

individuals upon whose memories my mind delights to dwell, and whose portraits I would essay to trace. In their day the mass of the clergy were orthodox without making a noise about it; they were moral without persecuting every man that was lax; they formed an intermediate link between the gentry and the industrious classes, partaking of the self-possession of the one, and the homely shrewdness of the other. They did not feel uncomfortable in the drawing-room, and they felt at home in the farmer's ha'. I have mentioned the name of Robertson, but these characteristics were not confined to one party; a more perfect gentleman, one who more consummately blended the elements of firmness and kindness, a sterner man or a truer Christian than the late Sir Henry Moncrieff, I have never known.

After these grave details, it is with joy that I let my pen loose on the subject that has lured me through them. The manse of those days, methinks I see it still! It might stand embowered among tall old trees, or, with a few saplings around it, on the moss-speckled green which clothes the undulating swells overlooking the brown upland stream winding away beneath the banks of bracken and "long yellow moor." It might be a snug, compact, new white-washed mansion, or (among a set of shabby grudging heritors) an old rambling patched up pile of the big stone of the country. Under every form it was impossible to mistake it for any other building. There was an express on in the dead stone, there was a sentiment in the green fields, there was a feeling in the breeze that played around it was—it could be no other than the manse. It could be the house neither of laird nor farmer. It was an appendage to—an inhabited counterpart of the church. There the two buildings stood—there they had stood for long years looking at each other from their respective clusters of ashes and scyanores, at such a distance that the bedrel could catch the first glimpse of the minister issuing from the door, and by a vigorous application to the cracked apology for a bell, clatter down the ferer by side and beneath tree—old sires and intruding dissenting knotty points of doctrine, and rosy girls with crimson yet comely swans by their sides, blushing in embarrassed but not painful silence—into the church before the pastor could climb the pulpit. The house stood so near that the rooks of a spring morning hovered over them in an unbroken winging circle, as the hazens of one grove sang in their happy gambols, the abodes of the neighbouring swarm.

Within doors you were almost certain to find order, comfort and a kindly welcome. The minister was a man of education, I do not say of high intellectual powers. There is this blessing in a gentleman that it gives a fine tone even to those who are unacceptible of knowledge. It is your only true refiner of the manners; it is education not birth that makes the difference between the gentleman and the rustic. Tam—it was with our minister. He might be a peasant's son who had never mingled with society except when doing, at long intervals with his patron; or he might be one who had moved in more polished circles but in his country retirement was incessantly assimilating himself to the tone of those by whom he was surrounded: still a spark was ever and anon escaping, which though it betrayed no acquaintance with old or modern erudition, bespoke a man who in college halls had rubbed shoulders with the monuments of the lexicon of the old world. He might not have succeeded in learning to dance, but his carriage had been improved by the attempt.

Every man who has leisure must have his hobby, and prairie had made preaching and the duty of visiting his parishioners sufficiently easy to leave the good man time to ride one. If he was of an unassuming but tasteful character, he bestowed himself to gardening. His arbutals and his strawberry apples, his "Long megs and Ribston pippins," were the boast in the country side. Perhaps those reared by some scion of an old but not wealthy family, who after aspiring in vain to earn wealth and honours as a member of the College of Justice, had retired to cultivate his paternal grounds, might come near them, perhaps the layman might fancy they were superior, but our good priest knew better. If the minister were of a less refined and more robust turn, the "glebe" attached to his manse was sure to seduce him into a more extensive scale of farming. Sir John Sinclair's statistical account of Scotland, and many an agricultural county report, can vouch for the success with which our clergyman pursued the theory of agriculture. My own experience of the redundancy of the simple duties which a farm furnishes, in many a manse, enables me to bear witness to their practical skill. I will not deny that individuals might at times mount these hobbies too often and ride them too long. I am not quite sure that my dear single hearted friend—was sufficiently mindful of his clerical dignity, when he mounted his old black cart horse, with a huge bunch of an apple tree, neither stem nor leaf of

which could be seen for the clustering fruit, across his shoulder; and jogging his way in triumph, "now twisting right, now twisting left," as the pitiless rough trot of his steed swayed him, showering down apples on either side, while from every hut and village along the road urchins rushed out to cuff, kick, and buffet each other in their scramble for the prizes. And I am quite sure that his neighbour—was anything but clerical in his conduct, when, out of devotion to his new farm, he postponed day after day the baptism of the "Irishman's child," until the desperate father, finding him with his spade among a field of whins, offered, as a last resource, to "stub away till his Reverence went and christened the child." These, however, are exceptions.

Others devoted them-selves to more intellectual pursuits. They wished to prosecute those of the multifarious sciences embraced in the comprehensive but somewhat superficial curriculum of a Scottish student of divinity, which had taken their fancy at college. One was a philologist, another a metaphysician, another a mathematician or observer of natural history. Among so numerous a body, many were shallow enough; rather qualified to talk about the thing to the amusement of their neighbours, than to follow out important inquiries. But even about these there was a *bonhomie*—the result of the combined workings of the refinement of letters, and their consciousness of holding a sacred office—that one could not but love. In proportion, as they aspired above their brethren they exposed them-selves to trials of temper. C—[the late Dr Crue] I remember, perpetrated a poetical tour through Scotland, which exposed him to all the reckless wit of the Edinburgh in the hey day of its youth. Till his dying day he could not enter a room where the blue and yellow cover was visible. Many a man however has exercised, unnoticed by the world, in the manse of a secluded Scottish parish, intellectual powers of no ordinary character, finding that study was its own reward. The clergy formed in those days the literary elite of Scotland, and from among them the professors of our universities were frequently selected. Reid, Playfair, and Robertson are eminent examples.

The minister's wife—and Protestant ministers of all denominations are a marrying generation—Luther, with his headlong haste to rush into this state, was not a type of them—was generally a dear creature. Not infrequently she was a minister's daughter as well as wife. A young clergyman invited to assist an older neighbor was sometimes apt to find in his manse a richer and more lasting reward than he anticipated. More than once I have witnessed a pretty idyl on the accession of a new incumbent. Some difficulty would occur regarding the removal of the widow and orphans of his predecessor. The young unsophisticated, scarcely fledged minister was all accommodation, and they of course were anxious to repay his kindness. What a moment to enter upon the friendly relations with a family! Not only was the stay upon which they had all leant, as if it were to stand forever, thrown down,—they must quit, one the scene of a long life of matrimonial bliss, the rest, the natal spot of which they had become as it were part and parcel. Innocent Eves, they must leave the paradise from which they never dreamed of issuing, for the, to them, waste and cold Eden which lay without. What wonder when the eldest hope, "woman grown," who, before the rest had struggled to maintain an air of self-possession, unconsciously sighed, half aloud, her regret at leaving so dear a spot; that the grave and authoritative pastor of a whole flock, blushing and stammering like a school boy, should whisper, "Why need she ever leave it?" Tush! I am whimpering; let me proceed. Sometimes the minister would bring home some bonny bride, whom long years before he had wooed and won—the pride of some farmer's ha', the son's, rosy-cheeked, warm and pure hearted daughter of a sturdy yeoman. Sometimes a scion of some "good family" fallen into decay would condescend to bloom in the manse, like the faint and delicate China rose in a common flower pot. But to the honor of the sex be it said, the consciousness of their position in brief space assimilated all the discordant beams into a pretty uniform character. The air of the manse made them all alike. You might know the minister's wife by her managing appearance, subdued by habitual repetition of the doctrine that a worldly spirit was reprehensible; by her consequential air, sometimes repressed by the reflection "pride was not made for man," sometimes by a consciousness that she was in the presence of people newly imported from the gay world.

I need not particularize the daughters, having frequently alluded to them already. The boys were; in nine cases out of ten, bold, high-spirited, unlucky lumps. They were alternately the pride and pest of their father. A glad man was he, and his heart did burn within him, when the youngsters were fairly initiated into the "timents."—But scarce a day elapsed without bringing the tale of some escapade, not of

any great atrocity in itself, and yet sadly inconsistent with the decorum which ought to be observed by every inhabitant of the manse, from the minister himself down to the household cat sleeping on the rug before the parlor fire. What a gloom settled down upon the manse that day when *wee* Davie Wilkie was detected by the grim elder sketching the head of an old woman during the time of divine service! Ay, noble fellows have come from the manse, as every battle field and every bloody quarter deck for the last hundred years can testify. But my heart loves to dwell on those who have attained a more peaceful eminence. Wilkie I have already named; let me also pay a tribute to John Thompson of Duddingston, a painter in whom learning has strengthened genius, and a soul delicately attuned to every ennobling emotion has breathed a living soul into knowledge. From the time he used as a boy to wander up one of our Argyshire burns carrying his Horace in his hand, or making his earliest essays at counterfeiting nature, till now, that from his command over the elements of landscape; he can devise fitting forms for every sentiment, as he can inspire a sentiment into every scene, his life has been one of imaginative aspiration. Of all the men I ever conversed with, he comes nearest my conception of a man of genius. In him, and in every thing that surrounds him, I find my *beau ideal* of the Scottish clergymen of the old school, yet further idealised by the union of genius and taste.

There was a monotony about the manse life devoid of tedium. The occupations of its inmates, their amusements were simple and varied. Unaccustomed to the high spice of gay society, their unsophisticated palates relished the simplest enjoyments. There was one era in the lives of mother and daughters—either in prospective or already passed—the occasion of their visit to Edinburgh the year when it fell to the minister's lot to represent the presbytery in the General Assembly. This occurrence is an inexhaustible source of conjecture and anticipation till it arrived; it was a matter of conversation all their after life. Living among themselves revered by all around, if ever there was a Paradise on earth, it was, or ought to be found in a manse.

The times upon which my memory so fondly lingers are gone, and the men whose characters were framed in and by them are fast disappearing. In their stead I see fierce and uncompromising polemists. It may be that my old friends were too much men of the world. It may be that their good nature was the consequence of indolent want of zeal for the cause of their Master. It may be that their successors are killing themselves by their own incessant conscientious warfare against all that is evil. Let them kill themselves if they will, but why should they tease the life out of others? It may be wrong, but it seems to me that the placid happiness of the blameless life of one of the old pastors was worth all the marrow-piercing sermons of a dozen of their fiery successors. I prefer the soft cloud that veiled the glory on the Mount, to the thunders of Sinai.

No doubt there is a good working in, and certain to come out of the present combustion, and yet I am happy in the prospect of escaping the confusion and embitterment. No doubt a philosopher could prove that the rising storm is the necessary consequence of the preceding calm. I am glad to think that I shall be housed before the tempest reaches its height. I am well aware that all ministers even in my day were not such as I have portrayed them. Peace and pardon be with the erring; it is enough that the memory of what is good should survive as an example to posterity. No form is permanent on earth; that in which they existed, as well as some that have already passed away, may—must be changed, but the dove like spirit which brooded over it will animate others. This is the concern of younger men. The future is theirs to use or abuse. My constant longing is to be with those whom I loved and honored while living; and my only anxiety that no uncharitable Zolote may disturb my dying hour.

DOMESTIC PEACE.

It is a pleasant sight to see every thing smooth and smiling within the same walls. To have no separate interests, no difficulty of humor, no clashing of pretensions to contest with; where every body keeps to his post, moves in his order, and endeavors to make himself acceptable; where envy and contempt have no place, but where it is a pleasure to see others pleased.

BOOK-BINDING.

THE Subscriber has commenced Business in the shop recently occupied by D. Spence, where he is ready to execute orders with despatch, at the usual prices. Blank Books bound to order.
July 20. JOHN ROSS.