

Reminiscences of a Scottish Country Parish.

BY AN OCTAGENARIAN.

IV.—THE OLD MINISTER—(Continued)

For the Review

Like many of the surrounding clergy our old minister farmed considerably, and in addition to his glebe, rented, and wrought a farm in one of the adjoining parishes, to which he had to make frequent visits. These visits were always made on horseback, as almost all journeys were at that period made. On one of these visits, he had promised to bring home some fresh eggs, and as he could not carry them in a basket, they were carefully placed in the outside pockets of his overcoat. All went well for a time, till in a moment of forgetfulness, he put his horse to the trot, to the loss of the eggs, and the spoiling of the minister's coat.

He was naturally a grave man, but he used to tell now his gravity was once sorely tried. He was preaching in a neighboring parish, when in the course of the service a "daft wife" came into the church, and began moving about, as she was well known, and usually made no disturbance, no one moved to put her out. After a time her eye caught sight of the dandy of the parish, who occupied a front seat in one of the galleries, and, who had fallen asleep, with his head lying back, and his mouth open, making her way to his seat, and slipping up behind him, she took hold of his head in her two hands, and kissed him from cheek to chin. The ludicrous character of the whole transaction, the state of the daft wife's mouth, (she was an inveterate tobacco chewer) and the consternation of the young man, all combined, so overcame the preacher, that he had to close the service abruptly, and escape to have a hearty laugh.

One other incident in the old minister's life is worthy of record, and was for a considerable time the wonder of the parish. If there had been newspaper reporters in those days, it would have been greedily reported as a Romance in high life. It happened in this way—The principal proprietor and patron of the parish at that time, was the third son of an Earl, a General in the British army, and a favorite groom of the bedchamber to the Prince Regent, afterwards George the IV. He was unmarried, and from his position in the army, and in the Royal household, was only an occasional resident in his castle. During one of his visits he was much taken with the good looks of one of his female domestics. After betraying her, he left her to the sad consequences of her fall. Her friends, who were respectable farmers in the next parish, disowned her, and she was obliged to retire to a neighboring town, where renting a single room, she supported herself and her child by spinning—Time passed on and her boy was well grown up, when some one, on one of the General's visits to his estate, took it upon himself to remind him of his conduct to that servant girl. To his honour be it recorded, he agreed to acknowledge the boy, provide for his education, and make him his heir if that could be done. The young man was accordingly sent to Eton, to be educated, and he seems to have recommended himself favourably to his father, now pretty well advanced in years. But that was not all, he intimated his purpose to marry the mother of his child, and thus legitimize him according to the law of Scotland. Whether the banns were proclaimed in the parish Church we could not learn, but one day the old minister was called to the castle, where in the presence of witnesses the General was married to his old servant. To carry out the requirements of the law, the son (now a young man) was placed beside his mother, and her skirt, or apron thrown over him during the ceremony, and so by that and other acts he was not only legitimized; but was qualified to succeed as heir of entail to his father's estates. The newly made wife retired after the marriage to a house that had been prepared for her, near the castle, and lived to a good old age. Her grand funeral is one of our earliest memories, when she was carried to be laid in the grave of her husband, and to have her name recorded on her tombstone as the *Mrs. G.* — What a change

from a serving maid to the wife of an Earl's son; but truth is sometimes stranger than fiction.

The old minister lived to a good old age, after a ministry of nearly forty years, in his first and only charge, leaving no family, his only daughter dying before him. His widow married a neighbouring minister, and by one of those strange changes in Providence, returned as mistress of the manse, her second husband having been translated to the parish in 1843. When the old minister died he was buried at the east end of the church, and as near as possible to the pulpit from which he had preached so long. A plain stone, giving his name, age, and the number of years he had served the parish with the text "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," marks the place of burial.

When his wife died, she was laid by his side, and in the same plot, on her other side, rests the body of her second husband. On visiting the place a few years ago with a friend, and while standing by their graves our friend asked: "Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection; for they twain had her to wife."

Glimpses of Japan.

BY T. IVERTON.

For the Review.

'Tis a beautiful summer morning as our stately ship slowly wends her way through the narrow channel leading to Nagasaki. Close to us on the left rises abruptly out of the sea an islet known as the historic rock. All eyes are directed towards it. Inquiring what interest attaches to this rock we are told that the Catholic converts took refuge from persecution on it three hundred years ago. Their enemies overtook them, however, and flung them all, to the number of thirty thousand, over the precipice facing us. There is nothing left to remind one of this tragedy so far as could be seen from the ship, and everything around was so calm and beautiful that it was difficult to realize that such a thing ever happened. Suggestive this of that final deliverance from pain and sorrow enjoyed by those who in that day earned the crown of martyrdom.

I went ashore for a ramble into the country as soon as possible. The path followed the course of a small river that flows through the town. This river is spanned at intervals by stone bridges that are covered with vines and creepers to such an extent that one is tempted to think the whole a part of nature's work. Gardens formed by terracing the steep slope drop roses along the path, and their fragrance fills the air. Brooks with water as clear as that of any Scottish glen flow past us "to join the brimming river." Then all of a sudden you hear the cuckoo, and you are reminded of other days when this harbinger of spring was familiar and welcome. Sitting by one of the splendid reservoirs I saw a company of workmen on the slope of the hill beyond. Others were coming down the valley carrying burdens and singing lustily the while. Those on the hillside soon responded and the effect in that quiet and lovely spot was most pleasing. Here at any rate men seemed to enjoy life and labor. Indeed the very conviction was while going through Japan that there was less want and suffering there than in any other country. And what a panorama stretches before one sitting on that eminence! Mountains now wooded to the top, then verdant with grass, and again waving here and there with grain to a greater height above the plain. The roadstead is crowded with ships of all kinds and from every country, giving an air of animation and human interest to the whole scene. Above all we have that combination of mountain, sea, and river so dear to the Oriental, and so essential to his ideal of perfect scenery. Truly nature has done much for the Japanese; nor do they appear to be insensible to her benignant aspects and her kindly ministrations. They thoroughly realize that there is a beauty in nature which art vainly strives to equal, and there seems to be a conscious striving in all their art to be true to nature. Seldom, if ever, do you find a bit of natural scenery spoiled by the Japanese. Even if they have to introduce artificial improvements it is done with such taste that it is never obtruded upon one.