

THE  
CHURCHMAN'S MAGAZINE  
AND  
MONTHLY REVIEW.

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Vol. I.]

JULY, 1869.

[ No. 1.

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TALES, ESSAYS, AND REVIEWS.

OPENING NEW GROUND;

A TALE OF MISSION LIFE.

By the Author of the Heir of Redcliffe.

CHAPTER I.

"These home delights, so good and pure,  
They may not aye endure;  
For thee, perchance, a sterner call may sound,  
Oh, where wilt thou be found?"

*Lyra Innocentium.*

Who could wish for a pleasanter home than Avonside Rectory?

It was a long low building, the lower windows sheltered by a verandah running all the length of the house, and supported on posts, so wreathed with flowers, as to make the walk it covered one continual bower.

Right down from it sloped a green lawn, with just inclination enough to make a couch to rest on, or a descent to roll down to the box and laurel, hiding the low wall that shut in the garden from the paddock, that went sharp and steep down to the river. And just on the other side, up rose the ground with equal steepness, and well kept and trimmed—arranged in slopes and terraces of green, broken by well turfed graves; some marked by old headstones covered with yellow lichen, others by well carved stone crosses; and on the crest of the hill stood the handsome church, its square tower serving as a landmark to all the country round. The deep southern porch covered a doorway, whose round arch, surrounded by border upon border, zig-zagged, knotted, nail-headed, or of bearded faces, was the pride of Avonside,