

the minister rises, and, the whole congregation standing, offers a prayer. The Church of Scotland has no liturgy, and every clergyman has to prepare his own prayers. These are commonly understood to be given extemporaneously, and generally they are extemporaneous; but as we listen to those sentences, uttered with so much feeling, solemnity, quietude, and fluency, we soon know that the prayers, filled with happy turns of expression, containing many phrases and sentences borrowed from the Liturgy, and some (or we are much mistaken) translated from the Missal, and all conceived and expressed in the simple beautiful liturgical spirit, have been, if not written, at least most carefully thought over at home. At one time Mr. Caird's prayers were ambitious and oratorical; but now their perfect simplicity tells of more mature judgment and taste. We cannot say whether the congregation has so far mastered the essential difficulty of unliturgical common prayer as to be properly joining in those petitions; but the perfect stillness, the silence and stirlessness that prevail in church, testify that the congregation is at all events intently listening. The prayer is over—only a quarter of an hour. Then a lesson from Scripture is read, chosen at the discretion of the clergyman; then comes the sermon. You cannot doubt, as you see the people arranging themselves for fixed attention, what portion of the worship of God is thought in Scotland the most important. The service in that country is essentially one of instruction rather than one of devotion. The text is read; it is generally such as we feel at once to be a suggestive one; it is sometimes striking, but never odd or strange. Then Mr. Caird begins his sermon. He has no manuscript before him, not a shred of what the humbler Scotch calls *paper*, and abhor as they abhor a vestige of Rome; but who could for a moment be misled into imagining those felicitous sentences extemporaneous, or that masterly symmetrical discussion of the subject, so ingenious, so thoughtful, so rich in fine illustration, rising several times in the course of the sermon into a fervid rush of eloquence that you hold your breath to listen to—the excogitation of the moment? In hearing Mr. Caird you have nothing to get over. There is nothing that detracts from the general effect; none of those disagreeable peculiarities and awkwardnesses in utterance, in gesture, in appearance, in mode of thought, which grievously detract from the pleasure with which we listen to many distinguished speakers till we get accustomed to them, and learn to forget their defects in their merits and beauties. He begins quietly but in a manner which is full of earnestness and feeling; every word is touched with just the right kind and degree of emphasis; many single words, and many little sentences which when you recall them do not seem very remarkable, are given in tones which absolutely thrill through you: you feel that the preacher has in him

the elements of a tragic actor who would rival Kean. The attention of the congregation is riveted; the silence is breathless; and as the speaker goes on gathering warmth till he becomes impassioned and impetuous, the tension of the nerves of the hearer becomes almost painful. There is abundant ornament in style—if you were cooler you might probably think some of it carried to the verge of good taste; there is a great amount and variety of the most expressive, apt, and seemingly unstudied gesticulation: it is rather as though you were listening to the impulsive Italian speaking from head to foot, than to the cool and unexcitable Scot. After two or three such climaxes, with pauses between, after the manner of Dr. Chalmers, the preacher gathers himself up for his peroration, which, with the tact of the orator, he has made more striking, more touching, more impressive than any preceding portion of his discourse. He is wound up often to an excitement which is painful to see. The full deep voice, so beautifully expressive, already taxed to its utmost extent, breaks into something which is almost a shriek; the gesticulation becomes wild; the preacher, who has hitherto held himself to some degree in check, seems to abandon himself to the full tide of his emotion: you feel that not even his eloquent lips can do justice to the rush of thought and feeling within. Two or three minutes in this impassioned strain and the sermon is done. A few moments of startling silence; you look round the church; every one is bending forward with eyes intent upon the pulpit; then there is a general breath and stir. You think the sermon has lasted about ten minutes; you consult your watch—it has lasted three quarters of an hour. If you are an enthusiastic Anglican you say to yourself, "Well that comes to the mark of Melvill or Bishop Wilberforce." If an enthusiastic Scotch churchman you say to yourself, "Well, I suppose Chalmers was better; but I never heard preaching like it, save from Guthrie or Norman McLeod."

Then follow a brief collect, a hymn, and the benediction; and you come away, having heard the great Scotch preacher. We may very fitly call him so; for except Dr. Guthrie and Mr. McLeod, there is no one whom the popular judgment of Scotland in general places near Mr. Caird. And though every district of Scotland and every town has its popular preacher—and though many congregations have each their own favorite clergyman whom they prefer to all others—still the very best that the warmest admirers of other Scotch ministers can say of them is, that they are better than Mr. Caird. He is the Scotch Themistocles. Even those who would place another preacher first, place Mr. Caird second.

It is rarely indeed that we find such a remarkable combination in one individual of the qualities which go to make an effective pulpit orator. Mr. Caird's mind has the knack of producing the precise kind of

thought which shall be at once worthy of the attention of the best educated and most refined, and effective when addressed to a mixed congregation. And that is the practical talent for the preacher, after all. No depth, originality, or power of thought will make up in a sermon for the absence of general interest. No thought or style is good in the pulpit, which is tiresome. There is an insufferable but lofty order of thought which you listen to with an effort, feel to be extremely fine, and cease listening to as soon as possible. John Foster, who scattered congregations, was beyond doubt an abler preacher than Mr. Caird; but he *did* scatter congregations, and therefore he was not a good preacher, finely as his published discourses read. There are other preachers who attract crowds by preaching sermons which revolt every one who possesses good sense or good taste; but in distinction alike from the good and unpopular preacher, Mr. Caird has the talent to produce at will an order of thought elevated enough to please the most cultivated, and interesting enough to attract the masses. He has a good foundation of metaphysical acumen and power; strong practical sense; then great powers in the way of happy and striking illustration; indeed, he traces knowledge between the material and the spiritual with a felicity which reminds us of Archbishop Whately. Mr. Caird has also that invaluable gift of the orator—a capacity of intense feeling; he can throw his whole soul into what he says, with an emotion which is contagious. Further, he has a remarkably telling and expressive voice, and a highly effective dramatic manner. Add to all these qualifications that, from natural bent fostered and encouraged by unequalled success from his first entering the church, he has devoted himself steadfastly to the single end of becoming a great and distinguished preacher. That end he has completely attained. For at least ten years he has held in Scotland the position which he now holds; and the fortunate incident of his preaching at Crathie extended his reputation beyond the limits of Scotland. Mr. Caird is certainly the most generally popular preacher in the Scotch church, and he deserves his popularity. We cannot, of course, go into the question of mute inglorious Miltons, and of flowers born to blush unseen. It is possible enough that among the Cumberland hills, or in curacies like Sydney Smith's on Salisbury Plain, or wandering sadly by the shore of Shetland fords, there may be men who have in them the makings of better preachers than Bishop Wilberforce, Mr. Melvill, Mr. McLeod, or Mr. Caird. Of course there may be Folletts that never held a brief, Angelos that never built St. Peter's, and Vandycks who never got beyond sixpence a day. There may be, of course, and there may not be; and what is known must for practical purposes be taken for what is.

It may readily be supposed that the announcement of a forthcoming volume of