

Scotland, it would cause us pain; but I think we should on both sides cultivate the manly spirit by which, to a true honest man, though differing from us, we should give him as hearty a shake of the hand on leaving us as we would give him when coming to us, not because he leaves us, but because we would rather see an honest man leaving us for the sake of truth than a dishonest man joining the Church of Scotland. I hope to see that spirit still more manifested. A man disagrees with most pious, most respected, most conscientious brethren in the Free Church, but to balance that he comes to agree with equally pious, equally kind, and equally respected men in the Church of Scotland, so that I really must say, in reference to clergymen coming to this Church from others, or passing from this Church to others, that the only thing we should endeavour to do is to ascertain the honesty of their intentions, the excellence of their character, and whether they leave or whether they come, as we would give answer to a higher power, not to raise up any barrier or give any such encouragement as would hinder them from acting an honest conscientious part.

The motion for Mr. Johnstone's admission was unanimously agreed to.

COUNTRY LIFE.

How sweet country life is, those are likely to know who return to it after weeks or months of town life. No matter at what season, whether summer or winter, such a return takes place. The winter months, quite as much as the summer months, are enjoyable to those to whom the country, with its tranquil incidents, is their chosen and constant home. The visitor (if there chanced a visitor in the depth of winter) sometimes gives expression to his sympathy, as he looks round the table, and says, "You must find this place *very dull* in winter time." My good friend, we reply, reserve your compassion for any who may think they need it. We do not need it? The question debated among us sometimes is this—*which of the seasons is it we enjoy the most?* Discussions of this sort are not brought to any other conclusion than this—we enjoy each as it comes. One may be stopped on the threshold of a rural home, and required to show cause for the preference which we accord to it. In meeting this reasonable inquiry a sufficient answer might be this.—A much higher rate of family health—if people are wise and temperate—may be reckoned upon here, than in cities or city suburbs. We are exempt from the visitation of a hundred ills, real or imaginary, to which we find our city friends liable. Along with purer air, early hours, and country routine, there will be (or may be) a greater simplicity of minds, manners, and tastes. At this distance from town we are not tyrannised over by conventional forms; it is true we are not able to talk so well of all things, but we think more, and we are more reasonable.

But when these, and other considerations of like import, have been duly brought forward as sufficient grounds of the choice of country life—if such a choice be at the option of a family man—there will remain what I do not find it

very easy to make intelligible to those who possess little or no consciousness of the same order. There is a yearning for rural life, which yearning is almost irresistible, and it is stronger than any formal reasons can be, and stronger than many such reasons put together:—there is the Rural Instinct; or call it, if you please, the Rural Passion. So intense is this feeling in some constitutions, that it avails to overrule motives of worldly interest, as well as the dictates of ambition, and the social tastes, and the promptings of literary emulation—in a word, it is a taste, it is a preference, or a passion, which probably will have its way, and will be master of a man's course through life.

Yet there is a something more than this in the rural instinct. I do not hesitate to affirm my belief—conviction—that a mystery is veiled beneath or within the constitutional taste for country life. If we fail to find this rural element within the range of our philosophy, physiological or mental, if it be not in the framework of either the body or the soul—if it does not come up from out of an analysis of the solids or the fluids, or "come over" along with the imponderable elements of human nature—then we must go in quest of it in the records of the primordial history of the species. This passion for country life—this love of a garden—this tranquil satisfaction with my lot, if only this be granted to me to see and commune with the world as God made it—bright, flowery, fresh, fruitful—this countryman's love of the country, has it not a meaning that is historic?

Whether the first book of the Pentateuch be history or not, it is perfectly certain that the garden in which the first man and his wife were placed by their Creator has written its hieroglyphics upon the profoundest tablets of human nature:—the tracing is still sharp and fresh upon body, mind, soul, heart, affections, sympathies; it is fresh among the tastes; it is stamped upon regrets, memories, hopes; and it is the germ of bright conceptions of immortality. It is useless to tell me that suppositions of this sort are fanciful and unreal, or that they are neither scientific nor worldly wise in their tendency. You say so, either because, in your case, the genuine instinct was scantily bestowed at the first; or else because the marking has been rubbed out by years and years of daily chafing against brick walls and the corners of streets.—*Isaac Taylor in Good Words.*

LENT, NOT GIVEN.

How dreary is the dwelling now,
And deep the shade on heart and brow!
For one who gladdened every spot
With her sweet smile, alas! is not.
Sunshine was on her: life was fair,
And fresh, and beautiful; and care
A stranger; while her dear delight
Was song. The house by day, by night,
From Jenny's voice a gladness caught,—
'Twas with a wondrous sweetness fraught.
Methinks 'twere now a pain to hear
Her songs; that love would turn the ear
Aside, though sweet the melody,
And beg the singer silent be,
Nor touch the keys her hand had swept,
Till Grief its last sad tear had wept.