to the Father to express the joy which it gave them to assist as members of the Church, at the Holy Sacrifice.

"I marked every part with care, and followed you attentively, dear Father," said Virginia; "there was but one serious distraction that occurred to me."

"What was that, my daughter?" asked Mrs. Wolburn.

"It came into my mind to propose a question to Mr. Rowland, mamma, respecting the custom of saying mass in Latin; would it not be better to have the service in the vernacular language?"

"The very fact of our using the Latin language, is an unanswerable argument in favour of the antiquity of our church. The mass and whole liturgy were composed at a time when the Latin language was the common language of the Roman empire, and long before the English was heard of."

"Oh, I am perfectly aware of that!" exclaimed Virginia; "but what is the reason the mass cannot be said in English?"

"The mass is translated into all languages, Miss Virginia," replied Rowland; "but were the church to permit it to be said in the various modern languages, the great bond which unites the priests would be broken. For is it not delightful to see any priest from the most distant region of the world on his arrival in the United States, officiating before a people, whose language he is an utter stranger to, and that with all the actions and ceremonies, and the same language as the American clergyman? And were I to go to Russia, what a consolation would it not be for me to be able to appear at the altar as though I had been educated there: and the natives of that country could assist at the mass which I should offer in the same manner as that of their own clergy."

"This point of discipline is strangely misrepresented and objected to," said Mrs. Wolburn.

"Especially by persons who can urge no solid argument against the truth of the church," added Louisa.

"Accept of this prayer-book, Miss Virginia," said the Father, putting into her hand a handsome volume, "here the service is translated.—During the mass fervently recite the prayers spe-

cified, and you will profit by your attention. The duties of Catholics are explained in the vernacular tongue from the pulpit, hymns of the same kind are sung in the choir, the scripture is read every Sunday to the faithful—”

“And more we do not want,” added Virginia.

“Mamma,” said Louisa, “we have been so much pleased with the mass, could we not return to the evening service?”

“The evenings are short, my dear,” replied Mrs. Wolburn, “and the vespers, I fear, commences too late.”

“They commence at three o’clock, dear madam,” said Rowland, “and if it is convenient, I am sure you will be pleased.”

“It is impossible to return to the hall for dinner if we would be in time,” returned Mrs. Wolburn.

“My table is at your disposal, dearest ladies,” replied the Father: “for though my fare is frugal, it is sufficient.”

Mrs. Wolburn, with much courtesy thanked him for his kind offer; but lest it might be troublesome to the Father, proposed to her daughters to dine at a friend’s about a mile distant; from whose mansion they could easily return at the appointed time for vespers.

It was agreed, and they drove off in haste.

It was matter of great surprise to the Hon. Mr. Charles, (this was the name of the friend to whom they went,) to see Mrs. Wolburn and her daughters, at such an hour on Sunday. A thousand conjectures presented themselves to his mind, and as the report that they were pleased with Father Rowland had already widely circulated, Eugenia, his eldest daughter, did not hesitate to express the idea that she conceived, of their having been at the chapel. A more benevolent and hospitable family could not be found than that of Mr. Charles; but his notions concerning religion were little better than those of

his favourite author Gibbon. He loved to speak of *nature* and her works; of deep rivers, and high mountains, and the firmament, and the seasons, and the Supreme Being: but revelation he rejected, and regarded all systems of religion as inventions of men. To all who would uphold his notions in public, he was an enthusiastic friend. And I have heard from his children, that he esteemed a female fanatic who went about diffusing the sentiments of mere natural religion more than the greatest philosophers, or the combined wisdom of all learned and pious men. The name of that demagogue was Eliza Wrong, who, like the far-famed Johanna Southcott, by her fantastic address, did not fail to attract round her person a multitude of followers. But as the venerable Mr. Powell used to say, with much keen wit, they were followers of WRONG.

In the course of conversation at table, Mr. Charles introduced the subject of religion: and in his wonted way began to descant on what he termed the *philosophy* of religion. Mrs. Wolburn remarked, with much propriety, "that she asked not for the philosophy, she was in pursuit, and hoped she had discovered the *divinity* of religion. She no longer wished to conceal her sentiments, she had become a believer in the doctrines of the Catholic church, and she would soon have the honour of being a member of the same." Louisa and Virginia made the same avowal. Mr. Charles acknowledged that there could be no other church, if there be any such thing, but the Catholic: he said that they are the most consistent, and the pomp and majesty of their ceremonies could not but extort admiration from any man of taste. As to the sects of Protestantism, Methodism, and a host of others, he looked upon them as so many impositions on human credulity. They began in the passions, and they must end in folly. He even deigned to declare, that if he

were to believe in christianity at all, he should without hesitation, be a Roman Catholic. This acknowledgment is made by most of those who call themselves deists: and really when we reflect seriously on the subject, there can be no medium between the Catholic religion and downright deism. For, throw aside a tribunal by which to decide what is right and what is wrong, and the human mind will not cease its aberrations, until it find itself straying without restraint or law, amid the regions of infidelity. I should like to know what the Protestant religion is: it throws no restraint on the mind, and consequently none on the passions. It rejects mortification, penance, fasts, and all kinds of external austerities, which were preached by our Redeemer, by St. Paul, and by all the saints. Can such a system be styled a religion? Oh! what delusion! and how many are kept under its influence by human respect, education, and interest. It was not so with Mrs. Wolburn and her daughters; they made religion a subject of deep research, and after discovering the truth, they embraced it. Would to heaven that their example were followed by all whose bosoms are visited by doubt and apprehension: they would then "find rest to their souls."

Mr. Charles applauded the step taken by the ladies; and though his daughter sneered not a little at the Catholics, and spoke much of the inquisition, and I know not what, Mrs. Wolburn openly and fully vindicated the cause of the church.

"You had better be upon your guard, Virginia," said Eugenia, with a look of keen sarcasm, "otherwise they will have you in the inquisition."

"Fear not, my dear," replied Virginia; "perhaps you don't know what is meant by the inquisition."

"I have lately satisfied my mind on that subject, by reading a work put into my hands by Mr. Rowland."

"What a shocking institution!" exclaimed Eugenia.

"It is shockingly misrepresented," returned Virginia.

"It shows the blood-thirsty character—"

"What do you say, Eugenia? beware; do not speak in such terms of men, whose doctrine, views, intentions, and everything, are grossly misrepresented by Protestant writers. You identify the inquisition with the church. This is a mistaken notion, which I myself had conceived before I instructed myself. The author of the work which I read remarks, that it is a political or civil institution, established by the kings of those countries in which it existed: it took its rise at a time when the fanaticism of men threatened not only the purity of the church, but the tranquillity of the governments. When to preserve the public peace it was necessary to have recourse to vigorous measures. But that justice might be done to all who were arrested and arraigned, there were two kinds of judges, ecclesiastical and lay; the former awarded—the latter inflicted punishment on the guilty. It must be remarked, Eugenia, that these tribunals were erected with the approbation of the people: for those subjects who were disposed to be peaceful not only had nothing to fear, but had no other efficacious means of preserving their property and their persons from the fury of fanatics of those times. But it is in vain for me to enter into all the details of this institution. Read, Eugenia, and instruct yourself thoroughly."

"I have read too much on that subject—"

"Too much of calumny and aspersion," replied Virginia.

"If there be nothing else to prevent you from

becoming a Catholic than the inquisition, dear Eugenia," said Mrs. Wolburn, "that should not prevent you."

"What, Mrs. Wolburn, could you for an instant harbour the idea that *I* would be a Catholic?—never—never—"

"So I once thought, as well as you, Eugenia," returned Virginia. "Your prejudices are not so strong as mine were. I despised the very name of Catholic, before I conversed with Mr. Rowland; and I must inform you that my first doubts were excited by Dr. Dorson."

"How so?" asked Eugenia.

"Because he could not reply to an argument which was proposed by Rowland."

The controversy would have continued till night, had not the time arrived for the departure of Mrs. Wolburn and her daughters. They had determined on assisting at vespers before they returned home. Mr. Charles evinced towards them more of affection than ever; for he believed they were acting rightly. But Eugenia expressed a sensible change in her regard, and seemed by her coolness at parting to say, that her intimacy with the girls had ceased. The ladies possessed too much of magnanimity, were too deeply impressed with the importance of the affair they had engaged in, to suffer themselves to be moved from their purpose by the bigotry and ostentation of Eugenia. They pitied her, and so must every person whose ideas are enlarged and whose heart is expanded.

The hour of vespers had arrived, and Mrs. Wolburn and her daughters were just entering the premises of the chapel, when the bell rang. Groups of merry children, whose buxom voices re-echoed through the grove, were running to the gate, and vieing with each other who would be the first to reach the church. Father Rowland had already entered the sanctuary, and as soon

as the ladies entered, he intoned the *Deus in Adjutorium*, or "Incline unto my aid, O God." He was answered by a full choir, who continued the anthem; after which the Father and the whole congregation sat. The Psalms 109, 110, 111, and 112, were then chanted without interruption, in a plain, noble, and solemn tone. The verses were sung alternately by male and female voices. The effect of the evening service is truly delightful. I know not what a calm and holy influence pervades the heart, when all around breathes devotion: the light tapers, the neat altar, the crucifix, the ornaments, the clergy. Oh! if there be anything like an anticipation of the bliss of heaven, it is that moment! compared with this, any other pleasure is empty. The pageant of the theatre, the splendour of the ball-room, the vanity of the world, melt away like vapour.

After the psalms were concluded, the Father arose and chanted the lesson of the day. A hymn was then sung by the choir, and then followed the beautiful canticle of the Virgin Mary, *Magnificat*, or "My soul doth magnify the Lord."—Luke, 1st chap. During which, Rowland, with great dignity and piety, ascended the steps of the altar, and from a plated censer, shed a cloud of incense around; it resembled the spirit of prayer arising in fragrance to the throne of the Most High, and called to mind those beautiful sentences of the psalmist, which are recited at the incensation of the altar: "Let my prayer, O Lord, ascend like incense before thy sight—the lifting up my hands is an evening sacrifice," &c. Which being concluded, he sang the *Dominus Vobiscum*—"May the Lord be with you." The prayer of the day, and the *Benedicamus Domino*—"Let us bless the Lord." He then sat, and the choir sang the hymn to the blessed Virgin Mary. The prayer was sung by the Father. Then com-

menced the most solemn and awful part of the vespers. The blessed sacrament was exposed in a rich case, from which emanated rays of silver and gold: in a moment the altar was again concealed in a cloud of incense. After a hymn in honour of the blessed sacrament, the Father intoned the *Tantum ergo*, or "To this mysterious table now," &c., which was continued in full strain by the choir. He then chanted the *Panem de Cælo*, or "Thou hast given them bread from heaven," and the prayer; after which he mounted the platform of the altar, took into his hands the blessed sacrament, and turning towards the people, amid the ringing of the bell and the soft tones of the organ, blessed the congregation: with this the service ended. Mrs. Wolburn and her daughters appeared almost in another world during the service.—Louisa shed an abundance of tears, which were commingled with those of her mother and sister. Virginia knew not how to suppress her feelings: with her eyes turned up to heaven, and her hands clasped, she poured forth her soul to prayer and thanksgiving to Him who had brought her to the knowledge of the truth. On opening a small collection of Catholic Hymns, in English, which lay near her in the pew, she met the following beautiful paraphrase of the 148th Psalm, and conceiving it a most suitable acknowledgment to God, for all his mercies to her, recited it with great feeling.

Begin, my soul, th' exalted lay,
 Let each enraptur'd thought obey,
 And praise the Almighty's name.
 Lo! heaven, and earth, and seas, and skies,
 In one melodious concert rise,
 To swell th' inspiring theme.

Ye fields of light, celestial plains,
Where gay, transporting beauty reigns,
 Ye scenes divinely fair.
Your Maker's wondrous power proclaim,
Tell how he form'd your shining frame,
 And breath'd the fluid air.

Ye angels, catch the thrilling sound,
While all the adoring thrones around
 His boundless mercy sing ;
Let ev'ry list'ning saint above,
Wake all the tuneful soul of love,
 And touch the sweetest string.

Join, ye loud spheres, the vocal choir,
Thou dazzling orb of liquid fire,
 The mighty chorus aid :
Soon as grey evening gilds the plain,
Thou, moon, protract the melting strain,
 And praise him in the shade.

Thou, Heaven of Heavens, his vast abode,
Ye clouds, proclaim your forming God,
 Who called yon worlds from night :
'Ye shades, dispel !'—th' Eternal said,
At once the involving darkness fled,
 And nature sprang to light.

Whate'er a blooming world contains,
That wings the air, that skims the plains,
 United praise bestow :
Ye dragons, sound his awful name
To heaven aloud ; and roar acclaim,
 Ye swelling deeps below.

Let every element rejoice :
Ye thunders, burst with awful voice,
 To him who bids you roll :

His praise in softer notes declare
 Each whisp'ring breeze of yielding air,
 And breathe it to the soul.

To him, ye graceful cedars bow ;
 Ye tow'ring mountains bending low,
 Your great Creator own ;
 Tell, when affrighted nature shook,
 How Sinai kindled at his look,
 And trembled at his frown.

Ye flocks that haunt the humble vale,
 Ye insects fluttering on the gale,
 In mutual concourse rise ;
 Crop the gay rose's vermeil bloom,
 And waft its spoils—a sweet perfume,
 In incense to the skies.

Wake, all ye mountain tribes, and sing,
 Ye plummy warblers of the spring,
 Harmonious anthems raise
 To him who shaped your finer mould,
 Who tipp'd your glittering wings with gold,
 And tuned your voice to praise.

Let man, by nobler passions sway'd,
 The feeling heart, the judging head,
 In heavenly praise employ :
 Spread his tremendous name around,
 Till heav'ns broad arch rings back the sound,
 The general burst of joy.

Ye, whom the charms of grandeur please,
 Nurs'd on the downy lap of ease,
 Fall prostrate at his throne ;
 Ye princes, rulers, all adore ;
 Praise him, ye kings, who makes your pow'r
 An image of his own.

Ye fair, by nature form'd to move,
 O praise the Eternal source of love
 With youth's enlivening fire;
 Let age take up the tuneful lay,
 Sigh his blessed name—then soar away,
 And ask an Angel's lyre.

This was a day of more than earthly joy to Mrs. Wolburn; a thousand reflections rushed into her mind. She looked most affectionately on her daughters, whose early education had been of the most erroneous kind; whose minds had been darkened by prejudices of ignorance, and malevolence, but who, by a special mercy of God, were now enlightened, and like herself, attached to that *vine* of which all good Catholics are the *branches*. She longed once more to unbosom her feelings to their common benefactor, Rowland. But as it was growing late she deferred to a more favourable time her conversation with him.—Virginia and Louisa seemed loath to leave the church, which to them appeared a place of exquisite delight: but at the suggestion of their mother they withdrew and entering the carriage speedily returned to Wolburn-hall.

CHAPTER XIII.

“Whence but from Heaven could men unskilled in arts,
 In several ages born, in several parts,
 Weave such agreeing truths?”—DRYDEN.

The first information which they received on their return, was the illness of the trusty Moses. A long life of virtue and devotional practices had prepared the good man to meet his end without alarm. He had belonged to a Catholic gentleman, who lost his life in the defence of his prin-

principles during an insurrection before the American revolution, and was left at an early age to General Wolburn, who had lived on the most intimate terms with his master. Moses was an exception to most persons in circumstances similar to those in which it was his fate to be.—He followed the General to battle, encountered the enemy, and fought by his side for the liberty of America. But during the distractions and calamities of the times, no matter where he was, he never lost sight of his religion and his duties. His assiduity at prayer, his fidelity, his piety, were a subject of astonishment, as well as edification to the General, who, in conversation with the first men of the age, would not be ashamed to speak as it were proverbially of his good sense and correct principles.

The illness of Moses was not a subject of astonishment, but of keen grief, to the ladies. His health had been gradually declining, and he had now reached an age which is given to few, having attained his eightieth year. After tea, the ladies and the General went to the room in which he lay. It was the place in which was soon to terminate the life of their favourite and aged servant. At the head of his bed hung a crucifix, which sixty years before he had received from a venerable clergyman; and at the foot a cup of holy water. His hands were clasped on his breast, holding entwined around his fingers the beads which he had so often recited. As Mrs. Wolburn entered, she approached the bed-side, and fixing an eye of grief and sympathy on his sunken face, "there, there," she said, pointing to the crucifix, "is all the Christian's hope."

"It is mine, it is mine," replied Moses, with a panting bosom.

"You are going to the home of all good christians, dearest Moses. How enviable is your con-

dition! How preferable to that of the greatest monarch, or the wisest philosopher!"

"I tried to sarve God always, misses. I have sinned, I knows wery—wery much—"

"But God is all merciful," said Louisa.

"If we do not hope in his mercy, what would become of us?" added Virginia.

"Massa," said Moses, "do me de favour to send for Fader Rowland?"

"The priest is the best consoler at this hour, when all other mortals turn away with disgust or affright from the dying," said Virginia.

"Father Rowland shall be sent for immediately, my good man," replied the General—"immediately,"—and left the room.

"What would it profit me now, misses, if I was as rich as a king, and had no religion?" said Moses.

"Here," whispered Virginia to Louisa, "here we see the necessity of true faith, without it who could die with resignation or hope?"

"When you come to die, misses, you will larn—" he tried to proceed, but his voice sank. A silence ensued, during which nought was heard but the deep and hard breathing of one who was drawing near his end.

"Do not exhaust yourself, Moses," said Mrs. Wolburn, "speak little—you cannot bear it—"

Opening his dying eyes, in which, however, was a striking expression of calm and serenity, he fixed them steadfastly on Virginia; and after some struggling—"You will den larn de blessings of de Catholic Church. I would not," he falteringly added, "for ten thousand worlds be anything but a Catholic at dis hour—tank God!" He closed his eyes, and a cold heavy tear rolled down his withered cheek. Mrs. Wolburn wiped it off with her handkerchief.

Oh! if there be a scene calculated to pierce the heart, to show the efficacy of faith and true

religion, it is one like that to which the reader is now introduced. The death-bed, round which all the vanities of the world dissipate like mist, and the realities of religion hover; the dread of the impious—the hope, the solace of the good! While life is blooming and the world has charms to dazzle, the subject of religion is one which occupies least of the mind's attention. There are other things more dear to human passion: the pageantry of the world is bright and seducing, the heart is stunned by pleasure and fashion, and music, and dance, and gaiety, and the evening circle: then is heard the reckless laugh, the vacant joke, the merry hum and buz of converse. Then is kept off, as a thing too gloomy to be mentioned, the work of death, and the vanishing of friends, and the crumbling into dust, and the dark grave. No! touch the harp, raise the vocal song, twine the luxuriant dance, press to the pageant of the play, and the revels of the evening, but speak not of death, nor the fear of eternity. Oh, the illusion, the fatal folly of human kind! But for the gayest, and the wealthiest, and the fairest, the hour of gloom, and sickness, and death, *shall* arrive. The following lines supposed to be written by a young lady in consumption, will speak more eloquently than my description:

“ I go from the world like a drooping flower,
 Whose beauty hath faded away :
 I remember the time—O name not the hour !
 When I, too, was lively and gay.
 But the frost of the tomb hath fallen on me,
 The sunshine of spring cannot save
 The withering blossom of youth—Gay one, see
 How the young and beautiful sink to the grave.”

It was now midnight, the clock in the **corridor** struck the hour with a sound awful in the stillness

of the night, and the gloom that pervaded the hall; and the last that would ever fall on the ear of Moses. It was like a funeral knell. With a trembling hand he made the sign of the cross, and asked if the Father had arrived: at that instant, Rowland, accompanied by the General, entered the room. To Moses, his appearance was like the visit of an angel of peace and solace; one, whose office it is to dissipate the horrors of death, and kindle the torch of consolation, even amidst the darkness of the tomb. He clasped the Father's hand, rolled up his pallid eyeballs, and sobbed. It was a melting scene. The stout heart of the General dissolved with feeling: over his manly brow he placed his right hand, and knelt with the ladies; after a few words spoken by the Father in the most impressive and affectionate manner, the company retired from the room, and Moses and Rowland were left together. *There* stood the best friend of the dying man. All others have quitted him: the world is as gay and as reckless as ever, while the soul is quivering on the lips of poor Moses! His confession was soon over: he who had so faithfully frequented the tribunal of penance, could not have much to depress his conscience. How different the dying sinner! After his confession, the father gave a sign for the company to return. In a moment they were upon their knees: and the Father sprinkling holy water upon the bed, with a grave tone began: "Peace to this house and all that dwell therein." After the accustomed prayers, he caused a blessed candle to be lighted, and holding in his hand the consecrated host, repeated the prayers of the church: "Behold the Lamb of God," &c.; and approaching the bed-side, communicated it to the departing christian. Moses received it for the last time with a fervour, a faith, a composure, a confidence, a serenity, which

are to be found only near the couch of *Him who dieth in the Lord.*

After the viaticum, Rowland proceeded to administer the sacrament of extreme unction, in compliance with the injunction of St. James, chap. v: "Is any man sick among you? let him bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."

If I were allowed to break the stillness of a death-bed scene, or interrupt the solemn prayers of the church, I would ask, why have the Protestants rejected this, from the number of sacraments? why, since they are such vindicators of the Bible, they do not act in accordance with its requisitions? There could be nothing plainer; the priest of the church is to be called in, the sick man is to be *anointed*. Is the dying Protestant anointed? compare the death-hour of a Protestant with that of a Catholic. In the room of the former you find no crucifix, no blessed and lighted tapers. What is there to soothe his agonies, or inspire hope? the minister speaks of the mercies of God, and prays, and all is over. The reckless soul, which for years had never thought perhaps of eternity, is suddenly ushered into it—with what preparation! In the room of the Catholic, you will find some emblem of his faith, and some token of his hope. The sacraments of penance, extreme unction, and the holy eucharist, are administered, and the dying mortal is accompanied by prayer into a world of mystery.

Then the Father assisted by the ladies, recited the prayers for the dying: the saints were invoked to come to the assistance of the christian—"Depart, christian soul!" exclaimed Rowland—Mrs. Wolburn wept; her daughters shrieked—

Rowland stood composed, with his ritual in one hand, and his crucifix in the other. "Depart, christian soul!"—and in an instant the pulse of life ceased for ever.

All present were deeply affected. A death-like stillness prevailed. The good Father waving his hand motioned them to kneel, and join in the prayers of the church for the departed soul. The General was quite overcome: he even wept for the loss of his faithful servant, and his frequent sighs were audible, whilst Rowland continued,

"Come to his assistance all ye saints of God. Meet him, all ye angels of the Lord. Receiving his soul. Presenting it in the sight of the Most High. May Christ who called thee, receive thee, and the angels conduct thee into the bosom of Abraham. Eternal rest grant him, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine unto him, &c. From the gates of hell, deliver his soul, O Lord. O Lord, hear my prayer, &c. Let us pray.

"To thee, O Lord, we commend the soul of thy servant Moses, that being dead to this world, he may live to thee, and whatever sins he has committed through human frailty, we beseech thee, in thy goodness, mercifully to pardon, through Christ, our Lord. Amen."

After a short pause, during which all seemed to meditate on the impressive scene before them, the Father added, "Grant, O Lord, that while we here lament the departure of thy servant, we may ever remember that we are most certainly to follow him. Give us grace to prepare for that last hour by a good life, that we may not be surprised by a sudden death, but be ever watching when thou shalt call, that so with the Spouse we may enter into eternal glory, through Christ our Lord." The General most fervently responded. Amen.

Such was the holy end of Moses. His remains were decently exposed in the hall for two days. Many of Rowland's congregation, with whom

Moses was a great favourite, visited the room in which he lay, and poured forth their prayers for the repose of his soul. All were loud in his praise, and several acts of charity and religion were related of him which had not transpired during his life. What a consoling reflection for the Catholic, that the pious solicitude of the church follows him even to the tomb, and that although removed from her sight, he is still remembered in her suffrages and prayers!

On the morning of the third day, the body, in a coffin covered with a black pall, was carried to the church, as the General was as anxious as Rowland that every respect should be paid to the memory of a servant whom he so highly respected. Three lighted tapers were placed at each side of the coffin. The Father, attired in sable vestments, offered up the Holy Sacrifice, and besought the assistants to join him in prayer for the departed. After which, preceded by the Cross, which was borne between two tapers, the incense and holy water, he proceeded to the bier in a mourning cope, and slowly read as follows:—
“Enter not into judgment, O Lord, with thy servant, because no man shall be justified in thy sight, unless thou grant him the remission of his sins. Let not the sentence of thy judgment fall heavily upon him whom the true supplication of christian faith commendeth to thee; but by the assistance of thy grace may he deserve to escape avenging judgment, who during life was signed with the seal of Holy Trinity. Who livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.”

“Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death on that tremendous day, when the heavens and the earth shall be moved, when thou shalt come to judge the world by fire. I tremble and fear until that judgment shall take place, and the wrath to come. That day is a day of wrath, of calamity, and misery, a great and very bitter day when thou shalt come, &c.”

Having commenced the Lord's Prayer, Rowland went round the bier, and sprinkled holy water thrice at each side. Then taking the censor he went round in like manner, and incensed the remains thrice at each side. After some further prayers the body was carried from the church to the grave-yard, Rowland meantime repeating, "May the angels conduct thee into Paradise. May the martyrs receive thee at thy coming, and conduct thee to the holy city of Jerusalem. May the choirs of angels receive thee, and with Lazarus, who was once a beggar, mayest thou enjoy eternal rest."

Rowland was on the following Tuesday invited to dinner at the hall. Amongst the guests he was astonished to perceive Henry and Sabina Bramswell, as he fancied, and truly, that a great coolness had subsisted between the young people in both families, in consequence of the change of religion in Louisa and Virginia. The extraordinary change in the latter had made a deep impression on their young neighbours. Henry observed, that there must be something singular in the Catholic Religion, when a person of such violent prejudices as Virginia was induced to embrace it. He accordingly paid a visit at the hall with his sister, and the result was an invitation to dinner.

During the evening a very animated conversation was carried on between the young ladies, and Henry proposed various questions concerning the doctrines and practices of Catholics to Rowland, which proved how deeply they had been misrepresented to him. He was astonished to find from the answers of Rowland, that on many points of faith the Catholic Church taught directly the contrary of what was imputed to her. Louisa perceived with delight, from Henry's ingenuous countenance, that each of his prejudices was vanishing in succession before the powerful rays of truth.

"But," said the General, interrupting one of the Father's conversations, "I forgot to ask you, my dear sir, why it was you incensed the coffin at church on the day of poor Moses's funeral? You will pardon me when I say, I thought there was something heathenish in the rite. What service could it render to the poor fellow?"

"So far from being offended," replied Rowland, "I am quite pleased that you have asked me the question. This ceremony was performed to show the respect which the church entertains for the bodies of her children, which by Baptism were made the Living Temples of the Holy Ghost, and which have been sanctified by the reception of the Sacraments, and particularly by having been united to the adorable Body of Christ in the Holy Communion. 'Know you not,' says St. Paul, 'that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?' And again he says, 'The Temple of God is holy, *which you are.*' The church, therefore, pays every respect to the remains of that temple of the Holy Spirit, and hopes, that it will rise immortal and glorious at the last day, to be forever honoured in heaven."

"Are you satisfied, my dear," said Mrs. Wolburn to the General?

"Perfectly so," replied he, "the Father has scripturally justified the practice, and his explanation convinces me, that we should never look upon any observance as unmeaning, without having first learned the cause of its adoption.

"Oh!" said Louisa, "you will always find an admirable agreement between the doctrines and ceremonies of the Catholic Church. They mutually explain each other."

"But," said Henry Bramswell, who had been eagerly listening, "Virginia has been describing to me the ceremonial of the other day, and I do not understand why the mass was said over the dead body. What is the mass?"

"It is the great sacrifice of the new law—a

continuation of the sacrifice of the cross on Mount Calvary," answered the Father.

"Was not that great sacrifice perfect? Does not St. Paul say, that Christ, by *one oblation*, hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and that he has no necessity of offering sacrifice daily as the priests of the old law, for that he did this *once* in offering himself? Was not the atonement then made, infinite, and why continue other sacrifices?" urged Henry.

"We do not offer *other sacrifices*," replied Rowland, "we continue and repeat the same sacrifice of the cross, though in an unbloody manner. The priest and the victim remains the same. We do not believe that the sacrifice of the mass is necessary *for increasing the merits* derived by Christ in the sacrifice of Calvary. We offer the same divine victim *for the application of those merits* to our souls, and *in commemoration of the passion of our Redeemer*. The infinite perfection of the sacrifice of the cross consists in its being referred to by all that preceded it, as well as by all that was to follow. As whatever preceded it was a preparation for it, so all that comes after accomplishes it, and serves to apply it. We believe the sacrifice of the cross was perfect, and Christ's atonement infinite. We know therefore that the price of our redemption is *not paid a second time*, because the first payment was fully adequate, but that what applies to us this redemption, continues incessantly. We recognise a distinction between things that are reiterated on account of their imperfection, and those which are continued as necessary, and because they are perfect. The Fathers of Trent declare, that this sacrifice was instituted only 'to represent that which was once offered on the cross—to perpetuate the memory of it to the end of time—and to apply its saving virtue to us for the remission of those sins which we every day commit.'"

“Does not the offering of the mass,” still urged Henry, “argue insufficiency or defectiveness in the atonement made by Christ? Does it not derogate from the dignity and efficacy of that atonement?”

“Clearly not,” said Rowland, “as you may perceive from the principles I have laid down.—For if your argument were just, it should be concluded by the same reason, that when Jesus Christ, *at his coming into this world*, offered himself up to God, in place of those victims, *which were not pleasing to him*, (Heb. x. 5.) he did an injury to the offering of himself upon the cross—that when he *continues to appear for us before God*; (ib. ix. 24.) he weakens that oblation by which *he hath once appeared for the destruction of sin by the sacrifice of himself*, (v. 26.) and that *by never ceasing to intercede for us in heaven*, (vii. 25.) he arraigns as insufficient that intercession which, *with a loud cry and tears*, he made for us when dying.” (v. 7.)

With regard to the objections urged from this epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, they do not militate against the Catholic doctrine in the Mass. The object of the apostle in this epistle was to teach us that the sinner could not escape death, unless by the substitution of a victim who should die in his stead—that whilst men substituted mere animals in their places, their sacrifices were no more than a public acknowledgment that they deserved death—that so unequal an exchange not being able to satisfy the divine justice, they renewed every day the sacrifice of these victims, a certain proof of the inadequacy of this substitution—but that when Jesus Christ was pleased to die for sinners, God being satisfied with the voluntary substitution of so worthy a person, had no more to require as the price of our ransom; from all which the apostle concludes, that not only no other victim should be offered up after Christ, but that even Christ

himself should be only once sacrificed by death. Surely there is nothing in all this inconsistent with the principles and doctrine which I have explained."

"I hardly need add, that the offering up of this holy sacrifice for one of our deceased members, is a necessary consequence of our belief in a middle state. Perhaps you are not aware that the great St. Augustine, in his Confessions, informs us, that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered up by the remains of his virtuous mother, for the repose of her soul, and that he earnestly entreats his readers to pray for eternal rest to his parents. What we did the other day for Moses, was done for St. Monica, at Ostia, so long ago as the year 387."*

The carriage of the Bramswell's was now announced. Henry seemed unwilling to interrupt their interesting conversation, and at parting, begged Rowland to lend him some approved works, explanatory of Catholic doctrine. It would be impossible to describe the joy which poor Louisa felt on this eventful evening. She saw the impression that had been made on Henry's mind, and that he was determined, without prejudice, to study the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and the arguments by which they are defended. She slipped into Sabina's hand a small manuscript, written by herself, and beautifully bound in silk, which contained hymns and prayers to the Holy Ghost, for direction in faith, and requested her to place it in Henry's way. She also engaged her mother to join her in a Novena, or Nine Days' Devotion, in honour of the Mother of God, to secure the inter-

* *Imus et redimus sine lachrymis; nam neque in eis precibus quas tibi fudimus, cum tibi offerretur pro ea sacrificium pretii nostri, jam juxta sepulchrum posito cadavere, priusquam deponeretur, sicut illic fieri solet, &c.* Confes. ib. ix. c. 4.

cession of this Queen of Heaven, in the good work of Henry's conversion.

Virginia observed the intense anxiety of her sister for Henry's fate, and although she ardently desired to see him a member of the Catholic Church, could not help rallying her on the subject, as if the motives of her uneasiness were not altogether religious. Mrs. Wolburn one day entered a room in which they were sitting, and overheard Louisa say, with particular emphasis, as if in reply to some remark of her sister—"Be convinced, Virginia, that I would rather see Henry Bramswell dead this moment, if I knew he had died in the Catholic faith, than be united to him for a thousand years, were it possible, with the religious principles he has hitherto professed." "I firmly believe you would, my dear," said Mrs. Wolburn, kissing her from behind.

Within a month after, on a Sunday morning, whilst the congregation of Rowland were assembled in preparation for the holy sacrifice, an unusual excitement was occasioned by the sight of a young gentleman, who proceeded slowly and seriously to the altar, and knelt, apparently with great humility and devotion. outside the communion rails.

It was Henry Bramswell.

The Father soon appeared in surplice and stole, and having ascended the altar steps, respectfully asked the young gentleman the object of his visit on that day to their humble temple?

Henry rose, and in a distinct and firm voice, replied, that having of late devoted much of his time to the consideration of religious questions, he had become convinced of the truth of the Catholic faith, and that as the result of his conviction he had now come to request, as the greatest of all favours, that he should be admitted within the pale of the Catholic Church. "I have," continued he, "during my whole life entertained

the utmost contempt for the Catholic religion. I have frequently spoken of it with unchristian bitterness. But I knew not the real character of the church I was attacking, and was deplorably ignorant of the truth which I impugned. I am now convinced of my errors, and my injustice ; and although, reverend sir, I might have been more privately received into the bosom of the church, I thought the best reparation I could make for my former opposition to the church of God, and the most grateful offering I could make him for having thus called me out of darkness into his admirable light, would be to appear here thus publicly, for the purpose of renouncing the religion in which I have hitherto lived."

This declaration was listened to with breathless silence by the whole congregation, tears of joy might here even be seen starting from many an eye, and when Henry had concluded, involuntary ejaculations of praise to God burst forth on every side. The choir commenced the solemn hymn of the Holy Ghost. The new convert, in a loud voice, recited his profession of the Catholic faith, and was admitted by the Father into the church of Christ, with the right to participate in her holy sacraments, whilst his glowing cheeks were suffused with tears. He then solemnly intoned the *Te Deum*, or hymn of thanksgiving to God, which was composed by Saints Ambrose and Augustine, it was continued by the choir, and the whole congregation joined with a feeling and fervour, which proved the delight they experienced at seeing a strayed sheep returning to the fold of the good shepherd.

Rowland retired to the vestry to prepare for mass, and soon commenced the holy sacrifice.

After the gospel he preached an appropriate sermon, the text of which was from the 2d chap. 47th verse of the Acts, "And the Lord increased daily together such as should be saved." He proved from this and various other passages of

scripture, that as no one was saved in the deluge of old, except those who were inclosed with Noah in the ark, so no one could hope for salvation outside the church, the ark of the living God—that Christ having gratuitously redeemed mankind and established a church, all men were bound to listen to her voice under pain of damnation—that those who wilfully opposed this spouse of Christ, and who from culpable ignorance or neglect in using the proper means to discover her, were not united to her communion, could not expect to be amongst the members of the elect—that to the end of time, as well as in the days of the apostles, the Lord daily added to the church those who were to be saved—that it was unjust to charge this church with what was termed ‘the frightful doctrine of exclusive salvation,’ because in teaching this doctrine she nearly re-echoed the declaration of her founder, who in giving his apostles the great commission to preach his gospel to every creature, had solemnly declared that whosoever does not *believe* shall be condemned—that the church could never compromise the interests of truth, and that it would be a false charity and mistaken liberality to conceal from any human being the extent of danger which he incurred, by living in a state of wilful separation from her—that although Catholics believed salvation to be impossible outside their church, yet they never applied this doctrine to particular individuals, nor presumed to say that such or such a person was damned, because to all appearance he did not die in the Catholic faith, because they knew that God alone who readeth the heart, could be aware of the dispositions of that heart; whether it was implicitly or not, attached to the church, and whether if outside its pale, it has been so culpably, or otherwise. He added, that in his opinion, the fate of many who died outside the true church was to be dreaded, if not for the sin of infidelity, or their want of

true faith, at least *on account of their other actual sins*, the pardon of which must be so extremely difficult for them, deprived as they were of those numerous helps and graces which are to be found in the true church alone. He concluded a very impressive discourse, by beseeching his hearers to join the new convert in thanksgiving to God, for the precious gift of grace which he had received, and to pray that the Good Shepherd would bring back to the fold of truth, all his wandering flock.

On the following Sunday, Henry Bramswell, faithful to his vocation, approached the Holy Table. He had spent the greater part of the week in retirement and prayer, and had made a general confession of his life to the good father. It was impossible not to be edified at the manner in which he had prepared himself for the great duty of communion. During three days immediately preceding, he fasted on one meal, and when he appeared on the Sabbath at the Table of the Lord, every one was struck with his recollected air, and the fervent emotions which he exhibited, as the happy moment drew nigh that was to unite him to his God. After having repeated with the father, in sentiments of contrite humility, the *Domine non sum dignus*, he neither moved nor spoke until he received the Holy of Holies. After a short pause he slowly retired to his place, and so profoundly was he penetrated with the majesty of God's presence, and his own unworthiness, that he remained for a full hour on his knees, apparently without life or motion. When the tide of gratitude which inundated his soul burst forth into words, they were words of melting tenderness and love. He shed copious tears, he prayed and wept again. He called to mind the innumerable mercies of God, the singular graces which he had bestowed upon him, and the crowning of all his goodness in this great banquet of love. Even after he had retired, he could not for a moment during that happy day

lose sight of his Divine Guest. All his thoughts and feelings, and powers, were directed towards him. He was occupied in erecting a throne of virtues in his heart, on which, with the eye of faith, he loved to behold his Redeemer seated. He would frequently tell him, that he was the chosen king of his heart, and whilst he conjured him to reign there with absolute dominion, and to establish it as his kingdom for ever, all his interior powers were unceasingly bent in adoration before him.

He had soon to prepare for the reception of another sacrament. Having consulted the will of heaven, and sought the advice of his spiritual director, he felt convinced that he was called by God to the married state. A formal proposal was made to the General for Louisa's hand. The great object of her solicitude having been attained in Henry's conversion, she with the blessing and approbation of both her parents yielded her consent. A day was named for the nuptials, and the parties and their friends, (many of whom did not profess the Catholic faith,) proceeded to the church. It was a truly christian marriage. The ceremony commenced by prayers suited to the occasion, which were recited with great devotion by the youthful pair. Rowland ascended the altar and delivered them an instructive exhortation on the holy sacrament they were about to receive, and the important obligations that were to result from it. He reminded them, that matrimony was originally instituted by Almighty God in the garden of Eden, that it was ratified and confirmed by his divine Son in the New Testament ; that it was honoured by his presence and by his first miracle at Cana in Galilee, and was, in fine, elevated by him to the dignity of a sacrament. He said, that those who worthily received it, obtained graces peculiar to this sacrament, by which they would be enabled to fulfil its great responsibilities, discharge the duties

which they owed to each other, and thus sanctify themselves in that holy state.

He then dwelt on the dispositions necessary for entering into marriage. As it was *a sacrament of the living*, it should consequently be received in the state of grace ; for to approach so holy a rite in the state of sin and spiritual death, would be to profane the sacred institution, and instead of the blessing of God, to receive his condemnation. He observed, that the chief reason why so many marriages were unhappy, was because the parties were influenced more by sensual and worldly considerations, than the fear of God, the love of virtue, or the desire of securing their salvation ; that such persons never prepared themselves to receive the sacrament worthily ; that they thus entered the holy state with the added guilt of sacrilege and profanation, and being deprived of the sacramental graces, found marriage to be an insupportable yoke of misery, instead of a comfort or a blessing. He then spoke of the necessity of a vocation to this holy state. It was the duty of all young persons to consult the will of heaven on this point, and if they did so unfeignedly, and from a sincere desire to ascertain to what state of life God had called them, with a view to embrace it, they had every reason to hope for the direction and light of the Holy Spirit. Having discovered their vocation, they were then bound to invite Jesus Christ to their nuptials, that he might bless and sanctify them.—
“ *The most perfect idea of a christian marriage,*” continued he, “ *is that to which the parties are called by God, and to which, they, in turn, invite Jesus Christ.*”

He besought those before him to invite that Divine Guest. as he was formerly invited to the marriage of Cana. His presence would hallow and ennoble the union that was about to take place in his name. He would work miracles of grace in their hearts, by changing their feelings

and dispositions, and by adapting them to each other in such a manner as would produce christian peace and concord. He would remove, perhaps, the latent sources of coldness and indifference, and transmute them into the sincere and enduring warmth of conjugal affection, as he had formerly changed water into wine. He would teach them the duties of charity and christian forbearance, he would enable them to support and console each other in all the trying vicissitudes of life. If they were to be blessed with an offspring, he would inspire them how to train up their children in the way they should walk, and thus leave them the precious legacy of a holy education in the fear of the Lord, an inheritance more valuable than all the riches of the earth.

He, in fine, conjured all present to unite with him in his prayers to God, that he would pour down upon these his servants the effusions of his grace, that he would fill their hearts with worthy and pure dispositions. "And as the apostle of nations," said he, "has declared that what they are about to receive is 'a great sacrament in Christ and in the church,' let us beseech the Lord that they may receive it in a manner worthy of Jesus Christ, and worthy of themselves, as adopted children of his holy spouse."

They were then united after the form prescribed in the Roman Ritual. The bride was given away by her venerable parent, who shed tears of joy on the occasion, whilst, in answer to the appeal of the Father, many a heartfelt prayer was poured forth to God for the temporal and eternal happiness of Henry and Louisa Bramswell. At the close of the marriage the Father slowly pronounced the following beautiful prayer:

"Look down, O Lord, we beseech thee, upon these thy servants, and afford thy kind assistance to these thy institutions, by which thou hast been pleased to provide for the propagation of the human race, that they who have been joined

together by thy authority, may be preserved by thy help. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

He then commenced 'the mass for a bridegroom and bride,' and having proceeded with the holy sacrifice to the end of the *Pater Noster*, he turned on one side towards the newly-married pair, who were kneeling at the foot of the altar. At that awful moment, when he was standing in presence of Christ, he pronounced in his name, and as his minister, the nuptial benediction, in the following truly eloquent and pathetic prayer:

"O God, who, by the power of thy might, didst create all things out of nothing;—who, at the first formation of the world, having made man to thy own likeness, didst, out of his flesh, make the woman also, and give her to him for a help-mate: and didst teach us by this, that what was one in the beginning, was not meant to be separated afterwards.—O God, who, by so excellent a mystery, hath consecrated this union of the two sexes, and made it a figure of the great sacrament of Christ and his church,—O God, by whom woman is joined to man, and that union which was instituted in the beginning, is still accompanied by the only blessing that has not been recalled, either in punishment of original sin, or by the sentence of the deluge—mercifully look down upon this thy handmaid, who, being now to be joined in wedlock, desires to be taken under thy protection. May love and peace constantly remain in her. May she marry in Christ, faithful and chaste. May she imitate the holy women of former times. May she be pleasing to her husband, like Rachel. May she be discreet like Rebecca. May she be like Sara in her length of years and fidelity; and may he who is the author of all evil never have a share in her actions. May she remain attached to the faith and commandments: and, being united to one man in wedlock, may she flee from all unlawful addresses. May the regularity of her life and conduct be her

strength against the weakness of her sex. May she be modest and grave, bashful, and venerable, and well instructed in heavenly doctrine. May she be fruitful in offspring, approved and innocent; and may it be at length her happy lot to arrive at the rest of the blessed in the kingdom of God. May they both see their children's children to the third and fourth generation, and live to a desirable old age in happiness. Through Jesus Christ, &c."

He then turned to the altar, and after his own communion, he administered the holy sacrament to Henry and Louisa. He proceeded with the mass to the *ite missa est*, and before the general benediction of the people, he pronounced the following separate blessing over them:

"May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob be with you, and may he fulfil his blessing upon you, that he may see your children's children to the third and fourth generation, and afterwards enter into the possession of eternal life, through the assistance of our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth for ever." Amen.

The curiosity of the reader, who may be anxious to know the fate of the other persons connected with this history, can be gratified in a few words. Within a year after the above occurrence, the General departed this life in the faith of his trusty servant Moses; his widow went to spend the rest of her days with her affectionate daughter Louisa, who had been just delivered of an heir, and Virginia, the once bitter and anti-catholic Virginia, together with Sabina Bramswell, retired to the convent, where they dedicated the remainder of their lives to him 'whom to serve is to reign,' and whom they had chosen for their eternal spouse.

