

his church, and all belonging to some body of Christians or other, his proposal was at once agreed to. Mr. Irving's words, however, instead of being "few," were found to be "many." The gentleman in whose house the prayer was eventually became impatient, thinking his friends who had been simply invited to drink tea, might feel so lengthened a prayer to be an infliction; and accordingly, as he chanced to be next to Mr. Irving, he gently pulled him by the tails of his coat, and whispered into his ear, "Mr. Irving, I'm quite ashamed at your continuing so long." Mr. Irving, suddenly paused, and turning about on his knees towards two or three of his members who were in the same part of the room, said in his own firm stentorian voice, "Ye servants of the Lord, I appeal to you for protection against such interruptions;" and so saying, he resumed praying, just as if nothing had happened, and continued for a considerable time longer.

But the most ludicrous incident which has been communicated to me, connected with Mr. Irving's habit of extending his prayers at private meetings to an undue length, occurred at his own house, when he resided in Claremont Square, Pentonville. For a considerable time, he had what he called an early prayer-meeting once a week, which prayer-meeting was open to any one who chose to attend it. The hour at which it commenced was six in the morning. Many dissenting ministers whose duties in their own respective chapels prevented their having the gratification of hearing him preach on the Sabbath-day, were induced by their anxiety to see him and hear him speak, to attend his early prayer-meetings. On one occasion, the Rev. Mr. —, a popular dissenting minister, made his appearance at Mr. Irving's house, precisely as the clock struck six in the morning. After a psalm had been sung, Mr. Irving requested one of his elders to address the throne of grace. The party having done so very briefly, another psalm, of the Scotch version of the songs of David, was sung, when Mr. Irving himself engaged in prayer. The reverend gentleman continued in the exercise for about fifteen minutes without the slightest symptom of his drawing to a conclusion. The dissenting minister being at the time connected with a theological institution, had a class of pupils to meet precisely at seven. It was now within twenty-five minutes of the time, and as after leaving Mr. Irving's house, it would require at least a quarter of an hour of the most rapid cab-driving, to carry him to the place where his class met, so as to be in time, he became exceedingly fidgety at the circumstance of the reverend gentleman continuing so long. Still he was unwilling to disturb the meeting by rising and leaving the room, in the middle of Mr. Irving's prayer. He determined on waiting a little longer, in the anxious hope that the reverend gentlemen would relieve him from the embarrassing situation in which he felt himself to be placed, by bringing his devotions to a termination. The next time he took out his watch, it was within five minutes of the latest moment he could remain. Imagine his feelings, when Mr. Irving seemed still so earnestly engaged in prayer, as not to hold out the most slender

hope of concluding for a time to come. Two minutes more elapsed, and still no appearance of Mr. Irving coming to a close. The dissenting minister could bear it no longer, but rising up from his knees, he escaped to the door of the room which was partially open, and made his way down stairs, in the quietest possible manner. He had just reached the street door, and was in the act of taking off the latch, when a large Newfoundland dog, which Mr. Irving kept in his house at the time, sprang upon him, and placing one of his paws on either shoulder, forced the reverend gentleman down to a crouching position, with his head against the door. The animal fortunately did not bite, or in any way hurt Mr. —, but kept him in the position just mentioned, for at least five minutes, when Mr. Irving having concluded his devotions, one of his servants on coming down stairs released him from the exceedingly awkward and unpleasant predicament in which he was placed.

Mr. Irving was remarkable among his contemporaries in the pulpit for his correct views of the duties which devolve upon a minister of the gospel. While most exemplary in his attentions to the poor, and while ready at all times, like the Master whom he served, to be the servant of the humblest individual in his flock, he never compromised his fidelity as a "legate of the skies," by shrinking from a full and fearless proclamation of the more important truths of the gospel, to the nobles and the magnates who came crowding to him, and who were proud to cultivate his acquaintance. In his capacity of a preacher of the Cross, he knew no distinction of persons; he was indeed, a leveller of all the conventional differences which obtain in society. He never flattered the great. He brought them down to a footing of perfect equality, as regarded their moral condition, with the most destitute beggar in the streets of London. And not only did he do this in general terms, but he eagerly availed himself of their presence to rebuke them for the specific sins which they were in the habit of most frequently committing, and earnestly and solemnly and faithfully warned them of the inevitable consequences of persisting in the practice of those sins. He must, indeed, have proved a Nathan to many an aristocratic conscience.

A friend of mine who was present at the time, lately mentioned to me, that on one occasion, after dwelling on the frightful extent to which the Sabbath-day was desecrated by persons moving in the higher spheres of society, he pointed to a particular part of the chapel in which were seated a number of noblemen and ladies of title, and said with great emphasis—"And you are the men and women who commit these sins. You are the persons who are in the constant habit of profaning God's holy day." Those only who have heard Mr. Irving preach, can form any idea of what the effect of this apostrophe must have been. His uncompromising boldness and unshrinking fidelity as a preacher of the gospel, have often reminded me of John Knox charging Mary Queen of Scots with particular sins, when surrounded by all the splendour of her court.

A more kind-hearted man than Edward Irving