

stimulus which his writings are supposed to give to the best sympathies of the heart. And yet what are the representations which these writers make of religion?

In "David Copperfield," Dickens introduces to us a man named Murdstone, who married for property, and, by sternness and morose severity, aided by the same characteristics in a maiden sister, to whom he gives the rule of the house, breaks the hearts, and destroys the lives, of two wives in succession. He also treats David, his wife's son, with cruelty; and, after his mother's death, puts him to a low business, washing bottles. This man and his sister are described as professedly pious persons, and their sternness is explicitly declared to be the result of their religion. By this man, David was sent to school, to a master who combined all that was tyrannical to his scholars, with unfaithfulness as a teacher, and unscrupulous cupidity. This schoolmaster, also, is described as a pious man. Later in the story, David finds him in the warden of a penitentiary, diligently engaged in imparting religious instruction to the prisoners; and two of the most consummate of villains, who have figured largely in the story, are described as his converts. In a word, all the characters in the story that are so painted as to awaken the abhorrence of the reader, are described as professors of religion.

Let us turn to Scott, the other boasted author of novels of unexceptionable moral character. In "Rob Roy," the hero's father is a merchant, having no ideas beyond his ledger, stern, and void of the common feelings of humanity. His son, on his return from France, expresses disinclination to engage in mercantile pursuits: the father coldly tells the son that he may have a month to decide, and if he persists in his refusal, shall be turned out of doors, and his cousin, a Papist, established in his place. During this time, the father says nothing to the son, shows no affection, moves before him in distant coldness; the son expresses no change of purpose, and the threat is executed to the letter. The father is described as a Dissenter, and his conduct is declared to be the result of his religion. The son afterwards engages a Scotch servant, Andrew Fairservice, a most rigorous Presbyterian, a sanctimonious reader of the Bible, and observer of the Sabbath, but supremely covetous, and never letting slip any opportunity to steal from and defraud his master. Afterwards, through the frauds of the young Papist whom he had taken into his service, the father becomes embarrassed, and is expected to fail. We are then introduced to