

neighbourhood. A minister, then, must have some appearance of good status in the community; and a small stipend imports that he is doomed to respectable, if not genteel poverty.

Certainly our ministers do succeed wonderfully in maintaining an aspect of comfort. Their abodes and families are not less orderly and well-conditioned than those of many who are in easier circumstances; and every friend who visits them is hospitably received. There seems to be a mystery in the fact that they are apparently as well off as neighbours who have double their means; and one might think that they had discovered the secret of transforming baser metals into gold, or reaching the needful by fairy wishes. But the results are otherwise to be accounted for; and the true explanation is neither alchemy nor magic. Dire is the struggle by which the stunted minister so upholds himself in society. A perpetual and rigid economy is essential to the issue. In countless cases he must forego what others deem necessities of life. With exhausted frame he must walk where others drive. Disease has far advanced in his home before he asks advice for which a medical fee, however moderate, must be paid. The invalided of his circle must remain where they are when the hope of health is change of air. Time would fail to enumerate like occasions on which he exercises an absolute self-denial rather than go into debt or ask augmented income.

The minister and his family do not alone suffer from this penury. Its mischief is largely shared by his people. He cannot furnish adequate instruction from his own brain, or even from the Bible, without suitable helps to the exposition of Scripture.—He must give himself to reading that his profiting may appear to all; but a small stipend denies him the books which would make him an interesting and instructive preacher. His hearers insist that no taught of his work shall be diminished, and any imperfection in his discourses they may severely criticise; so demanding in effect the full tale of bricks, and withholding the straw wherewith to make them. Apart from mere means of knowledge, a minister is crippled and impeded otherwise by the distractions of want. That he may give his people all his mental energies, he must be among them, as Paul says of Timothy, 'without fear.' But the question how limited means and large ends are to meet is very formidable, and is inseparable from apprehension. It is destructive of composure. It impels him to take thought of a very profitless or rather pernicious character; and I have heard one of our ablest ministers say that a great part of his official life had been spent in studying how to make £2 do the work of £3. Is it conceivable that a mind

so engaged can devote to ministerial duties its full elasticity and power?

The severity of this probation tells sadly not only on the existing roll of ministers, but on the future supply of the pulpit. The sons of ministers have great advantages over others in acquiring suitable qualifications for ministerial work, and they have been largely in request for our more important charges. But when, from earliest infancy, they have seen and felt the embittered working of small stipends, and read their influence in a mother's anxious face and overtaken constitution, they must be singularly devoted if all this ordeal in no degree affect their choice of a profession. The consequences are, I believe, already discernible in our ecclesiastical statistics.

Other youths besides ministers' sons come to perceive the hardships of the manse; and these hardships tend as powerfully as earthly conditions can tend, to drive from the ministerial office all that portion of the rising generation who have not merely the lore of schools and colleges, but the engaging manners of social cultivation. With a certain class some refinement in their pastor is essential to his acceptability; and what peasant even does not like in his minister the amenities of a gentleman? It is well that our Theological Hall be open to a labourer's son, or even a beggar's son; for not a few of humble birth have become eminent divines; and there are cases where the needy, to use a scriptural simile, have been lifted out of the dunghill to be set with princes, even with the princes of God's people. But it fares ill with a church, especially in times of research and pretension, when these exceptions are made the rule, and its dominating principle in the appointment of spiritual superintendents is that of Jeroboam, who stationed at the altar 'priests of the lowest of the people.'

The foregoing remarks have mostly regard to expediency; but the course they recommend has the more important phase of express and peremptory duty. Our denomination is not at liberty to stint and half-starve its ministry. 'Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things.' We preach the gospel of Him who has declared that 'the labourer is worthy of his hire.' The fulfilment of these precepts has allied promises. 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.' Our people all give more or less for religious and benevolent objects; numbers of them give liberally, and not a few of them munificently. But if all the givings of our church members were sum-