

CHAPTER III.

SCIENTIFIC RECREATION.

It has already been stated in the opening chapter that the minister's lodgings contained a room that looked like either a chemist's laboratory, a druggist's prescription room, or a combination of both, and that this room suggested scientific tastes on the part of the occupant. The fact is that McCheyne, had he not been pre-empted for the ministry, would certainly have devoted himself to some form of scientific research. As it was, he managed to work in with his theological training a certain amount of study in the departments of chemistry and biology. Recognizing, as he was obliged to do, the fundamental questions raised by the materialistic philosophy, he took a very special interest in all the problems that lie along the border-line between dead and living matter. He was fascinated by the phenomenon of life itself, and sought to penetrate more deeply into its mystery. So keen was his interest, so strong his proclivity, so quick his powers of observation, that one day, being alone with Professor —— in his laboratory, the professor turned to him abruptly and said:

"Well, McCheyne, what are you going to make of yourself?"

"Oh, I'm booked for the ministry," he replied.

"What!" exclaimed the other, "Good heavens! Why don't you go into something useful?"