

THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

A TALE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

My father was a regular Church and State religionist ; so that as I was born on the south side of the Tweed, I was baptised and confirmed in the Church of England. But I am sorry to say that I knew but little of my religion when I was a young man. I belonged to the Church of England, because it was the Established Church ; and that was reason enough for me. It was my father's reason before me. " How could anybody dream of being a Dissenter ? " he used to say ; for his part, he never could make out where they came from, or what they wanted. " What good could there possibly be in being a Dissenter ? " thus he designated all who did not belong to the establishment.

In process of time my father died, and I was left to my own devices. Having occasion to go to Scotland to see my maternal uncle, respecting my father's affairs, he pressed me so much to stay with him and assist him in his business, that it ended in my becoming an inmate of his house for some years.

My uncle, like my father, was a Church and State religionist : consequently, being in Scotland, he was a Presbyterian. I recollect his asking me, the first Sunday after I got there to go to church with him. He said, " the forms were different, but I should soon get accustomed to their ways : no two countries were alike in these respects. The Established Churches of England and Scotland believed in the same doctrines ; they only differed in discipline : and that was always admitted to be non-essential. The differences among Protestants was very much moderated ; Episcopalians and Presbyterians no longer refused, upon occasion, to worship God, and to partake of the Holy Communion of the Lord's Supper, according to each other's ritual. Mr. Melvill was an excellent man, gave them good sermons, and he was sure that I should like him."

As I had always heard my father say that it was the duty of every one to belong to the Established Church, I could make no objections. I had been taught to consider the sermon as everything, the prayers and sacraments as nothing ; and as Dr. Webber, my former clergyman, had preached so much about Protestants, the Protestant religion, and our pure Protestant faith, as to leave the impression upon my mind, that nothing was necessary to make a true Church but that it should be Protestant, I found no difficulty in going to the Presbyterian Kirk. Here I heard a great deal about the equality of the ministers of the Gospel ; and read a great deal, in books lent to me, about bishops being a rag of Popery, and about predestination, reprobation, &c.

I do not know that I was the better for this, but I was prevailed upon to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which I had never received in the Church of England, as my father never recommended me to do so, either by precept or example, considering it only proper to be done by very old people, or those who were without sin (though where I was to find these latter persons he did not tell me). It was explained to be a mere act of commemoration. We all sat at a long table in the church, the bread and wine being handed round.

During my sojourn with my uncle, I got acquainted with a young man who was an Independent ; and like most young men, we had many arguments about religion. He quite confounded me upon the question of an Established Church, by proving to me that the Church of England (to which I at first belonged, and in which I confessed I should worship when I returned to England), was not the Established