

NEW DOMINION MONTHLY.

JULY, 1874.

JOCK THE BEADLE; OR, ONE OF DEAN RAMSAY'S CHARACTERS IN CANADA.

There lives, not many miles beyond the township of Dumfries, Ontario, one of those specimen Hawick Scotsmen whose characteristics Dean Ramsay so delighted to delineate. For the nonce we will call the subject of our sketch "Jock," and we think we are perfectly safe in asserting that for sturdy, blunt, plain, outspoken and uncouth utterances, though filled withal with a measure of fearfully practical common sense, Jock would prove no mean sample for the famed delineator of Scottish character.

As if Providence designed a peculiar cut of mankind for peculiar offices, Jock proves no exception to the general rule. Had he been still in his native land undoubtedly he would have been a beadle. There is a certain combination of qualities so essential to the man who would fill that office with anything like satisfaction to himself and those around him, that by natural consequence, as well as by common consent, he who possesses these qualities is either a beadle now, or is assuredly destined to be one; nor has he rest to his feet nor slumber to his eyelids—speaking from an earthly point of view—until he finds himself fully esconced and established in that worthy and dignified position, with all its troubles, its dignities, its cares and responsibilities resting upon his stalwart shoulders.

Jock is not indeed in his native land, but, nevertheless, Jock is up in years, and has found his native element. In plain terms, he is a beadle, a veritable Jeddart beadle in

Canada, and well does he sustain the reputation which has so long signalized these functionaries, as a class, in the centre and south of Scotland. Cool to freezing point, practical to terrible demonstration, and blunt and outspoken beyond the most charitable stretch of formality, he moves through the world a living mass of dry, hard, barren and naked facts, sticking out all over him like the pointed edges of a cold boulder. Not that Jock is void of all the finer feelings incidental to humanity. By no means. A right leal and warm heart beats beneath that rough exterior, and the fountain readily wells to overflowing should fate or fortune disturb any of the family relations; but upon all the world beside, whether naturally, unnaturally, providentially, or otherwise, Jock looks with a cold and calculating eye, mentally digesting what to him is an ever constant truism, a self-evident proposition, and one requiring no other than the plainest common-sense demonstration, viz., "Aye, Jock lad, juist min' yersel."

Jock was on the most intimate terms with his minister; but who ever knew a beadle that was not? And as time passed on this intimacy gave way to a degree of shrewd familiarity at times which would rather stagger staid notions. Indeed, Jock's coolness never, in any one instance within our recollection, forsook him; but, on the contrary, he was equal to every emergency that might arise.