

FATHER LARKIN'S

Mission in Jonesville;

A Tale of the Times.

BY

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FATHER LARKIN'S MISSION IN JONESVILLE.

CHAPTER I.

HOW TO BUILD A RAIL-ROAD AND A CITY.

THE patriotic Col. Jones, wishing to do something for his country, projected a rail-road, which should join the great western lakes with the Mississippi River, by a new route which possessed great advantages over every other—if not for the public accommodation, at least for his own. As one man cannot expect to carry out such an enterprise alone, Col. Jones formed a company. That is, he induced three or four of his friends to join him.

Their first operation was to buy up a large quantity of land at each terminus of the contemplated rail-road, and at two or three promising points along the route, to hold for a rise. These lands were bought very cheap, with a very moder-

ate payment of cash and a long credit for the balance.

The next thing to get was the charter. That was to be obtained like all good things by working for it. First, there were suitable men to be nominated for the Legislature. Then Col. Jones and his friends went to the State Capital, to give dinners and champagne suppers, and lobby, and, if the truth must be told, bribe a little. A certain number of shares in the new company were judiciously distributed.

The charter was a very liberal one. It granted a handsome appropriation of state lands, along the route of the new road, and other important privileges, which were worth all they cost.

Then Col. Jones, as President, went to Europe to borrow money on the bonds of the new company, and sell stock, while his partners raised all they could at home. The European subscriptions and loans were to buy the rails, a very heavy item, and furnish rolling stock to roll off the money of foreign capitalists.

But before this could be made available, the track must be graded. This work was given out to three or four contractors, who agreed to take a large part of their pay in the lands appropriated to the company.

The contractors for the eastern section of the

road were Messrs. Scrougem and Gougem. Mr. Scrougem went to New York with letters of credit, testifying to his honorable character, his large resources, and the important and lucrative contract he had secured. Thus recommended, Mr. Scrougem bought a large quantity of ready made clothing, the coarsest, cheapest and poorest he could find, boots and shoes, groceries, provisions, whiskey and tobacco; all the refuse of the market. He bought on long credit, of course.

Then he engaged a ship load or two of Irishmen, as laborers on the new road, and was ready to commence operations. After all, the Irishmen were at the bottom of the whole business. Our western Yankees could scheme, and lobby, and bribe, and financier; John Bull is always ready to open his pockets and loan his money, with a prospect of a good interest or handsome dividend; but when it comes to hard work—the bone, and muscle, and sinews, without which all the rest would be useless, then we have to call on the Irishman, who is the basis of all important operations.

The Irishmen came—a large colony, with men, women and children, but not “much cattle,” and were distributed along the route, in little groups of shanties, built of boards, furnished by the contractors, for which they paid a higher rent in proportion to the cost, than tenant houses pay in New

York; and that is enough. The laborers were to have a dollar a day; and provisions, clothing, whiskey and tobacco, were furnished from the contractor's stores instead of wages. Of course they were charged two or three times as much for every thing as it was worth. The men were encouraged to drink. The cheap and wretched whiskey of different colors was dealt out freely, and the appetite grew by what it fed on. The surface water was poor, and required to be mixed with whiskey. The women learned to drink and smoke as well as the men, and had the friendly excuse of keeping them company. Even the little children were debauched with the fumes of tobacco and the universal beverage. Chills and fever came, and the remedy was whiskey. No church—no priest—no schoolmaster; bad influences and associations: and, after a time, hard conditions and desperate feelings. There was but a small balance of money due the men at the end of the month; and that little they did not get. Some excuse was made—the work went on; more of the miserable trash of the contractors' stores were taken and more of the wretched whiskey was drunk. The men were plundered of the greatest part of their wages in this way, and then cheated of the remainder. They had no resource. It was vain to ask for justice. They went off, to find work with the

farmers or in the little villages that were beginning to spring up along the new rail-road. The contractors paid for their goods, or failed to do so, just as they found it convenient; kept their lands, and became millionaires. This is the way to build rail-roads.

Col. Jones, the President of the new rail-road, centered his interests chiefly in the embryo city of Jonesville, which was laid out with great taste on a section of land he had reserved to himself, where the road crossed a river, which afforded valuable water-power privileges. In the centre of the new city he laid out a public park, and built himself a handsome residence on its handsomest street. Beautiful lithographic maps of the city were printed, bordered with views of many projected edifices.

It was a good speculation. Jonesville became the county seat, which gave it a court house and jail. Mills and manufactories were established on the river. Mechanics and laborers gathered to build the necessary edifices. Merchants came to supply the necessities of life, and in a time so brief—it seemed wonderful—Jonesville was a smart, thriving, enterprising city.

Of course, a large number of the Irish laborers on the rail-road found a home in Jonesville. It

was an important station, and the company established here the machine shops for repairs. There was plenty of work and good pay; though the large shops and factories still kept up, to some extent, the store-pay system of the rail-road, but they could not carry out all its atrocities.

The Irish population of Jonesville had been demoralized, as the French say, with a peculiar meaning, first by poverty, eviction, and a forced exile from the land of their birth; then by a crowded passage across the Atlantic: still more by their rail-road experiences, which I have but faintly sketched; and now they brought all the careless, improvident, and intemperate habits that many of them had acquired to their new home. A few, with native energy, struggled out of this depressed condition, but the greater portion were what one would expect, from these antecedents and circumstances. Houses were scarce, and rents high in Jonesville; and poor people were obliged to live in little shanties, or crowded into tenements, cellars and garrets. The use of whiskey, grown a habit on the rail-road, was of course, continued. Drinking led to frequent intoxication—intoxication to family quarrels, brutal treatment of wives and children, and sometimes to murder. The little shops and groceries where whiskey was sold,

sprung up like a crop of mushrooms. With a population impoverished and persecuted in their native land; ignorant, because the means of education had been denied them; subjected to the debasing influences I have but faintly depicted; what could be expected but vice, misery, disease, and crime?

CHAPTER II.

It was evening. A pleasant party was assembled in Mrs. Col. Jones' drawing-room. First, Col. Jones himself, who though scarcely forty-five years old, considered himself the patriarch of Jonesville. Mrs. Col. Jones, a superbly fashionable lady, born and bred in New York, and entitled to set the fashion in all matters of taste, in the society of Jonesville. Mr. Alfred Jones, son and heir of Col. Jones, twenty-five years old, and of course the leading young man in the city; and Miss Mary Jones, a very beautiful young lady of eighteen, as lovely and accomplished as it is possible to imagine.

I have mentioned the members of the family first—so far then, please consider yourselves acquainted. We have next two clergymen, the Rev. Mr. Plumley, a High Church Episcopalian, and the Rev. Mr. Splurge, an Old School Presbyterian. Col. Jones was a Presbyterian, considering it the most solid persuasion he knew of; while Mrs. Jones was an Episcopalian, as being undoubtedly the most fashionable. The young lady went to church with her mother; the young gentleman went—nowhere. Lawyer Quirk, Mr. Dimity, the

dry-goods merchant, and other worthy citizens of the upper hundred or so, made up this highly fashionable party.

The Rev. Mrs. Plumley disputed the palm of fashion with Mrs. Col. Jones; while Miss Splurge, an antiquated spinster, sister and housekeeper to the Rev. Mr. Splurge, was very active in all religious and philanthropic enterprises, and was the presidentess of fourteen societies, including the Ladies' Auxiliary, Bible, Tract, Missionary, Sunday School, Sewing Society, and all the rest of them.

"Have you heard the news, Col. Jones?" asked lawyer Quirk. All ears were wide open, and all conversation suspended; even a flirtation which was in progress between Mr. Alfred Jones and Miss Plumley.

"La! Mr. Quirk, what is the news? deu tell!" cried Miss Splurge, before Col. Jones had time to answer.

"We are going to have a Catholic Priest in Jonesville, ma'am," said lawyer Quirk, sharply.

If a bomb-shell had come down through the ceiling, and burst in the midst of the party, it might have done more mischief, but could scarcely have produced more consternation. Miss Splurge, as usual, was the first to give vent to her emotions.

"What! a popish priest in Jonesville! Mercy on us; what next, I wonder?"

"A Romish priest in Jonesville!" exclaimed the Rev. Mr. Plumley, as blandly as surprise and a mild indignation would permit.

"A Jesuit, no doubt," suggested the Rev. Mr. Splurge. "Rome grows more and more audacious in her encroachments. There is unquestionably a deep laid conspiracy to bring this whole country under Papal domination."

"We shall have the Inquisition next," said Mr. Dimity, who was a strong Know-Nothing.

Col. Jones was not a man of very decided opinions. Nominally a Presbyterian, he rather conformed to the ideas of that sect; but he wished, above all things, to be popular. He trimmed carefully to the breeze, and watched the currents. He did not care enough for his religion to be a fanatic; and would have been very glad to unite all parties in politics and all sects in religion, provided they would make him Mayor, send him to Congress, or elect him Governor. He had discovered in the meantime, that an Irishman's vote is as good as anybody's.

"Well, I can't say I am sorry our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens are going to have a clergyman of their own persuasion," said the Colonel. "I reckon it will be a good thing for them; and I

don't think that ministers of any other denomination can do them much good."

"Gracious, massy! no;" exclaimed the impetuous Miss Splurge. "Haint I tried hard enough, I wonder? I distributed tracts, and they took 'em to kindle the fire with. I gin the children clothes to git 'em to go to Sunday-school, and they went just long enough to dirty 'em, so that I could'nt ask 'em back again. I fed three families with soup last winter, that gave promise of conversion, but as soon as they got work they relapsed into idolatry, and when I went down in Irish Row to talk to 'em about their horrid superstitions, they actually insulted me. The children hooted me, threw cabbage stumps at me, and called me 'a bloody old Cromwellian,' and—" and here the good lady, from evident motives of delicacy let her voice fall to a very loud whisper—"and '*a nasty old Orange* ——' I can't tell you what, but it was something horrid."

"The Irish people," said the Rev. Mr. Plumley, "have never taken very kindly to the efforts made for their conversion. Our Church has been established in every parish for three centuries; but I am sorry to say, it has made very little progress."

"Perhaps, if it had not been so closely allied to Popery," suggested the Rev. Mr. Splurge, "it

might have succeeded better in converting people from it."

"I am not aware that the Presbyterians have had any better success, Sir," was the polite reply.

"Fact is," said Mr. Quirk, "one religion is natural to one sort of people, and another to another. The English are naturally Episcopalians; the Scotch take naturally to Presbyterianism, and the Irish run to Popery just as a duck runs to water. As for this country, we are made up of all sorts of people, and so we have all sorts of religions."

"I can't quite allow that, my dear Sir," said the Rev. Mr. Plumley. "Of course there is a right way, and a sound doctrine, and a true Church. A dozen different creeds can't all be right. There can be but *one true Church*, and all sects are necessarily in error and schism."

"Well, who's to decide which is the right one, I should like to know?" exclaimed the excitable Miss Splurge, cutting in before her brother, who had already opened his mouth, could get out a word. "If the Church of Rome is the mother of harlots, as the Bible says, I'd like to know who's her oldest darter?"

"My dear Madame," said the Rev. Mr. Plumley, with admirable sauvity, "if the Church of England is, as you intimate, the eldest daughter of Rome, I think you must allow that Presbyterian-

ism comes next. I don't see that we gain anything by abusing our common mother."

Miss Splurge subsided—in other words, she simmered down; while Col. Jones, acting as general peace-maker, interposed his good offices.

"Roman Catholics," said he, "have as good a legal right to profess and practice their religion as any of us. All denominations are equal before the law. As we cannot hope to convert them to our various religious views, it is best that they should have the free enjoyment of their own. For my part, I am glad to have another clergyman settled in Jonesville."

"You don't call a popish priest a clergyman, I hope?" snapped out Miss Splurge, with bitterness.

"Why not?" interposed Mr. Quirk, who had a lawyer-like enjoyment of mischief. "I presume there may be persons here, who, if closely pressed, might deny the right of the Rev. Mr. Splurge to the same appellation."

The lady did not need to see the direction of Mr. Quirk's eye, to understand this insinuation.

"Well, I guess," said she, "if the truth was known, the apostolic succession isn't quite so clear in some of the branches, that they need to fling at others."

"In courtesy," said Mr. Plumley, "it seems proper to allow the title of clergyman to ministers

of all denominations. If a Romish clergyman comes to Jonesville, I shall try to treat him with politeness."

"I always thought he was half a Papist," whispered Miss Splurge to her next neighbor. "But they hain't got no meeting house," said she aloud. "I'd just like to see their mummeries once, if it was'n't wicked."

"But, Col. Jones," said Mr. Dimity, who was really concerned, "what is going to be the influence of these Romanists on the prosperity of Jonesville?"

"Hard to say, my dear sir. You see that New York and Philadelphia, and Boston and Baltimore, and I might add Cincinnati, St. Louis, Chicago and Milwaukee have got along in spite of it. So I don't see that we have anything to apprehend for Jonesville. No doubt the influence of their religion is bad. They are poor, unthrifty, quarrelsome, and given to intemperance; but it is to be hoped that a resident priest will have a good influence."

"Why, Colonel!" said Mr. Quirk, who couldn't let a flaw in logic escape him, "if the Catholic religion makes people poor, unthrifty, quarrelsome and intemperate, and they attend more to their religion for having a priest, then they will become

poorer, more unthrifty, more quarrelsome, and more intemperate."

"Got you there, father!" said Mr. Alfred, in high glee, who had been listening to the conversation with great interest.

"Besides," said Dr. Newton, a very quiet, thoughtful man, who now joined in the conversation for the first time; "the facts are not favorable to this view of the case. Intemperance is justly considered the mother of poverty and vice. Now Catholics, as a class, are not so intemperate as Protestants."

"La, sakes! hear the man!" exclaimed Miss Splurge, who had recovered from her late discomfiture—"I guess you don't visit Irish Row very often, do you?"

"Yes, I do, Madame," said the Doctor. "I go there very often, for there is much sickness there, as there always is where people are crowded together in impure air and uncleanly conditions, with bad habits in addition."

"Why don't you say drunkenness, and be done with it?" said Miss Splurge.

"Drunkenness, if you please, Madame," continued the Doctor. "Still the fact is as I state it. In the Catholic countries of Italy, Austria, France, Spain, Portugal, &c., drunkenness is scarcely known, while in England, Scotland, Holland,

Denmark, and Sweden, almost entirely Protestant countries, it is very common. This is the testimony of national statistics, confirmed by the accounts of all impartial travelers in these countries. Now, if the Irish are given to intemperance in this country, we must look for some cause besides their religion, which strictly prohibits it."

"Well, it's a great deal of attention they pay to their religion, then," said the amiable Miss Splurge.

"It is their misfortune, perhaps," said the Doctor, smiling, "that many have so little opportunity to do so. Driven from their homes, thrown upon our shores, and scattered over our rail-roads, they are deprived of the care of their pastors and subjected to all the temptations of poverty and hard conditions. It is very easy for us, with our comfortable homes and elegant churches, and stated preaching of the gospel, to speak harshly of the poor Irish; but we cannot judge them rightly until we have been placed in their situation, or they in ours. If placed on an equality, we might make a fair comparison. I put it to you, Col. Jones, as a man who has seen the world; do you think the same number of Americans, subjected to the same privations, would behave any better?"

The Colonel was flattered at this appeal, and responded to it handsomely.

"Well, Dr. Newton, I can't say—I think they

would. They might not have exactly the same vices, but I am afraid our's might be the worst."

The conversation closed. Miss Jones delighted the company with her performance on the piano, and Dr. Newton, who had some accomplishments added to his good sense and good feeling, joined her in a duet. There were too many clergymen and pious people to make dancing allowable, so the party broke up early, and our friend Miss Splurge, taking charge of her brother, walked home in the moonlight, venting her smothered wrath on those horrid Papists.

CHAPTER III.

ARRIVAL OF FATHER LARKIN IN JONESVILLE.

THERE was great joy in Jonesville when it was known that the Right Rev. Bishop was about to send them a resident missionary priest. There was a greater joy when Father Larkin arrived among them.

As it was known on what train he was expected, a large portion of the Catholic population assembled at the rail-road station, to give him a fitting welcome. A great many Protestants and non-Catholics were also attracted to witness his reception. It was hearty and enthusiastic of course. I am sorry to be obliged to confess also, that, in a few instances, the joyful excitement had been evidently heightened by artificial stimulus. But it was in sorrow, not in anger, that he made this observation. He grieved that Protestants should be so scandalized; but he grieved much more that Almighty God should be offended.

When the train passed on, the crowd gathered round him. They cheered again and again; they kissed his hands; they shed tears of joy. No expression or manifestation seemed extravagant

enough to tell their happiness. All wished to speak to him and bid him welcome, and all wished to hear him speak. There was no way but for the good father to mount the first convenient platform, which happened to be a cart, from which, when the tumultuous cheers had subsided, he addressed the assembly.

It was a beautiful sight to see him, as he stood a moment in silence, looking round upon the throng of people gathered about him. He was nearly six feet in height; his form a model of manly beauty; with a ruddy complexion; hazel eyes, and clustering locks of dark brown hair. His manner was the perfection of simple dignity; his dress elegant in its chaste neatness. He seemed thirty years of age, though really some years younger. His air and manner bespoke the gentleman and scholar; his smile was full of affection, sweetness and humility; and when he spoke, his articulation satisfied the most fastidious taste, while his musical voice and earnest manner went straight to the hearts of his hearers.

"My Christian brethren, and kind friends:" said he, "I thank you for your generous welcome. It has pleased Almighty God, that our Right Rev. Bishop should send me to you. I have been appointed to be your pastor. When our Blessed Lord established His Church on the earth, He said to

those He ordained to preach His Gospel, 'As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you. He that heareth you, heareth Me.' Your Bishop, as you well know, has received his consecration, mission, and jurisdiction, in a direct and unbroken line from the Apostles. And I, a humble and unworthy priest of that One Church, which Christ established, and which we are taught is 'One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic,' come to you, my Christian brethren and friends, deputed to exercise here, that same authority which our Lord and Saviour gave to His Apostles when he said,—'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.' 'Whose sins ye forgive, shall be forgiven; and whose sins ye retain, shall be retained.' Here, friends, are the words of my commission.

"And we, my brethren, whom the Providence of Almighty God has taken from our beloved native land, and brought into this glorious country of our adoption, why has He sent us here? What is our mission to this new continent, and this mighty and growing Republic? Has God permitted you to become exiles from our dear mother land, merely that you may dig canals, and build rail-roads, and labor for the temporal prosperity of this noble country? God forbid. It is your holy mission to aid in planting His Church over this broad land. Wherever you are gathered, in these rising towns

and cities, from east to west, from north to south, Catholic churches are to be built, Catholic schools established, Catholic convents, hospitals, colleges, and other institutions of Catholic religion and charity planted and sustained, until the cross shall glitter on thousands of spires, and our glorious faith shall have millions of believers. America, through your instrumentality, is to be converted to the Catholic faith.

"Almighty God chooses His own means. He takes the weak things of this world to confound the mighty. Our Lord was born in a stable and cradled in a manger; His Apostles were chosen from fishermen and publicans; and the poor, oppressed, down-trodden exiles from the martyr nation of centuries, our poor Ireland, God has chosen to bear the treasures of His Holy Church, to a country destined soon to surpass every other in power, and wealth, and greatness.

"But oh, my brethren! if it be true that Almighty God has chosen you, out of your weakness and poverty, for this sublime mission, and me, His unworthy servant, to aid you in its accomplishment, how great are our responsibilities, how important are our duties! How sad would it be if any of us should give a scandal to the faith we were sent here to honor and cherish! How dreadful, if our non-Catholic neighbors were to have their prejudices

against our holy religion strengthened by our neglect of its requirements! How terrible would be the punishment we should deserve, if our neglect of our holy religion and our disregard of its precepts, should be a stumbling block in the way of our fellow citizens, who are, perhaps, sincerely desirous to find out the way of salvation.

"If there is one Catholic here, who has given such a scandal, disgraced the land of his birth, outraged the land of his adoption, and dishonored our holy religion; what can I say to him? Confusion, shame, remorse, should overwhelm him. 'It were better that a millstone were hanged around his neck, and he were cast into the depths of the sea.' 'Better if he had never been born!'"

With sad, tearful eyes, the good Father looked round on that hushed, sorrow-stricken assembly. There was no sound but sobs. In a few moments, with a softened voice, he went on.

"If there are any here who have given such scandal in the past, the Church, your tender mother, opens her loving arms to every contrite soul. The words of the Blessed Jesus, to every truly contrite heart are ever the same—'Go in peace; sin no more.' The tribunal of penance is open. God asks a humble confession, a sincere contrition, an earnest amendment of life. Begin from this hour. Say now and here, 'God being my helper, I will never

again be a scandal to His Church, and I will do all I can to repair the scandals I have made.'

"My dear Christian brethren, you are now to have the daily Sacrifice of the Mass, as soon as we can find a suitable place for a temporary church. We must have instructions for those who have been neglected, schools for the children, and in time, I hope, an asylum for our destitute orphans.

"It is the duty of the Pastor to take the lead; but he can do little without the help of his people. Let us all go to work for the glory of God and the salvation of our souls; and in this way, and in no other, can we do honor to our religion, and show our kind neighbors around us, the true character and the proper influence of the Catholic Faith. God bless you, and give you grace to seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice."

It was at once a speech and a sermon. Col. Jones heard every word of it; and, acting upon his first generous impulses, he walked up to Father Larkin and grasped his hand.

"You are welcome to Jonesville," said he, like a man who had about the best right of anybody to say so. "I am not of your persuasion," said he, "but I am glad you have come, notwithstanding. I believe it will be a good thing. We can't all believe alike, you know, but I hold that when we

can't agree, we should agree to disagree. That's my doctrine."

"I can't quite admit," said Father Larkin, smiling, "that we ought to *agree* to disagree; but we ought certainly to be charitable in our disagreements. I suppose you will allow that there is but one faith in Heaven."

"Certainly; of course."

"And our Lord and his Apostles taught only one faith on earth."

"Well, yes; I suppose so."

"And we pray—'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven?'"

"O yes, of course, we all say that."

"Then I think we must not agree to disagree, except in the sense of being very charitable to those who are ignorant of the true faith."

"Exactly; and now, my good Sir, will you do me the honor to come and take dinner with me."

Father Larkin accepted the unexpected invitation. At the table he charmed Mrs. Jones and Miss Jones by his unaffected gentleness, elegant conversation and racy humor. The Colonel may have had some misgivings of the effect it might have on his more bigoted fellow-citizens; but an election was approaching, and he believed, like a good many other people, firstly, that Father Larkin

would tell every Catholic in Jonesville, in the confessional, or somewhere, who he must vote for; and, secondly, that every Catholic would vote just as he told him to; and Col. Jones was as wise as his neighbors.

CHAPTER IV.

THE JONESVILLIANS DISCUSS THE INTERESTING
SUBJECT.

THAT afternoon, great discussions were going on at every corner in Jonesville, in every bar-room and grocery, and wherever people met, to talk over the absorbing news.

Mr. Dimity was in a state of excitement; and a larger group than usual gathered about his counter.

"I tell you, he's a Jesuit," said Mr. Dimity.

"He's an almighty cute chap, anyhow—Jesuit or no Jesuit," said Jonathan Jewsharp, a Yankee from the extremities of Down East. "I kinder guess you'll have ter overhaul a heap of your parsons, afore you'll find one to match him. Golly! how slick he did give it to 'em!"

"Oh yes, he's smart enough. They all are. The Jesuits have to be smart. They won't have any but smart men for such business as they are after."

"Wal, who's a better right, I should like to know? The Pope's got a tarnal hard road to hoe, and I guess he wants all the smart fellows he can

get to help him out," said Jonathan, whittling a pine stick into a cider tap.

"That's what makes them so dangerous," continued the anxious and perturbed dry-goods man. "They take all the brightest young fellows they can find; and then give them a first rate education; and then they all obey orders, and go just where the Pope chooses to send them, and do just what he tells them to do. I tell you, the country is'n't safe."

"Wal, I swow! You'r making out a desp'rat case, aint you, now? You blame the Catholics because they take smart fellows for priests, instead of spoonies; then you blame 'em for giving 'em a good edication, instead of grindin' 'em out of a theological mill as they do down East, faster'n a hoss can trot; and then you blame 'em for obeyin' orders. What the deuce do you want 'em to den? Do you want 'em to disobey orders? Jerusalem! A darned pretty consarn that would be, anyhow. How'd you like to see one of General Scott's officers disobeyin' his orders, or his sogers either? Queer sort of a discipline you'd have, wouldn't you, now?"

"But, I tell you that only makes them the more dangerous."

"Come, Dimity," said Dr. Newton, who had dropped in, and was listening to this discussion,

"where's the proof of any danger? In the first place, Father Larkin is not a Jesuit. He is a secular priest. Do you suppose the country will suffer, if our Irish fellow-citizens have a chance to go to church every Sunday, and stop off a little of the whiskey? Will it hurt you, or me, if they confess their sins? And if this new priest should get all the dirty children scrubbed up, and set them to learning their catechism and multiplication table, what do you suppose would happen to Jonesville?"

"That's about the way to talk it," said Jonathan, triumphantly, as he whittled off the biggest kind of a pine shaving. "You don't know which side your bread's buttered on; the less they spend for whiskey, the more they'll have to spend for calico. Now, darn it, don't be a tarnal fool, and bite your own nose off to spite your face."

So the affair was discussed in a hundred circles, among the non-Catholic Jonesvillians. The Catholics had their own side of the question.

Many poor, discouraged people, thanked God, and took new courage that day, from the inspiring presence and cheering words of Father Larkin. Many a poor man who had seemed lost; sunk in the slough of vice and wretchedness, now saw a beacon of hope to cheer him, and a strong hand,

with a brother's heart to energize it, stretched out to help him.

There were two classes in Jonesville who were maddened by the advent of the good priest. The more fanatical of the no-Popery people of different denominations; the believers in Maria Monk; the readers of Gavazzi; the patrons of the religious and irreligious Know-Nothing papers. The Lodge of United Americans was in a great excitement, and called a special meeting. But the strongest, and worst, and most effectual opposition showed itself where the worst evils had their strong-holds—in the distilleries and grog-shops. The craft was in danger. Every one saw that just in proportion as Father Larkin was able to carry out his evident intuitions, just so far would the whole whiskey traffic, so far as the Catholic population of Jonesville was concerned, be diminished.

Men would keep their wages; their families would be provided for; they would have better food, clothing, dwellings—but the whiskey trade would decline in like proportion.

CHAPTER V.

FATHER LARKIN MAKES A BEGINNING, AND FINDS
A HELPER.

WHILE these discussions were going forward in Jonesville, and agitating the city to its centre, Father Larkin was not idle. He found a large, unused loft, which, with some rude benches and a temporary altar, would answer for both church and school-room, until they could be better provided. And as he knew the philosophy of striking while the iron is hot, he lost no time in beginning his mission. Volunteers worked night and day in fitting up the loft, and the Holy Sacrifice was offered the next morning but one, after the good Father's arrival. He preached at Mass, and appointed another instruction the same evening, while all the parents were entreated to send their children at three o'clock, P. M., that no time might be lost. All the rest of the time, besides that needed for sick-calls and the absolute demands of hunger and sleep, Father Larkin spent in the confessional, for there he knew the foundation must be laid for all true reformation. Morning and night the church was crowded, and the grog-shops were deserted.

The Catholics, who had responded to the law of supply and demand, went joyfully to the evening instructions; but a few reprobates, and some Yankees, who would have been as bad, if they had sinned against as much light, sat in their new-made solitudes and cursed the priest who was taking their customers out of the jaws of hell and leading them in the road to heaven.

The dawn of light saw the faithful priest kneeling before the altar, which he had decorated with flowers; midnight found him in the confessional, if he was not by the side of the sick and dying.

And two hours every afternoon he gave to the instruction of the children in their catechism. How sadly, how terribly many had been neglected, those may know who have seen the kind of education which children get in the streets of all our cities. But the germ of faith was there, and the rudest, and most stubborn and depraved, became gentle, obedient and docile, under the powerful influence of a strong intellect, a firm will, and a loving spirit.

But Father Larkin needed help. The harvest was plenteous, but he labored alone. No Sisters of Charity, no Christian Brothers, no good Religious of any order to give him their aid. He made an earnest appeal to the good Bishop, but they could

not then be sent to him—the wants were so large, the supply so limited.

Father Larkin prayed for help, and then he wrote a letter. Here it is.

“MY DEAR CHILD:—You have longed for a sphere, as our good American ladies say, or as Catholics express it, you have sought earnestly to know your vocation. Young, gifted, accomplished, with all this world can offer of comfort and hope, you are unsatisfied. I have not seen that you have a vocation for any religious order. To enter one, without it, is as much to be dreaded, as not obeying a vocation when we have one. May our Lord protect you, my child, from either calamity. I believe that you are to live in the world; but none the less is it your duty to devote your talents and energies to the service of our Divine Master. How much I need your help! Here are hundreds of poor people, long neglected, to be instructed; here are also hundreds of children growing up without education. I am doing all I can; but were I three instead of one, there would still be more than I could accomplish.”

Miss Cecelia O'Neil received this letter; read it lovingly; pondered it deeply; prayed over it earnestly. She was the pride and joy of her family, and the ornament of a small, but choice circle of

friends. Educated at one of the best convents in America, her natural abilities had been thoroughly developed. Especially did she excel in music; but the triumphs of society did not satisfy her aspirations. She felt her energies and capabilities wasted; and now this letter of Father Larkin opened to her a path of duty, which she felt she could tread with joy. Her parents, though good Catholics, dreaded to lose their daughter, in her possible devotion to a religious life; so that the letter of Father Larkin, relieving their apprehensions in that respect, was so welcome that they easily consented that Cecelia should go to his assistance. This obstacle overcome, the beautiful girl bade a cheerful good-bye to her splendid home, and took the cars for Jonesville.

Father Larkin had found the help he needed. Cecelia took the school off his hands at once; and on the following Sunday, with a melodeon her father had sent her, they had music at Mass; and it was but a few months before she had a choir of boys and girls so well instructed, that Father Larkin could sing High Mass, not only to the great delight of all his good Catholics, but to the admiration of many tasteful Protestants, who came every Sunday to hear the most eloquent preacher in Jonesville, as all acknowledged; and who behaved as well as could be expected.

Col. Jones attended sometimes very patronizingly. Miss Jones came because she was getting too High-Church in her notions for the Rev. Mr. Plumley. Mr. Alfred Jones attended regularly, and had begged the privilege of adding his fine voice to the choir, because, as was evident to everybody, he greatly admired Miss Cecelia O'Neil. In order to sing masses and vespers, he was obliged to practice; and Miss O'Neil was his instructor. Father Larkin watched them with a paternal and pastoral anxiety; but the young man developed such good dispositions, that he saw no sufficient reason to interfere.

The Rev. Mr. Plumley was grieved. Miss Jones was one of the pet lambs of his flock. He had done everything he could to save her from her Romanizing tendencies. He allowed her to have a crucifix, very privately. He encouraged her to keep all the fasts she could find in the Book of Common-Prayer. He even allowed her to have an English copy, with its calendar of Popish saints, its extra Athanasian Creed, and its sanction of Auricular Confession. To the great scandal of Mrs. Plumley, who insisted on knowing all the particulars, he even permitted her to call him Father Plumley, and to come to confession once or twice in his study, and then, with a little awkwardness, he read the form of absolution out of the English

Prayer-Book; and, to crown the whole, he aided her to establish a little sewing society of young ladies in his church, who helped the poor, taught Sunday-school, and called themselves "Sisters of Mercy."

Miss Splurge was outraged.

"My gracious!" she exclaimed, when she heard this last atrocity, "what are we coming to? Is Popery going to overrun Jonesville, I wonder? Brother, why don't you compose a sermon that'll put a stop to it. I only wish I was a minister. Wouldn't I give it to the Beast with seven heads and ten horns, and the scarlet what-d'ye-call-her. Here's Miss Jones just as bad as a Papist, and I wouldn't wonder to hear she was one any day. If she is going to have all this folderol, she might as well have the Pope, and be done with it. They'll be setting up a convent here next—I expect nothin' else."

CHAPTER VI.

A LITTLE TALK ABOUT THE BRANCHES.

FATHER LARKIN in his care for his now fast improving, and generally exemplary flock, did not lose sight of his Protestant neighbors. When his school was organized under Miss O'Neil, and going on swimmingly, to the delight of parents and children, he sometimes called at Col. Jones, whose early kindness he did not forget. The Colonel was always glad to see him; Mrs. Jones was very polite, Mr. Alfred loved and admired him, but Miss Jones was in trouble.

Father Larkin was all kindness and sweetness to her, but he would not allow that her "Independent Branch of the Church Catholic," as she called the American Protestant offshoot of Cranmer's Parliamentary establishment, had any connection with any trunk or root whatever.

"The branch, my dear Miss Jones," he said playfully, "must belong to the tree. If it is cut off, it withers away. What possible sort of a branch now, is an independent branch?"

"But you know we claim that ours is a purer branch," said the zealous young church-woman.

"And who purified it? Was it Henry VIII., with his six wives and his horrible murders? Was it Cranmer, who divorced and re-divorced him and aided him in all his iniquities, and then wrote seven recantations before he went to the fate he so richly deserved, and to which he had consigned so many far more innocent? Or was it perhaps, that more execrable monster than either, the murderess Queen Elizabeth, who sent lovers, rivals, and hundreds of holy martyrs to the scaffold and the rack? Are these such persons as Almighty God chooses to purify His Church?"

"O, Father Larkin! do you mean to say that we do not belong to the true Church?"

"My dear young lady, the Church of England, as it is called, of which your branch here is a cutting, was separated by violence, persecution, robbery and wrongs which endured for centuries, from the unity of the One Church of Christ. The succession of her bishops is doubtful, and they have no authoritative mission or jurisdiction. The Creed of the Catholic Church, which you accept, teaches that there is One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church. Your Church does not claim to be the One—only an independent branch. It was so far from Holy in its origin, that I fear it has not outgrown the taint. It is not Catholic but national. If Apostolic in any sense, it long since became schismatic. For

eight hundred years, Miss Jones, your ancestors like mine, were good Catholics, in communion with the See of St. Peter, which is by the appointment of our Lord, the Centre of Unity, and they appear to have been better Christians then, than they have been for the last three centuries."

"But our liturgy is so beautiful!"

"Yes, all that is taken from the Holy Scriptures and the Catholic Missal."

"But you invoke the angels and saints."

"So do you."

"Why, Father Larkin! where do we invoke them?"

"Here, my dear young lady," said he, opening a beautifully bound Book of Common Prayer on the table beside him, and reading—

"'O ye Angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; praise Him, and magnify Him forever.'"

"'O ye spirits and souls of the righteous, bless ye the Lord.'"

"There is invocation of both angels and saints for you, taken from the Holy Scriptures, and contained in your Prayer-Book."

As this was enough for one instruction, Father Larkin held out his hand, and said "good-bye." Miss Jones grasped it cordially; and as soon as he was gone, put on her bonnet and went off with her perplexities to the Rev. Mr. Plumley, who assured

her that the invocations to saints and angels in the Bible and Prayer-Book were only poetical licenses and figures of speech.

But Miss Jones was far from being satisfied with his explanations.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW THE GOOD WORK GOES ON.

WHEN Father Larkin had been six months in Jonesville, he had as large a congregation as his little church could contain at both masses on Sunday; a flourishing and orderly day-school; a beautiful Sunday-school, which included all the young people and some of the middle-aged; an edifying Rosary Society, and active confraternities. The stream of whiskey had almost dried up. Many of the worst had taken the pledge on their knees, with the solemnities of a religious obligation. The people, with good wages, and instructed in better modes of living, were better lodged and clothed, and far more healthy.

Dr. Newton had in the most disinterested manner assisted Father Larkin in introducing cleanliness, ventilation, and a more healthful diet. The consumption of tobacco, among the young particularly, was much diminished. The old, whose habits were hard to change, stuck to their pipes, of course. Even those who laid them aside all through Lent, sucked away at them with a new relish on Easter Sunday.

But the Catholics of Jonesville were so much improved, that Father Larkin prepared to build a church. Col. Jones thought a donation of a lot of ground would be a good investment, and several Protestants subscribed liberally, to enhance the price of lots and improve the city. But the great bulk of the money came from Catholic laborers, week after week, and servant girls, who had to be restrained from giving, as they wished to do, their entire wages. It was not long before a gilded cross glittered on the prettiest spire in Jonesville. Alfred Jones raised a subscription to buy an organ, which he had learned to play. A fair was held to buy a bell; and when all was done and paid for, there was another great day in Jonesville, when the good Bishop came, and with the imposing forms of the Roman Ritual, consecrated the new edifice to the worship of Almighty God.

Even Mr. Dimity was obliged to knock under, and witness the ceremony. The Bishop preached an earnest sermon suited to the occasion, of which Miss Jones was a most attentive hearer.

Miss Splurge was, as Jonathan Jewsharp expressed it, "in a terrible pucker." If she could have poured out the vials of her wrath, *aqua fortis* would have been mild in comparison. She dreamt of a beast with seven heads and ten horns, or ten heads and seven horns—she didn't know which—

with a scarlet woman riding on him, who, she declared, was the "livin pictur" of Miss Cecelia O'Neil.

But the erection of a noble church, though a great and central work, was not sufficient. The next work was to build a school-house large enough to hold all the children, with a library, reading-room, lecture-room, &c. It was not enough to dissuade the young from going to places of dissipation and temptation; it was also necessary to provide them a resort where they could get physical, mental, and moral improvement. It took time, and labor, and care; but the good father worked steadily on, until his objects were accomplished. Oh, the power of a good, zealous priest! And what power on earth is so legitimate, so genuine, so beneficent! In the light of his good deeds and perpetual charities, the fanaticism of no-Popery grew ashamed of its persecuting intolerance, and Know-Nothingism all agreed, was dead and buried.

Father Larkin had no more ardent admirers or warmer defenders among the non-Catholic population than those who were of no religious sect, but belonged to the great and pervading denomination of Nothingarians. Jonathan Jewsharp trained in this numerous company.

"You can say what you like," said he to a rather violent specimen of a Methodist brother, "but I

calculate that this 'ere's a free country. You can't force your religion on nobody, and a Catholic's jist as good a right to have his, and enjoy it, as a Methodist. How many of your church members do you think would go to prayer-meetin' at six o'clock in the mornin'? Not a great heap, I calculate. At your meetin's the fellers are lookin' round at the gals, and the gals are snickerin' and showin' off their new bonnets, and as soon as its over, they all shake hands and chat and titter. When the minister makes one of his long prayers, and tells God every thing he wants the people to know, but kinder hates to reel it right out to 'em, they all set stock still on their seats, or there is only now and then one that gets down on his marrow bones. But there's no whisperin', nor gigglin' among the Papists. They don't look at folks' bonnets. And when they pray, down they go on their knees, old and young, as if they meant it, and no mistake. I tell you what it is; I haint got no religion, and I don't know as ever I shall have; but if I ever do want any, I know jist where to find it, and it won't be at a camp meetin' I shall get it, neither. If their's any religion at all, it's the Catholic, you can jist take and bet your life o' that."

"Why, Mr. Jewsharp, you don't mean that you could ever believe in the Pope, and an infallible Church, and all such absurdities?"

"Look here, mister whats-your-name; I stand neutral in this scrimmige. I don't train in neither company, no how; but if I was goin' to enlist in either, it would be in something that's got a head to it. Why should'nt the Church have a Pope, as well as our country a President, or an army a commander in chief, I'd like to know? And now you jist take notice, mind I tell you. Jist open your eyes wide, now. If ever I jine a church, it 'll be because it can do something for me, and let me know jist exactly what I ought to believe and jist exactly what I ought to do, and no guess-work, and no mistake about it. I don't want a fallible church, no how you can fix it. I don't want a man's church. They are all fallible enough, and they know it and have the grace to say so. When I jine a church, I want it to be God Almighty's Church, and I kinder reckon that's pretty likely to be *infallible*. What d'ye think o' that, old Hallelujah?"

"Old Hallelujah," as our friend Jonathan rather irreverently called him, had'nt a word to say for himself, and "jist sloped slantindicular."

While Father Larkin was toiling industriously in the good work of saving the souls and bodies of his people; while the children were increasing in intelligence and piety, the young people cultivating their minds and hearts, and the whole Catholic population becoming as remarkable for sobriety,

industry, and all the decencies of life, as a portion had been for the reverse, the Protestant population of Jonestown were not uninterested spectators. Col. Jones was well pleased, for his first judgment had been sustained. The Rev. Mr. Plumley was bothered. He was conscious that the comparison naturally made between his labors and those of Father Larkin, was not in his favor. The circumstances were, to be sure, very different. As a rule, the Episcopalians of Jonestown, as of all our cities, were the richest, the most respectable, and the most cultivated people in the place. They dressed so elegantly, and behaved with so much propriety, that preaching to them seemed an impertinence; and when they softly confessed themselves "miserable sinners," all sitting there in their cushioned pews, in fine broadcloth and satins, and *moires antiques*, and loves of bonnets, no one could imagine that they really meant it.

Then there was the dread that the most thoughtful and pious of his flock should discover that what they had taken for a church was only the hollow, empty, unsatisfying sham that so many have found it to be. It required all his care and skill to prevent the detection of the counterfeit, now that the genuine was brought into so striking a comparison.

The Evangelical ministers preached every few Sundays against the mummeries and superstitions

of Popery. The Rev. Mr. Splurge, incited and aggravated by his sister, gave a series of fourteen Sunday lectures, in which he proved that the Pope is Antichrist; that Rome is Babylon; that Catholics are idolators; that it is an article of Catholic faith to keep no faith with heretics; that Papist servant girls are spies in Protestant families, and are obliged to betray all their secrets in the confessional; that the country is in danger from Jesuits, who are scattered over it, and conspiring against its liberties; that all priests are wicked men, and all nuns bad women; that everybody ought to get married;—a doctrine in which Miss Splurge most religiously believed, but had not yet been able to carry out in practice;—finally, that every Catholic is either a knave or a fool, and bound to go to a very bad place in the next world.

Precious little attention did Father Larkin pay to all this. An hour by the bedside of some poor, sick, or dying fellow-creature; a visit to cheer the home of poverty, the pauper's refuge, or the prisoner's cell; the labors of the confessional, where he could pour the oil of consolation into the wounds which sin had inflicted on the soul, were worth more to him than all polemic triumphs; and yet, as a soldier of the faith, he never shrank from any encounter, and labored to so instruct all his people,

that they would be able to give a reason for the faith that was in them.

And so intermeddling Protestants found it. Miss Splurge would'nt have a Papist in her house; but she took every opportunity to attack the servants of her neighbors. I can't say that she made much by the operation.

"Biddy," said she one day, to the girl of Mrs. Deacon Spike, who had come to borrow a flat-iron, "what does the priest say to you when you go to confession?"

"Sure, an' he tells me to mind my own business, Miss," was Biddy's quiet answer. But Miss Splurge had a wonderful faculty of perseverance; and she returned to the attack the first convenient opportunity.

"Does your priest bless donkeys, Biddy, as they do in Rome?"

"Not very often I'm thinking, Miss, but if you'd jist come over and knale down, I presume he'd oblige *you*."

It was rather a hard hit; but Miss Splurge was a game one and soon rallied.

"Look here, Biddy," said she, in her most taunting way, "how does it happen that you Catholics are always such poor, shiftless critters?"

"Sure it's the will of Almighty God, Miss; that's all the rason I know," said Biddy.

"Well, have they always been so much poorer than Protestants?" said she, with a little pious malice.

"Indade Miss, I think I've heard say they have ever since the Rich Man and Lazarus, we read about."

Miss Splurge concluded that Biddy was one of those incorrigible Papists that it is no use talking to.

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. JONES GIVES A PARTY.

BUT we must not forget Col. Jones, and his political aspirations. He got a nomination to Congress. Soon after Mrs. Jones gave a great party, to which everybody was invited; for it would not do to neglect any one whose political influence might be of service in a close election. I believe that Mrs. Jones sent her cards of invitation to every prominent man in Jonesville, and all the ladies, of course. Col. Jones had particularly requested that every clergyman should be invited, even to the Campbellite and Hard-Shell Baptist. Father Larkin accepted the invitation, both because Col. Jones had been generous to him and his people, and because some of those he greatly prized and hoped to win for his Master, were to be there also. He did not hesitate to enter a scene of festal gayety and splendor, like the marriage feast of Cana, or the dinner at the Ruler's house, almost as cheerfully, as he entered the hovels of poverty and disease, if he might do honor to the cause of his Divine Master.

The two young ladies who were the reigning

belles of Jonesville, were Miss Mary Jones, and Miss Cecelia O'Neil. It was a fair and honorable rivalry—America against Ireland. Miss Jones was lovely; Miss O'Neil magnificent. If Miss Jones was, as some contended, more graceful, Miss O'Neil possessed a queenly dignity and sweet majesty, worthy of her ancestry. It was a beautiful thing to see this Catholic lady, the cynosure of the best society in Jonesville. Her voluntarily assumed position as teacher of Father Larkin's school—and the fact of her being Irish in birth, and a Catholic in religion, did not detract from the admiration she compelled, so much as increase it by the surprise that the ignorant and prejudiced experienced at finding such qualities where they had been taught not to expect them—as if beauty, genius, poetry and art had not been for centuries, almost entirely confined to Catholic nations.

So young America, as developed in Jonesville, vowed that Miss O'Neil was a "splendid gal, and no mistake." But there was one whose eye lighted up with a new animation, when she came radiant with her superb loveliness, into Col. Jones' drawing-room. His heart beat quicker, and the blood mounted to his forehead when she held out her little gloved hand to him. I am afraid he stammered a little, and looked foolish, as young gentlemen thus interestingly circumstanced are apt to do.

But who was this admirer of Father Larkin's generous and zealous aide-de-camp. Who should it be but our young friend, Alfred Jones, Esq.

Like seeks like in the moral world as the material—"birds of a feather flock together." At the same time, it is not less true that people are brought together by their repulsions.

A curious group, gathered out of the "jam" at Col. Jones', was thus drawn and driven together. Father Larkin, Rev. Silas Plumley, Col. Jones, Miss Jones, Miss O'Neil, Miss Splurge and her Reverend Brother, Dr. Newton, Alfred Jones, Mr. Quirk and Mr. Dimity, all engaged in an animated conversation.

In England, it is contrary to the canons of good breeding, to introduce religious discussions into general society; but we have no such rule in America, where we discuss pretty much what we have a mind to. So the conversation which began about the weather, went next to the crops and business matters, then changed to politics, and brought up on religion.

"Father Larkin is right about there being one Church," said the Rev. Mr. Plumley, in his mildest manner. "There can be but one true Church, and all sects are in the sin of schism."

"Well, brother Plumley," said the Rev. Mr. Splurge, "that is just where Mr. Larkin holds that you are."

"Ah! my friend; but we hold the same of him. Our Church in America, which is a branch of the Church of England—"

"Well, and what is that a branch of, I should like to know?" asked Miss Splurge, who could never hear a theological discussion without a strong disposition to "pitch in."

"The Church of England, Miss Splurge, is a branch of the One, Catholic and Apostolic Church."

"Well, and what do you consider our Church, I should like to know," said the fair lady, with a little asperity.

"I don't like to say disagreeable things, my dear Miss Splurge," said the reverend gentleman, still more blandly, "but as you ask the question, you must excuse me if I answer it. We don't consider Presbyterianism as any Church at all, or any part of a Church."

"Brother! do you hear that? Are you a-goin' to set there and be abused by a brother minister, in that fashion. I guess John Calvin was as good as Thomas Cranmer, any day, and understood the Scripture as well as any of your half papist Anglicans. You might just as well belong to the Beast, and done with it. I have more respect for real out and out Popery, than such a wishy-washy, half and half, patched up concern as yours is. Branch, indeed! Where's your trunk to grow to?"

Father Larkin smiled at this indignant outburst; the Rev. Mr. Plumley tried to conceal his irritation; Dr. Newton laughed; and Alfred Jones applauded.

"Bravo! Miss Splurge;" said he, "won't you join our debating society?"

Col. Jones, who wanted harmony, at least until after the election, came to the rescue.

"Come, come," said he, "no quarrels; no bickerings. We are all Christians. What matters a name? Let us all agree just as far as we can, and when we can't agree, let's agree to disagree."

This was the Colonel's infallible panacea.

But the Rev. Mr. Plumley, with all his blandness, didn't fancy being snubbed by Miss Splurge, who represented the whole Presbyterian interest, which was pretty formidable in Jonesville; so he said—

"Colonel, it is all right to be charitable and tolerant, and to seek to harmonize discordant elements; but there are such things as principles, Sir. There is a right way—and what is not right is wrong, Sir. The Church is 'the pillar and ground of truth.' We are commanded to 'hear the Church.'"

"Yes, Mr. Plumley, but which?" asked Dr. Newton, who was more interested in the controversy than anybody suspected.

"Which? why *the* Church. We should not be told to 'hear the Church' if there was more than one."

Father Larkin had listened with a satisfied silence. Now he said one word; but it held a volume. That word was "*Exactly!*"

"My friends," said the reverend Campbellite, "there is one way to settle all controversy; that is to appeal to the Bible."

"The Bible!" exclaimed Mr. Plumley, forgetting his usually mild manner, "what does that settle! Don't you all, in all your pulpits, appeal to the Bible to support your heresies. Here is brother Smith, the Baptist, takes the Bible to prove that nobody must be baptized but adult believers, and they must be dipped; here is Mr. Jenks, the Universalist, will quote you plenty of Scripture to prove that there is no devil and no hell, and no use of his preaching. Mr. Chilton denies the Divinity of Christ, and friend Zebidee, the Quaker here, takes the same authority to dispense with the Sacraments."

"Well, friend Plumley, and has'nt thee also by the same authority, dispensed with five out of the seven Sacraments thy older and larger branch teaches?" asked the rotund and rosy disciple of Penn.

"The Church, friend Zebidee, must interpret the Scriptures; and the Church purified must differ from the Church corrupted."

"Ah! friend Plumley, thee endorses the Scrip-

ture; but who endorses for thee? Thee calls thy branch pure and the other branches corrupt, but who gives thee the right to make such a decision? Besides, friend, thee said a little while ago that we must hear the Church, and now thee says we must only hear thy branch, and that the other branches will lead us into error. Thee had better overhaul thy logic, friend Plumley, before thee condemns thy neighbors."

"Come, Father Larkin," said the Colonel, willing to make a diversion in Mr. Plumley's favor, "it seems to me you ought to have a part in this discussion."

"I am very well satisfied to listen," he answered quietly.

"But you might help, perhaps, to disentangle the subject of its perplexities."

"It *has* no perplexities to the Catholic. The Church which guides his faith is one, in all times and everywhere teaching the same doctrine. Branches which have been cut off, or have cut themselves off from her communion, and which differ from her and from each other, cannot be considered as being a part of her, or as having any authority."

"Thee sees, friend Plumley, that we are pretty much in the same fix, don't thee?" asked friend Zebidee, with the mildest possible spice of maliciousness.

"But the Bible, Sir; is'nt the Bible of any authority?" demanded the zealous Campbellite, before his Episcopalian brother could find words to express his indignation.

"The Holy Scriptures," said Father Larkin, "were given to the Church, which was already organized when they were written, and she was made their keeper and interpreter. 'No prophecy of Scripture,' the Bible says, 'is of private interpretation.' It also says that the Scriptures 'are hard to be understood,' and that 'the unlearned and unstable wrest them to their own perdition.' Our Lord promised to His Church that the Holy Spirit should guide her into all truth. He promised to be with her 'all days, even to the consummation of the world.' Here is the promise of a perpetual and divine infallibility, which can belong only to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and not to separated branches, which contradict and anathematize each other, nor to the hundreds of sects which wrest the Scriptures to make them support all their 'various and strange doctrines.' No, my friends," said the eloquent priest, warming with his subject, "the prophecies of Scripture, the promises of Christ, the needs of man, and all the facts of Religious History, point to One, Visible Church, with One Doctrine, One Priesthood, One Communion, One Divine, and therefore, and of necessity,

Infallible guidance. Such a Church we are commanded to hear. Such a Church is truly 'the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of truth.'"

The whole assembly which was now listening to the discussion, was hushed to a deep silence as Father Larkin spoke these words with the force of a conscious authority, and the inspiration of a supernatural faith.

No one wished to make any reply, and Miss Jones led her friend Miss O'Neil to the piano-forte, when Alfred and Dr. Newton joined them, and they gave the company some charming music, after which all retired to their several homes.

CHAPTER IX.

FATHER LARKIN FINDS THE REWARD OF HIS
LABORS.

THE next day Father Larkin had two anxious visitors. With no concert with each other, Alfred Jones and his sister Mary met in Father Larkin's little parlor. Both had come on the same errand. They wished to be instructed in the Catholic Faith.

No one can tell the joy of the good Father's heart; but he wished to act prudently and honorably.

"Do your parents know of this?" he asked them, when they had explained their wishes.

"No," they both said.

"Father is very liberal," said Alfred, "he will not make any opposition."

"Mother knows how I feel," said Lucy. "I think she sympathizes with me a good deal; but she has not the courage to have it known."

"Still, my children, you owe a certain respect and duty to your parents. They should not bind your consciences, but it is right you should apprise them of the step you propose to take, and, if possible, get their consent. And you, Miss Jones,

have another duty I think. You must inform your Pastor."

"Oh! that is done already, Father."

"And does he give *his* consent?"

"I should rather think not, still he had the grace to say he had rather see me go over to Rome, than join any sect of dissenters."

"That is very kind of him. Perhaps he will follow the example of some of his clerical brethren, and come over to Rome himself."

"Do you know, Father Larkin, I believe he might, if he were not married."

"But Alfred, my son, what has started you all at once? I began to think you cared for nothing in our Church but the music."

"And the organist, Father," said Miss Jones, with a bright smile.

"Oh! lies the wind in that quarter?" asked the Father—but he had not been so blind as they supposed. Mr. Alfred blushed rosy red.

"We must distrust, or carefully examine worldly motives," said the good father. "I must talk with Miss O'Neil about this."

He appointed a time to see them both, when they had informed their parents, to see what was necessary for their further instruction. Then he went very straight to find Miss Cecelia.

"So, my daughter," he said, "I am going to lose you."

"No, Father," she answered with a noble frankness, "not to lose a daughter, but to gain a son."

"So it is settled, is it?"

"No, my Father, not quite settled; but I believe it is God's will it should be. Pardon me for not having consulted you before. It is only since the party the other night, that I have understood this possibility; and I wished *him* to go to you first."

"It is well, my child. But what shall I do for a teacher and organist?"

"Do you forget that the Sisters are coming to take my place?"

"No, my child—I thank God for sending them to me; and that you will be relieved of your arduous and devoted labors. I know that it is not your vocation to teach, and the merit of what you have done for me, for our dear Master's sake, is so much the greater. Still, I shall be sorry to lose you."

"Why, Father Larkin, you will not lose me if I stay in Jonesville; and you will gain one I hope will be worthier."

"With God all things are possible," he answered, smiling—"even to find a worthier. We shall see."

They did see. Col. Jones and Mrs. Jones saw. The Reverends Plumley and Splurge, and Miss Splurge saw. The Baptists, and Methodists, and Campbellites, and Unitarians, and Universalists, and friend Zebedee the Quaker, and Mr. Dimity,

and Jonathan Jewsharp, and all Jonesville saw, with all sorts of emotions ranging from simple wonder up to consternation; and the now good and practical and most edifying Catholics of Jonesville, and the children of the Catholic school saw, with a joy so deep that no language could give it expression—all saw—

Alfred Jones, and his sister Mary received into the bosom of the Holy Catholic Church. They saw the good Sisters settled in Jonesville, in a real convent, in spite of Miss Splurge. They saw the good Bishop arrayed in gorgeous pontificals, join Alfred Jones and Cecelia O'Neil, with the full and joyful consent of the parents of both, in holy matrimony; and on the same day Mary Jones was received as a Postulant by the Sisters.

Finally they saw signs of many more conversions; and Col. Jones with the aid of the Catholic vote, achieved the object of his political ambition.

Father Larkin is still Pastor of the Catholic Church in Jonesville, with two worthy assistants. The Christian Brothers have come to his aid, and taken charge of the boy's schools and orphan asylum; while the Sisters have the care of the girls. The Catholic Institute of Jonesville is one of the most spirited institutions in the country, of which Alfred Jones, Esq., is President. Dr. Newton and Mr. Dimity were baptized on the same day. The

lodge dissolved spontaneously shortly after. The good priest is now superintending, with the efficient aid of Dr. Newton, and the generous assistance of the Hon. Col. Jones, the erection of a Manual Labor Reform School for boys, and model tenement houses for the poor, which are to have every convenience for health, comfort, and even a degree of elegance, and supply at once a solid investment for the rich, and good dwellings for the poor.

So much for the external and visible ; but eternity alone can unfold the spiritual benefits, achieved under the Divine Providence, by Father Larkin's Mission in Jonesville.

THE END.