

of his ability. When he is not a clumsy, blundering man, whose solecisms make him the butt of the community, he is made to delight in the exhibition of a dry, sarcastic humor, that wounds more than it amuses. Covetousness is his besetting sin; doling out small sums from the poor-fund of the congregation one of his chief pleasures, as it enables him to demand gratitude without earning it. He is the last to assent to an increase in the stipend of his minister, and quotes the case of the apostle Paul, who labored with his own hands, and yet was the most efficient elder the Church has ever seen, as one that should prove the inferiority of the white fingers that lie on the pulpit desk, to the horny fist that grasps the spectacle case in the elder's pew.

There have been such men in the eldership of the Presbyterian Church, as there are cretins with enormous goitres in the Alpine valleys of Switzerland. But all the Swiss are not cretins; and non but an idiot would paint a man with a goitre on his throat, and imbecility in his face, to represent that healthy and intelligent race. No better name does he deserve, whose diseased imagination and feeble mind lead him to write under such a portrait as we have copied from many books of fair standing in the literary world—this is a Presbyterian elder.

The eldership is the glory of the Presbyterian Church. Many other Churches can boast of a pious, learned, and devoted ministry; but no other can lay claim to a class of men who, engaged in the active duties of life, cheerfully, and without remuneration, give a considerable share of their time and energies to the oversight and advancement of the congregation they are connected with. The membership of the Presbyterian Church, in whatever land, has never been destitute of men of high position and attainments, who have been willing to share with their humbler, yet no less worthy, brethren, the duties and responsibilities of this office. Since the year 1560, about which time the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, French Switzerland, and Holland were fairly established, until the present, many who, like Sir Ralph Abercrombie, have occupied places of trust and dignity in the world, have felt it to be their highest honor to minister in the eldership of the Church. But leaving altogether out of sight the high standing, in a worldly point of view, of many of these unpaid laborers in Christ's vineyard, it may confidently be stated that the eldership represents much more than the average of the piety, intelligence, and social excellence of those by whom, under the constitution of a free Church, it is appointed. Many elders in the past have taken positions, not only side by side with, but often in advance of, their fellow-presbyters in the ministry, in fighting the battles of the Church, and in promoting the extension of the Gospel. Such were Mr. Murray Dunlop and Sheriff Jamieson, whose loss the Free Church of Scotland was lately called to deplore, and many in sister churches, of whom language might well be employed like that which was made use of in regard to Colonel James Wallace, the brave soldier who commanded at the battle of Pentland Hills, and died an exile in Rotterdam. "I doubt not," said Mr. MacWard concerning him, "but you have heard of the removal of worthy and great Wallace, of whom I have no doubt it may be said he hath left no man behind him in that church, minister nor professor, who hath gone through such a variety of temptations, without turning aside to the right hand or to the left. He died in great serenity of soul. He had lived abroad such an ornament to his profession, as he was not more lamented by us than by all the serious English and Dutch of his acquaintance (who were many), as having lost the man who, as a man, was