

cies than an established Church. Thus, every June, we have a statement of the revenue of the Free Church; including all the sums raised for its ministers, missions, manse, schools: every penny subscribed during the year is brought forward to swell the amount; and collected with the aid of appeals, reports, self-gratulation, and stump oratory, the clattering mechanism of all this machinery making a dust and din not so like as one would wish to the quiet and beautiful growth of Christianity spoken of in the Gospel. And then, when the lists are completed, you are triumphantly asked, "Did you ever see the like of that?" "Can the Established Church show such proofs of vitality?" Yes, my friend, and better: no part of its existence depends on clatter or boastful figures: and so the General Assembly does not call upon the thousand parishes of Scotland to parade before it all the offerings they throw into the treasury of the Lord. Hence it is that no one can possibly know the amount contributed by the members of the Church of Scotland; the Assembly only asking for returns of the appointed collections for the "Five Schemes of the Church;" and trusting all other Christian work to the Christian life that may be in each parish. Thus, the Edinburgh Presbytery has voluntarily raised revenue of £10,000 or £15,000: but only some £2000 of this is reported to the Assembly. Last year I was a member of a congregation in Glasgow, which, in addition to extraordinary collections, annually subscribed for pious uses £800 a year: but scarcely £200 of this was ever heard of in the Assembly. And, to show that the working is the same everywhere, we find in a country parish where I was lately living, that a girls' school was needed: the minister got a schoolhouse built and a salary subscribed for a teacher, and nothing more was said about it. Had this been done by a Dissenting congregation, the whole matter would meet you again in the Annual Report of their Church. I like our way better. The grand march of the universe goes on without much noise. The music of the spheres is not loud toned. The growth of a tree is not heralded night and morning with thunder-claps. So is all progress, all life unobtrusive, unconscious. "The healthy know not of their health, but only the sick." The Church of Scotland seeks to do the work God hath given her to do in the land, and caters not for the applause of men. So ever work, O venerable Church! "God, who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

Why have I made this confession? Simply because I wish your readers to beware that a few dry-as-dust statistics can never make them acquainted with the true power and nobleness of the Church of their Fathers. They would need to study her genius and history; love her with a generous and loyal love; travel over the length and breadth of Scotland, and trace her silent, unostentatious, resistless influence for good: they would need to see Scotland without her to know how much Scotland

is indebted to her. She has struck her roots in the heart of the nation; and her ramifications extend to the remotest corner of the land. She is to be found everywhere:—mid the heart of commerce and the peace of the glen; in the rural lane and dusky alley; on moorland and mountain. The beautiful House which our Fathers built! well may her very stones be dear to us.

I was present at the last meeting of Glasgow Presbytery, when the Elders' Memorial in effect to the Call, and thus virtually to do with Patronage, was considered. No dissent was come to on the subject, all parties agreeing to delay until after the Synod had met, when they would transmit an Overture to the General Assembly, drawing its attention to the subject. The leading speeches in the Presbytery were admirable; but as they were fully reported in all the Glasgow papers, I have probably seen them. It was admitted that although the present Act (Lord Alton's) was not the perfection of wisdom, it had worked well: owing to the friendly and good sense of the patrons: for since 1840 only 14 cases of disputed settlement had occurred over the whole Church, while in some time some 500 or 600 ministers must have been harmoniously placed. I think that, for order and agreeable working, we may thus challenge comparison with any Church. As must be remembered that all disputed cases are decided, and can only be decided, by the Judicatories of the Church, who pronounce judgment according to what they believe before God and their country to be for the interests of the parish. No great tyranny surely!

But really as Patronage is at present exercised in Scotland, it is in general not beneficial. A vacancy takes place; twenty or thirty licentiates apply for it: now it is dangerous that if the parishioners had to hear of these strange ministers, confusions and distractions innumerable would result. But as a matter of fact, what do the principal heritors in Scotland? Why, they knowing the matter better, pick out five or six of the best, and offer them to the people. "Choose which of these you like." That simplifies the matter immensely. Certainly there are some contemptible heritors, chiefly Dissenters, who act otherwise, and seek to annoy the Church by doing as they can to intrude men; just as it is the Free Church portion of the Town Council of Edinburgh who are the most unwilling to give a congregation their own choice; but on such a check must, and I have no doubt will, soon be put. In the meantime, the Elders' Association, which includes a large number of the most zealous and influential laymen of the Church, is using every exertion to induce the Church to apply to the State, that the Call may be made effectual: and that the Patronage Presentation may thus be of none effect, unless a majority of the members or heads of families sustain it by giving a call to the presentation.