

THE MARRIAGE

the prudent young clergyman called immediately on Mr. Micklewham to read the letter which he had received from the Doctor; and which the worthy dominie did without delay, in that rich and full voice with which he is accustomed to teach his scholars elocution by example.

LETTER XXXII

*The Rev. Z. Pringle, D.D., to Mr. Micklewham, Schoolmaster
and Session-Clerk, Garnock*

LONDON.

DEAR SIR—I have been much longer of replying to your letter of the 3rd of last month, than I ought in civility to have been, but really time, in this town of London, runs at a fast rate, and the day passes before the dark's done. What with Mrs. Pringle and her daughter's concernments, anent the marriage to Captain Sabre, and the trouble I felt myself obliged to take in the queen's affair, I assure you, Mr. Micklewham, that it's no to be expressed how I have been occupied for the last four weeks. But all things must come to a conclusion in this world. Rachel Pringle is married, and the queen's weary trial is brought to an end—upon the subject and motion of the same, I offer no opinion, for I made it a point never to read the evidence, being resolved to stand by THE WORD from the first, which is clearly and plainly written in the queen's favour, and it does not do in a case of conscience to stand on trifles; putting, therefore, out of consideration the fact libelled, and looking both at the head and the tail of the proceeding, I was of a firm persuasion, that all the sculduddery of the business might have been well spared from the eye of the public, which is of itself sufficiently prone to keek and kook, in every possible way, for a glimpse of a black story; and, therefore, I thought it my duty to stand up in all places against the trafficking that was attempted with a divine institution. And I think, when my people read how their prelatie enemies, the bishops (the heavens defend the poor Church of Scotland from being subjected to the weight of their paws), have been visited with a constipation of the understanding on that point, it must to them be a great satisfaction to know how clear and collected their minister was on this