

himself, and who are contending for the faith under the same banner.

Then there is the excessive individualism of churches—an individualism which occasionally shows itself in wilful choice of unrecognised and unaccredited men for the pastorate. It is one of our advantages that we can avail ourselves of the services of men whose natural gifts and force of spiritual character qualify them for pastoral work, even although they have not undergone a complete academical training. And we have often derived great benefit from the labours of such men when they have been accepted by churches on the ground that they have already given proof of their worth in less prominent forms of Christian usefulness, and when they have been reliably recommended as having done so. But that is a different thing from the rashness of some churches in calling men who are not known, and in regard to whom there is no guarantee of fitness for the pulpit beyond the power to preach a few racy discourses calculated to produce a temporary impression. Considerable injury has been done by this evil in the past, yet there are signs apparent that it is to some extent being checked. The results of former mistakes have rendered our churches on the whole more cautious. The wise action of the Committee of the Union in making their grants of money conditional on the choice of the churches receiving aid of men whose character and fitness are reasonably accredited—a course which is not only legitimate within the lines of Independency, but is even obligatory if the rights of those who contribute the money are to be consulted—this wise action of the Committee is telling to a very encouraging degree. Our best safeguard is to sustain the Committee in their procedure, and to do our part in spreading a healthy denominational opinion on this point.

I have thus endeavoured as cursorily as possible to introduce the subject of our conversation this evening. I have a great love for the principles of Independency; and I have a firm assurance that if we can only take advantage of the expansiveness of these principles, and apply them energetically to the varying requirements of Christian life and work, we shall make our power more widely felt, and play a still larger part in advancing the cause of Christ in our land.

THREE SCENES.

BY MISS C. W. BARBER.

SCENE THE FIRST.

It was a balmy night in June. The stars were out in the deep azure above, shedding over the wide, green earth quiet beauty, and the streets, in town and country, were filled with loiterers, who, won by the beauty of the night, had come out from hot offices and pent-up workshops to enjoy the hour.

In a stately country house, scarcely an hour's walk from the goodly city of C——, there were brilliant eyes, flashing mirrors, rose-breathed vases, and a party of young and happy revellers. Young gals, clad in white, with artificial flowers twined among their braided hair, or sunny curls stayed here and there, leaning upon the arms of their gallants, or chatting merrily upon the sofas and cushioned chairs, which were strewn plentifully through the rooms.

It was one of those scenes which make the young forget, for a brief time at least, that earth has cares and trials; that it is not what it seems—the residence of truthful and happy hearts. Beside a centre table two persons stood leaning gracefully over the leaves of a richly-bound album, admiring the engravings and sentiments which they found there. Howard Greenleaf and Edith Hastings were pronounced, by all, *the stars* of the evening. There was something that proclaimed him to be “one of nature's nobility.” His hair was very black, and curled over a high, white forehead; his eyes were lit up by the fires of genius; his voice deep-toned, yet musical, as he turned every now and then, with an admiring glance, to the fair creature at his side. Edith was exactly the reverse of her companion, and yet none could have said that she was less beautiful. Her curls were light, almost flaxen, in their hue; her complexion was clear, even to transparency; and her large, blue eyes, and sweet, rosebud-like mouth, formed a face as innocent and pure in its expression as that of a little child. She was clad in a robe of muslin not more snowy than the rounded arms, which were ornamented by heavy bracelets of gold. She was the only, the idolized child of the banker in C——.

A servant came in, bearing a waiter, upon which were refreshments. Among the stately pyramids of cake flashed several glasses, filled to the brim with wine. Howard was interrupted in the middle of one of his best speeches, as the ebony-faced attendant stopped before him; but he helped his fair companion bountifully to the tempting things before them, and then, as a crowning act to his politeness, he took two sparkling glasses from the waiter, one of which he gave into the hand of his lovely companion. Both quaffed off the ruby tide without the shadow of a fear.

SCENE THE SECOND.

There was a wretched pallet of straw in the corner of a cellar in one of the most loathsome streets of the city. One old tin lamp, covered with lint and grease, stood on a rude pine table in the middle of the room, shedding a ghastly blue light over the scene, and “making the darkness more visible.” Upon the pallet of straw there was a dying man, and beside it stood a child with flaxen hair and mild blue eyes. He was the exact portrait of Edith Hastings. The dying wretch was Howard Greenleaf: that child was