

MAJOR.—I think you may profitably invest three shillings and ninepence in procuring from our mutual friend Maclear, a copy of James Grant's new historical romance, "*Jane Seaton, or the King's Advocate*."

LAIRD.—Just the vera' wark I was gainin to precognosce ye anent, but my memory is turning as leaky as a water-stoup wi a hole in its bottom. Is it indeed the grand production that the newspaper tribe describe it to be? If we may believe thae gentry it's little, if anything, inferior to the *Waverly Novels*.

MAJOR.—No, no, my worthy producer of bread stuffs, that is carrying the joke a fraction overly far! There is a long and dreary distance between the bantling of Mr. Grant, and the very poorest production of the immortal Wizzard of the North. John Galt, and at least half a score of others fell to occupy the middle ground which I have pointed out.

LAIRD.—Deil's in the man! I wonder that ye should be sae ready in advising me to birl my bawbees upon an affair, for which sae little can be said. Just when I supposed I was about to become the owner o' a swan, lo, and behold it dwindled doon and degenerates into a common, every day goose! I may address the "*King's Advocate*" in the words of the auld sang:—

"I thoct ye were some gentleman,
At least the Laird o' Brodie,
But foul fa' your meal pocks
Your'e but a puir bodie!"

MAJOR.—Laird! Laird! will you never give over jumping rashly at conclusions? Though by no means a first chop romance, "*Jane Seaton*" is respectably removed above twaddle. The author has evidently read up to his subject with care; and if his production be lacking—as it unquestionably is, in the higher attributes of fiction, it merits a perusal, from the mass of antiquarian chit-chat which it entertains. Take the book home with you to Bonniebraes, and I will insure you much pleasing, and even instructive sustentation for the "lang nights o' winter."

DOCTOR.—At what epoch is the scene laid?

MAJOR.—During the reign of James V,—and the stage of the romance is abundantly replenished with the leading personages who flourished in that stormy period of Scottish history.

DOCTOR.—Does Mr. Grant sport a good style?

MAJOR.—Pretty fair, but his dialogue is somewhat stiff. It lacks that attribute called by Thespians *touch and go*, which is so essential for creating the impression of reality. The incidents, too, frequently border on the melo-dramatic;—and the concluding flare-up would take pro-

digiously with the shilling-gallery audience of Astley's. Still the production can claim a large dividend of praise, and will probably secure a plethoric circulation. The Laird, I doubt not, will read it with appetite.

LAIRD.—Oo ay! Anything is gude eneuch for the Laird.

MAJOR.—Will you do me the favour, Laird, to present this volume, with my best respects, to your excellent sister, Miss Girzy?

LAIRD.—Wi' a' my heart—and mony thanks for your considerateness. It is, indeed, a bonnie looking buikie.

MAJOR.—Yes, and better than it's bonnie. The press of Republican America has seldom, if ever issued a more gracefully written volume than "*The Shady Side; or, Life in a Country Parsonage*."

DOCTOR.—I quite agree with you, Crabtree. The writer, who is evidently a woman, and uncursed with a "strong mind," handles her pen after a singularly engaging feminine fashion. To my mind there is something very pleasing in the following description of a visit paid by a newly-wedded pastor and his young wife,—

"When they crossed the dashing rivulet, and drew up before a low, brown cottage, Mary shrunk from another call. Her frequent alternations of feeling, for the last six hours, had wearied her; and the single remark of Edward, in reference to the dwelling before them, that "it contained the poorest family in his flock," made her anticipate a scene to which she felt inadequate.

Yet, Mr. Vernon did not look as if he were performing an unpleasant duty. Two or three bars were let down, and, stepping over, they were at the door. To Mary's surprise, he led her into a room so clean and cheerful, that she scarce noticed, immediately, how scantily it was furnished. A stunted fire was burning on the broken hearth; a bed in one corner, with a clean, but oft-patched counterpane, a single chair and stool, and an old chest, formed the only furniture, except the much-worn rocking-chair, in which was the venerable woman of nearly fourscore, totally blind; she, with her widowed daughter and grandchild, forming the family. On a rough shelf, under the south window, stood a monthly rose and geranium, carefully nurtured, tokens of the tastes and habits of more prosperous days.

The aged matron was alone when her visitors arrived. She knew her minister's step, and spoke his name before he crossed the threshold; she knew, also, that one was with him of lighter step than himself, and was prepared to welcome his young wife; so preternaturally quickened, upon the loss of one, are the remaining faculties.

Mary sat by her side, and held the wrinkled, wasted hand in hers, and listened with a full heart as this handmaid of the Lord spoke of his great goodness,—of his comforts which delighted her soul, and of that better land where is no darkness, no light. Neither did she omit to mention