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I Know Not The Hour.

I know not the hour of His coming ;
I know not the day nor the year ;
But I know that He bids me be ready
For the step that I some time shall hear.

And whether on earth or in heaven—
Down here, or 'mid scenes of the blest
I am sure that His love will surround me,
And with Him I will leave all the rest.

I know not what lieth before me,
It may be all pleasure, all care ;
But I know at the end of the journey
Stands the mansion He went to prepare.

And whether in joy or in sorrow,
Through valley, or mountain, or hill,
I will walk in the light of His presence,
And His love all repining shall still.

I know not what duties are waiting
For hands that are willing and true,
And I ask but the strength to be faithful
And do well what He gives me to do.

AND IF HE SHOULD BID ME STAND IDLE—
Just waiting—IN WEAKNESS AND PAIN,
I have only to trust and be faithful,
And some time He'll make it all plain.

And when His voice calls in the morning,
At noontime, perhaps, or at night,
With no plea but the one, Thou hast called me
I shall enter the portals of light.

The Pioneer Church of the Disruption.

BY HUGH CROMARTIE.

NESTLING on the south side of the Moray Firth about fifteen miles east of Inverness is the clean, lively little town of Nairn, on account of its salubrious climate and beautiful surroundings, known as the "Brighton of the North." It is an historic as well as a romantically situated town. On its seal is St. Ninian, in proper habit, holding in his right hand a cross and in his left an open book. Some of the best blood of the covenanters of the north still flows in the veins of the native inhabitants and has made its independent sturdiness felt more than once with living memory. It was probably that heritage to which may be, to some extent, attributed the self-denying, but determined, stand taken by the Nairn congregation in 1840, in connection with the Disruption. A brief account of the facts no doubt will interest many of the readers of the PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW among whom are some who worshipped in the old church and by whom the associations of a past generation are dearly cherished. Last spring the Free Church congregation celebrated its jubilee and the circumstances amid which the congregation was formed fifty years ago, gave the celebration an interest quite unique, and attracted to it the interest of the Free Church as a whole, the chief feature being that the old Free Church of Nairn was the pioneer church of the Disruption. It came about this way. Dr. Chalmers visited Nairn in 1839 to advocate his scheme of Church Extension. He was accompanied by Dr. Buchanan. The result was the formation of a committee for the purpose of erecting a chapel of ease or *quoad sacra* church. The names on the committee deserve to be recalled from the past of fifty years ago. They are James Rose, elder, John Malcolm, senior bairn, Alexander Falconer, sheriff-substitute, Robert Malcolm, sheriff clerk, James Anderson, elder, John Donaldson, elder; and Dr. Bayne, Firhall. The minister of the

parish, at the time, was a Mr. Grant, who, although he acted as chairman of the committee, proved rather a hindrance than a help to its operations. After two years, during which little or nothing was done, Mr. Grant opposed the work of the committee, but great as was the influence of the minister in the North in those days, the Nairn men had minds of their own and Mr. Grant was succeeded in the chairmanship by a gentleman of high Christian character, named Mr. Robertson of Newton. In the meantime the struggle for freedom was being sorely waged over all Scotland with Chalmers, Gordon, Cunningham, Candlish, Begg, Buchanan, MacDonald, Forbes and other mighty men as leaders on the popular side. The Nairn committee foresaw the result and began to prepare for the inevitable fully a year before the crisis came upon the Church. In the words of the local chronicler, they practically gave up the idea of building a new parish church and at a subsequent meeting of subscribers they finally and formally abandoned the project, advertised that such subscriptions as had been paid towards erecting the additional church would be repaid by the treasurer, and thereupon the committee dissolved. The same committee, however, slightly enlarged, immediately came into existence again, and the subscribers to the old scheme—all but one—transferred their subscriptions to the new project, which was to build a new separate church, a circumstance which shows that it was the same people all along who had been moving in the matter. The committee not only erected the building, they also drafted a constitution for the church. In the prospectus of the new Church, dated September 2nd, 1842, its principles are stated to be,—first, the principles of the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland, second, the principles of Spiritual independence, third, of non intrusion. It thus happened that when the Disruption took place on the memorable 18th of May, 1843, the new Church was all but ready. For the first two Sabbaths after the Disruption the people who came out worshipped in the Independent chapel from noon to 1 o'clock p.m. On the third Sabbath they assembled in their own building, erected by themselves as a Free Church of Scotland, being the first to do so in the church. On that occasion Rev. Simon Fraser MacLachlan preached. An arm chair and table covered with a tartan plaid served as a pulpit. The congregation numbering about 800 were led in praise by Mr. James Anderson. A kirk session of five members was formed with Rev. W. Barclay, of Auldearn, as Moderator *pro tem*. The communion roll contained the names of 100 members and the statistical report to the Presbytery gives 1,500 of an adhering population. The question of conferring the right to vote in the election of a minister, upon women members was decided by the session in favour of the women and on the 1th of October, 1843, the first minister of the new congregation was unanimously chosen. The call was signed by all the members and the name it contained was that of Rev. Alexander MacKenzie, M. A., a licentiate of the Church of Scotland, or as such were then called, a Disruption probationer. He was ordained and inducted to the charge in the following November, and the ministry then begun continued for twenty years, when he accepted a call to an Edinburgh charge.