

The part which a village pastor is called upon to play requires both head and heart, for the relation between shepherd and flock is here very different from the conventional footing on which clergy and laity stand with regard to each other in town life. Not only the pastor to be chosen, but also his wife is carefully scrutinized, and her qualifications for the patriarchal position she has to occupy critically examined into; for if the clergyman is termed by his flock "the honourable father," so is she designated as "the virtuous mother."

An orphaned congregation must have a new pastor, the flock

cannot be suffered to remain long without a shepherd; and this is the topic which is being discussed with much warmth at an assemblage of village elders. On the white-decked table are standing dishes of bread and cheese, flanked by large tankards of wine. The first glass has just been emptied to the memory of the dead pastor, and now the second glass will be drunk to the health of his yet unknown successor. These meetings preceding the election of a new shepherd are often long and stormy; for when the wine has taken effect and loosened the tongues, the different candidates who might be taken into consideration are passed in re-



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view, and extolled in much heat, or abused with broad sarcasm. One man is rejected on account of an impediment in his speech, and another because he is known to be unmarried; a third one, who might do well enough for any other parish, cannot be chosen here because his old parents are natives of the village; for it is a true though a hard word which says that no one can be a prophet in his own country. One man who ventures to suggest the vicar of a neighbouring village, is informed that no blacker traitor exists on the face of the earth; and another, who describes his pet candidate as an ideal clergyman, with the figure of a Hercules