

our dignity as ministers and members of a Church established by law in the mother country; nor even because we desire to appropriate to ourselves the name, if only the name, of the thing we desire and love;—but for far higher and more substantial reasons. We seek security against the dangerous innovations which dissenters have made and are making in the doctrine, discipline, and testimony of the Church. We seek to bind ourselves and the generations which will succeed us to the orthodox profession of our fathers. Looking abroad on the *disjecta membra* of Presbyterianism in many lands, on the Church of the American States shivered into a dozen of fragments—Old School, New School, and diverse schools,—many of them containing something more than the germs of what may grow into the upas tree of rationalism and infidelity; on the Church of Ireland, with a considerable section openly denying the divinity of our Lord; on the U. P. Church of Scotland, with a Voluntary Testimony; on the Free Church, propounding, in this year and century of grace, the Popish doctrine of spiritual independence;—we cannot but congratulate ourselves on the wise instinct which has led us to seek shelter within the shadow of the walls of the goodly house which our fathers have built. To use a nautical figure, should we cut ourselves clear of our present moorings, whither should we drift? In these fast and changeful times, where should we be fifty years hence? Novelty is rife around us, the free-thinker is busy sapping at the foundations of our hope, erudite men, in colleges and pulpits, speaking the jargon of philosophers, are endeavoring to explain away our holy mysteries, the eye of reason is coldly scanning our faith, and marking out boundary lines through its very midst. Should we set up for ourselves, what next? Where are our safeguards against the assaults of the enemy? Independence is a noble thing, if we could only use it discreetly—if we could only repress the disposition which so inevitably characterizes it, to sneer at things old and affect things new, to believe too little in the dread of believing too much. Have we cleared a couple of acres of forest land and erected a log-hut in these western wilds? and do we not then shake our fists at monarchy and scowl at aristocracy, and say harsh things concerning those institutions which we formerly prized and respected? Suppose we have an ecclesiastical house of our own, a bran new American house. A man can surely do what he listeth with his own property. He may put what furniture he pleases into it; he may make what alterations in the apartments and partitions seem good to him; he may arrange its internal economy after a fashion of his own; nay, he may pull it down—rafter and beam, tower and wall—and sow salt on its foundations, if he be so minded. Suppose we have become independent, then—no longer Erastians and

hirelings, but men and brethren. We shall tear a leaf or two out of the Confession, we shall append an explanatory note to the 23rd chapter, we shall elevate Erastianism into a heresy, we shall raise up a new Testimony and compel our licentiates to vow against it, we shall declare something anew marriage, we shall lay hands upon Elders in the ceremony of ordination, we shall invent a new name, and call Kirk-Sessions Parochial Presbyteries, and we shall have, hold, and possess, a huge quantity of spiritual independence. No, brethren! Rather will we hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. It is not for us to erase a single line, to assail a single position, to qualify a single doctrine of that Confession. Modern devices and imaginations and inventions have no charms for us. We are contented to walk in the old ways, to maintain the old standards, to love the old Church. More than honour and reason, more than rank and dignity, we prize safety, and we think that at present we are safe. The ritualism of England and Germany will never infect us. The utilitarianism, the sensationalism, the love of display, and the constant hankering after some new thing, which have so disfigured and divided the Presbyterianism of the American States, will never usurp dominion over us. It may be that our friends who have lately made the venture of independence, may prosper as we would desire. Concerning ourselves, there can be no doubt whatever, as long as we remain in connection with the Church of Scotland. Against that rock the gates of hell will not prevail. Popery, prelacy, and, alas! that we should say it, her own rebellious children, have frequently dealt hard blows at the venerable mother. Many heresies, many systems of philosophy falsely so called, many novelties, have from time to time prevailed around her. Still are her garments unspotted from the world, pure and saintly, as in the days when Culdee missionaries laid her foundations deep in the gloom of Caledonian forests, and taught barbarian kings and painted kernes to bow at the name of Jesus. Strong she is, too—let her enemies confess it; stronger far than when she sat more at ease and governed it over an undivided people; strong because of her trials and afflictions, because of the need she had to furbish her weapons and hang out her banners and man her walls. Like the pine of Clan Alpine

“Moored in the rifted rock,
Proof to the tempest’s shock,
The firmer she roots her the harder it blows.”

Let it be known, then, far and wide, to whomsoever it may concern, that, mainly for the reason we have herein specified, we are resolved at all hazards to maintain intact our present connection. Other motives we have. We love our mother as a dutiful daughter should, and surely if that is a weakness it is a very amiable one. Our intercourse with