

tion of some acquainted with Kitto's life, we may have seemed to have been too minute in our references or narrative ; for our general readers, however, we consider this necessary ; because on their acquaintance with specific facts, will depend the practical lessons to be adduced.

## PASTORAL RECOLLECTIONS AND GLEANINGS.

### THE BLACKSMITH, AND THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER.

"I need a cleansing change within,  
My life must once begin again.  
New hope I need ; and hope renew'd,  
And more than human fortitude ;  
New faith, new love, and strength to cast  
Away the fetters of the past."—COLERIDGE.

The Blacksmith, as related at the close of last month's sketch, was waiting till I should proceed.

"Now, my dear sir, you will pay special attention to what I am going to say to you."

"Ay, that I will."

"But before I begin, we will pray to Jesus Christ to enable you to understand, and feel what I may say."

"I hope, sir, your good prayers will be answered,"

I began by reading the first verse of John iii.—"*There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.*" "Nicodemus was a man of distinction among the Jews, and held in repute as a religious man. He had heard of the miracles which Jesus Christ performed, and he now sought an interview with him, and thus addressed him—'*Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God : for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*' Jesus Christ is attentive to this respectful address, and replies—'*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*' But his reply startles Nicodemus, who does not understand the meaning of what he says : '*Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old ? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born ?*' You see Nicodemus does not call in question the correctness of Jesus Christ's statement, that a man *must be born* again before he can see the kingdom of God ; he merely intimates the difficulty he feels to conceive how such an event can take place."

"Ah, sir, that's the case with me. I can't understand it."

"Well, but stop ; don't get flurried. What appears difficult at first, may, by explanation be simplified ; we gain all our knowledge by degrees."

"Very true, sir ; a lad must learn to make a nail, before he can shoe a horse."

"In the seventh verse Jesus Christ says—'*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*' 'This new birth is necessary to fit you for the kingdom of heaven ; and, therefore, as I am a divine teacher, you should not marvel at my enforcing what is necessary to prepare you for a state of future happiness.' And as Nicodemus could not go to heaven till he had experienced this great change in his soul, neither can you, or myself, or any else."

He now rose up in his bed, his countenance undergoing frequent and rapid changes of expression ; and, with his fists clenched, and his long arms extended, he thundered out the following sentence, which, by its suddenness and its vehemence, startled me.

"What a rascal that parson is, to say nothing to me about the necessity of this new birth ! Why, he came to lead me blind-fold into hell."

"Now, my dear sir, be composed. This excitement will unfit your mind to receive the instructions I am going to give you."

"No, no, it won't sir ; I am only giving vent to my feelings, which, if kept pent up in my soul, would make me burst with rage. It was an act of cruelty to stay so long after he was sent for before he came ; but to say nothing about the necessity of