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will do, if it is necessary to be as good as this,—then—it is worth while trying.”

He drops abruptly into his seat, thankful for the murmur of appreciation with which his words are received, and a moment later the silence is broken by cries of ‘Dagleish! Dagleish!’

Dagleish is slow to respond, but at length he rises, pale as ashes, yet burning with enthusiasm. His voice has scarcely been heard in public since the events of the previous autumn, and every instinct of decency—so he thinks—bids him be silent now. But if no one else will give utterance to the things that are crying out to be said, what can he do?

‘I am one of these,’ he says, ‘who have not forgotten Mr. Dobbs’ remarks at that debate on Toleration. It was my first experience of the Debating Society, and I suppose nothing else of the kind will ever seem to me quite so remarkable. I remember the proverb Mr. Dobbs quoted. It was not the last time I have heard it on his lips. To-night, if you will let me, I want to take that proverb up for a moment, and look it in the face. “Pull one stick out of the bundle, and what becomes of all the rest?” They fall to the ground, of course. What then? Is our life, is the faith of our fathers, a bundle of sticks? God forbid! Our life, our faith, is a living, a growing thing. What becomes of a tree if you snap off a lifeless twig?

‘Some of us have never forgotten a sermon the Pastor preached on Growth. “The chief value of any life lies in its expectancy.” What is the expectancy of a bundle of sticks? Just this,—he glanced at the blazing fire,—‘that to-morrow it will be cast into the oven.

‘Mr. Scrymgeour has spoken of knowing something of the highways and by-ways of Mr. Thatcher’s life. I am afraid,—he glances at the senior deacon,—‘those who know something of the highways and by-ways of mine may think it great presumption on my part to echo Mr. Scrymgeour’s words, but, if I have to choose between presumption and ingratitude, I choose presumption with all my heart. No one will fill Mr. Thatcher’s place: no one will ever be to us what Mr. Thatcher has been.

‘We are not going to follow him to Rome, but it cuts us to the heart to hear some of the brethren speak as they have spoken. We know how differently the whole question looked to Mr. Thatcher. One is just thrown back upon