

BACK IN THE FIFTIES

PART I—THE PARSON

CHAPTER I

IT is towards the end of a summer vacation, about the middle of the nineteenth century, that we find Philip Carr snugly ensconced in one of the dainty recesses of the Signet Library, in the metropolis of Scotland. The deep-toned clock of old St. Giles—whose sombre majesty and elaborate Gothic ornamentation look in, so to speak, at the window where he is sitting—has just rung four; and he has sat there since noon, according to his use and wont, completely absorbed in a book. We take advantage of his abstraction to drop the reader a few hints concerning him.

Somewhat above the middle height, of regular, well-developed features, there is nothing specially remarkable in his appearance, except, perhaps, the raven blackness of his crisp hair, and the exceeding beauty of his eyes, deep-set, of a dark, liquid blue, which, when he converses on any subject that interests him, glow with an intense and most pure light, such as