

who witnessed its horrors can never forget them so long as they retain the faculty of memory. The country was thickly inhabited when the scourge began; and when it ended—so far as it did end—the country was desolate, and we saw its habitations melt away before our faces. We saw the sick, the dying—nay, the very dead lie on the road-side, where some pitiless hand had cast them out in their extremity. The corpses were buried so thick and hurriedly that we have known of instances in which the dogs came at night and tore them from their graves; and we have heard of worse things than this, but we shall speak only of what fell under our personal observation. It is a harrowing memory still, that of the all but naked children, mere living skeletons, weird and ghastly, who dragged themselves about to beg for food. One or two of those who survived, and whom we saw in after years, when they ought to have been men, were still, to all appearance, strange, withered-looking children; they had never grown up. It was a pitiful sight to see women swollen with what must have been some kind of dropsy, and which was invariably fatal, still toiling to crawl about, and try to find something for their families to eat. There was fever everywhere; in sheds hastily fitted up for hospitals; in the houses that remained standing; in the ditches where the outcasts had leaned a few sticks against the bank or wall, and covered them over with an armful of straw, or with sods, to form a shelter. At night the air was filled with the sound of horns or cries, made by people who stayed in the fields to prevent the famishing creatures from coming and carrying away the turnips or sheep. On an estate of one of our principal gentry two poor women were taken at this time, who, like the prodigal longing to fill himself with the husks that fed the swine, had stolen a handful or two from some of the crops, to keep themselves and their children from fainting of hunger. They were brought into the stable yard of the mansion in question, and there the eldest son of the house and his relative, a nobleman, had them tarred and feathered—and these were landlords of the higher rank. But let no one suppose the misery ended with what was called the Famine. Long after the Famine was over, we have seen women cutting nettles in the ditches to make a dinner for their families. We have seen a household that passed for being better off than its neighbours sit down at mid-day to dine off Swedish turnips thinly sprinkled with oatmeal, and which were considered rich because a little dripping had been mixed with the water in which they swam. We have heard it said that Irishmen at home are lazy men at work, but it ought rather to be acknowledged that they deserve credit for being able to stand up at all and work on fare which, although better than this we speak of, is still insufficient properly to support the human frame. Since the Famine we have known men and men with wives and children, work for sixpence a day; eightpence a day we have known to be considered a reasonable rate of wages. In a word, since the Famine, we have habitually seen what elsewhere would have been regarded as famine, and we know that such a state of things still largely prevails throughout the country in question. Is it, then, only "greed and ambition" that can desire a deliverance from it, or is it to be expected, or even wished, that the people should continue to submit to it with light-heartedness and good humour? Could their light hearts and good humour under such circumstances be indeed natural or genuine? But let us come to the landlords. We have already narrated one of the deeds performed by them, and we can tell more. It was since the Famine that we saw a range of cabins built upon a waste in a certain district of Connaught. They were ordinary Connaught cabins of the poorer kind, the walls built of stones without any mortar, and the roofs thatched with heath. All around them the land was covered with rock, stones, and barren heather, and the people who were to inhabit them were about to be removed there from a portion of the same estate, where they and their fathers had lived for generations, and whose fertility, conferred by their labours, had excited the greed of their landlord, and decided him on taking it into his own hands, and removing them to till the wild, and make it fit for cultivation. It was since the Famine that we saw a landowner turn the people out from a whole village on whose site he had chosen to build a residence. Those considered fit to work were driven off to America, or wherever they chose to go. Those acknowledged to be totally unfit—old women, grandmothers who had well earned rest for their declining years, were lodged together in a shed and obliged to spin for the bit they put in their mouths. And this sending off of the people out of the country: it has been much praised and hit upon as the expedient for the prosperous settlement of Ireland. A few years ago, nevertheless, all England was thrilling with sentiment over the separation of families among the Negro slaves of the Southern States. This formed the most moving subject in Mrs. Stowe's great work, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and it could have been only something deeply and universally rooted in human nature that awoke a sympathy so keen and general. This separation was looked upon, and justly looked upon, as one of the worst things in the accursed system alluded to—now happily extinct even at the cost of so great a war. Is the Irish peasant less worthy of regard than the Negro slave? Or can any human being be justly required to give up

all human rights and feelings—home and country, mother, father husband, wife and child? For this is what emigration has meant and still means in many instances. "Domestic love," said Thomas Davis, writing of the Irishman more than thirty years ago, "almost morbid from external suffering, prevents him from becoming a fanatic or a misanthrope, and reconciles him to life." The emigration movement had not then as yet begun, and Davis did not know how the rending of that great love was about to become another feature in the lives of those to whose cause he had so passionately devoted himself. But this is a digression; to return. It was since the Famine that we knew of a landlord who forced the victim of his seduction upon his tenant for a wife, in order that the scandal might be hidden. We heard the story told of a man with whom we were acquainted, by another of the same class, and who recounted it as an extremely clever device, and as a most excellent joke. Was it a prey-worthy patience that endured this? It was since the Famine that the Protestant clergyman of a certain parish pointed out to us, with every expression of horror and disgust, a landlord of his district whose brutality had inflicted on the daughter of one of his tenants the most grievous wrong that man can inflict on woman; and the girl had been of singular attractions, of perfect innocence, and almost a child. He had, indeed, been brought to trial for his crime, but was acquitted, in the face of overwhelming evidence, by a jury packed with his fellow-landowners and their dependents; and we saw him afterwards in a public place among a group of the chief gentlemen of his county, by whom he continued to be regarded as a capital good fellow. Is it then "greed and ambition" that seek to be delivered not only from the danger of a recurrence of the graver ills we have described, but from sufferings that are only light in comparison with them? Is it "greed and ambition" alone that seek freedom from the despotic yoke of such men as those we speak of? We fancy there are none who will make such a claim, unless, like the Hon. David Plunket, they belong to a class that has grown fat on human misery, and whose minds are foul with the constant pursuit of self-interest, and every indulgence of the petty tyrant.

CAN the writer of a "Passing Note" in last week's *Witness* find nothing more powerful to advance against Mr. Arthur Sketchley's account of this colony than the "No Popery" cry? If so, we fear New Zealand must beg to be saved from her friends, for they show her cause to be weak. The writer in question informs his readers of what most of them who have any acquaintance whatever with the current literature of the day must already have known, that is that "Arthur Sketchley" is the *nom de plume* of a gentleman named Rose, who had at one time been a clergyman in the Church of England. A "renegade clergyman" this writer calls him, with an evident attempt to excite for New Zealand the sympathy of the public, as if they might thus be blinded to her faults, and she not cleared of the charges brought against her. The writings of "renegade" clergymen have, however, been too well established in the highest ranks of the cultured world to become discredited by any insult that men of small minds and ill-manners may offer to their authors. Cardinal Newman, for example, is also a "renegade clergyman" whose books are universally regarded as an honour to the English language, and the English Press teams with the writings of "renegades" generally. There is, perhaps, hardly a newspaper of note in London upon whose staff some "renegade" has not a chief place. What, therefore, the nick-name that the writer of a "Passing Note" has, with much vulgarity, conferred upon Mr. Rose, may be expected to effect among the world outside of New Zealand, whom, nevertheless, we conclude, it is most important to convince that Mr. Rose has been in error, it is difficult to understand. In New Zealand itself, again, we should have thought it was not necessary to have increased the indignation excited by Mr. Rose's sketch, through the invocation of the "No Popery" cry. If that sketch be untrue there will be a full amount of indignation here against its misrepresentations, and nothing will be needed to fill up the measure of this indignation; if it be true there will still be the extreme fury of a degraded people stripped of their disguise and made known to the world in all their ugliness. And this writer of a "Passing Note" has done nothing to prove that it is not true; his attack upon the author of the statements in question, on the contrary, is just of such a nature as to lead impartial people to conclude that there was nothing he could do to vindicate the colony's fair fame, but that he had been obliged in desperation to adopt the warfare of the scold, and take to calling nick-names and attributing unworthy motives. Again, it seems a strange assurance for any writer who is a member of the Church of England to stigmatise as a "renegade" even any clergyman who has left that communion. He must know that he himself belongs to some one or other of a collection of wrangling sects whose bond of union is a mere matter of temporal convenience. He must know that, no matter what party he belongs to, under the same roof with him there are as many who will tell him he is going straight to perdition, as there are who will agree with him that he is in the right path, although some be there who