

tropolis, under such high auspices as those of Dr. Chalmers, there was every reason to hope he would succeed in his capacity as a minister of the gospel. "Sir," said Mr. Irving, somewhat bridling up as if his vanity had been touched—"Sir, I do not come here under the auspices of any man; I came here relying entirely upon my own resources." The event shewed, as every one is aware, that the reverend gentleman's reliance was not misplaced.

I think there can be no question that Mr. Irving was inordinately fond of popularity; and I believe there can be no doubt that it was to attract attention, that at a public meeting of the London Missionary Society, he drew out in the presence of thousands of persons, his gold watch, and handing it to the Secretary of the institution as a contribution to its funds, said, "silver and gold I have none, but what I have I give thee." But while thus so ardently panting after distinction, it is a fact which cannot be too much dwelt on in his praise, that when he had reached the very summit of his reputation, so far from his head becoming dizzy, or his heart haughty with his unprecedented popularity, he continued the same calm, humble, unsophisticated man he was before. At the very time that the princes and nobles of the land were crowding in such numbers* to hear him preach, as to fill the whole of Hatton Garden, and a large portion of Holborn, with their splendid equipages; at that moment it was his delight to visit and converse with the poorest of his people, and to exhibit to them, and to all men, the greatest mildness and modesty of demeanour. I may here mention a fact which strikingly illustrates the humility and kindness of his disposition; namely, that he was never known on any occasion to pass the poor unnoticed when in company, which, in the hey-day of his popularity he often was, with the noble and great ones of the earth, but that he always showed as much respect and attention to the poorest as to the richest and greatest of the land. At this time he resided at Claremont Square, Pentonville, and might almost every day be seen walking about the square and the adjoining streets, carrying in his arms his own child, then not twelve months old.

And here I ought to remark, that Mr. Irving was exceedingly fond of children. Perhaps there are but few fathers whose affection for their offspring is so intense as his was. I have great reason to believe, that the loss of a child, to whom he was devotedly attached, so deeply affected his mind, as in a great measure to prepare him, by a process which I will rather leave to be inferred than distinctly to state it, for the adoption of the extravagant views which unhappily characterized the latter years of his life.

Mr. Irving's affection, though of course peculiarly strong in the case of his own children, was not confined to them. He loved children in the aggregate, and could cater with his whole soul into their innocent feelings and recreations. I

may here mention an incident, which, though perfectly trilling in itself, shows how deeply he could sympathise with children in their little distresses, and how much he could enter into their feelings. A little boy, five or six years of age, the son of a friend of my own, had been one day playing at his ball against a dead wall near Exmouth-street, Pentonville, when the ball had somehow or other got fixed on the ledge of the wall. The boy, child-like, began to cry, thinking he would never get his play-thing again. Several persons passed, but took no notice of the tears of the young innocent. At last Mr. Irving came up, carrying in his arms in the way already described, his own child, when seeing the boy in distress, he inquired what was the matter. The child sobbed out in accents which were barely intelligible, that his ball had stuck on the wall, and that he could not get it down. "My dear little fellow," said Mr. Irving patting the boy on the back, "don't cry; but show me where it is." The child pointed to the place. Mr. Irving advanced to the wall, though one of the tallest men I have ever seen, it was not until after he had made two or three efforts on tip-toe, that he succeeded in reaching it. He handed it to the now-overjoyed boy, and again patting him on the head, said to him in his own peculiarly kind and gentle accents, "Do not throw it up there again." This incident may appear to most persons trifling. So it, doubtless, as before remarked, is, considered in itself; but to me it is very interesting, as illustrative of the singular amiableness of Mr. Irving's mind, and the cordial manner in which he could enter into the feelings of little children; and this too at a time when being in the very meridian of his popularity, his thoughts might have been supposed to be occupied with matters of a different nature.

So long as Mr. Irving continued in connection with the Church of Scotland, his Sabbath-day sermons were as remarkable for their length as for their originality and eloquence. They seldom occupied less than an hour and a quarter in the delivery; frequently he preached from an hour and a half to two hours at a time. On one occasion, when preaching on behalf of some religious institution, the London Missionary Society, if my memory be not at fault, more than three hours were occupied in the delivery of his discourse. His prayers in public were not proportionably long, though usually as long as is customary among Dissenters. In private meetings, however, Mr. Irving's prayers were often extended to such a length as to occupy as much time in their utterance, as is devoted by many of the metropolitan clergy to the delivery of their sermons. The reverend gentleman's lengthened prayers at private meetings, either in his own house or at the house of friends, were sometimes attended with rather ludicrous circumstances. Having on one occasion accepted an invitation to a tea-party, at the house of a near relative of an Alderman of facetious celebrity, Mr. Irving, before departing proposed, as he very often did on similar occasions, to improve, in a spiritual sense, the meeting of the party together, by "a few words of prayer." Most of those present being members of

* Mr. Irving's first congregation in Cross-street, Hatton Garden, did not exceed fifty persons.