

at once go into the ways of the ungodly companions with whom he has come in contact ; and this leads them to ridicule his strictness, and to rally him upon the folly of depriving himself of enjoyment by being over-scrupulous. He hesitates to spend his Sabbaths with them in idleness or worldly amusement ; he has strong convictions of the sinfulness of gambling, and of frequenting theatres and places of amusement of a similar character ; he is satisfied of the heinousness of the sin of drunkenness, and feels a moral shrinking from the dissipation which he witnesses. All this, they tell him, is an excess of religion. You will not take a drive into the country for a little pleasure on the Sabbath day ! You will rather sit moping in the house, reading the Bible, or go to church ! How dull ! "Be not righteous over-much, neither make thyself over-wise ; why shouldest thou destroy thyself ?" You will not have a game at cards, for such trifling stakes as we play for ! you think it wrong ! Indeed ! How precise your notions are ! You will not go to the theatre ! you think the influence of theatrical representations decidedly and hopelessly bad ! Surely you are too straitlaced ! You will not drink any more ! Why you have scarcely taken any thing yet. We are merely beginning. Come, do not spoil our sociality. No ? You will not ? O, put away your scruples. There is no harm in it, but on the contrary a vast deal of pleasure, of which you will be a fool to deprive yourself. "Be not," therefore, "righteous over-much, neither make thyself over-wise : why shouldest thou destroy thyself ?"

Take, again, an illustration from actual history ; that afforded by Margaret Wilson,* one of those Scottish martyrs of whom I previously spoke. Two stakes were fixed within high-water-mark of the Solway ; and Margaret, a young person, eighteen years of age, whose parents were

* See M'Crie's "Sketches of Scottish Church History."