

**MAURICE AND
BERGHETTA; OR,
THE PRIEST OF
RAHERY. A TALE**

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Maurice and Berghetta; or, The priest of Rahery. A tale by William Parnell

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WILLIAM PARNELL

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by
William Carvell

A TALE.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE

CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD

OF IRELAND.

GENTLEMEN,

I AM glad to have an opportunity of giving a public, though small mark of respect to men, whose merits have always appeared to me equal to their privations. This is a very large compliment; for these privations have indeed been great. We may however begin to speak of them without bitterness, for their end is clearly approaching; the bigotry, which darkened the understanding of the Irish Government, has passed away; and it is not likely that the Government should continue to reject a body of men, on whom the civilization and subordination of the lower orders in Ireland depends. But when the

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exclusion of your body from the rights of civil society shall cease, the peculiarities of manner and character, which distinguished it in adversity, will disappear also.

There is something, however, every interesting in these national and professional features, though they are merely Irish; and before they are quite forgotten, this attempt is made to fix and embody them in the description of an Irish priest, such as may have existed a century ago. I am afraid, that he will not be thought quite orthodox, at least by that large description of christians, which exists among Catholics, as well as among every other religious sect, who value the Church more than the Gospel. Allowance ought however to be made for a Protestant writer, who does his best to reconcile differences, believing that the time is fast approaching, when the great foundation principles, the warmth, the sincerity, and the benevolence of religion, will be so prevalent, that the present differences, which have been exalted into disproportioned importance by controver-

sy, will be as little regarded as the differences respecting meats, which divided the Church in its early ages.

The character of your Clergy will in future partake more of that of the upper orders of society, yet perhaps it will be intrinsically less amiable, than that of the age which the following pages represent. — You have hitherto remained in peaceful and useful obscurity, safe from the contamination of the Castle and the Vatican; and it would be difficult to say in which of these petty courts, the foulest traffic to corrupt the purity of individual principle has been carried on. But now you have acquired sufficient value to be worth being purchased; nor can your Church hope to escape the certain contamination of influence, but in the measure of the domestic nomination of your Hierarchy.

This principle, happily begun, must raise your Church to an eminence of piety and talent, far beyond that of the Protestant or any other Church, where the interest of politicians is allowed to influence

the choice of the chief servants of religion; this measure can alone ensure, that with the manners and mental cultivation of a more refined age your pastors may preserve the simplicity and purity of the Priest of Rahery.

The intercourse, Gentlemen, which I have had with very many of your body, has impressed me with sentiments of the deepest esteem, which I cannot express better than by the wish, that the Catholic Priesthood, in its constitution and destination, may be neither English, Roman, nor Italian, but Christian and Irish.

THE AUTHOR.