

vours to promote their advancement in the world. Nor were their assiduities confined to relatives—they were ever ready to befriend the friendless. By nature philanthropic and ardent, and living during a period when social improvement was sought by means of political reform, they were enthusiastic admirers and strenuous advocates of the principles of civil and religious liberty.*

Thus connected with the north of Scotland, Mrs. Mackay had, at an early period of her life, taken a deep interest in the Celtic population of the Highlands and Islands. It was a warm and enthusiastic attachment which led her to make so great efforts in behalf of her fellow-countrymen who had been compelled by poverty and distress to leave their native land—to which was added, in after life, the impulse of a higher motive—a concern for their spiritual welfare.

Her mind was naturally powerful and active, as well as benevolent. It was a large and enlightened benevolence, which sought the best and permanent interests of her fellow-creatures. Endued with no common buoyancy and vivacity of spirit, and an ardent temperament, she was not to be discouraged by difficulties in any work she undertook. The kindness of her nature, and that power which an ardent spirit exercises over the feelings of others with whom it comes in contact, generally enabled to remove them all:—above all, her own soul had been touched by the Spirit of all grace, and she felt constrained to go on in her course. But this grace, at the same time, led her to see much defect and sin in the motives of her conduct, and to complain that, in what she did for the good of others, she was more actuated by a mere *instinctive* compassion, than by a single regard to the glory of God. Her reception of the doctrines of the gospel had been gradual—these doctrines having in her to contend with the scepticism of an understanding, not immediately brought to a conviction of its own weakness. But as, by the grace of God, she came to a more full reception of them, her whole character underwent a corresponding change. Her natural ardour was brought under a softening, subduing, and restraining influence; and in her latter days, love to men, and the salvation of their souls, became more and more the predominating prin-

ciple of her conduct. The discipline of a death-bed sickness (as will be seen afterwards), opened her eyes to see more than she had ever seen before, that human actions cannot stand the scrutiny of a holy God—that there is no righteousness but Christ's righteousness—and that there could be no salvation, had not God declared his willingness to save the guiltiest for Christ's sake.

In illustration of her character, and the Christian principle which guided her, two events of some importance in her life may be stated. The first of these was in 1837, when she received a considerable and very unexpected accession of private fortune, by the bequest of one of those whom she and her husband had befriended in early life, and who had ever felt himself bound to his parental benefactors, by a warm and affectionate gratitude; but the accession gave rise in her mind to no idea of self-indulgence, or large expenditure on her own account. On the contrary, she avoided such expenditure, while she entered upon a more enlarged sphere of benevolence, and seemed to be resolved upon a more entire consecration of her substance to the Lord. No doubt, a naturally humane and generous disposition rendered such a sacrifice, in her case, more easy; but we have, at the same time, her own recorded conviction, that "a grateful recognition of God the giver was a burden duty in disposing of the bounties with which he favored us;"—that there was too often a sinful omission in the distribution of property; and that she felt bound to allot a portion of her means "to the furtherance of the eternal interests of a very destitute portion of our countrymen,—that God, having singularly prospered an effort made to this end, had thereby strengthened the claim on the instrument he had so honoured, to spare no means likely to advance it."

The second occurrence deserving of notice, was the deep impression made on her mind by the Disruption of the Church of Scotland, and the line of conduct which it led her, thereafter, to pursue. The principles on which so many ministers seceded from the Establishment she thoroughly appreciated; they approved themselves to her mind and conscience, and never ceased to influence and direct her in the future distribution of her means. "While (she said) as a christian and a patriot, I hold myself indebted to the protesters and founders of the Free Church of Scotland, of which I am a member, in an amount of obligation to which money can bear no proportion, I feel that, in the circumstances in which I am placed, it is my privilege as well as my duty, to bestow my property on the men, who by a sacrifice as noble as the reasons for it were imperative, cast themselves and their families on the bounty, or rather on the justice and gratitude of those who participate in the valuable results of the sacrifice, from the sufferings of which they are at the same

* Late in life, Mr. Mackay became author of a "Life of Lieut.-General Hugh Mackay of Scoury (his distinguished and pious ancestral kinsman), who was Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Scotland, 1689 and 1690, Colonel Commandant of the Scottish Brigade in the service of the States-General, and a Privy Councillor in Scotland."—To a revised edition of this work after the death of Mr. Mackay, Mrs. Mackay prefixed a memoir of her husband, very interesting in itself, and very creditable to her talents and literary taste.